Danilo Pérez | Al Di Meola | Billy Childs

DOWNBEAT

Jazz, Blues & Beyo

Esperanza Spalding

Chamber Music For Modern Times

How Artie Shaw Began the Beguine

Steven Bernstein
BLINDFOLDED

Mat Marucci
MASTER CLASS

SEPTEMBER 2010 U.K. £3.50

$4.99

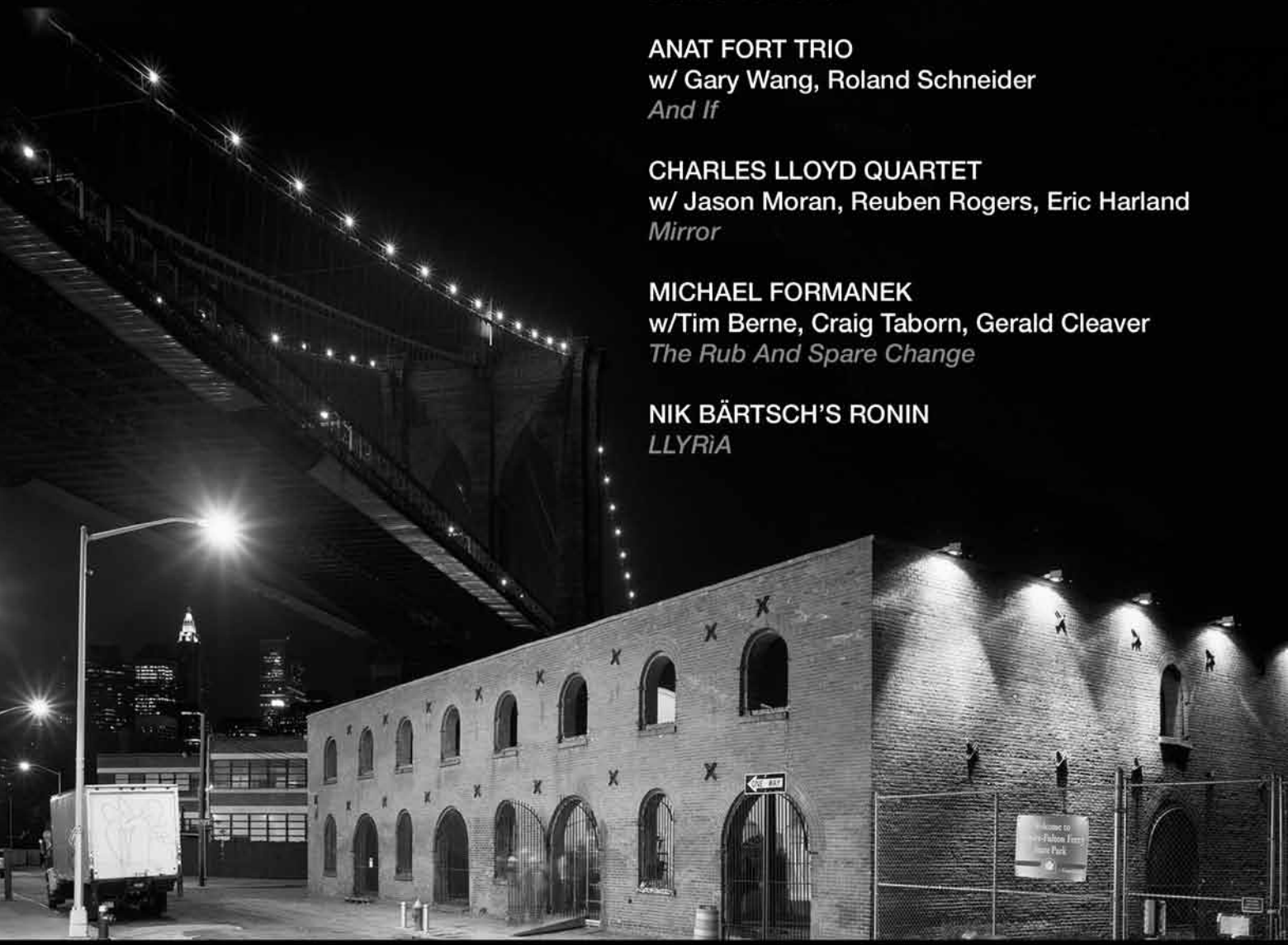
0 09281 01493 5

DOWNBEAT.COM

DOWNBEAT

ESPERANZA SPALDING // DANILO PÉREZ // AL DI MEOLA // BILLY CHILDS // ARTIE SHAW

SEPTEMBER 2010



ECM

FOOD
Iain Ballamy / Thomas Strønen /
Nils-Petter Molvær / Christian Fennesz
Quite Inlet

DINO SALUZZI
w/ Anja Lechner, Metropole Orchestra
El Encuentro

NORMA WINSTONE
w/ Klaus Gesing, Glauco Venier
Stories Yet To Tell

ANAT FORT TRIO
w/ Gary Wang, Roland Schneider
And If

CHARLES LLOYD QUARTET
w/ Jason Moran, Reuben Rogers, Eric Harland
Mirror

MICHAEL FORMANEK
w/Tim Berne, Craig Taborn, Gerald Cleaver
The Rub And Spare Change

NIK BÄRTSCH'S RONIN
LLYRìA

Available at:

amazon.com

www.amazon.com/ecm
Amazon, Amazon.com and the Amazon.com logo
are registered trademarks of Amazon.com, Inc. or its affiliates

The new JAVA RED from Vandoren PARIS

"These reeds are amazing in every way! They are extremely resonant, blow evenly, versatile and consistent in all climates. I tried the Reds and instantly fell in love! Thank you Vandoren for taking my sound to the next level!"

Tia Fuller
Saxophonist with Beyonce
Mack Avenue recording artist

Check out Tia's new CD *Decisive Steps* available now from Mack Avenue Records.

DANSR

U.S. importer • 818 W. Evergreen Ave., Chicago, IL 60642 • 888-707-4455
www.dansr.com • sales@dansr.com • www.tiafuller.com

DOWNBEAT

SEPTEMBER 2010

VOLUME 77 – NUMBER 9

President	Kevin Maher
Publisher	Frank Alkyer
Editor	Ed Enright
Associate Editor	Aaron Cohen
Art Director	Ara Tirado
Production Associate	Andy Williams
Bookkeeper	Margaret Stevens
Circulation Manager	Kelly Grosser

ADVERTISING SALES

Record Companies & Schools
Jennifer Ruban-Gentile
630-941-2030
jenr@downbeat.com

Musical Instruments & East Coast Schools
Ritche Deraney
201-445-6260
ritched@downbeat.com

Classified Advertising Sales
Sue Mahal
630-941-2030
suem@downbeat.com

OFFICES

102 N. Haven Road
Elmhurst, IL 60126–2970
630-941-2030
Fax: 630-941-3210
http://downbeat.com
editor@downbeat.com

CUSTOMER SERVICE

877-904-5299
service@downbeat.com

CONTRIBUTORS

Senior Contributors:
Michael Bourne, John McDonough, Howard Mandel

Atlanta: Jon Ross; **Austin:** Michael Point; **Boston:** Fred Bouchard, Frank-John Hadley; **Chicago:** John Corbett, Alain Drouot, Michael Jackson, Peter Margasak, Bill Meyer, Mitch Myers, Paul Natkin, Howard Reich; **Denver:** Norman Provizer; **Indiana:** Mark Sheldon; **Iowa:** Will Smith; **Los Angeles:** Earl Gibson, Todd Jenkins, Kirk Silsbee, Chris Walker, Joe Woodard; **Michigan:** John Ephland; **Minneapolis:** Robin James; **Nashville:** Robert Doerschuk; **New Orleans:** Erika Goldring, David Kunian; **New York:** Alan Bergman, Herb Boyd, Bill Douthart, Ira Gitler, Eugene Gologursky, Norm Harris, D.D. Jackson, Jimmy Katz, Jim Macnie, Ken Micallef, Jennifer Odell, Dan Ouellette, Ted Panken, Richard Seidel, Tom Staudter, Jack Vartoogian, Michael Weintrob, Kevin Whitehead; **North Carolina:** Robin Tolleson; **Philadelphia:** David Adler, Shaun Brady, Eric Fine; **San Francisco:** Mars Breslow, Forrest Bryant, Clayton Call, Yoshi Kato; **Seattle:** Paul de Barros; **Tampa Bay:** Philip Booth; **Washington, D.C.:** Willard Jenkins, John Murph, Michael Wilderman; **Belgium:** Jos Knaepen; **Canada:** Greg Buium, James Hale, Diane Moon; **Denmark:** Jan Persson; **France:** Jean Szlamowicz; **Germany:** Detlev Schilke, Hyou Vielz; **Great Britain:** Brian Priestley; **Japan:** Kiyoshi Koyama; **Portugal:** Antonio Rubio; **Romania:** Virgil Mihaiu; **Russia:** Cyril Moshkow; **South Africa:** Don Albert.

Jack Maher, President 1970-2003
John Maher, President 1950-1969

SUBSCRIPTION INFORMATION: Send orders and address changes to: DOWNBEAT, P.O. Box 11688, St. Paul, MN 55111–0688. Inquiries: U.S.A. and Canada (877) 904-5299; Foreign (651) 251-9682. **CHANGE OF ADDRESS:** Please allow six weeks for your change to become effective. When notifying us of your new address, include current DOWNBEAT label showing old address.

DOWNBEAT (issn 0012-5768) Volume 77, Number 9 is published monthly by Maher Publications, 102 N. Haven, Elmhurst, IL 60126-3379. Periodicals postage paid at Elmhurst, IL and at additional mailing offices. Subscription rates: $34.95 for one year, $59.95 for two years. Foreign subscriptions rates: $56.95 for one year, $103.95 for two years.

POSTMASTER: Send change of address to: DownBeat, P.O. Box 11688, St. Paul, MN 55111–0688. **CABLE ADDRESS:** DownBeat (on sale August 17, 2010) Magazine Publishers Association.

MPA

PRINTED IN U.S.A.

20th akbank jazz festival

The Sound of the City, for 20 Years

September 23rd - October 12th 2010

www.akbankjazz.com

ORGANIZATION

pozitif
www.pozitif.info

biletix
0216 556 98 00
www.biletix.com

AKBANK

SEPTEMBER 2010 inside

ON THE COVER

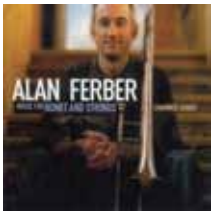
Cover photography by Jimmy Katz

FEATURES

60 Chris Lightcap

74 Fred Hersch

66 Solomon Burke



72 Alan Ferber

DEPARTMENTS

Esperanza Spalding

JIMMY KATZ

Contagious Enthusiasm

The first time I heard Esperanza Spalding was just one year ago at the Montreal Jazz Festival, when she fronted a group at the intimate indoor venue Gesù. I was blown away by her deft bass chops, leaping vocal lines and streetwise stage manner … and I couldn't wait for the show to end. She was so intense, and had so much going on musically, it made my head spin.

A couple of months later I caught her performance at the Chicago Jazz Festival, where she played to a large daytime crowd on one of the fest's smaller stages. There, in the open-air setting of my hometown's tranquil lakefront, I was able to open my mind to the music and simply existed with Spalding in each creative moment that unfolded, one after another. After about a half hour, I had to return to my duties selling T-shirts and subscriptions at the DownBeat booth, but not without noting my growing interest in her artistry and my genuine amusement at her give-it-all-you-got attitude.

Just a few weeks later, I saw Spalding perform twice at the Monterey Jazz Festival with the intergenerational group Us Five. I began to sense her magnetism as she laid down rock-solid bass lines, reacting in time to everyone around her, head bobbing and weaving in the background with the exuberence of youth and the unabashed confidence of someone fully immersed in the music. It was then I realized just how contagious her enthusiasm was, and, unlike my experience just a few months prior, I felt as if I could have listened all night without ever tiring.

Since receiving an advance copy of Spalding's new CD *Chamber Music Society*, I have found even more appreciation for this gifted young talent (a "woman on the rise," according to a recent article in O, The Oprah Magazine), who has won the Rising Star–Acousic Bass category of the DownBeat Critics Poll three years running. For the past several days, as I prepared to put this issue to bed, I found myself starting my mornings with a spin of this surprisingly intimate disc, wondering why I didn't embrace her sooner. I can't get enough of it, and I'll surely miss it when we turn our attention toward next month's issue.

DownBeat writer Dan Ouellette has interviewed Spalding on at least three occasions since her debut in 2006 and has watched her develop into a brilliant artist with vast appeal. Ouellette, whose profile of Spalding begins on Page 28, isn't the only one who has marvelled at just how far she's come in such a relatively short time; her fellow musicians are talking, too—singers, instrumentalists, arrangers, the whole community, it seems. **DB**

Classic keys captured in all their detailed glory – complete with all the must have effects – matched to our finest hammer action keybed. Available in 73 and 88 key models. **korg.com/sv1**

SV-1

Two for the Road

There's no better feeling than a well played set. With Korg's SV-1 Stage Vintage Piano and SP-250 Portable Stage Piano, you can enjoy that feeling every time you play. Each begins with a solid and expressive touch, adds superb and detailed sounds, all topped off by a simple, direct panel design to bring out the best in your playing – night after night, gig after gig.

SP-250 DIGITAL PIANO

Piano essentials with the same 88 key keybed as the SV-1, plus onboard speakers and a portable metal stand. An all-in-one solution that won't break your back – or your wallet! **korg.com/sp250**

Check out Neal Evans at soulive.com

KORG

Chords & Discords

New York Distances

In the article on Joe Lovano (August), Dan Ouellette writes that following Joe's accident, "locally based" Steve Slagle and others came to jam. I live in New York City and it takes me a couple hours to get to my friend Joe's house. In any case, thanks for the good article, and no matter where Joe lives, when you get there, the feeling is down-home and family.

STEVE SLAGLE
NEW YORK

Long Lasting

I love to read the great book *DownBeat–The Great Jazz Interviews: A 75th Anniversary Anthology* when I get home in the evening. I hope DownBeat will be around for 75 more years. DownBeat did more for jazz music than anybody else. If not for DownBeat, jazz would not have lasted this long.

ROBERT WASHINGTON
HUNTINGTON, W. VA.

Norvo's Turn

The Veterans Committee for The DownBeat Hall of Fame (August) has been an excellent idea. Does anyone remember Red Norvo? His pioneering efforts, his long and distinguished career, the fact that he, Coleman Hawkins and Mary Lou Williams were the only musicians to spot and advance young musicians seem to be completely forgotten. This is a major disservice to him and those of us who know him to be one of the most important musicians of the 20th century.

MARSHALL ZUCKER
WANTAGH, N.Y.

Classic Evans

It is most heartening to hear the admiration that Chick Corea has for Bill Evans (June), and Ed Enright's "First Take" in that issue aptly summarizes this wonderful pianist who, in my opinion, is the Beethoven or the Vladimir Horowitz of jazz piano.

VICTOR SNIECKUS
KINGSTON, ONTARIO

Focus On Music

John McDonough's gratuitous rant about "concept" albums in general, and the "fashionable concerns of ecology" as appearing on the liner notes of Ramona Borthwick's *One Of Us* ("Reviews," May) in particular, is unfortunate and raises questions.

Some are mainly dialectical. Must a work be broodingly pensive to qualify as personal? Should a musician who wishes her work to be well-received have to set aside even temporarily some of her existential concerns, in this case one pertaining to ecology, and publish albums which must submit to the dictates of some narrow and imagined jazz canon? Any album is an expression of the artist's unique and personal interaction with the world as she/he sees it.

While critical impressionism is inevitable and perhaps substantially desirable, shouldn't a review eventually be all about the music?

DEEPAK MEHTA
MUMBAI, INDIA

Corrections

- Pianist Sylvie Courvoisier's name was misspelled in the review of her disc with Mark Feldman, *To Fly To Steal* ("Reviews," July)
- Trumpeter Ellen Seeling's band was misidentified ("Jazz On Campus," August). Her group is the Montclair Women's Big Band.
- R.J. DeLuke should have been listed among the critics voting in the DownBeat poll.

DOWNBEAT REGRETS THE ERRORS.

HAVE A CHORD OR DISCORD?
E-MAIL US AT EDITOR@DOWNBEAT.COM.

PLAY JAZZ STANDARDS

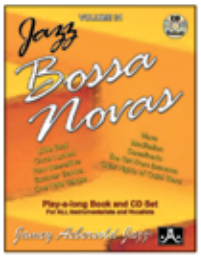
TUNES YOU NEED PERSONALLY RECOMMENDED BY JAMEY AEBERSOLD

VOLUME 22
FAVORITE STANDARDS *2-CDs!*

Some of the most favorite standards in jazz in one amazing collection.

Stella By Starlight • My Old Flame • My Ideal • Lover • Easy Living • Out Of Nowhere • Tangerine • The Nearness Of You • Wives & Lovers • Soon • I Remember You • If I Should Lose You • It Could Happen To You

BOOK/2-CDs..... $19.95



VOLUME 31
JAZZ BOSSA NOVAS

Ten beautiful and popular Bossa Novas played with a distinct "jazz flair." Add interest and variety to your performance!

The Girl From Ipanema • One Note Samba • Desafinado • Meditation • So Nice • Little Boat • How Insensitive • Wave • Quiet Night • Once I Loved

BOOK/CD..... $15.90

VOLUME 40
'ROUND MIDNIGHT *2-CDs!*

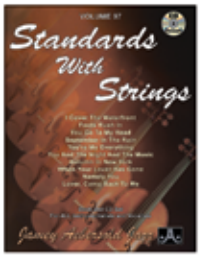
Autumn In New York • 'Round Midnight • Nancy • Love For Sale • Early Autumn • A Time For Love • Namely You • I Know That You Know • I Cover The Waterfront • If I Love Again • September In The Rain • You Go To My Head • Softly, As In A Morning Sunrise • Days Of Wine And Roses • Lullaby Of Birdland

BOOK/2-CDs..... $19.95

VOLUME 58
UNFORGETTABLE STANDARDS

Let's Fall In Love • Unforgettable • I'll Take Romance • Imagination • Gone With The Wind • In The Wee Small Hours Of The Morning • I Hadn't Anyone 'Till You • When You Wish Upon A Star • Like Someone In Love • Lullaby Of The Leaves • Polka Dots And Moonbeams • Someday My Prince Will Come

BOOK/CD..... $15.90



VOLUME 97
STANDARDS WITH STRINGS

Rhythm section is piano/bass/drums and violins!

I Cover The Waterfront • Fools Rush In • You Go To My Head • September In The Rain • You're My Everything • You And The Night And The Music • Autumn In New York • When Your Lover Has Gone • Namely You • Lover Come Back To Me

BOOK/CD..... $15.90

VOLUME 23
ONE-DOZEN STARDARDS *2-CDs!*

One-dozen must-know standards.

Angel Eyes • But Beautiful • Imagination • Personality • You Say You Care • Like Someone In Love • Polka Dots And Moonbeams • Everything Happens To Me • Violets For Your Furs • Here's That Rainy Day • Will You Still Be Mine? • I Should Care

BOOK/2-CDs..... $19.95

VOLUME 32
BALLADS

He who commands the ballad will command the audience! Excellent learning package for performing these beautiful, timeless classics.

Lover Man • Soul Eyes • Chelsea Bridge • Skylark • Lush Life • You've Changed • Ballad Blues • You Don't Know What Love Is

BOOK/CD..... $15.90

VOLUME 51
NIGHT & DAY STANDARDS

Embraceable You • Night And Day • The Man I Love • Tea For Two • I Got Rhythm • Three Little Words • I'm A Fool To Want • Just One Of Those Things • My One And Only Love • You Do Something To Me • With A Song In My Heart • How Long Has This Been Going On? • I Get A Kick Out Of You

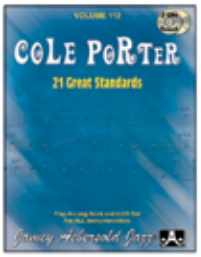
BOOK/CD..... $15.90

VOLUME 71
EAST OF THE SUN

DON'T MISS THIS ONE -- This often over-looked set is one that Jamey personally recommends. Stand out in your next jam session!

The Boy Next Door • East Of The Sun • Falling In Love With Love • Honeysuckle Rose • I Wish I Knew • Just Squeeze Me • Melancholy Baby • My Heart Stood Still • Old Folks • One O'Clock Jump • The Second Time Around

BOOK/CD..... $15.90



VOLUME 112
COLE PORTER *2-CDs!*

All Of You • At Long Last • Don't Fence Me In • Dream Dancing • Easy To Love • Ev'rything I Love • From This Moment On • Get Out Of Town • I Concentrate On You • I Get A Kick Out Of You • I Love You • I've Got You Under My Skin • In The Still Of The Night • It's Alright With Me • Just One Of Those Things • Love For Sale • Night And Day • So In Love • *And 3 More!*

BOOK/2-CDs..... $19.95

Discounts, offers, updates, jazz trivia and prizes! **Follow us on Twitter:**

AEBERSOLDJAZZ

JAZZ CATALOG!

1000s of Hand-Picked Items!

Exclusive offers and discounts in our E-newsletter at

www.jazzbooks.com

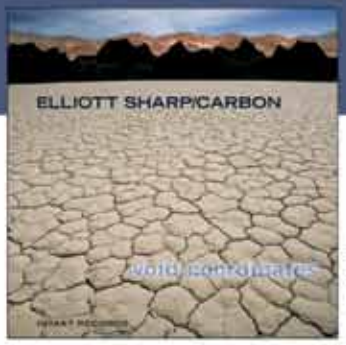
INTAKT RECORDS WWW.INTAKTREC.CH

Intakt CD 168

COURVOISIER – FELDMAN QUARTET
TO FLY TO STEAL
Sylvie Courvoisier: p · Mark Feldman: vl · Thomas Morgan: b
Gerry Heimingway: dr

Intakt CD 161

FRED FRITH COSA BRAVA
RAGGED ATLAS
Fred Frith: g, b, voice · Zeena Parkins: acc, keyb, voice
Carla Kihlstedt: vl, voice · Matthias Bossi: dr, voice
The Norman Conquest: sound design



Intakt CD 163

ELLIOTT SHARP CARBON
VOID COORDINATES
Elliott Sharp: g · Zeena Parkins: el-harp · Marc Sloan: b
Joseph Trump: dr · David Weinstein: synth

Intakt CD 171

STEVE LACY
NOVEMBER
Steve Lacy: ss

Intakt CD 165

AKI TAKASE – LOUIS SCLAVIS
YOKOHAMA
Aki Takase: p · Louis Sclavis: cl, bcl, ss

Intakt CD 182

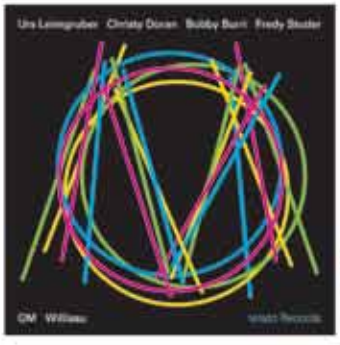
DER ROTE BEREICH
7
Frank Möbus: g · Rudi Mahall: bcl · Oliver Steidle: dr

Intakt CD 175

MICHAEL JAEGER KEROUAC feat. Greg Osby
OUTDOORS
Michael Jaeger: ts · Greg Osby: as · Philipp Schaufelberger: g
Vincent Membrez: p · Luca Sisera: b · Norbert Pfammatter: dr

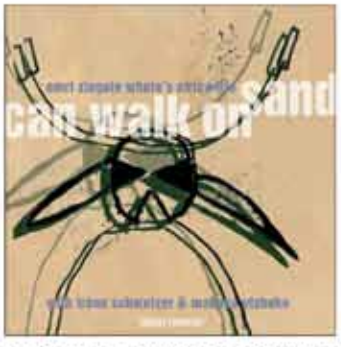
Intakt CD 183

SCHLIPPENBACH TRIO
BAUHAUS DESSAU
Alexander von Schlippenbach: p · Evan Parker: ts
Paul Lovens: dr



Intakt CD 170

OM
WILLISAU
Urs Leimgruber: ss, ts · Christy Doran: g, devices · Bobby
Burri: b, devices · Fredy Studer: dr, perc



Intakt CD 167

OMRI ZIEGELE WHERE'S AFRICA TRIO
CAN WALK ON SAND
Omri Ziegele: as · Irène Schweizer: p · Makaya Ntshoko: dr

Intakt CD 164

XU FENGXIA – LUCAS NIGGLI
BLACK LOTOS
Xu Fengxia: guzheng, sanxian, voice · Lucas Niggli: dr, perc

Intakt CD 158

BARRY GUY / LONDON JAZZ COMPOSERS ORCHESTRA RADIO RONDO
IRENE SCHWEIZER SCHAFFHAUSEN CONCERT

Intakt Records · P. O. Box 468 · 8024 Zürich, Switzerland · intakt@intaktrec.ch / North Country Distributors · info@ncdsales.com

The Beat

Creative Rediscoveries

Subscription series to release archival sets from '70s and '80s cutting-edge jazz


Don Cherry (left) and Lee Konitz at the Creative Music Studio in the 1970s

ROLAND SCHEFF


RAYMOND ROSS

The packaging, marketing and titling of *Archive Selections: Volume 1*, the first of a projected 12-CD subscription release by the Creative Music Studio (creativemusicstudio.org), might best be described as utilitarian. But its contents—three 1975 trio performances by bass virtuoso David Izenson with vocalist Ingrid Sertso and pianist-vibraphonist Karl Berger, four big band charts by Oliver Lake from 1976 and 1979, and three grooving numbers from 1980 by the Mandingo Griot Society—are anything but.

The aforementioned tracks represent only a fraction of approximately 400 hours of tapes documenting the musical production that transpired at C.M.S. during its dozen-year run, which began in 1972, when Berger and Sertso settled in Woodstock, N.Y. The holdings showcase a veritable who's who of the '70s and '80s cutting-edge, among them Don Cherry, Dave Holland, Jack DeJohnette, Anthony Braxton, Cecil Taylor, Marilyn Crispell, John Lindberg, Lee Konitz, Jimmy Giuffre, Frederic Rzewski, John Cage, Nana Vasconcelos, Trilok Gurtu, Steve Lacy, Abdullah Ibrahim, Carla Bley, Adam Rudolph, Ed Blackwell, Leo Smith, George Lewis and the members of the Art Ensemble of Chicago.

"We'd like to show the breadth of music that was happening," Berger said. "Each volume will have a similar distribution of styles—something more mainstream, if you want to call it that; more experimental music in the jazz idiom; and experimentation by world music people with improvisation." Each volume will also contain a booklet of oral histories from living alumni that describe the *mise en scène*.

The project launched in 2008 with a $25,000 grant from a German university that enabled Berger and engineer Ted Orr to digitize and remaster the first hundred reel-to-reel tapes, cherry-picked both for artistic quality and condition. Rights revert to the artists, who will be asked to allow C.M.S. to excerpt up to 20 minutes for the compilation CDs, which will be used to finance the remaining work. Six months after subscribers receive their copies—Berger hopes to expand the base from its present three dozen to several hundred—the Planet Arts label will release each individual CD to the general public.

The son of a Latin professor and himself a Philosophy Doctor from the University of Heidelberg (his thesis was "Definition of the Function of Music in the Soviet System Between Stalin and Khruschev" through the example of Shostakovich), Berger knows a thing or two about the art of pedagogy and curriculum-building. After playing extensively with Cherry during the mid-'60s and with various New York outcats between 1966 and 1968, he decided to apply his skills to the teaching of the universal language of notes and tones, for as he puts it, "very egotistical reasons."

"We were playing every night, and it sounded great, but my academic training told me I needed to know something more about what I was doing," Berger said. "If you have to teach it, then you have to know what you're saying, so to speak. I was also interested in what methods I could use in order to tell the next generation how to loosen up their conceptual ideas."

Berger returned to New York in 1970 with the intention of starting a Creative Music Foundation. Through the aegis of Ornette Coleman, he met Gunther Schuller, Mike Mantler and Cage, who made up the initial advisory board. That year, Cage left the New School, where he had been teaching; Berger applied, got the job and started an improvisation class.

He developed a practice system called "gamela taki," derived from a mnemonic rhythmic syllable from Pakistani tabla music.

"Those two words came from Don Cherry, who heard them on the shortwave radio that he carried around with him all the time," Berger recalled. "Music happens in time and with the same overtone structure all over this planet. We decided to look at whether we can practice certain things without thinking about style, which we called 'basic practice.' By using language as a tool rather than counting, you train your mind to listen to each beat. It brings you to a place where you're no longer thinking bars or forms of that kind, but are just adding odd and even, and create a sense of freedom for yourself.

"The same principles apply as much to interpretation as improvisation," he continued. "Later on, you might find yourself in a certain stylistic environment where you feel comfortable, and that's where you can explore your personality."

As a corollary, Berger also decided to "expose everybody to what people are doing now. How are Anthony Braxton or Dave Holland or Cecil Taylor working? Rather than have some theory about it, have them come and create pieces for people, and talk about their work."

The Creative Music Studio can be seen as a kind of parallel universe to Chicago's Association For The Advancement Of Creative Musicians, of which Berger was unaware until the '70s.

"A lot of different things were going on," Berger said. "The artists were energized by working with these orchestras, and the audience were in an exuberant state, so there's a lot of overflowing energy on the tapes. Also, you hear soloists play together who otherwise wouldn't, playing in a way that they otherwise wouldn't, and you hear raw improvising on world music concerts that start off with ideas from Brazil or Turkey or India."

Berger does not regard the archive project as purely historical in intention. "We're trying to use the new flow of communication to establish contact between the people who were at C.M.S. and also to do events," he said. He cited an August 2010 C.M.S. festival in Istanbul, preceded by a July workshop-concert in Bari, Italy, and a March 2011 C.M.S. symposium at Columbia University.

"I'm the lucky one," he says. "I was there all the time, I got to meet and play with all these musicians, and it opened up my way of playing like never before." Sertso adds, "The main philosophy is an open mind—doing your training and doing your music, but open. Through opening up to the world, you find your own style." —*Ted Panken*


John Clayton (left) and Christian McBride

STEVE MUNDINGER

Jazz Aspen Snowmass Celebrates 20 Years

Nestled in the Colorado Rockies, this year's 20th anniversary Jazz Aspen Snowmass festival brought together a bright collection of well-known jazz musicians from June 25-July 3. Artists enjoyed the backing of a solid big band, led by bassist/composer and JAS Academy Artistic Director Christian McBride. Shows featured Dianne Reeves, John Clayton, Patti Austin, Russell Malone and trumpeter Terence Blanchard.

Jim Horowitz, president and CEO of Jazz Aspen Snowmass, said he is proud that "we are still here after 20 years. This clearly attests to the fact that the Aspen community has embraced the festival as a permanent community asset, one that yields significant economic and cultural benefits."

Enshrined when both the Aspen Institute and Aspen Music Festival were created in the late '40s, JAS has been a great fit for the town. "It embraces two of the principal legacies of Aspen's last 50 years," Horowitz said. "First, as a major summer gathering place for culture and the exchange of ideas, and, second, as a town with a well-established tradition of high-energy parties and events."

As for the future, Horowitz said that it will be "20 more years of juggling, dancing, re-invention and whatever else is required to keep it rollin.' Our new venue and home at the Benedict Music Tent in Aspen, where it all began 20 years ago, will have legs and become a fabulous home for us for many years to come." —*John Ephland*

Riffs


Lucky Peterson

Lucky's Back: Blues singer/multi-instrumentalist Lucky Peterson will release his first disc in seven years, *You Can Always Turn Around* (Dreyfus), on Sept. 28. The recording features songs by Tom Waits, Robert Johnson and Curtis Mayfield.
Details: dreyfusrecords.com

Akinmusire Signs: Trumpeter Ambrose Akinmusire has signed to Blue Note. He will record his debut for the label this fall with Jason Moran producing. **Details:** emimusic.com

Chopin Meets Jazz: The High Arts Society of Warsaw will celebrate Frederic Chopin's 200th birthday with two jazz-based tributes to the composer in Chicago and New York. Violinist Krzesimir Dębski will direct the concerts at Chicago's Symphony Center on Sept. 27 and New York's Carnegie Hall on Oct. 4. Other participants include vocalist Agnieszka Wilczyńska and pianist Emilia Sitarz. **Details:** chopinusa.pl

New Masters: The National Endowment For The Arts has announced the 2011 NEA Jazz Masters Awards. Recipients include Hubert Laws, Dave Liebman, Johnny Mandel and the Marsalis family (Ellis, Wynton, Branford, Jason and Delfeayo). Producer Orrin Keepnews received the 2011 A.B. Spellman Award for Jazz Advocacy. Each recipient will be awarded a $25,000 fellowship. **Details:** nea.gov

Blujazz Closes: Chicago's musician-owned Club Blujazz closed in early July.

Two-Wheeled Tour: Cornetist Taylor Ho Bynum will tour New England Sept. 10–23, traveling entirely by bicycle.
Details: taylorhobynum.com

RIP, Benny Powell: Trombonist Benny Powell died in New York of a heart attack on June 26. He was 80. Powell worked in the Count Basie Big Band and Thad Jones–Mel Lewis Jazz Orchestra during the '50s and '60s. He also led his own groups and taught at New York's New School For Social Research since the mid–'90s.

In our Dreams, there are Lions...

info@dreamcymbals.com - 877-933-7629 - www.dreamcymbals.com

Dream Lion Series

Steeped in tradition, with an aggressive attack and a musical decay!

Hear them for yourself at a "Dream Cymbal Tasting" near you!

The Drum Circuit 9/1 - 9/8
San Luis Obispo, CA - (805) 543-0338

2112 Percussion 9/8 - 9/15
Raleigh, NC - (919) 833-0046

Washington Music Center 9/8 - 9/15
Wheaton, MD - (301) 946-2300

Woodshed Music Guelph 9/8 - 9/15
Guelph, ON Canada - (519) 763-5300

Fork's Drum Closet 9/15 - 9/22
Nashvile, TN - (615) 383-8343

Skips Music Inc. 9/15 - 9/22
Sacramento, CA - (916) 484-7575

Mooresville Jewelry & Loan 9/22 - 9/29
Mooresville, NC- (704) 663-2599

Music Lab 9/22 - 9/29
Ausitn, TX - (512) 707-0560

Wizdom Prog. Music Academy 9/22 - 9/29
London, ON Canada - (519) 471-4565

Resurrection Drums 9/29 - 10/6
Holywood, FL - (954) 926-0204

Music 6000 9/29 - 10/6
Olympia, WA - (360) 786-6000

Encore Musical Instruments 9/29 - 10/6
Winnepeg. MB - (204) 788-0967

Dave's Drum Shop 9/15 - 9/22
Ottawa, ON Canada - (613) 594-DRUM

Nikki Yanofsky

JEFF LIPSKY

Upcoming Singer Nikki Yanofsky Rides New Media Wave

Nikki Yanofsky, a 16-year-old Canadian who got her first international exposure singing the national anthem at the 2010 Olympics in Vancouver, is the next big thing in jazz. At least that's what Paul Foley, general manager of Decca Records, believes. He's been working to convince the world that her 13-song debut, *Nikki*, will connect with a younger generation.

The label has overseen the production of online-only videos, launched major campaigns on Facebook and Twitter, teamed up with iTunes and recorded a special for PBS. On top of that, there's the more traditional publicity push of press releases, radio airplay and television appearances.

"We think the story now has been, how does a 16-year-old sing jazz like she's been doing it for 30 years?" Foley said. "Her potential is unlimited. From a label that has done a lot of traditional jazz over the years, also, it's great to open up jazz to a younger audience."

All the press releases, tweets and television shows seem to be working. Her album—which juxtaposes "I Got Rhythm," "Take The 'A' Train" and other standards with pop ballads and r&b songs she helped write—hit number one on Billboard's Heatseekers Chart on May 22, which tracks musicians who have never appeared in the top 100 of the Billboard 200. The record also reached number two on the jazz charts and near the top on the Canada sales charts.

The strategy for marketing Yanofsky illustrates the music industry's growing reliance on the Internet and social networking. The singer's Twitter feed is a mix of high-school chit-chat and personal notices about upcoming shows; her official Facebook site has a more formal tone and is stocked with links to video clips. Decca has also launched a campaign on adult alternative radio, releasing "For Another Day" as a single. Foley explained that Yanofsky is first and foremost a jazz musician, but Decca wants to capture a wider audience as well. He hopes her PBS special, "Nikki Yanofsky: Live In Montreal"—something the label wouldn't normally undertake for a new artist—will help make fans of "a lot of the moms and grandmoms who watch PBS."

Yanofsky entered the Canadian spotlight during the Montreal Jazz Festival as a tiny 12-year-old with a big voice. In the four years since that gig, her life has been full of press interviews, concerts and recordings. She said the support of her management and friends, along with a dedication to her schoolwork, helps her stay grounded despite her growing fame.

"The good thing about this is that it's been gradual," Yanofsky said. "We've paced everything, so nothing feels too overwhelming. It feels like it's time for this to happen, to start getting attention not only in Canada but around the world." —*Jon Ross*

Find your First Love All over again... & again

Cannonball

New One-Piece
Soprano Saxophones

Vintage Reborn™

Professional Saxophones

www.cannonballmusic.com

CANNONBALL

CANNONBALL MUSICAL INSTRUMENTS

75th ANNIVERSARY DEALS

Get DB DELIVERED!

We've been here 75 years and you *STILL* don't have a home subscription. Well get one now, while our special anniversary items are available!

By subscribing, you'll save money, get *The Great Jazz Interviews: A 75th Anniversary Anthology* or piece of DownBeat fashion, and you'll never have to worry about missing another issue!

And when you order now, you have the choice of three limited-time only subscription deals:

1) Your subscription and our 75th Anniversary T-shirt
2) Your subscription and *The Great Jazz Interviews: A 75th Anniversary Anthology*
3) Your subscription and our 75th Anniversary Hat

PLUS! All new subscribers will also receive the July 75th Anniversary Collector's issue as a gift!
While supplies last!

Three ways to subscribe:

1) Fill out the card on the opposite page and send it in with your payment to DownBeat.
2) Go to downbeat.com and click on the subscribe button.
3) Or, just give us a call at 877-904-5299.

Questions?
877-904-5299
service@downbeat.com
DOWNBEAT.COM

THE T-SHIRT DEAL

THE BOOK DEAL

THE HAT DEAL

Vinyl Freak | BY JOHN CORBETT

Johnny Lytle Trio
Blue Vibes
JAZZLAND, 1960

I get a shock every time I play this record. Not because of the music, which is terrific soul-jazz, but because of what's on the inner sleeve. Of course, this record was made back when simple white paper envelopes were designed to protect the LP, which made them the perfect place for an amateur artist cum record collector to draw. When I pull out the LP I'm treated to a cartoonish pencil drawing of an especially well-hung, smiling donkey.

Apologies to Johnny Lytle, who, were he alive (he died in 1995 in his hometown and lifelong base of Springfield, Ohio), might take solace in the fact that the presence of such a drawing probably meant that this was a treasured, often reached-for item. Lytle was a sensitive vibraphonist, adept at super-down-tempo ballads, like his radiant version of "Somewhere Over The Rainbow," full of sweet little bluesy fills, exultant swells and breathy hesitations. This was Lytle's debut, waxed for Jazzland with the leader's regular trio, Milt Harris' churchy organ and soft, perfectly supportive drumming by Albert "Tootie" Heath. Later outings on Jazzland were picked up and reissued by Riverside, as in the case of *Happy Ground, Moon Child* (with Ray Barretto on congas), and then Lytle went straight to Riverside, as on his two best-known sides, *Got That Feeling!* and *The Village Caller!* (all exclamations all the time!), though another one to look out for is the LP he made with Johnny Griffin on tenor, *Nice And Easy*.

There's loads of lounge sound here, the quietude saturated with groove on "Movin' Nicely" and a slightly over-emotive version of "Autumn Leaves." The vibes/organ combo is a bit eccentric, but it works fine here, Harris and Lytle avoiding each other most of the time, now and then ganging up in tandem on the unsuspecting quiet passage. You can't fault Lytle and crew for laying it on thick—it is the heavy romantic crowd they're playing to, the stuff of wistful nights at the bar alone with the jukebox and the trusty barkeep. Nice, too, when they dig into a bit more funky stuff, like "Mister Strudel"—served like you like it: flaky, with sweet sugar frosting. **DB**

E-MAIL THE VINYL FREAK: VINYLFREAK@DOWNBEAT.COM

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

Bill Dixon Combined Individual Approach, Cooperative Mission

Influential trumpeter, organizer and educator Bill Dixon died on June 16 in his North Bennington, Vt., home after a two-year illness. He was 84.


Bill Dixon
MICHAEL JACKSON

Dixon rarely indulged in gymnastic displays; instead he used electronics, extended techniques and slow tempos to make music that flowed like liquid mercury. Cornetist Taylor Ho Bynum, who worked frequently with him over the last decade, said, "His investigations of timbre and tone, use of space and silence, and explorations of the upper and lower extremes of the instrument completely revolutionized the way I approached playing."

In 1964 Dixon organized the October Revolution, a concert series that focused attention on nascent experiments in music, and the Jazz Composer's Guild, a short-lived collective intended to put musicians in control of their performances. Dixon sought to redefine jazz as art music, with all the resources and responsibilities conferred by such status.

"He and Cecil Taylor had the idea that if we all refused to work for conditions that we saw as unfair, we could change those conditions," said guild member Carla Bley.

"Unfortunately," added pianist Burton Greene, "it seems the American individualism idea of 'you get yours, I get mine' was more ingrained in most of us than the collective ideas of Dixon and Taylor."

By the end of the '60s Dixon had moved on to academia. He was a tenured music professor at Bennington College until 1995, and he treated this endeavor as seriously as his music.

"Bill devoted all of his time to teaching during the early '70s," said trumpeter Stephen Haynes. "He felt working with someone's mind is the highest art one may practice."

Musicians like Rob Mazurek came to Dixon for private tutelage.

"Bill instilled in me the idea of critically searching for the essence of what it is you are trying to do," Mazurek said. "What is it that you want to communicate—on the instrument, through composition, through painting, through words, through the way you walk into a room?"

Dixon made 21 recordings as a leader. His large ensemble recordings like *Intents And Purposes* (RCA) in 1967 and *Tapestries For Small Orchestra* (Firehouse 12), released last year, reconciled the intensity and technical freedom of avant-garde jazz with the discipline and precision of 20th century classical music. His small-group recordings, which typically featured multiples of a single instrument, were even more audacious. According to percussionist Ben Hall, who worked with him on the 2008 trio session that yielded the double LP *Weight/Counterweight* (brokenresearch), "He managed to outline, infer and establish orchestral range compositionally with limited materials."

Dixon's six-disc solo set *Odyssey* (self-released, 2001) showed that he could realize this ideal without accompaniment. At the time of his death Dixon was preparing two books and a recording of his final concert. Haynes said, "Bill died with his creative boots on." —*Bill Meyer*

MYRON WALDEN

"[WALDEN'S NEW RELEASES]...PAINT THE BROADEST PICTURE OF WALDEN'S EXPANSIVE INTERESTS YET; A DOCUMENT OF ONE OF THE MODERN MAINSTREAM'S MOST PROVOCATIVE SAXOPHONISTS, COMPOSERS, AND BANDLEADERS."

- JOHN KELMAN, *ALL ABOUT JAZZ*

NOVEMBER 2009

MYRON WALDEN MOMENTUM

"...UNCANNILY EVOCATIVE OF THE 1960S MILES DAVIS QUINTET" WITH "A FIRST RATE BAND."

- NATE CHINEN, *THE NEW YORK TIMES*

"MOMENTUM, IS A POTENT MODERN MAINSTREAM SET THAT TAKES TRUMPET ICON MILES DAVIS' LEGENDARY 1960S QUINTET AS A TOUCHSTONE, BUT ACHIEVES REVERENCE WITHOUT SACRIFICING ITS OWN VOICE."

- JOHN KELMAN, *ALL ABOUT JAZZ*

MARCH 2010

MYRON WALDEN IN THIS WORLD

"TO FEEL AND WHAT WE SHARE [ARE] SOME OF THE MOST DEEPLY AFFECTING JAZZ BALLADS I'VE EVER HEARD.

THESE...TWO ROMANTIC SETS...ARE NOT THE CUSTOMARY JAZZ INTERPRETATIONS OF THE GREAT AMERICAN SONGBOOK AND SIMILAR STANDARDS. THEY ARE ORIGINAL COMPOSITIONS DRAWN FROM HIS OWN LIFE."

- NAT HENTOFF, *THE WALL STREET JOURNAL*

JULY 2010

MYRON WALDEN COUNTRYFIED

"RAMBUNCTIOUS COUNTRY BLUES AND GOSPEL-TINGED SUITES"

- ARMIN ROSEN, *NY PRESS*

"MYRON WALDEN...IS SIMULTANEOUSLY THE MOST INSISTENTLY PERSONAL AND INSTANTLY ACCESSIBLE MUSICIAN OF HIS GENERATION.

WITHIN HIS OWN COMPOSITIONS HE TELLS STORIES...HE FITS NO CATEGORY BECAUSE, AS HE CONTINUOUSLY DEMONSTRATES, 'MY PASSION IS TOO EXPANSIVE TO BE LIMITED TO ONE STYLE.'"

- NAT HENTOFF, *THE WALL STREET JOURNAL*

DEMI SOUND RECORDINGS | WWW.MYRONWALDEN.COM | AVAILABLE ON iTunes AND AMAZON

New York's CareFusion Jazz Festival Takes On Broad Contemporary Scope

As rock and pop fill more slots on jazz festival bills each year, it can be tempting to discount anything that doesn't fit neatly into the jazz genre as a straight-up bid for ticket sales. But George Wein's CareFusion Jazz Festival New York, which ran June 17–26, focused a wide lens on new directions in creative music that underscored the influence of jazz concepts and luminaries far beyond the more traditional lineups of previous JVC Jazz Festival programs.

One favorable effect of the more adventurous lineup was the crowd education at shows like Le Poisson Rouge's double bill featuring Nasheet Waits, Eric McPherson and Abraham Burton's Aethereal Bace and Chicago post-rock outfit Tortoise on June 23. The latter drew an audience of indie rock fans. But as openers Waits and McPherson created hauntingly spare melodies on two kits while Burton improvised a series of fearless and exquisite lines out front of the unusual trio, chatter ceased and the crowd edged ever closer to the stage. Complementing Tortoise's soaring orchestral themes and driving, angst-ridden drums, Aethereal Bace introduced what seemed to be a new flock of listeners to one of the most exciting new bands on today's scene.

In a free show on the fest's opening night at Zebulon, Mostly Other People Do The Killing also introduced rock elements (namely, Kevin Shea's fast, trebly, cymbal-heavy drumming). Mixed with a bass-propelled swing and a frenetic, free frontline vibe that recalled Ornette Coleman and Don Cherry's unbound aggression, the group nodded to the music's history while carving out a new approach to its future within the space of one tune.

CareFusion also heralded a parade of huge names, with a Carnegie Hall celebration of Herbie Hancock's 70th birthday on June 24. Expectations ran high for the bill, which boasted Hancock with Wayne Shorter, Terence Blanchard, Joe Lovano, Jack DeJohnette, Ron Carter, Dave Holland, Wallace Roney and Lionel Loueke with emcee Bill Cosby.

Reaching back to the years he shared with a selection of the artists onstage in Miles Davis' late-'60s quintet, Hancock's set kicked off with Blanchard's arrangement of Shorter's "Footprints," performed alongside the tune's author. Roney's trumpet took the helm later with a fast, virtuosic solo on Carter's "81." The group used the remaining time to have fun with the obligatory Hancock anthems "Maiden Voyage" and "Cantaloupe Island," with Lovano, Blanchard and Roney often standing down and letting Shorter's genius take over.


Graham Haynes

JACK VARTOOGIAN/FRONTROWPHOTOS

The first set was disappointingly short, with the second half of the program devoted to Hancock's *The Imagine Project*, a concept album about the need for peace that relies on guest appearances in a similar vein to the pianist's 2005 release *Possibilities*. Derek Trucks, Susan Tedeschi and India.Arie—along with the strong backing band and brilliantly versatile bassist Tal Wilkenfield and keyboardist Greg Phillinganes—gave compelling performances.

But it's hard to make material that hinges on familiar guest artists work in a live setting without them. And putting a fresh spin on songs like Peter Gabriel and Kate Bush's cloying "Don't Give Up" is a task that needs all the help it can get. With the exception of Wilkenfeld's bluesy take on Bob Dylan, Phillanganes' emotional rendition of "A Change Is Gonna Come" and Trucks and Tedeschi's "Space Captain," many of the tunes fell flat despite original arrangements and nearly technically perfect performances.

If Miles Davis' late-'60s artistry informed the first set at Hancock's birthday celebration, it was his next concept that gave way to a free presentation of the touring act "*Bitches Brew* Revisited" at Brooklyn's Prospect Park Bandshell on June 19. Featuring some of the heaviest-hitting names in new creative music, the Graham Haynes-fronted ensemble seemed to defy laws of time and space. Progressions of Cindy Blackman's undulating drum rhythms, keyboardist Marco Benevento's modal harmonies and effects and DJ Logic's samples updated the backbone of the classic album's rhythm section, giving way to new approaches to improvisation over Davis' legendary open compositions. —*Jennifer Odell*


Jason Stein (front) and Jason Roebke

MICHAEL JACKSON

Clean Feed Festival Builds Improv Bridges

In times of fiscal duress, the arts can flourish regardless. President Franklin D. Roosevelt's Federal Art Project even fueled creativity during the Depression.

Still, Pedro Costa's Lisbon-based Clean Feed label is something else entirely. Last year with the globe in the bowels of recession, Costa released 36 new CDs of challenging music and intends to up that tally to 45 in 2010. No instance of quantity over quality, each Clean Feed CD is gorgeously packaged and features choice recordings by new music vanguardists from both sides of the Atlantic.

For the past five years, Costa has hosted label festivals in New York. In consultation with Umbrella/Pitchfork promoter Mike Reed, this year Costa set sights on Chicago, since a growing slice of his roster, including Herculaneum, Charles Rumback, Ken Vandermark and Jason Stein, emanate from the Windy City.

Over two days at Chicago's Cultural Center, Hideout and Heaven Gallery, Clean Feed featured the New York trio of reedist Ingrid Laubrock, pianist Kris Davis and vaunted drummer Tyshawn Sorey, Memorize the Sky (reedist Matt Bauder, drummer/vibist Aaron Siegel/bassist Zach Wallace), Chicago's Keefe Jackson and Lisbon's Trio Red.

Jackson's trio, in which bassist Jason Roebke is integral, concluded its set in the Cultural Center's Preston Bradley Hall with "Maker," the

opener from the recording dubbed *Seeing You See* on the label. Charles Mingus-like in ominous passages, "Maker" stunningly balances Jackson's chiseled tenor tone and Jeb Bishop's livewire trombone. Also salient was Jackson's increasing use of the eerily profound contrabass clarinet. The eclectic crowd at the Cultural Center included seniors, who were a little taken aback during the following set, when Sorey walloped his side drum after protracted minimalism. Laubrock held much in reserve, although the slow builds, effective on the fine Clean Feed document *Paradoxical Frog*, dragged a little live.

A superbly impromptu set where Bishop and bassist Josh Abrams met Portuguese guitarist Luis Lopes at the Hideout preceded an impressive showing from local sextet Herculaneum. Driven by whip-crack drummer Dylan Ryan and exploratory alto saxophonist Dave McDonnell, Herculaneum featured fresh, through-composed structures, in the case of "Eyeball" recalling Trevor Watts' Moiré Music, which makes abundant, intelligent use of a horn-heavy frontline.

Bass clarinetist Stein's trio Locksmith Isidore works around drummer Mike Pride living in New York, so when they get together they don't spare the horses. The audience was regrettably thin for final sets at Heaven Gallery but the music writ large. "Red Trio" hunkered down as soon as Rodrigo Pinheiro's fingers hit the piano. Hernani Faustino's hydraulic bass in close cahoots with Garbriel Ferrandini's nervously acute percussion made this dark-hued improv of a high order. Stein, Roebke and Pride fed off the chamber-like intensity of the sparsely intimate space with a brilliantly tight set. *—Michael Jackson*


Brian Haas (left), Lauren Green, Josh Raymer, Jeff Harshbarger and Chris Combs

RACHEL HOFLING

Jazz Odyssey Meets Beethoven in Tulsa

More often than not, aspiring jazz artists from around the world who seek to drink deeply from the jazz fount emigrate to New York. Of course, there are numerous exceptions to relocation, like the Jacob Fred Jazz Odyssey, which, since 1994, has evolved its unique jazz voice based smack dab in Tulsa, Okla.

The JFJO collective—led by pianist Brian Haas and today comprising lap steel guitarist Chris Combs, bassist Jeff Harshbarger and drummer Josh Raymer—staged an impressive event on June 12 that arguably would have never happened had the group transplanted itself to New York. JFJO delivered a largely successful melding of jazz and classical music in an evening billed as "Ludwig." The concert featured the quartet with the 50-piece Bartlesville Symphony Orchestra conducted by Lauren Green as Beethoven's Third and Sixth symphonies were re-envisioned with a jazz sensibility. The show attracted a nearly full house at the 1,700-seat Bartlesville Community Center (an hour's drive northeast of Tulsa).

The concert turned out to be a tour de force of jazz melded with classical, with a call-and-response component through Noam Faingold's unorthodox-but-respectful arrangements. Staying true to Beethoven's melodies, countermelodies and compositional intent, Faingold allowed space for pockets of improvisation and chose different instruments to cover solo parts. For example, Haas played piano on what were violin spotlights in Beethoven's original scores.

The JFJO presided as the dominant factor, with the orchestra supplying the dynamics, providing the sheer volume to the shifts in tempo and rhythm, and responding to the call in the piano and lap steel lines. The first half of the concert featured Beethoven's Symphony No. 6, the lap steel opening with a peaceful, countrified feel. The piece's rural joy was interrupted in the lyrically cacophonic fourth movement, a musical rendering of a torrential thunderstorm characterized by Haas' forceful, driving pianism, Combs' eerie, FX'd lap steel voicings of anticipation and Raymer's pounding drums.

After the intermission, JFJO and orchestra performed a jazz-infused take on Beethoven's Symphony No. 3. The first movement was forceful, the second sober, the third set loose in a scampering scherzo vibe and the fourth, the climax, a slow-to-burn thriller. The jazz playing was at times exclamatory with strong rhythmic punctuation points, Raymer's drumming taking on a swinging tango-tinged groove in the second movement.

—Dan Ouellette

Aaron Goldberg
Pointed Analytic Swing


EMRA SLEK

A Harvard grad now positioned to receive a master's in philosophy from Tufts, Aaron Goldberg knows a thing or two about carving logical, poetic pathways through dense webs of information. That's Goldberg's modus operandi on *Home* (Sunnyside), a 10-tune recital with Reuben Rogers and Eric Harland, joined on three selections by tenor saxophonist Mark Turner. The proceedings actualize the leader's contention in the program notes of this group's previous date, *Worlds*, that "song is cross-cultural currency."

On both recordings, the unit, which first recorded at the end of the '90s, navigates the various stylistic tributaries that make up the 21st century mainstream—Pan-American and Mediterranean-flavored songs, odd-metered originals, re-imagined jazz and songbook standards, swing blues—with authority, elegance and conversational erudition that bespeaks shared experience over the long haul. Goldberg displays sharp harmonic reflexes, fluid command of line and cut-to-the-chase sense of narrative logic.

"I don't think of either *Worlds* or *Home* as polylingual," Goldberg said. "I think of each of our individual languages as improvisational, and we're able to sound comfortable speaking and communicating in that single language anywhere in the world.

"If you enter musical situations without a preformed agenda, the music will play itself," he continued. "Everything you say musically will relate to what you or someone else just said. You play for the band, for the musical environment you're in, and stay out of your own way. The secret is to take the same attitude you have on the bandstand—allow it to be what it's going to be. That's hardest to do in a recording studio, because you want to sound good and you have a certain responsibility at least to predict what's going to happen, and yet not legislate that it happens."

Although *Worlds* is Goldberg's fourth leader CD, each with Rogers and Harland, his resume boasts more than 60 recordings as a sideman. These include consequential dates with long-term employers Joshua Redman and Kurt Rosenwinkel, past and present encounters with Guillermo Klein and John Ellis, strong sessions with Greg Tardy, Omer Avital, Jimmy Greene and Ali Jackson, along with recent issues by the Mexican singer Magos Herrera (*Distancia*, Sunnyside) and the Dutch alto saxophonist Joris Roelofs (*Introducing*, Material). He also is one-third of OAM Trio, a free-spirited collective unit with Avital and drummer Marc Miralta that recently issued *Now And Here* (Karonte), its fourth recording since 1999.

Goldberg draws from the Pan-American aesthetic that evolved in Boston and New York during the '90s. After spending the winter of 1991–'92 at the New School, he spent subsequent summers jamming in Brooklyn before moving to New York after college graduation. But he is equally informed by a bold attitude towards mainstream swing expression espoused at such venues as Betty Carter's Jazz Ahead program, New York piano rooms like Bradley's and the Top of the Gate, as well as at Wally's, a Boston saloon where Goldberg eschewed more conventional undergraduate pleasures during his 1992–'96 Harvard years to play five-hour gigs for $15 a night.

"If you think you can become a great jazz musician without learning to swing and play standards, I would say, 'Prove it to me,'" said Goldberg, who also spent time with the Wynton Marsalis Quartet and the Lincoln Center Jazz Orchestra. To function with Marsalis, he assimilated the pianistic vocabularies of early jazz with enough proficiency to make it sound good on the gig but without embracing it. "It's affected the way I play solo piano, and my sense of how important it is to be a solid, two-handed pianist who doesn't need to rely on anyone else for time," he said. "But I don't play stride well enough or freely enough to make it a major part of my music."

Since Rogers and Harland are, as Goldberg understates it, "two of the busiest guys around," he often plays with bassists Avital and Matt Penman and drummers Jackson and Greg Hutchinson. Goldberg deploys skills honed in academe—his concentration is analytic philosophy—to keep each iteration on point.

"Analytic philosophy puts a premium on clear thinking," he said. "It forces you to be self critical, and to read the history of very smart people, tackling the toughest questions, so that you don't feel you're thinking in a vacuum. You're part of a long tradition of intellectual discourse—which is very similar to being a jazz musician." —*Ted Panken*

Georgia Anne Muldrow ›› *Reviving Childhood*

While singer/multi-instrumentalist Georgia Anne Muldrow may be better known in the underground soul and hip-hop worlds than in jazz, her jazz sensibilities are undeniable. Muldrow's singing usually unfolds as if she's improvising melodies and lyrics, conveying a child-like innocence and sense of wonder. In turn, she grounds her melodies with sophisticated overdubbed vocal harmonies, hazy keyboard chords, deep funk bass lines and rickety rhythms.

"This music—when I make it, I'm coming from the most humblest place ever," Muldrow said. "I never come with, 'Oh, this going to be the tightest shit ever!' I'm never approaching music like that. Always, like a child, I approach music."

Muldrow's late father, Ronald Muldrow, played jazz guitar and invented instruments for Eddie Harris. Her mother, Rickie Byars, sang in Pharoah Sanders' ensemble. And while Muldrow continues to thrive slightly below the hip-hop radar, one of her goals is to work with forward-thinking jazz artists such as Henry Threadgill, Geri Allen and Wayne Shorter. She is releasing two jazz projects, *Turiya's Smile* and *Ocotea* (under the pseudonym "Jyoti"), on her own imprint (SomeOthaShip) this year. But particularly on "Indeed"—the lead song from her latest disc, *King's Ballad* (Ubiquity)—the singer connects different generations lyrically as much as musically.

"I feel like there are a lot of songs geared toward [children] but the content has nothing to do with childhood," Muldrow said. "So I feel like my song is paying homage to children just as we need to pay homage to our elders, because children deserve our respect as well. But if we give the proper respect to children, we could learn a lot more from them. We need to get into asking them questions about who they are and what they think about the world and its various problems."

Much of the emotional tenor on *King's Ballad* as well as last year's "Roses," her near-breakout song from *Umsindo* (SomeOthaShip), shows maturity and levity when compared to the dark *Olesi: Fragments Of An Earth* (Stones Throw) and *Sagala* (Ramp), where the sonic cathartic rage sounded as if she was at the artistic crossroads meeting of John Coltrane, Public Enemy and Funkadelic. Several years ago, it felt as if all the world's problems rested on Muldrow's shoulders as she sang somber tunes like "Demise."

"Being pregnant and having a child and being a mother shape who I am," Muldrow said of her current artistic vision. "Being a black woman, who is seeing what the true purpose my existence is as an African person living in America, and recognizing that the struggle is not over, shape my music."

—John Murph

Stanton Moore
Pioneers' Testimony

Stanton Moore's latest multimedia project is a triple threat based around the ongoing history of funk drumming. Under the banner *Groove Alchemy*, Moore's CD/DVD/instructional book *Take It To The Street* sings the praises of early pioneers Jabo Starks, Clyde Stubblefield and Zigaboo Modeliste and goes even further back to trace their influences to the days of early 20th century New Orleans rhythms. Moore also looks at the creative process behind these beats in order to find ways to make new grooves.

The New Orleans drummer puts his zeal for music education directly in touch with his present music career as a recording artist and bandleader. The new *Groove Alchemy* (Telarc) showcases his trio of organist Robert Walter and guitarist Will Bernard. The co-founder of New Orleans' funk band Galactic also looks at the making of the groove with a 152-page instructional book, also called *Groove Alchemy* (Hudson Music), which includes transcriptions, text and a play-along data/MP3 disc with more than 600 examples. A DVD of the same name on Hudson Music features Moore expanding on the roots of funk drumming, playing and describing examples by Stubblefield and Starks along with Modeliste.

"The first book and CD focused on my approach to New Orleans drumming, a history of street beats, second line, how to make it authentic, make it more contemporary," Moore said. "With my funk drumming, I've always wanted to get really specific, transcribe this stuff and [note] the differences between Clyde and Zig, how they compare to different guys before them. Clyde came out with 'Cold Sweat' and the open hi-hat idea from Melvin Parker. I trace those ideas back to the basic funk beats, try and maximize the potential as a whole project, because the whole idea was that a lot of the stuff comes out of New Orleans, second line stuff along with the James Brown stuff."

When Stubblefield was asked about why Moore chose to emphasize his contributions with James Brown during the '60s, he said, "It was because we had the groove and we knew the click of the songs. They have such a good groove and pattern. And Stanton likes the patterns of the grooves in these songs."

For Moore, though, the past points toward the future. "The history is the starting point so we can understand the creative process, and then alternate it," he said. "I come with style combinations, play one way, slow it down, one bar of Jabo, one bar of Clyde. It's style combinations when you take two guys and take a little bit, feel juxtaposition and learn how they differ." At this point, he brings in a rock heavyweight for contrast. "Then there's some [Led Zeppelin's] John Bonham, moving between straight and swing, where you can juxtapose to come up with something new, combine tones on top of that, getting very specific but do it in a much more organic way.

"People have been doing this with jazz for years, styles and analysis, transcriptions of first solos of people like Elvin [Jones] and Max [Roach]," he continued. "So I wanted to do something that was coming from that approach. I'd never seen transcriptions from these funk drummers. This book is like the first one-third of what I've come up with so far. That's why I wanted to make sure to get the CD out there, so people could see where I get some of these influences." —*John Ephland*

Joel Forrester
Silents' Buzz

As a precariously perched Buster Keaton see-sawed back and forth on a ladder tipped sideways over a fence, a cluster of cops shuffled beneath him, shaking their batons and gesturing furiously. Beneath the flickering grey and white light of the silent film *Cops* was a solo piano, its player, Joel Forrester, using a combination of stride and bop elements and his own sense of comedy to propel each character's actions into three-dimensional swing as he accompanied the film.

In New York, which Forrester has called home since the early '70s, the 64-year-old pianist's name is synonymous with the horn-heavy Microscopic Septet he co-led from 1980–1992 with Philip Johnston. A prolific composer, his estimated 1,200 works of music include "Fresh Air," the theme of Terry Gross' National Public Radio show. While Forrester and Johnston shared composing duties in the band, the pianist's solo work is similarly accessible and experimental, the latter quality coming in part from his study with Thelonious Monk, whom he credits with having given his music a "searching quality, harmonically."

But in Paris, Forrester's reputation hinges on his solo performances set to silent films. He's played such programs at the Louvre, the Pompidou Center and the Musee D'Orsay, and on one warm evening this spring, he held court in New York's Gershwin Hotel, where his understated conversational humor matched his ability to tell a funny story through music.

Case in point: "Lunacy," Forrester's opening number. From the top, a dirge-like cadence carried the lower register, punctuated every few bars with a purposeful plunk from Forrester's right hand. The interplay evoked a teasing refrain; it could conjure a bird knocking the hat off Charlie Chaplin's head in time to the tune. As the melody developed, listeners' imaginations began to do for the compositions what Keaton would do in the second half of the show.

"That was the idea," Forrester said a week later. He explained that introducing the concept of jazz and silent film with the music alone opens the listeners' minds to the concept. "If I'm doing my job, people forget that I'm playing and are just into the dual experience."

But when he performed music to Keaton's *Cops*, a Tim Burton-esque piece called "The Mascot," and a dark comedy called *Haunted Spooks*, the sound and visual elements of the experience were seamless. Even Forrester's musical comedy is in line with what he's learned from studying the cinema. Take Harold Lloyd, the star of *Haunted Spooks*.

"[Lloyd] sets up his visual jokes … in advance," Forrester said. "Seemingly random actions end up causing the thing that's really funny."

He points to a series of comedic scenes based on the protagonist's ineffectual suicide attempts. "It's a technique of building a climax that's in itself deflationary," he said. "I got that from him and use it all the time in music."

Forrester's path to "the world's leading accompanist to silent film," as the Paris Free Voice has dubbed him, has been both illustrious—he composed music for many of Andy Warhol's early movies—and pragmatic: Two decades ago, he played 11-hour shifts at a Manhattan silent movie house. But these days, he's found a steady groove, performing music to film, leading his two bands and occasionally reuniting with the Micros, who recorded an album of Monk's music this spring with the release date to be determined.

The pianist is currently working on a musical theater memoir of his life, to be completed and staged in Paris. Only there, he says, can he really duck out of "that flow" of New York rhythms that presses him to keep gigging with his various bands.

"My music always starts life as a solo piano piece, then gets programmed to its proper-size group," Forrester said. "But when I play solo, I lose myself, and that's really important. It's very much a solitary buzz, me and these images."

—Jennifer Odell

ESPERANZA SPALDING

In Full Orbit

By Dan Ouellette // Photography by Jimmy Katz

Esperanza Spalding buoys with moxie-plus, high-octane ebullience, spirited determination and respectful humility in the face of the jazz legacy.

For her new strings-laden album, *Chamber Music Society* (Heads Up), she insisted on opening with the moody yet playful vocalese tune "Knowledge Of Good And Evil." But she met with resistance from her co-producer/co-arranger Gil Goldstein, her management and others who maintained that the leadoff track should be the lyrical beauty "Little Fly," which showcases both her vocals and her bass playing on a William Blake poem she set to music. Even though she was out-voted, she wielded veto power, which she clung to.

"We were having this little argument, and I was saying, this album is an art piece, and I don't want to get obsessed with marketability," says the 25-year-old bassist/vocalist who has taken the jazz world by storm since her debut album, *Junjo*, released in 2006 on the distribution-challenged, Barcelona-based Ayva label, and her 2008 follow-up, *Esperanza*, on Heads Up. "Finally Gil said, 'Espe, is there anyone in the world whose opinion you would accept if we played them the album?' I told him, 'Yes, there's one person, not that it matters, and that's Wayne Shorter. If Wayne agrees with you, I wouldn't argue.'"

Goldstein says that he was willing to concede to the artist's demand for the first tune (as musician and co-producer, he says, she gets two votes), but nonetheless contacted Scott Southard, who works at International Music Network, the Boston-based booking agency that represents Spalding and Shorter. Goldstein told Southard that they were ready to go into the mastering stage and requested a quick turnaround. The next day Spalding received a text message from Southard. "Scott said that he sent Wayne the tapes overnight," says Spalding with a laugh of amazement. "Wayne listened to it, and he agreed with Gil. So we went with 'Little Fly.'"

Why consult Shorter, whom Spalding didn't know? "I figured it would be a moot point because there's no way they could get in touch with Wayne Shorter that quickly to settle some stupid dispute," says Spalding. "I figured that I would just win."

But why Shorter and not some other upper-tier jazz master? "He's the voice of music now that I most respect, flat out, in any genre," she says. "It's not only his music, but also his character, his spirit. He's the artist I most admire. He's valid. He's the real thing. He's solid."

When Shorter voiced his opinion, he also requested that Spalding give him a call. It took her two days to muster up the courage to ring him. They ended up conversing for 45 minutes. "Wayne talked about music and his perspectives on many, many things," says Spalding, who took notes that she's attached to her refrigerator so she can reference his sage ruminations. "What he talked about was multilayered, multifaceted—everything from his humanistic and spiritual perspectives to his music and career. It was life-changing for me. He shared so openly and freely about everything."

What Spalding also took away from the conversation was something that, given the unbridled eagerness inherent in her youth, taught her about her own future: "Wayne has so much bubbling enthusiasm to share. It's something that can pull you forward. I thought, damn, I can do this for the rest of my days, till I'm old and crunchy and can't move. That's the ultimate for me."

When we spoke four years ago, just as Spalding was launching her career a year after graduating from Berklee College of Music, she exuded such over-the-top excitement at the

prospects of her present and future that I wondered if she would flame and crash, a victim of flying too close to the jazz sun. But her willingness to play the nonconformity card won her out. She reveled in that freedom. "I've always been that way," the Portland, Ore., native, then-Boston-based upstart said. "So many people are asleep, but I'm awake."

Indeed, Spalding's jazz ascent has been meteoric, based on the small but substantive body of work she's developed so far and her buzz-worthy marquee performances—including a high-profile appearance at the 10th Annual BET Music Awards show on June 27, where she gave it up for lifetime achievement honoree Prince by playing a solo vocal/bass rendering of his "If I Was Your Girlfriend." Even so, she's in no danger of becoming a meteorite. Instead, she's in full orbit with her own solo endeavors as well as playing co-starring roles in bands led by Joe Lovano (Us Five) and McCoy Tyner.

While in the studio she may be perceived as demanding, she is decidedly not a spoiled diva intent on steamrollering what lies ahead. In fact, Spalding is remarkably humble in front of the monumental jazz legacy that she's tapping to inform her next steps.

Four years ago, everything was "fucking amazing." She ranged high on the exuberance meter. Today she continues to marvel, but in a much more mature manner, taking it all in stride. She's still spunky, quick to joke and giggle, and utters little squeaks and oohs, whether it's about the brunch that's being served to her at Café Reggio in the West Village or the confirmation she receives by cell phone for getting tickets to the CareFusion New York Jazz Festival show celebrating Herbie Hancock's 70th birthday at Carnegie Hall. Her trademark retro-Afro is pulled back and tucked up in a bun, and she still exudes a hip, carefree attitude, selecting the neighborhood eating space not for the sake of upscale vibe but for its funkiness of piped-in opera and classical music, busts of famous musicians, and its claim to fame as brewing the finest cappuccinos in the Village.

During a conversation at the 2007 Umbria Jazz Festival in Perugia, Italy, Spalding said she had a master plan: to play with her musical heroes. She drew up a list, two of whom she had just recently performed with: Richard Bona and Brian Blade. Then she suddenly remembered Stanley Clarke.

Regarding her tete-a-tete with Clarke, she burst out, "Oh, I flew to Los Angeles to work on his new album." Without knowing how she could be of use, she blew in from the East Coast on a 5 a.m. flight and arrived on the West Coast at 10, assuming that she would be escorted to her hotel where she could rest up. "But the driver took me right to Stanley's studio at his house," she said. "We met and he gave me a piece of music he had written and asked me to write lyrics to it." Clarke told Spalding that he'd return in a couple of hours. "Oh, my God, what was I going to do," Spalding recounted, in a mock panic. "But I just wrote, and then sang the lyrics." The song, "All Over Again," showed up on Clarke's Heads Up CD *The Toys Of Men*.

After telling the story, she exclaimed, "This is way better than Superman and Spider-Man. I'm playing with musicians I admire, and that's been amazing. Everything's happening right now. It's not been like a big super bang-up, but more what I see as a natural evolution of a musician working hard on her craft and going places as a result."

The remaining three names on her list of six were Wayne Shorter (check), Stevie Wonder (check; he asked her to perform his song "I Know You Know" and accompanied her on her tune "Fall In" at a Los Angeles benefit he puts on annually) and Chick Corea. The last collaboration has yet to happen, but today that doesn't matter as much as it did three years ago.

"I've modified my concept of the list," she says. "Now, I realize that you can't want to be with someone. It's like wanting to marry someone you've never met. Music is so intimate, so fragile, so unpredictable. Today I feel like playing with someone because there's something there to explore and the chemistry is there. I adore Chick Corea's music, his writing. I've listened to his *Inner Space* record so many times that I could sing every part of it. But that doesn't mean that if we worked together there would be the magic and meaning that would be important for our combined energies. So, now, I'm letting go of my lists."

Spalding says she's not interested in "getting a gig" anymore; she's more concerned about what she can offer when opportunities arise. Case in point: her vocal collaboration with Milton Nascimento on the luscious tune "Apple Blossom," from *Chamber Music Society*. Working with another one of her all-time heroes came by serendipity.

Last year she and her trio were booked to play two dates in Brazil, at São Paulo and Rio, opening for George Benson. On a whim beforehand, she asked her management to send an e-mail to Nascimento to let him know how much she appreciated his music. A month later he responded and let her know he was paying attention to her, especially since she had recorded his tune "Ponta De Areia" on *Esperanza*. They continued a short correspondence of mutual admiration, and that was it—until Spalding arrived in Brazil.

"I didn't know he was in the audience, but he saw us perform in São Paulo," she says. "He came backstage and we met. And he invited us to a little party at his house when we got to Rio. We thought it was just a get-together, but he had actually thrown the party in our honor because we were visiting. All these musicians came and we all played, drank and hung together. Milton said to me, 'Let's make some music together sometime.' That was super heavy. It was the ultimate to have that offer come from a hero of mine, not through some management plan."

Fast-forward a couple of months, and Spalding was in a bind over how to sing one of her own compositions, "Apple Blossom," the story about an aging man who laments the death of his wife. "I wrote the song, but I had never experienced loss like that," she says. "I needed someone else to sing it with me. That's when I thought of Milton. I love the way he phrases

Danilo Pérez

Berklee Alumnus '88

PHOTOS: LUCY CODER

Grammy Award winner. Has performed and recorded with the best: Wynton Marsalis, Michael Brecker, Roy Haynes, Wayne Shorter, and more…

Artistic Director of the Berklee Global Jazz Institute

JoAnne Brackeen

Leads Grammy-nominated group. Has performed and recorded with the best: Stan Getz, Art Blakey, Joe Henderson, Dexter Gordon, Pharoah Sanders, and more…

Professor of Piano

Hal Crook

Berklee Alumnus '71

Has performed and recorded with the best: Phil Woods, Bob Brookmeyer, Clark Terry, Roy Hargrove, Paul Motian, James Brown, Woody Herman, Lionel Hampton, NBC Tonight Show Band, and more…

Professor of Ensembles

Ralph Peterson Jr.

Leads all-star groups. Has performed and recorded with the best: Roy Hargrove, Geri Allen, Don Byron, Uri Caine, David Murray, and more…

Professor of Percussion

www.berklee.edu/downbeat

Berklee college *of* music

English on his version of 'Norwegian Wood.' It's so dark and melancholy. I thought he would be perfect for my song."

Spalding e-mailed him, and he replied that he would be in the United States in November and agreed to come to the recording session in Los Angeles. She showed him the rough draft of the song, and the two nailed their gorgeous duet.

"It all happened so organically," says Spalding. "You can feel the love between us when we sing. It had nothing to do with [the notion of] having to get this big name on the album."

The same held true with Spalding's connection to Tyner, who the night before our brunch at Café Reggio commanded SummerStage in Central Park as a part of the CareFusion New York fest. It was a free show on a double bill with Stanley Clarke, featuring Hiromi. Tyner's band was an all-star quartet including Spalding, saxophonist Ravi Coltrane and drummer Francisco Mela, an old friend of the bassist who appeared on *Junjo*. Smiling throughout, Spalding kept a close eye on Tyner, watching for the dynamics-prone pianist to wind down and rev up again. She played a deep groove, made sure to avoid Tyner's powerful left hand and lulled with balladic lines when she was offered the space to stretch.

Again, Spalding did no lobbying to perform with Tyner. That took place last December when she joined his quartet for a week's stay at Yoshi's in Oakland. The all-star cast came together outside of Spalding's sphere of influence. This New York appearance was the quartet's first since early January. They jelled again. After the show backstage, Tyner praised the young bassist: "Esperanza is brilliant. She's gifted. She's solid and dependable. She listens to what's going on and complements what I do. Plus, my first impression of her was that she's a very nice person on top of it all."

As for her onstage alertness, Tyner says, "You have to do that if you're looking for inspiration and direction—not only the notes but how you move physically. You listen to the rhythms and watch the body move."

The next morning, Spalding is speechless—almost. "Anything I could say would not do justice," she says when asked what it's like to play with Tyner. But hardly ever at a loss of words, Spalding says that it wasn't a case of intimidation the first time she played with him, but more self-consciousness and even a sense of insecurity. She recalls that the summer before the Yoshi's gig was dreamed up, she and her longtime pianist Leo Genovese had gotten into a total Tyner zone over the course of two month-long gigs.

"So, McCoy was already in the air," she says. "We listened to hours and hours of his music—solo recordings, live albums, quartets. We'd be driving for six hours through Italy and taking in McCoy the whole way. So, when the Yoshi's week came up, I knew all of his music so I didn't have to prep as much. But, as a bass player, I knew it was going to be difficult because McCoy plays the bass and the drums at the same time on the piano. At first that was a challenge for me, figuring how I could offer him the most with my bass, but by the end of the week at Yoshi's, I felt less idiotic. We were all totally engaged."

Spalding has had a love affair with music since she was very young. She was homeschooled for a stretch after a childhood illness and dropped out of the conventional setting of high school to pursue music. She took her GED, enrolled in the music program at Portland State University and entered Berklee on a scholarship thanks to her bass prowess. She graduated a year early in 2005 at the age of 20, and with much fanfare was immediately hired to teach in the bass department there. (She's since terminated her pact with Berklee, partly because she's gotten so busy, partly because she had qualms with the classes the school administration wanted her to teach.)

By that time, she had established herself as a side player with such notables as Lee Konitz and Patti Austin as well as a bandleader in her own right, which led to her recording a demo in April 2005 that was picked up by Ayva. A year later *Junjo* was issued in the States, at which time Spalding said, "My music has come so far from when we recorded it. It's all been a trip. It seems like every six months my music evolves. As I meet different musicians in new circles, they influence me and change my sound."

A nine-song collection of buoyant originals and sprightly covers, *Junjo* featured Cuban pianist Aruán Ortiz and Mela. In the liner notes, Spalding wrote: "You are my people, and I hope to make a dozen more CDs with you as we grow together musically and personally." As it turned out, that dream proved to be wishful thinking. By the time it finally saw the light of day in the States, she laughed at the liners and said, "Already we've all become too busy. I'm glad we had the chance to take a picture, and I hope to take more. But they're off and I'm on to other stuff, too."

In 2007, Umbria creative director Carlo Pagnotta caught her at the Jazz Standard in New York playing in a trio comprising guitarists Romero Lubamba and Russell Malone. "I wanted to have her come to Umbria with them," Pagnotta said, "but she insisted on bringing her own band."

At the festival, Spalding proved to be a rev-

One size. Fits all.

INTRODUCING THE H1 HANDY RECORDER.

Don't let its size fool you. The H1 Handy Recorder has our renowned recording technology and studio-quality microphones in our easiest, most portable device ever.

UNDER YOUR THUMB...

With its new user interface, the H1 is simple to use. Just push record and go. All its functions are at your fingertips: recording format, auto level, low cut filter, input level... no menus required!

SECURE YOUR DIGITAL MEMORIES.

The H1 comes with a 2GB microSD card. Using a 32GB microSD card, you get over 50 hours of recording time at 16-bit/44.1kHz. And you can record up to 24-bit/96kHz resolution.

SHARE THE LOVE.

With its USB 2.0 port, the H1 allows you to transfer your audio files to your computer. Listen, edit and share with your fans on your Mac or PC.

ACCESSORIZE THE SIZE...

Get the H1 accessory pack that includes a windscreen, AC adapter, USB cable, adjustable tripod stand, padded case and mic clip adapter.

Combining powerful recording capability with elegance and simplicity, the H1 is our smallest, most affordable recorder ever.

Brilliant Stereo Recording.
Now in your pocket...

H1 Handy Recorder

ZOOM

elation to the audiences at the Oratorio Santa Cecilia, where she performed three days with her trio of Genovese on piano and Lynden Rochelle on drums. She was a sparkplug who danced with her bass as she scatted and sang through a mixed set of standards (a grooving "Autumn Leaves" and a funky, upbeat take on "Body And Soul") and originals such as "Winter Sun," a samba-tinged tune with a funk-rock beat that she retitled "Summer Sun" for the occasion.

As for the expansive range of her music, she said, "Everyone wonders, why did you go to jazz when you're interested in so much else? For us young jazz musicians, it's how we learn music. It's like reading a sacred text in Greek. So we study and learn more and more, but our hearts are into a mishmash of different sounds."

At her Umbria performance, Spalding was as likely to explode into a patch of vocalese as to solo using her bass to sound like a horn. "I can't help it," she said afterwards. "I always try to tone down my dancing with the bass. I think, I must look like an idiot, but then I bust out and can't control it."

In regards to her Heads Up debut, Spalding upped the ante on her vocals and plowed deep grooves with her bass. It scored top of class as far as selling the most CDs internationally for a new jazz artist in 2008.

After the popularity of *Esperanza*, *Chamber Music Society* is decidedly an album that's coming in from left field. Inspired by the Chamber Music Society of Oregon (in which she played violin for 10 years), Spalding decided to create a modern image of a chamber group with string trio arrangements complementing her own originals that are infused with pop, folk and jazz. Genovese is on board as well as drummer Terri Lyne Carrington.

Spalding credits her Barcelona-based management, Montuno Productions, with giving her free license to pursue her latest musical vision. "They were the first people to approach me when I was just starting," she says. "They loved my music, and I've loved working with them. Sometimes I forget how blessed I am when I think of young artists whose managers are not really on their team. I told Montuno that I was making a decision that might not seem to make much business sense, but they'd just have to respect me."

Spalding didn't have a fully developed game plan for *Chamber Music Society*. It evolved slowly and came into focus with the help of Goldstein. "I wanted to work with Gil because of his enthusiasm," she says. "This genius master was so into my music that he was willing to go into it and make it better."

Spalding, says Goldstein with admiration, is "always reaching for something new every time she performs. She puts a face on every note. She's become more refined as a player. She's going deeper."

Goldstein explains how he got involved in Spalding's project: "It's not luck or an accident. It's more like I attract things that are suited to me. I have a distrust of things that are won through politics or positioning, and feel more blessed and in sync when things unfold in an organic way."

Spalding showed Goldstein three *Chamber Music Society* pieces she had arranged. Goldstein attended a Spalding show with pianist Adam Goldberg, vocalist Gretchen Parlato and three string players. "It was an early presentation of her chamber music project," he says. "But I didn't know what I could bring to it to make it better. I wasn't sold on the three strings and suggested that we bring in a couple of woodwinds. Espe immediately said no woodwinds. I said we may need some more colors in the music, so we decided to bring in extra singing voices. As it turned out, Espe sang in such a pure way that she sounds like a woodwind."

While she's received a lot of attention for her bass playing (she won this year's DownBeat Critics Poll for Rising Star, Acoustic Bass), Spalding has also improved immensely as a singer, showcased on wordless and lyrical parts throughout *Chamber Music Society*. Early on, she was best known as a terrific bassist in motion to greater heights, but then she began to slip in vocal numbers among the instrumentals.

She's been intent on that ever since, especially on *Chamber Music Society*.

Spalding downplays the notion that she's doing anything new or special as a bassist who also sings. "I never thought about singing," she says. "I didn't really care, because it came easy to me. But in the last couple of years, I decided to cultivate that. But I didn't know what I didn't know. I was singing by ear and not worrying about how it sounded."

Spalding's first self-taught vocal exercise was singing Michael Brecker's saxophone solo on "The Sorcerer" from his CD *Directions In Music*. She recorded herself and became dismayed when she played it back. "What I thought was happening was not really happening," she says. "What I was hearing in my head—the timbres, the different sounds, the textures—was not happening. I had to learn how to get that, how to articulate and come to the understanding of the mechanism of the instrument like I have with the bass." She began to listen to and study singers like Betty Carter, Abbey Lincoln and Nnenna Freelon to find out what was lacking in her own vocals.

Goldstein has seen the progress and goes so far as to say that Spalding is one of the best jazz singers on the scene today. "She's a real jazz vocalist like Abbey or Betty," he says, then adds, "not like an Ella or Sarah who were more populous. Espe is so versatile, running the gamut from great r&b to Stevie Wonder pop, and sings with the most personality. You hear half a note and you know it's her."

He's also amazed at how she plays bass and sings. "I can't think of another jazz singer who can sing the melody and comp with the bass notes for herself the way she does," Goldstein says. "It's singing the melody and anchoring the rhythm. The world could collapse around her, or she could be playing with the worst drummer, and she would still protect the rhythm like a soccer goalie."

Parlato, a good friend who has appeared on Spalding's last two albums (including their showstopping duet on Antonio Carlos Jobim's "Inutile Paisagem" on *Chamber Music Society*), says that Spalding's singing has become "profound and versatile." It helps, she says, that Spalding studied instrumental music first. "She's singing at such an advanced level. She's developed a very unique sound with her tone and texture that immediately hits you. It gives me goose bumps. She's very precise, perfectly in tune and takes big risks. Her dynamics are so wide. She's doing everything the right way. She's causing a scene by just being herself as a total person."

When reminded of her telling me three years ago that wonderful things happen as a byproduct of the natural evolution of a musician who's in motion, Spalding says, "Yes, it's all about the process. That's getting reaffirmed over and over. The things I forget the quickest are the events. But what I don't forget is being some place and grabbing a chunk of insight from another musician. It kicks my butt into a new direction."

As for the future, Spalding, who splits time between Austin, Texas, and New York's Greenwich Village, is already conceptually working on her next album, *Radio Music Society*, which she initially described as a funk, hip-hop, rock excursion. That's all changed now as she's been on the road experimenting with the tunes she's written so far. "It's about putting elements of our own music onto the radio," she explains. "It's about playing songs that should be on the radio but haven't been meddled with for the sake of getting on the radio. We've been doing some of these songs live and people are freaking out. They love them." Knowing Spalding, their shapes are bound to change even more when she and her band hit the studio in November.

The final question of our interview gives Spalding pause. She's a fluid talker, who moves from topic to topic with gleeful ease. But when asked to describe herself in six words, she stops in her tracks. The wheels are turning, but after long thought, she settles on her phrase. It's not perfect, she says, but it'll do: "Striving to achieve full human potential."

It's an excellent summation of what lies ahead—steady and grooving and determined as she goes. **DB**

Danilo Pérez
Code Of Adventure

By Ted Panken

Danilo Pérez downed a second double espresso during Saturday brunch in the restaurant of his Manhattan hotel.

"I have to take a risk, otherwise I start to freak out," he said. "I understood that early on, even when I was playing with great artists."

The 43-year pianist was midway through a four-night April engagement at the Jazz Standard with a new project dubbed "Things To Come: 21st Century Dizzy," on which he and his newest band—alto saxophonist Rudresh Mahanthappa, trumpeter Amir ElSaffar, tenor saxophonist David Sánchez and percussionist Jamey Haddad, along with drummer Adam Cruz and bassist Ben Street from Pérez's working trio—were deconstructing iconic Dizzy Gillespie repertoire like "Salt Peanuts," "Con Alma," "Manteca" and "Woody 'N You." It was only their third meeting, and Pérez meant to use his 10 club sets to coalesce the flow. There were arrangements, but Pérez spontaneously reorchestrated from the piano, cuing on-a-dime shifts in tonality and meter, relentlessly recombining the unit into various duo, trio and quartet configurations.

Ultimately, Pérez said, he hoped to extrapolate to the larger ensemble the expansive feel he's evolved over the past eight years with his trio, one that Street positioned "somewhere between Keith Jarrett's late-'60s/early '70s trio with Charlie Haden and Paul Motian and Herbie Hancock's *Inventions And Dimensions* record." Street added: "The music has a lot of emotional freedom, but also an unspoken subtext of rhythmic science that doesn't always need to be directly addressed."

"It takes time and patience to be able to go anywhere the music takes us," Pérez said. "Our mission is to uncover new territories inside what's there to create something unique, and then write to that." Elaborating as the conversation progressed, Pérez referred several times to "writing with windows through which people can enter and exit."

"I don't want to write in a dictatorial way—that inhibits personality," he continued. "I want them to put me in a weird spot." Pérez credited Wayne Shorter, his steady employer since 2001, as the source of this imperative. "Wayne writes you this amazing thing, but then says, 'Forget that, and bring your own idea—I want to hear your opinion of what I wrote.'"

Cruz cosigned Pérez's consistent non-attachment to material. "If there's even a smattering of routine on the gig, an 'Oh, this is what we do' feeling, Danilo immediately wants to throw a wrench—knock all these pieces over and start again," he said.

Mahanthappa added: "More than anyone I play with, Danilo loves loading a set with surprises to keep things fresh."

Pérez also attributed this predisposition to his experience with Shorter. "He's given my life a dimension that wasn't there before—to be committed and fearless, and not focus on the result, but let the stuff morph as it wants to," he explained. "I'm thinking a lot about what in my life is important to portray, and then letting the music mold and take shape as it goes." He referenced the title of his new album, *Providencia* (Mack Avenue). "It's to prepare for the unknown, for the future, almost as though you're watching something in forward motion. You let 'providencia' take place. I'm thinking a lot about movements and movies, even about struggle. And a lot about children—when I play now, images arise of how children make decisions, doing something and suddenly switching to something else, like organized chaos, but keeping the thread."

Providencia is a tour de force, a kaleidoscopic suite woven from the core themes that mark Pérez's oeuvre since his eponymous 1993 debut and its 1994 followup, *The Journey*, on which he presented a mature, expansive take on Pan-American jazz expression. There are dark, inflamed Panamanian love songs; original programmatic works addressing Panamanian subjects on which the woodwinds and voice that augment the ensemble improvise fluidly within the form; improv-centric combo tunes that incorporate complex, intoxicating Afro-Caribbean meters (Panama's *tamborito* on "Panama Galactic," for example) and highbrow jazz harmony; and a pair of cohesive, spontaneously improvised Pérez-Mahanthappa duos towards the end. Throughout the proceedings, the pianist plays with exquisitely calibrated touch, extrapolating the beyond-category voice shaped in the crucible of Shorter's quintet—Mahanthappa describes it as "the history of jazz piano and 20th century classical music, but improvised, virtuosic, reactive and musical"—onto the ingenious clave permutations and capacious harmonic palette that established his early reputation.

The precision of the language and clarity of intention on *Providencia* belies the loose methodology that Pérez deployed in making it. Yet, rather than work with a preordained "text," Pérez, in the manner of a film director who convenes his cast several weeks before shooting to work out characters and plot, constructed his narrative after extensive studio rehearsals.

"I approached it more as a life event than a record date, different than what I've done before," Pérez said, referencing his earlier, more curated productions. "I'm living by the code of adventure, to play what I wish for, without preconceptions. I'm fascinated by human collaboration expressed through music, how people with different interests, different loves, can come together and create. It's an invitation to get away from our comfort zone."

Similar impulses influenced Pérez's decision to collaborate with Mahanthappa and ElSaffar, both high-concept leaders who work with raw materials drawn from South India and Iraq, their respective ancestral cultures, as well as Haddad, a Lebanese-American who specializes in articulating timbres and meters drawn from North African sources. At the Jazz Standard, Pérez deftly wove their individualistic tonalities into the overall sonic tapestry. "I was curious to hear how I'd react to an unknown space, like traveling with a person that you never have traveled with or don't know well," he said. "I'm attracted to the connotation of globality—the global feel, the idea of bridging gaps."

RAJ NAIK

Pérez embraced the notion that "jazz is the only place where globalization really works" during his 1989–'92 tenure with Dizzy Gillespie's Pan-American-oriented United Nations Orchestra.

"Dizzy was a global ambassador, and the idea of doing a project around him seemed appropriate now," he said. "I believe that this group can become a sort of healing band. Maybe go to Iraq or India and play a concert with musicians there—have the group reflect how the United Nations or the government should be working.

"When I started playing with Dizzy, I was listening a lot to Bud Powell. Once I played a solo over 'Rhythm' changes, people were congratulating me, but Dizzy sort of said, 'Yeah ... but when are you going to deal with where you come from?' Later, I somehow added something, and he went *cluck-cluck* with the baton, meaning, 'Whatever you did, just keep going.' I understand now that by not putting up barriers, Dizzy was practicing his Baha'i faith. He wanted to create a cultural passport that functions all around the world, for everybody, and he should be credited for that."

Mentored by jazz pianist Donald Brown at Berklee and seasoned in the idiomatic nuances during a consequential year with Jon Hendricks, Pérez drew on Gillespie's first-hand knowledge of the thought processes of such seminal figures as Thelonious Monk and Powell, whose vocabularies he would assimilate sufficiently to make the rotation at Bradley's, Manhattan's A-list piano saloon.

"I heard Bach's flowing lines in Bud's music, and this helped me start to hear bebop," Pérez said. "Dizzy would say, 'Create counterpoint; if I play this note, find another one in the chord; don't play all the notes. Position your hands, lift some fingers, and then listen to the sound.' Wayne talks about it, too: 'Find the tonal magnetism.'

"When I came to the U.S., something drew me to the word 'jazz.' I don't know anymore what it means, but I know the feeling. I understand the emotion from being with the cats at Bradley's or the masters I played with later. There's a spontaneity, a moment of joy, something that drives your momentum and makes you feel more optimistic and aware. I realized I had to make a cultural decision to immerse myself in the environment, to hear how people talk, to learn. Then I started making connections—finding common tones."

Such experiences bedrocked Pérez's quest to find a trans-Caribbean rhythmic context for Monk's compositions during the '90s, documented on *Panamonk* (Impulse!) from 1996. The idea germinated, he said, on a 1994 tour with the Lincoln Center Jazz Orchestra devoted to Wynton Marsalis' arrangements of Monk repertoire.

"They approached that music in a sort of Monk–New Orleans–Panama folkloric way that resonated," he said. "In [drummer] Herlin Riley's playing, I heard the connection between the *tambores* of Panama and second-line rhythms, things that reminded me of *danzon* and *contradanse*—it all made sense. I had a similar experience playing with Paquito D'Rivera; I wanted to play jazz and swing, but he focused me on Venezuela and Panama."

Sharpening that focus were occasional gigs with the Panamaniacs, a short-lived group led by bassist Santi DiBriano, who introduced Pérez to Panama's contribution to the jazz timeline. Pérez contends that the demographic diversity stemming from Panama's position as a global port produces a cultural mix well suited to jazz expression.

"It's almost what New York feels like, but in one small country," he said. "That's what one has to portray, that kind of mystical mess—but an organized chaos."

Within the Panamanian melting pot, Pérez was ideally positioned to become an improviser. A child prodigy who studied classical music from age eight, he received first-hand instruction in singing and percussion from his namesake father, now 72, a well-known bandleader and *sonero* of Afro-Colombian and indigenous descent.

"My father was my first school, my fundamental figure," said Pérez, who became a professional musician at 12, dual-tracking during high school as a math and electronics student at the insistence of his Spanish-descended mother, who felt, perhaps from first-hand experience, that music was not a dependable profession. "Music was easy

for me since I was little, a language I understood quickly, so he used music to teach me to look at things I needed to function in society—'two plus two is four; four plus four is eight.' At 6 I'd pick up the guitar and start singing, 'Besame, besame mucho,' and he would say, 'Sing a second voice.' Later he had me transcribe Cuban records. Imagine being in that environment 24 hours a day. That connected me to music intuitively, while the electronics and mathematics—my mother's side—gave me the discipline and ability to learn things on my own.

"My father said he knew that sooner or later I would decide in favor of music. I think now that I didn't even have to choose, that I was already walking on the music path and wanted to continue growing on that path. From him I understood early on that being mentored was a key, and I surrounded myself with people that know. I always want to keep being a student, to be in situations I can grow in. Otherwise, I lose touch with how music first spoke to me."

In 2001, when he first toured with Shorter, Pérez faced a crossroads. Then 34, fresh from three high-visibility years playing trio with Roy Haynes and John Patitucci, boasting a CV that already included several influential Grammy-nominated albums and possessing strong communicative skills and multi-generational peer respect, he appeared on the cusp of the upper echelons of jazz leaders. Instead, he subsumed such aspirations, constructing his next decade's schedule around Shorter's itinerary and a full-time professorship at New England Conservatory. He started a family with his wife, a Chilean music therapist, established a foundation in Panama to work with gang members, created the Panama Jazz Festival, became active in Panamanian cultural politics and allowed his music to marinate.

"When I was 16, I promised that if I ever had an opportunity to go out and do something, I would return to my country and give back," Pérez said. "When I started playing with Wayne, his approach reconnected me with values that I learned with my father as a child. I realized that for my music to continue to flow naturally, I needed to keep growing as a human being. I need to intensify my promise."

In their essence, Shorter's musical lessons were not so dissimilar from Gillespie's earlier admonitions. "Early on we were playing 'JuJu,' and I was playing things I'd assimilated from earlier listening—McCoy—and Wayne looked at me like this." Pérez made his face blank. "All of a sudden, I saw a bunch of horses—I went with it. Wayne immediately turned and said, 'That's the shit right there.' I kept going for that, to the point where it became a state of mind. Every time I thought about music, he looked at me like this"—he deadpanned—"and every time I disconnected myself and thought about an event, a movie, my daughter, my wife, he'd say, 'That's the shit right there.'"

Shorter has offered moral lessons, too, delivered as metaphoric koans but always landing precisely on the one. "Wayne made me realize that courage isn't determined by trying to climb Mount Everest," Pérez said. "Courage is getting in a relationship and going through the struggle. He said, 'Happiness doesn't come for free. We have to fight for it every day, and we have to be inspired.' He talks about no regrets—they leave wounds. He says, 'Don't hide behind your instrument—see who you are.' Develop things. With Wayne you have to have a lot of tools together, but the most important tool is to be driven by your shamanistic side, your role in society as a musician."

Pérez, who left NEC to assume artistic directorship of Berklee's Global Jazz Institute last September, is walking that walk. He recalled a mid-'90s fortnight run at Bradley's playing duo with Jacky Terrasson. "It was 42 sets, and by the 42nd I thought I could play anything I heard. It's endurance, but also a belief developed by doing this so intensely with people around you. Sometimes artists walk this dangerous path of portraying ourselves individualistically, and forgetting that it's about all of us. People send messages, energy and ideas; jazz is important because it brings a community together. We must take up the sword. This is a quiet revolution—you dream your passion. That's what Wayne talks about." **DB**

Al Di Meola

Worldwide Seduction

By Ken Micallef

Perhaps more than any other former member of Return To Forever, guitarist Al Di Meola has taken the "fusion" mantle to heart. And we're not talking rapidity of notes. Return To Forever (RTF) was known for nothing less than notes, performed fast, effusive and in mass quantities. For his part, Di Meola became a '70s-era guitar hero for accelerating the speed quotient to previously unimagined levels, his blitzkrieg solos leaving fusion-heads floored. But beginning with Di Meola's first World Sinfonia album in 1990, the New Jersey-born musician integrated a wide palette of world music influences, from Africa to Argentina, into his basic template of Latin rhythms, complex arrangements and largely acoustic instrumentation. Whether you call it Latin jazz, worldbeat or world fusion, Di Meola acknowledges a global connection.

"My music has some relationship to all of that," Di Meola says from the Madeira Islands, where the latest incarnation of World Sinfonia is performing at the annual Funchal Jazz Festival. "But it's also sounding as if it has uniqueness to it. Unlike a lot of the music of the past that I might have been involved with, and definitely what is currently on the scene, [my music] has a unique thing happening, just by the nature of my influences coming together in a way that sets it apart from the technical past that fusion was so much associated with. The balance has finally come to fruition and it's really going over in a big way in Europe. It's really connected to a Eurocentric mentality and sentiment."

Di Meola has much to say about fusion's "technical past" and its current manifestations, but World Sinfonia and its upcoming CD release is foremost on his mind. Featuring the lineup of Fausto Beccalossi, accordion; longtime member Gumbi Ortiz, percussion; Peter Kaszas, drums; Kevin Seddiki, guitar; Victor Miranda, bass; and two special guests—pianist Gonzalo Rubalcaba and bassist Charlie Haden (both on four tracks)—the as-yet-untitled album is patented Di Meola, and something more. For every moment of passionate improvisation (its live performance will be witnessed by a largely European fan base that is quickly purchasing tickets to World Sinfonia's yearlong tour), there are also subtle allusions to indigenous music forms: Argentine tango, Cuban rumba and Spanish flamenco, as well as less definable elements from Africa, Morocco, Italy and the Middle East. For good measure, Di Meola also covers John Lennon and Paul McCartney ("Strawberry Fields Forever"), Harold Arlen ("Somewhere Over The Rainbow") and Ralph Towner ("Green And Golden"). World Sinfonia is light-years from the dazzling fusion of Di Meola's early hit albums *Elegant Gypsy* or *Casino*, even further from the fusion flames of Return to Forever. Di Meola 2010 prefers his solos

shorter, his guitar acoustic, and for the time being, at least, his audiences European.

"European audiences love acoustic guitar far more than electric," Di Meola explains. "The future holds more promise in Europe acoustically than with a loud electric guitar. And the accordion is very much a signature instrument in a lot of countries, like Spain, France, Italy, Poland, Germany and Hungary. They all connect to the accordion or the bandoneon. The mix between that instrument and acoustic guitars is a very rich and perfect combination for my music."

Di Meola largely abandoned electric guitar until the mid '00s, returning to it for the 2008 RTF reunion tour and now on his latest World Sinfonia release. Even so, citing hearing loss and a change of musical direction, Di Meola uses the electric only as a color, not as a main course.

"I view the electric as a beautiful instrument," Di Meola acknowledges, "and I like to include it and give the audience that part of me, that part of my past. But not in such an aggressive fusion way as in the past, or like we did recently with the reunion of RTF. That was more nostalgic than futuristic or forward-thinking. I've found a way to play electric so it's cool, it's not bashing the audience—it's more seducing the audience. You can still feel it, but it's not making them deaf like we did with the RTF reunion. That was really deafening. That's not where I'm at.

"As the audience ages, especially in Europe," he continues, "I don't think they want that aggressive, loud electric guitar thing. That became evident in Europe especially when I returned with RTF. It was amazing the difference in audience reception—night and day. World Sinfonia is getting a huge, much louder response, and more ticket sales. The sentiment towards the combination of musical elements that we bring to the table has really spread by word of mouth and works way better than a retro fusion thing, especially in Europe. But they still like the kick-ass electric thing in America."

Does Di Meola still enjoy "the kick-ass electric thing"? When it comes to his solos—definitely not.

"Sometimes certain fusion acts' solos go on indefinitely," he says. "The clapping at the end of the solos is more a result of the fact that it's over. It's a happy ending."

Di Meola speaks candidly and from recent experience, RTF in particular.

"Chick [Corea] completely forgets that," he notes. "I am taking nothing away from the level of musicianship, only the element of being so disconnected from what the audience is actually feeling. As long as they are getting off on it, they don't really care. On too many shows I felt this, and people got up and left. It's just being disconnected. When we did the reunion there was no sense of pacing. We did a whole second part of the show that was two songs. One hour and 10 minutes, and the second part of the show is two songs? That's a big mistake when you have an extensive repertoire of music. For each guy to do these lengthy solos within one song, it was one of the worst musical directions Chick could have made. I voiced my opinion and it resulted in total disrespect of my opinion."

The transformation in Di Meola's musical direction came not as a rejection of the tenets of fusion, but rather his well-documented love affair with the music of Argentinean bandoneon player and composer Astor Piazzolla. Di Meola has covered Piazzolla's tangos on multiple albums (*The Grande Passion*, *Heart Of The Immigrants*, *Di Meola Plays Piazzolla*); his spirit can be felt when his compositions aren't literally heard.

"Anything I got from tango music came from the influence of the great Astor Piazzolla," Di Meola says. "He and I became very good friends. We even exchanged letters. He was so supportive of my music, which shocked me. I asked Gary Burton, who at the time in 1984 was playing shows with him, and he said, 'Astor's music is the hardest thing I've ever played in my life.' Right then I wanted to know more about it."

Soon fast friends, Piazzolla gave Di Meola a piece he'd written for guitar, "Tango Suite," which made its way onto 1990's *World Sinfonia*. The pair planned to meet in Amsterdam for a duet recording, but Piazzolla fell ill, and passed away in July 1992.

"Piazzolla's music was complex, but at the same time it was moving me emotionally. And it had a wide range of emotions. A mixture of that influence on my compositions and performing my own renditions of Piazzolla's music with my group has proven to be an interesting sound. Unlike the classical people who have recorded versions of Piazzolla's pieces, we've changed them dramatically with the rhythm. We syncopate the rhythm rather than play it in a classical fashion, exactly as written.

"Until I leave this planet," Di Meola adds, "Piazzolla is a part of my life's journey musically. It's so part of me whatever I do."

Latin fever is nothing new to Di Meola. As a teenager scouting New York's 1960s music scene, he practically lived at the Corso Ballroom, a Latin music landmark then located at 205 E. 86th St., near 3rd Avenue. Here, Di Meola found Latin education in the orchestras of Tito Puente, Ray Barretto, Willie Colón and many others.

"The influence and practicing of those rhythms carried over into the way I approach rhythm in my music," Di Meola recalls. "I get along best with percussionists and drummers. So I am more of that mind. When I came on the scene I was involved with pianists who covered the left-hand rhythm thing, so I was subject to lines only. When I did *The Rite Of Strings* with Stanley Clarke, he didn't even know I had that element of rhythm. But with the guitar trio (with John McLaughlin and Paco de Lucia) I had to

support the other soloists with rhythm, and that was the more fun part, actually."

Today, Di Meola writes all his music in his Miami Beach home, then hands out extensive charts to his band members. They rehearse, then tour the music before recording a note. Everything is recorded live, a luxury Di Meola enjoys as a happy, if demanding, bandleader.

"When it comes to rhythm, I do have a concept in that I hear a lot of different syncopations at the same time," he explains. "What feels natural to a percussionist or drummer is not always hipper. I like patterns that start on offbeats and in places they might not naturally hear it. I don't like it when they play unisons, either; I like separate, individual parts. That takes a lot of getting used to and practice. If you have six players, you have a lot of clashing if they don't play [separate parts]. When it fits like a glove it can be the most rewarding thing. I have guys who are totally into making it happen. It's a pleasure to play with them. They have good endurance and a capacity to fulfill the picture I have in my head. That is rare.

"There is less hassle compared to past years," he continues, praising his group. "The worst is when you are collaborating with other name players. You have to make all kinds of compromises and there are egos to deal with and pains in the asses all over the place. The better thing is when you have your own group and everybody has a great attitude. Then you can get the music to the way you hear it in your head."

Di Meola claims the guitar is still a challenge, that he reads music daily to keep his technique fresh and his playing moving forward. He wants to maintain his legendary edge.

"I feel the best when I am reading music," he says. "It takes me away from all the problems. It brings me into this area of peace. It's my meditation. Writing is different, but similar. But reading any music is so comfortable and enjoyable. It could be my own music, the compositions of Ralph Towner, whom I love. It could be Piazzolla, The Beatles. That's why I did 'Strawberry Fields.' I might do a whole Beatles record next. John Lennon had those weird chords; his are my favorite pieces. The Beatles were mind-blowingly good!"

In addition to his new World Sinfonia album, Di Meola's DVD *Moroccan Fantasia* is set for simultaneous release. A musical travelogue of sorts, *Moroccan Fantasia* features the World Sinfonia group jamming with local Moroccan musicians, carousing down Moroccan streets, rehearsing and generally taking the lay of the land. Al Di Meola relaxing? He's come full circle, returning to the Latin music he loves, turning down the electric volume while retaining his trademark intensity. But is he still a guitar hero?

"Who, me?" Di Meola asks, sincerely. "If I hear that I try not to let it affect me. If someone says that, they're being respectful and nice. And if they think that, I am honored. But there is still a lot more work left for me to do." **DB**

DOWNBEAT ARCHIVES

Artie Shaw *Begin The Beguine*

By Tom Nolan

During the Swing Era, no musician was more successful or controversial than clarinetist and bandleader Artie Shaw, who this year would have turned 100.

For the new book *Three Chords For Beauty's Sake: The Life Of Artie Shaw* (W.W. Norton & Co.), author Tom Nolan interviewed Shaw between 1990 and his death in 2004 and spoke with dozens of his colleagues and contemporaries. Nolan captures Shaw with candor and sympathy, bringing "the Hamlet of jazz"—a reputation earned by his frequent retirments—to vivid life and affirming his rightful place in jazz history.

The following excerpt begins at Chapter 15, which brings us to a critical point in Shaw's career. The year was 1938, and Shaw had recently allowed his contract with Brunswick to expire. His orchestra, its reputation on the rise, was now ready to start recording sides for RCA Victor. Their resulting hit would become one of the best-selling records in history.

With the new label deal came a new name for the leader. A Victor executive thought "Art Shaw," said fast, sounded like a sneeze and might lead to unwanted gags: "*Art-Shaw*." "*Gesundheit*." Henceforth, it was decreed, this RCA artist would be billed "Artie Shaw." Sneeze or no, it helped mark Shaw's split with his "sweet swing" past, and it put him on a first-name basis with "Benny" and "Tommy" and "Ozzie" and "Charlie" and all the other hit-seeking bandleaders.

The number Artie Shaw thought he held as his ace when his orchestra gathered for its first session at Victor's New York studio the afternoon of Sunday, July 24, 1938, was his very own up-to-date arrangement of Rudolf Friml's vintage "Indian Love Call."

The Prague-born Friml's operettas had been 1920s Broadway hits. A 1936 movie of his *Rose Marie*, with Jeanette McDonald and Nelson Eddy, had yielded a million-selling record of "Indian Love Call." Artie's swing-style send-up of that song was as different from Nelson's and Jeanette's reverent call-and-response as "Stompin' At The Savoy" from a Strauss waltz. It featured Tony Pastor's semi-scat vocal in tandem with a hepster-chorus of bandsmen chanting droll comments—a device more or less invented by black leader-arranger Don Redman and brought to the fore by Tommy Dorsey the previous year with "Marie." Shaw's band had been doing this swingopated "Love Call" at gigs, and it was a crowd-pleaser.

But before recording "Love Call," Art had a warmup number to wax: an all-but-forgotten song from the unsuccessful 1935 Cole Porter show *Jubilee*. This one didn't sound so good though to the wise-men at RCA, especially (Art wrote) the label's recording manager, who thought Shaw's doing the tune would be "a complete waste of time."

No one but Xavier Cugat had recorded "Begin The Beguine" before—or even knew quite what it was. The New York Times critic who reviewed *Jubilee* called the number "a waltz," while The New Yorker's Robert Benchley groused: "Why throw in just another rumba?" The tune was of mixed parentage. In 1925, Porter saw a performance by a Martinique troupe whose native dance was the beguine; "begin the beguine," he jotted in a notebook. Ten years later, he viewed a different native dance in New Guinea and notated its melody, then joined notes to title for a number for *Jubilee*. "Begin The Beguine," at 108 measures, was thought "the longest popular song ever written."

Once *Jubilee* closed, its music went into limbo. There'd be nearly as many anecdotes about how "Begin The Beguine" ended up in Shaw's band-book as there were men in his orchestra.

Here's one, put forth in a Time-Life Records account of the swing era: "By 1938 Artie Shaw was playing for a dance at Syracuse University, he recalls, when some of the fans asked him if he could play 'Begin The Beguine.' Artie had never heard of it but found it was a jam session favorite with some of his sidemen."

Another version: "It all started in a hotel room in Boston," alto sax player Hank Freeman told author Burt Korall. "Artie and [arranger] Jerry Gray got to talking about this Cole Porter tune that never made it: 'Begin The Beguine.' [Trumpeter] Chuck Peterson said something about gimmicking it up, rhythmically. Artie and Jerry figured out a pulsating introduction, which, in its way, was innovative."

Trumpeter Max Kaminsky, who left Shaw's band months before its first Victor session, would try to take credit: "One day at rehearsal, when I started to noodle around with the song, Artie told his arranger to copy it that way."

Drummer Cliff Leeman said, "Jerry Gray scored the original 'Begin The Beguine'"—but added: "Artie used to give him a chart to go by, and how to style it; and then Gray would arrange."

Shaw shrugged off such stories with show-biz resignation, telling author Vladimir Simosko: "Everyone wants to get in on the act."

"We rehearsed it one afternoon," guitarist Al Avola told Time–Life, "and it wasn't even part way through when Artie stopped us. It was arranged in a beguine rhythm—*bhum bhum, bhum pah bhum*—and Artie wouldn't stand for that. He was always figuring how a song would play at the Waldorf, and that wasn't the sort of stuff he thought they wanted. So he said, 'Let's do it in four-four time,' so we changed the time but kept Jerry Gray's chords."

Blip! went the brass.

Ba-dooby-doo, bop!–bop! said the reeds.

Blip! blip!

Ba-dooby-doo, bop! Baa!

In four bars the band grabbed the listener by the ears; then Art's silken-smooth clarinet entered with the beguiling melody. The band kept going, maintaining a suave platform from which Shaw uttered perfect little phrases. Tony Pastor came in on tenor, graceful as an otter, polished as an old boot—*Bump! ba dodda-dodda ...*

The orchestra built it up, came down in volume, then rose up again, as Shaw led it out with his soon-to-be-patented upward glissando. The record seemed over almost as soon as it started, yet you felt you'd dreamed a whole love affair in its spell. "Begin The Beguine" was slick, romantic and swinging. As soon as it was done, you wanted to hear it again.

With "Beguine" captured, the band turned to "Indian Love Call." Shaw began in exotic mode: his lone clarinet over Leeman's tom-toms. Then the ensemble came in, as a bunch of the men chorused "*cheep-cheep!*" in playful commentary. Shaw's arrangement was full of surprises: dixieland-sounding passages; that trick of having the band *stop* for a few seconds, before jumping in full throttle; then a burst of Sousa-like fireworks to set up Pastor's scat-soaked vocal, which was nothing like Nelson Eddy but more like Louis Armstrong splitting a riff with Leo Watson.

By 8:30 p.m., Art and the band had cut six sides, each good enough to blast the orchestra out of the workaday music world and into the swing empyrean. But everyone from Shaw to Pastor to RCA's music director was certain "Indian Love Call" was the hit.

When it came to predicting hits, though, the only certainty was that no one—especially the "experts"—knew anything at all.

Then the band was on the move, and the road stretched out through August. Some engagements would take the band down South, where the locals' possible reactions to Shaw's "colored canary" caused both leader and singer anxiety. Billie Holiday thought Art was trying to build as large an audience as possible before trying an extended Manhattan location-gig. But once committed to something, she wrote, he wouldn't back down: "He's ... amazing and a good cat deep down. He's not one to go back on his word."

She saw Shaw turn words into deeds when they got to Lexington, Ky.: "[W]e couldn't find a place that would rent me a room. Finally Artie got sore and picked out the biggest hotel in town. ... He got eight cats out of the band and they escorted me to the registration desk ... I think the man at the desk figured it couldn't be true what he thought he saw … so they gave me a nice room and no back talk."

She wrote too of an onstage incident in what seems to have been Clarkesville, Tenn.: "When I came on, the sheriff walked up to the raised bandstand; Artie's back was to the dance floor, so he pulled Artie's pants leg and said, 'Hey you!' Artie turned around. 'Don't touch me,' he hollered over the music. But the sheriff ... pulled Artie's leg again. 'Hey you,' he said. Artie turned around. 'You want to get kicked?' he asked him. Still the old cracker sheriff didn't give up. ... 'Hey you,' he said. Then he turned to me and, so loud everybody could hear, he said, 'What's Blackie going to sing?' Artie looked like it was the end of the world—and the tour. I guess he thought I was going to break down and have a collapse or something. But I was laughing like hell."

But other scenes and taunts, in and out of the South, were harder to laugh off, and the constant battle for food, lodging and bathroom rights wore on everyone's nerves.

Alto player Les Robinson said: "Especially in the South, they didn't like the idea of a black girl sitting on the bandstand. They didn't care if she sang, as long as after she finished she returned to her place, as they would say."

The band kept on, doing one-nighters in Pennsylvania, Ohio, New Jersey, Massachusetts and New York. All the hard travel, bad food, missed sleep and (for some) over-indulgence caught up with several band members in September. Holiday had to see a doctor. Robinson caught pneumonia and checked into a New York hospital. One trombonist was replaced. Even Artie, who had a strong constitution, proved susceptible.

The night of Sept. 16, the Shaw band was in New York City in pitched swing-battle with the Tommy Dorsey Orchestra for a charity event at the 105th Regiment Armory, before an audience sprinkled with music-biz colleagues including Glenn Miller, Ozzie Nelson and Count Basie. Suffering from flu, Art had to be helped offstage and into a doctor's care—but not before giving Dorsey's crew a solid drubbing.

Nine days later, Artie was back in RCA Victor's Studio 2 for the second of his Bluebird recording sessions. But Billie wasn't with him.

Shaw later blamed Holiday, saying she'd resigned with Brunswick without telling him. Billie blamed RCA for putting out Art's records on their budget-priced 35-cent Bluebird label—thus competing with her budget-priced Vocalions, which made Brunswick cry foul.

Whatever the case, Victor yanked "Any Old Time"—the side she'd made with Shaw on July 24—and stopped Shaw from recording again with Holiday: another annoyance for Art, who now had to hire a second female singer to make the band's quota of girl-vocal platters.

He called on a white Washington, D.C., vocalist brought to his attention in 1937 by Goodman's trumpeter player Ziggy Elman. Benny had walked out on this singer in a D.C. club, but Art thought she had potential. In the summer of 1938, Helen Forrest was ready to make good on that promise.

Forrest learned some phrasings from Holiday, but her approach was her own: precise and polished, with banked emotions and her own subdued swing. She was well-suited to good show-tunes.

But the pair of movie-songs Forrest was given to do at her first session with Shaw was a far cry from the deluxe material Art vowed he'd specialize in. "I Have Eyes" and "You're A Sweet Little Headache" were on a par with the most jejune items from Shaw's Brunswick days. Art was appalled at being induced by RCA to commit this material to disc. Half a century later, he'd say, only half-joking, "That was the beginning of the end: the day I let them talk me into recording 'You're A Sweet Little Headache.'"

Shaw's orchestra made four other sides on Sept. 27, all instrumentals, each first-rate: a moody "Nightmare"; another Shaw original, "Non-Stop Flight"; Cole Porter's "What Is This Thing Called Love?"; and Jerome Kern's "Yesterdays." The five-hour session produced four top-notch tracks—plus two banal examples of someone else's idea of a possible hit.

Art would soon start quoting an anonymous poem about a musician who summed up his pragmatic *modus vivendi* as: "Three chords for beauty's sake, and one to pay the rent." On Sept. 27, Shaw played four chords for beauty and two to pay the rent. It was a ratio Art Shaw guessed he could live with, so long as it didn't tilt any farther.

But what if he wouldn't get to play the music he wanted? Already he was being told what he ought to record, and he'd lost the right to make disks with his first-choice singer. Not only that: Billie told him her days with the band were numbered. She thought she could make a living on 52nd Street, and she wasn't crazy about life with a big band—*any* band. She'd give Art a few more months, she said, and then leave.

With Billie soon to depart, and with more *schlock* in his RCA Victor future, maybe the race was already lost. Maybe Art should do what he'd done with the swing-strings orchestra: pack it in, give it up, start from scratch.

"And [when] we left town, [Artie] was thinking of dissolving the band," Leeman said. "But he had a commitment in a hotel in St. Louis." The gig was three weeks at the Chase Hotel, and the promoter made it clear Shaw had to have a white female vocalist. Fair enough; Shaw hired Helen Forrest for ballads, and Billie could sing her blues and swing.

Opening on Sept. 30, the band drew a thousand customers, breaking a house record; it topped that the next night, with fourteen hundred.

On a Monday off from the hotel gig, the Shaw band went to Chicago to play the annual Negro Christmas Basket Fund benefit sponsored by the Defender newspaper. Some five thousand people, nearly all black, filled the Savoy Ballroom to see a show billed as "Billie Holiday, with Artie Shaw and his Orchestra." [Agent] Joe Shribman said: "It was very funny, because they opened up and Artie really laid it on, 'cause he'd found out they didn't really know who he was. The band was tight; it was a great band. The reception was wild. When Billie came out, she tore the joint down."

But it was back at the Chase that Art's life changed forever. As with other pivotal events in Shaw's history, there are different stories about what happened.

In one, he'd just started playing that Cole Porter number they'd recorded when the crowd all of a sudden gave a roar. Shaw peered out to see what was going on, because often a couple drew a big reaction with some ambitious jitterbugging. When

he realized the crowd was cheering the tune, Art guessed they had a hit.

But Leeman, also on the scene, told a different tale: "[I]n the middle of the engagement, after a week or two in St. Louis, [Art] got a call one day from RCA Victor—this is only two months later—from Leonard Joy, who was a big man there, saying to come back [to New York]. [Shaw] was already gonna dissolve the band, now. But 'Begin The Beguine' ... is a sensation, it is sweeping the nation. Well, as a bunch of kids, you don't know how thrilled we were."

"Begin The Beguine" had been the B-side of "Indian Love Call," but disc jockeys and jukebox patrons flipped the record over and fell in love with "Beguine." Maybe they liked that the clarinet came in sooner.

Nobody knew why "Beguine" took off, not even the man who made it, although he took a few guesses in later years.

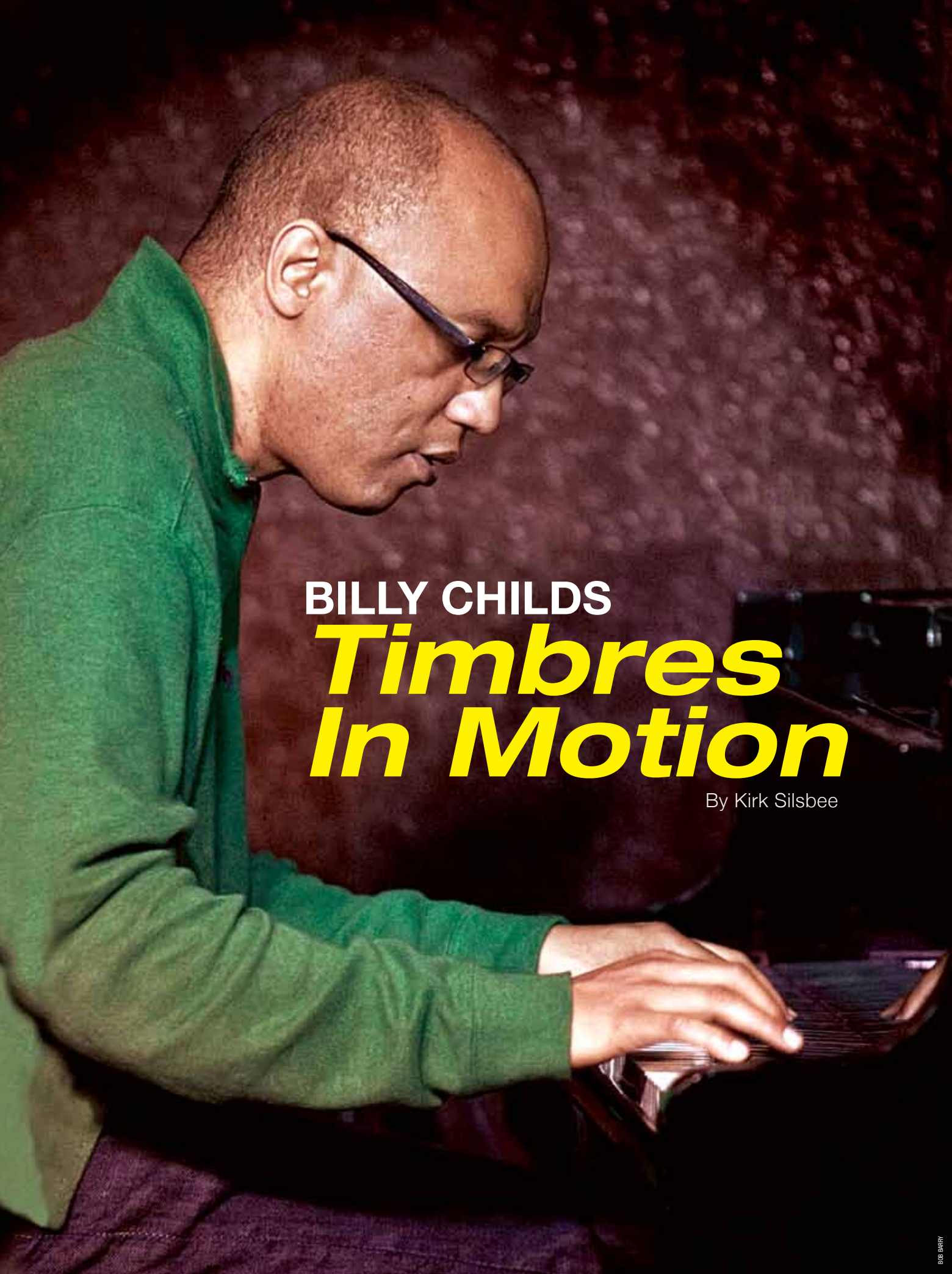
"What is 'Begin The Beguine'?" Shaw asked in 1990, when his '38 record in one form or another was *still* being bought. "It's the first time that anybody played a real *melody* down with a jazz *beat*. That's what it *was*. After the fact; I couldn't have known a-*head* of time. Still, holds *up*; that goes *on* and *on* and *on*. You'd think that's the only thing I ever *did*."

To someone else, Shaw said the record's appeal was that it combined swing rhythm with a Latin beat. But on another occasion, Art admitted: "I don't know why that tune caught on; I have no idea. … I tried to play the song the way I thought it would sound good. When you do something that does go off on its own and it's a standout thing—you don't *mean* it to *do* that; you just play a particular song, and you happen to hit a way of doing it that for some unknown reason the public buys, en masse. … Trouble with that is, they want you to keep doing the same *thing*. If you had done the same thing to start with, you'd not have played *that*. So—it's a cockeyed business. When you're dealing with the public—it's cockeyed."

Artie Shaw's record of "Beguine" made Cole Porter's all-but-unknown 4-year-old song "really big-time stuff," in Porter's phrase. Biographer William McBrien would write in 1998: "Porter was pleased with Shaw's version and invited him to a party, where Cole greeted him: 'Happy to meet my collaborator.' 'Does that involve royalties?' asked Shaw. 'I'm afraid not,' countered Cole."

Overnight, "Begin The Beguine" made Artie Shaw a household name. But another tune might just as well have done the trick. The band and its leader were more than ready, and "Back Bay Shuffle" or "Yesterdays" could as easily have lit their fuse.

Shaw might well have been grateful it was "Beguine," though, and not "Indian Love Call" that became his signature hit. While he would grow weary over decades of having to play Porter's melody again and again and again, how much more annoyed might he have been at having to hear two or three generations of sidemen chirping "*cheep cheep!*" the rest of his musical life? **DB**



BILLY CHILDS
Timbres In Motion

By Kirk Silsbee

BOB BARRY

Southern California recording studios tend toward nondescript outward appearances, and the L.A. Sound Gallery in Burbank is no exception. A bit of an austere fortress on the outside, it's a sleek, air-conditioned beehive of offices, studios and lounges inside. On a hot weekday afternoon last spring, one Sound Gallery studio was the site of a particularly rich amalgam of music as Billy Childs worked on the followup album to his 2007 Grammy-winner *Lyric.*

Like its predecessor, the music written for volume two of this collection—titled *Autumn: In Moving Pictures* (AristShare)—is played by Childs' innovative Chamber Jazz Ensemble. By virtue of the way he conceives the music and casts the instrumentation, the group has taken the jazz-meets-classical format to a new summit.

The Chamber Jazz Ensemble is a stellar mix of Los Angeles and New York players. The Ying String Quartet, bassist Scott Colley and drummer Brian Blade traveled west; saxophonist Bob Sheppard, guitarist Larry Koonse and harpist Carol Robbins are locals, like Childs. A warmup of four nights at the Jazz Bakery preceded the recording sessions last spring.

The jazz audience knows the 53-year-old Childs as a commanding pianist who was baptized in the fires of the Freddie Hubbard and J.J. Johnson bands. They also know of his compositional and arranging contributions to the books of vocalist Dianne Reeves and trumpeter Chris Botti. (Childs won 2006 Grammys for best instrumental arrangement accompanying a vocalist for her, and best instrumental composition for him.) Few of them know of his work as a symphonic composer for orchestras and string quartets around the world, though. Next January, Childs will premiere a violin concerto for Regina Carter and the Detroit Symphony, to be conducted by Leonard Slatkin.

At the Sound Gallery, a musical passage in 9/8 was being perfected over several takes. The strings, rhythm section and piano swirled around gracefully as tension, release, melody, counterpoint, rising and falling figures and rich textures wove in and out of the musical fabric.

On a break, the hungry musicians attacked food platters. Cellist David Ying, of the sibling Ying String Quartet, talked about the music between bites. "Billy understands the classical tradition of strings and how it's been most effectively used," he said. "So he doesn't write just to fill space; it's very contrapuntal."

"It's rhythmically challenging," violinist Timothy Ying added, "because he's got these complex meters that are changing all the time. But the writing all feels natural, even though it's complicated."

Childs is a lyrical writer. His melodic themes don't dwell in the murky or ponderous lower register. Hear his composition "Path Among The Trees" and you can easily see the sunlight dapple the ground between the branches on an afternoon ride.

"Sometimes I look at a passage and say, 'Could Billy have written that in any other way?' Timothy Ying said. "And the answer is, no—it had to be that way. It's Billy's language."

David continued: "Billy's inspiration is quite large. He's studied the Ravel quartets, the Bartok quartets, the music of Stravinsky and Hindemith. There's so much going on and so many different musics that he references. His writing is every bit as intricate and full of expressive detail as anyone who has ever written for a string quartet."

Childs joined the others in the repast. "What I'm doing is the blending of genres," he said. "It's rooted in that kind of lyrical classical composition that is descriptive of places and situations. That's on the classical side. The improvisation is something I turn over to the people around me, because I trust all of them with my music. The core of the group is six players—all people that I've been playing with for many years. It's all an attempt to find a music that expresses the whole of me."

Of his band, Childs said, "You'd be hard-pressed to find anyone who does what Carol does on the harp. She has an incredible harmonic knowledge as well as great rhythm and time. Bob is one of the great saxophonists of our generation. He doubles on everything and he plays the shit out of everything. His solos are consistently intense and creative, and his sound is amazing. Larry is one of the most gifted guitar players I know. He can scarcely be matched for melodic beauty and harmonic depth. Scott is my all-time favorite bassist. He's able to instinctively phrase to everything I write, and he's a spiritual player. Brian is just one of the greatest orchestral drummers to ever pick up the sticks. He's a very thoughtful player who can complement my written music on the drum set."

Harpist Robbins first met Childs in high school-level jam sessions, where her estimation of him was quickly formed. "He was a virtuoso back then," Robbins declared. "We'd play things like 'Dolphin Dance' and 'Speak Like A Child,' and you could hear his amazing technique and his great ears." She's been part of the ensemble since its beginnings in 2000.

"Billy sees the harp as an integral part of the group," Robbins said. "He's always given me the ability to improvise; I'm not just reading notes. He uses the harp for color and he likes to double the harp and the piano in places."

She also appreciates his knowledge of her instrument. "Harpists often have to fix the writing," she said. "Usually, if the composer is a pianist, they forget that we don't use our little fingers, so they write five-note chords. Or, they abruptly change from sharps to flats. Billy doesn't make those mistakes."

"This music is epic, and it's demanding on all levels," said Koonse, who first played with Childs in Hubbard's band. "The written music for the guitar is very specific here, so the only leeway I have is a personal choice like coloration."

Sheppard sees his work in the Chamber Ensemble as something of a summation. "It's one of those experiences," he maintained, "that encompasses everything I've done with my life: playing classical music, jazz, operating in the music business. I'm interpreting very difficult music and yet it allows me to express my jazz sensibilities. I think I give Billy's music something he relies upon: When he writes a melody for the saxophone, he can hear me playing it. And I think I know how he'd like to hear it played."

The gig at Ruth Price's Jazz Bakery was a chance for the band to break in the new material. "It was very hard," Koonse said, "and there were changes being made between sets and right on the bandstand. But there was something magical that happened. It just seemed to come together in a beautiful way. I mean, the Ying Quartet are some of the finest classical players in the world. To see how challenged and engaged they were was very inspiring."

Robbins agreed: "We'd rehearse, but what happened live was so full of promise. Billy would do something completely different and we'd just follow him. I love the spontaneity and the improv that's built-in with this group."

Sheppard also sensed the magic. "I thought the Bakery [shows were] some of the best performances we've ever given," he said. "Sure, it was hard, but it's always that way with Billy's music; he relies on everyone in the group to be able to make it work. He knows that in the worst-case scenario, it won't fall apart. The music is driven by the strength of him knowing his music. He's a good quarterback."

From her home in Beverly Hills, Price fondly recalled the ensemble at the Bakery, and the audience of active listeners who came out. "Billy really pulled it together because he's fluent in both languages," she said. "Billy's band is something I'm proud of as a testament to what we did at the Bakery. We worked hard to re-engineer the space so that the strings could be heard. That wouldn't have worked in a nightclub."

"People talk about Third Stream music," said Koonse. "For me, there's always some aspect that's missing: either the rhythmic vitality of jazz, or the depth of composition and harmonic content. I honestly feel that Billy's music and this band falls into a new category. Maybe he didn't create the genre, but he's taken it to a new level."

"I do a lot of different things," Childs said, "and I'm responsible for bringing all of the elements together. But the Chamber Ensemble allows me to bring practically everything I do under one umbrella. I'm not going to write a classical piece for the jazz instruments and, by the same token, I'm not going to ask the strings to blow off the changes." **DB**

INDIE Spotlight

To reserve your space in future Indie Spotlight advertising sections, call 800-959-5299, ext. 114.

Pamela Rose
Wild Women Of Song: Great Gal Composers Of The Jazz Era

San Francisco vocalist Pamela Rose celebrates the women songwriters of Tin Pan Alley.

"Remarkable, soulful voice." *—London Jazz*

"Rose infuses each track with beautiful clarity … and heartfelt, female-centric Jazz anthropology!" *—Jazz Times*

"a real gift… playful, sure and sassy" *—DownBeat*

www.wildwomenofsong.com

Gershwin By Grofé

Harmonie Ensemble/New York
Steven Richman (director)
Lincoln Mayorga
Al Gallodoro

Gershwin By Grofé, featuring legendary Al Gallodoro, Lincoln Mayorga, Steven Richman and the Harmonie Ensemble/New York, includes a red-hot performance of the original jazz band version of "Rhapsody in Blue." The Star-Ledger raves, "It's steeped in the Jazz Age cocktail of rhythmic insouciance and sweet tunes."

www.harmoniamundi.com

The Britton Brothers
Uncertain Living

"If *Uncertain Living* is an indication, The Britton Brothers are likely to leave an indelible mark on the music scene." *—AllAboutJazz.com*

The Britton Brothers' exciting debut album offers a unique take on modern jazz. With special guest Chris Potter.

Available at iTunes, CDBaby and
www.thebrittonbrothers.com

Antonio Adolfo and Carol Saboya
Lá e Cá (Here and There)

On his new CD *Lá e Cá (Here and There)*, pianist/composer Antonio Adolfo creates a gorgeous showcase for his alluring jazz/samba synthesis, with vocalist daughter Carol Saboya featured on five tracks. It's a fine follow-up to their critically acclaimed 2007 CD, *Ao Vivo/Live*.

Available on CDBaby, Amazon and all other major sites.

www.antonioadolfo.com

Philadelphia's Puzzlebox Pieces Together Space For Original Octet Approach

Back row: Joe Falcey (left), Anam Owili-Eger, Stan Slotter, Maxfield Gast, Larry Toft. Front row: Steven Gokh (left), Mark Allen, Keith DeStefano.

JULIA METCALF

Bassist Keith DeStefano leads the Puzzlebox octet, and his original repertoire receives little exposure at proper jazz clubs. It's not the only trend DeStefano has bucked. He also bypassed music school, and began composing and playing the upright bass fairly late in life.

"I would just constantly have ideas for tunes," the Philadelphia bandleader said. "The natural thing to do was to get a band together and play them. It's not a reaction like, I'm never going to play 'Satin Doll' for the rest of my life. You know, Duke Ellington, the guy's a genius. I just felt like I had a thing that I had to do. But it doesn't make any sense at all to do this."

DeStefano, a Red Bank, N.J., native, moved to Philadelphia to study painting at the University of the Arts. After college, he considered becoming a fiction writer or playwright before shifting his focus to music.

"I took the path of least resistance," DeStefano said. "Composition just came easily. I was never blocked. I would just write constantly, and I wouldn't judge what came out. I might get one good tune out of 20 things and I would learn from the rest."

DeStefano received his upright bass, a 1920s Juzek, from his wife as an engagement present in 2000. He had previously played electric guitar and electric bass. In lieu of music school, DeStefano studied with the late Robert Riccardi, a longtime bassist with the Pennsylvania Ballet Orchestra, and attended Odean Pope's Collective Voices workshop, where he developed an affinity for large ensembles.

Puzzlebox began earning notice in 2005 around Philadelphia with its independently released debut album, *Just When I Thought*. "At the time, Philly was very much a [straightahead jazz haven]," DeStefano said. "It was tougher for people doing original music back then. There weren't a lot of venues.

There were a lot of other guys that were just starting out," he continued. "They wanted to do original jazz and keep it going, and keep it vital by writing new music. And I think if you look out there now, that's a lot of what's going on in Philadelphia. It's a very vital 'new jazz' scene. A lot of it is underground, but it's there. It's kind of an exciting time."

Indeed, Philadelphia boasts two dozen such bands, whose youthful lineups draw inspiration from a plethora of styles. What's more, a handful of venues present such acts, alongside rock, hip-hop, avant-garde and world music bookings. These venues include Tritone in Center City, the Trocadero Theatre in Old City and Johnny Brenda's in Fishtown.

In addition, Chris' Jazz Café in Center City, long a bastion for mainstream fare, has booked Puzzlebox and peers such as Matt Davis' Aerial Photograph, Bobby Zankel's Warriors of the Wonderful Sound and the Augmented Fourthtet.

Earlier editions of Puzzlebox featured a retro sound that recalled Miles Davis' *Birth Of The Cool*. The group's second album, *A Place To Be*, came out in July and features the same attention to melody, in addition to the influences of Charles Mingus and Ellington.

Larry Toft, Puzzlebox's trombonist, said, "With Keith's tunes there's definitely a melody there, and he develops it, and then he takes it to the next step, which is exciting and harmonically challenging and progressive. The band can also play the more avant-garde [venues] as well. I think it very much lends itself to that because we can open up the tunes and stretch a little bit and kind of go off the chart."

For all of its versatility, Puzzlebox needs to spend more time on the road if it wants to survive. "We're running out of places to play in Philadelphia," DeStefano said. "I want to really play more festivals. You get to play for a larger, appreciative audience, people who actually want to hear your stuff." —*Eric Fine*

INDIE Spotlight

To reserve your space in future Indie Spotlight advertising sections, call 800-959-5299, ext. 114.

Chris Standring
Blue Bolero

In his sixth CD, guitarist Chris Standring returns with a left-turning musical project combining orchestral elements with his trademark pop hooks.

Features the #1 single "Blue Bossa." On tour this Fall.

Visit bluebolero.net for more details.

distribution[13]
Ultimate Vibe Recordings

www.bluebolero.net

Chie Imaizumi
A Time of New Beginnings

Featuring an All-Star band with John Clayton, Randy Brecker, Jeff Hamilton, Gary Smulyan, Steve Davis, Terell Stafford, Scott Robinson, Steve Wilson, Tamir Hendelman, Greg Gisbert, Mike Abbott and Paul Romaine.

CAPRI Records Ltd.

www.caprirecords.com

Robin Aleman
In Your Eyes

"Robin Aleman is a name to remember."
—Scott Yanow, Jazz Critic

Robin Aleman—vocals
David Epstein—piano
Bob Sabin—bass
Brian Adler—drums
Nathan Childers—saxophone

Now available on www.robinaleman.com and www.cdbaby.com.

www.robinaleman.com

Henry Grimes & Rashied Ali
Spirits Aloft

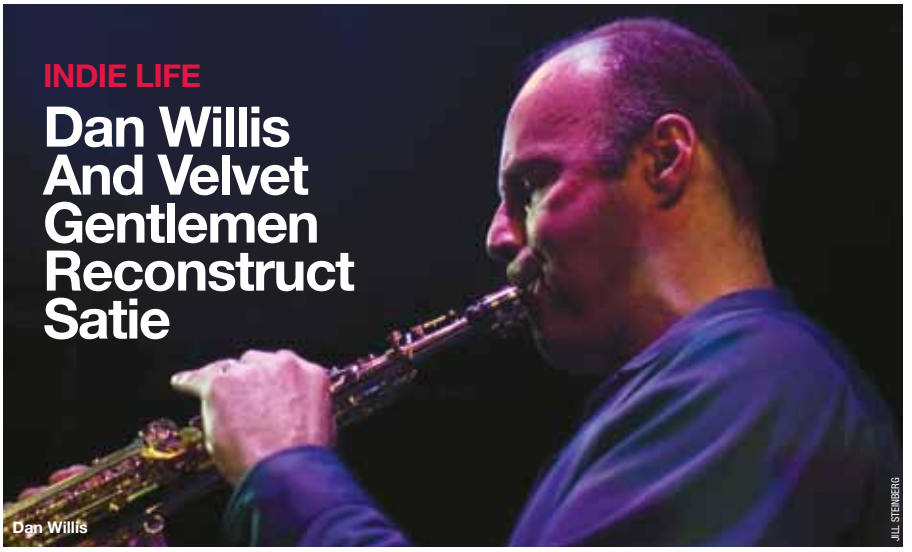
Henry Grimes and Rashied Ali convene on this magical live recording that holds aloft Henry's bass and violin, highlighting his recent pointilisms, ringing with the shock-by-shock rebound of the spaces between. Below, above, in perfect tune and time, Rashied lays foundations, constructs edifices of rock and crystal that ebb and flow.

PORTER RECORDS

www.porterrecords.com

INDIE LIFE

Dan Willis And Velvet Gentlemen Reconstruct Satie


Dan Willis

JILL STEINBERG

Jazz–classical crossovers have always been around, but multi-reedist Dan Willis' versions of Erik Satie's compositions stand out. Especially as his determination comes out of a blunt description of such combinations.

"Jazz musicians recording classical music is not a good idea," Willis said. "But out of that paranoia came the realization I had to stay true to these compositions, I had to stick to it, which kept me on solid ground, what with all those arrangements twisting around."

Indeed, "twisting around" Satie's music is just what his merry band of men (10 in all) do on Dan Willis And Velvet Gentlemen's *The Satie Project* (Daywood Drive Records). "This project was breaking new ground, a very big departure for me," he said. "My previous albums have all had originals. By my third record, Satie's music was having a big influence on me. I did have some apprehension about doing an album of someone else's compositions, but with the orchestrations and arrangements I found it satisfying."

Raised in a musical family, Willis has been working as one of New York City's most versatile woodwind specialists, having mastered 11 different instruments (he's been playing eight of them from the orchestra pit for a new production of *West Side Story*). The Satie Project is all newly arranged material of 15 compositions written by Satie. But rather than try to mimic classical music, Willis works the angles of mainstream jazz, free-jazz, even some bluesy rock.

As for the genesis of the project, Willis said, "It's kind of a long story. I was familiar with the first Gymnopedie when I was at Eastman [School of Music], having heard that music on many different albums, jingles, movie themes." But there came a time when Willis heard this music in a way that was totally unexpected.

"I was in a car accident," he said. "I was hit from behind and got whiplash. The very first album I listened to while I was recovering with my acupuncturist was *After The Rain*, a collection of Satie selections. I was completely melted and relaxed, and as the album went on I started to become more familiar with the music from his middle period. It was the first thing that really sparked an interest, including the Gnossiennes, written for his friend Claude Debussy. Then I'm thinking, 'He's writing more contrapuntal lines, sometimes two lines, sometimes four lines, [Willis plays his saxophone to demonstrate, for example, a bass ostinato]. I thought, 'Wow, that really screams Ornette Coleman! I could play this as free-jazz, with [drummer John] Hollenbeck, [guitarist Pete] McCann and [bassist] Kermit [Driscoll]; it could go anywhere.'"

Willis also recalls saying to himself, "If we can play this music and not piss off too many people by trying a jazz approach, there can also be very sweet, hypnotic, meditative pieces, and the music can become a springboard for jazz improvisation."

Talking more about the construction of the music, he notes, "Satie wrote a lot in collection of threes; we made them full-blown but small pieces. We state the melody then deconstruct and reconstruct it. The thing I went out on a limb with was the Nocturnes [there are six]; each one I wanted to do as a duo with members of my group. I went through each piece, thinking, 'Where is it going emotionally? Where do I want to go with each piece?' I wanted to capture the emotion with as little orchestration as possible, and get at what I thought was the original intent of each piece, really find the subtext of each line and try and exploit it. The music was originally on piano, but now it's with woodwinds. It's so well suited to woodwind instruments, the beauty of each line, the sorrow, the anger, the ecstacy."

Looking ahead, Willis added, "For most of the second *Satie Project*, I delve into the string-quartet pieces, wanting to take it to the next level. I'm not getting sick of [*The Satie Project*]. Every time I listen to it, I discover something new, with those same inspiring impressions. It is such beautiful music, very moving. I find myself going back to that music when I have difficult times. It's very complex but also very simple. My hope is that people will be inspired to go back and hear the piano music and find new ways to make it their own." —*John Ephland*

INDIE Spotlight

To reserve your space in future Indie Spotlight advertising sections, call 800-959-5299, ext. 114.

Paul Wertico's Mid-East/ Mid-West Alliance
Impressions of a City

★★★★½
—John Ephland, DownBeat

"musical narrative at its finest."
—Matt Marshall, JazzInside NY

"Haunting and memorable … an engaging musical experiment and one that is highly unique."
—Brad Walseth, JazzChicago.net

Available at CDBaby and iTunes.
www.chicagosessions.com

Sam Newsome
Blue Soliloquy

★★★★★ *—DownBeat*

"… a masterwork." *—The Examiner*

With the release of his new solo saxophone outing, *Blue Soliloquy*, soprano saxophonist Sam Newsome has established himself as one of the most important soprano saxophonists of his generation.

Available at iTunes and CDBaby.

www.samnewsome.com

Grace Kelly
Mood Changes

Grace Kelly follows up her ★★★★½ *GRACEfulLEE* CD with her fifth release!

Voted one of the Alto Saxophone Rising Stars in the 2009 and 2010 DownBeat Annual Critics Poll.

Winner of 12 DownBeat Student Music Awards 2006–'09.

Awarded 2007, 2008 & 2010 ASCAP Young Jazz Composers Awards.

www.gracekellymusic.com

Howard Levy
Tonight And Tomorrow

★★★★
—Michael Jackson, DownBeat

"a marvelous piano-trio album featuring Levy's harmonica… The trio interplay is first-rate throughout."
—George Kanzler, Jazz Times

Available at CDBaby, iTunes and ChicagoJazz.com
www.chicagosessions.com

Helmet of Gnats
High Street

Featuring electric guitar, multi-keyboards, electric bass and drums, Helmet Of Gnats is reminiscent of the classic Rock/ Jazz Fusion movement of the 1970s.

"This long awaited 2010 disc consolidates this band as one of the U.S.'s best modern fusion groups." —*Wayside Music*

Available at: Amazon, AmbientRecords, CDBaby, WaysideMusic.

www.AmbientRecords.com

Tyler Hornby
A Road to Remember

Drummer and composer Tyler Hornby's *A Road to Remember* fuses together the hues and emotions found in the mindset of movement, threaded together by a sophisticated mix of groove, swing, free and ECM jazz.

Hear the album at Tyler's new website: www.tylerhornby.com

www.chronographrecords.com

Muziek
"*Muziek* is a trove of interesting sounds, performances and artists that deserve repeated listening." —*Mike Reynolds, MuzikReviews.com*

To Eva With Love
Vocalists/songwriters Amikaeyla Gaston and Trelawny Rose have given us the gift of the first tribute recording to the living spirit of legendary vocalist Eva Cassidy.

Patois Records believes that improvisation is an integral approach to creating music as well as a way of life.

www.patoisrecords.com

Jeff Antoniuk and the Jazz Update
Brotherhood

"This is a quartet steeped in a 21st century style of hard bop that still values solid melody lines, probing improvisation, and, when called for, sheer beauty…" —*Jazzscene*

Includes the engaging rhythms of "Global Village," the buttery smooth "Isfahan" and a superb mashup of "Hot House" and "Evidence."

www.jeffantoniuk.com

The Avatar Sessions
The Music of Tim Hagans

"Hagans is at the helm on *The Avatar Sessions*, leading the Norrbotten Big Band through seven original compositions that demonstrate his impressive compositional range… European eclecticism brought to bear on an urban Manhattan sensibility." —*Shaun Brady, DownBeat*

www.fuzzymusic.com

¡Bien Bien!
"With *¡Bien Bien!*, Wayne Wallace has assembled a superb group of musicians accomplished in the Latin jazz styles and created a great CD featuring the trombone as the primary solo voice." —*Stan Pethel*

★★★★½ —*DownBeat*

Offshore Echoes
Channeling her multi-cultured background, vocalist Kristina lands on solid ground completing a personal journey with a rich musical message.

Patois Records believes that improvisation is an integral approach to creating music as well as a way of life.

www.patoisrecords.com

NEW FOR 2010!

18V 1064

GYPSY SWING ALLSTARS
LES NOUVEAUX BOHÉMIENS

Four world-renowned musicians, John Jorgenson, Charlie Bisharat, Marti Amado, and Bob Magnusson come together to record an acoustic Gypsy swing jazz album in the timeless style of Django Reinhart and Stephane Grapelli.

WTR 165

KNEEBODY
YOU CAN HAVE YOUR MOMENT

Kneebody's second W&W album after 2009's Grammy Award-nominated *Twelve Songs by Charles Ives*! By combining sophisticated compositions and virtuosic improvising, Kneebody has created a diverse, loyal fan base in the US and Europe.

18V 1063

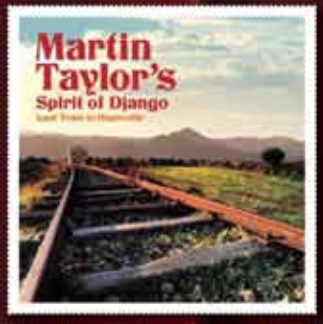
TYRONE SMITH
PLAYING IT BY EAR

Playing It By Ear embraces the fundamentals of the jazz, funk, and R&B traditions while Tyrone Smith intrigues the audience by flowing his virtuosic sax over eclectic grooves and engaging arrangements.

ACR 3285

EITHER/ORCHESTRA
MOOD MUSIC FOR TIME TRAVELLERS

To kick off its 25th anniversary season, the ten-piece Either/Orchestra delivers a unique combination of jazz and Afro-Caribbean grooves, catchy melodies, world-class arrangements, and stellar soloists. "This amazing ensemble does just about everything right." — *Village Voice*



P3M 23

MARTIN TAYLOR
LAST TRAIN TO HAUTEVILLE

This new album from multi-award-winning guitarist Martin Taylor marks the 100th anniversary of European jazz pioneer Django Reinhardt. "No matter how complex or daring, Taylor's interpretation never shortchanges the melodies; indeed, his remarkably fluid touch imbues a seamless beauty. Taylor is something to behold." — *Washington Post*

MAA 1039

THE DAVE LIEBMAN BIG BAND
AS ALWAYS

Dave Liebman leads the brightest New York jazz musicians in dynamic fashion through incredible arrangements of the jazz legend's compositions, seldom arranged for big band. "Liebman is among the most important saxophonists in contemporary music. A leader and artist of integrity and independent direction." — *DownBeat*

CHR 73301

FAY CLAASSEN
SING!

The big sound of the vast orchestra that accompanies Dutch jazz diva Fay Claassen is like a warm bath; it sounds so good & relaxing, yet is energizing and exciting as well. Claassen has recorded five CDs as a leader, with Toots Thielemans, Mike Stern, Kenny Werner, Barry Harris, Bert Joris, and more. She is a jazz diva of international stature and allure!

INU 34292

KAHIBA
GLOBAL DIALECTS

In Stores September 14th!

A convincing balancing act between emotional approachability, musical virtuosity, and compositional sophistication! This band has developed an intelligent new method of resolving compositions by using live electronics.

allegro
A DIVISION OF ALLEGRO MEDIA GROUP

North America's Leading Independent Music Distributor

www.allegromediagroup.com

THESE TITLES AVAILABLE AT: cd Universe

"Your Source for Blues, R&B, and Jazz"

www.cduniverse.com

Reviews

Contact: Marc Copland (left), Drew Gress, Dave Liebman, Billy Hart and John Abercrombie

Contact
Five On One

PIROUET 3048

★★★½

Here's a new grouping that looks like a one-off, but feels like a band. What can that be attributed to? Something more than professionalism, I'm guessing. From successful marriages to save-the-world think tanks, the particulars of ensemble chemistry are hard to nail down. But at the start of this year, in a Jersey studio, an array of 60-somethings—with 70-ish Billy Hart on the older side and 50-ish Drew Gress on the younger—proved that they spoke the same language, regardless of its myriad contours.

Long story short, a sense of connection centers this program. The way that Dave Liebman's tenor sax see-saws over the Marc Copland repetitions on "You And The Night And The Music." The way John Abercrombie weaves between the two, developing filigree. The quintet—some marketers might use the term "supergroup"—is in essence a working man's outfit. Each member is quite familiar with bandstand bylaws, and each knows that lost opportunities for nuanced improv don't always come 'round again. So it's contribution time; the music is consistently marked by sharing.

The title cut's freebop gallop is a masterpiece of pulse, thanks to Hart's floating grooves and the manner in which Contact passes the ball around. Feels like these guys made a pact based on agility before the mics ever got hot. The farewell flourish of "Like It Never Was" boasts a similar unity.

Flash is surely part of their collective arsenal, but there are several ways these guys wax radiant without seeming garish. "Retractable Cell" is a mid-tempo romp, somewhat pretty, if a bit languid (a trait that applies to a few of these tunes). But the interplay is terrific. The tenor twirls, the guitar steps out and the group launches subtlety after subtlety around them.

This deep coordination shines on the ballads as well. Hart's "Lullabye For Imke" floats in the ether with Lieb's long tones and the drummer's brushes clarifying the dreamy mood. Copland's "Childmoon Smile" is similar, providing pasteled gestures with power. Everywhere you turn on this record, poise and teamwork guide the way. Who's setting up the tour?

—Jim Macnie

Five On One: Sendup; Like It Never Was; Childmoon Smile; Four On One; Lost Horizon; Retractable Cell; My Refrain; Lullaby For Imke; You And The Night And The Music. (59:07)
Personnel: Dave Liebman, tenor and soprano saxophones; John Abercrombie, guitar; Marc Copland, piano; Drew Gress, bass; Billy Hart, drums.
Ordering info: pirouet.com

Rufus Reid
Out Front

MOTEMA 36
★★★½

Rufus Reid occupies a special place in the hearts of us Seattleites, as he spent three formative years here in the late 1960s. Since then, with his brawny sound, deep pulse and dedicated humility to driving an ensemble, he has become one of the most accomplished, respected and versatile bassists in jazz. On this album, as the title suggests, Reid steps "out front," with a muscular new trio whose members met three years ago in Texas, teaching a summer workshop. They project the empathy, warmth and joyous spirit of a group that has played together for years. It is particularly pleasant to hear Brazilian drummer Duduka Da Fonseca in a context that's not strictly Brazilian. His percussive drive ignites a lot of what is distinctive about the trio, which thrives on rhythmic diversity and staccato punch. The group also stretches beyond usual song form to ambitious compositional material written by all three band members, not always completely successful, but interesting. The pieces sometimes involve conversational, counter-melodic interactivity between Reid and energetic pianist Steve Allee, and I would prefer to have heard even more of that, though there's obviously nothing wrong with straightahead swing, either, and these guys cut a deep swath in that department, at many tempos. The trio talks briefly about the music in a somewhat stilted but informative video interview embedded in the disc.

Out Front kicks off with a snare drum roll by Da Fonseca on Reid's high-energy, zig-zag tune "Glory," inspired by the face of a black woman sculpted by African-American artist Elizabeth Catlett. Duduka's three-part samba "Doña Maria" follows, and now we're really into Brazilian territory, or perhaps more accurately, McCoy Tyner-goes-to-Brazil, given Allee's proclivities. Da Fonseca builds a smart solo on this one with variations on a roll and shines again on the trio's take on Marcos Silva's "Dry Land."

Two of Reid's most compelling moments occur on Tadd Dameron's "If You Could See Me Now" and Allee's composition "The Rise Of The Row." The Dameron is just exquisite. When he's walking, driving the band, Reid has a blunt, percussive sound with a short decay, but on this solo his notes sing and ring with a full sustain as he caresses that famous half-step rise in the melody. On "The Rise Of The Row," inspired but not actually based on a 12-tone row, after a dreamy, rubato piano/bass conversation, Reid delivers another passionately lyrical solo. He showcases his talent as an arco player on his long suite "Caress The Thought," which starts with a low, spine-shivering four-note figure with beautiful vibrato. Reid then again complements Allee's solo with lines that rise and fall in volume and presence in a way that sounds spontaneous and organic. Allee, who seems to be equally influenced by the percussive and modal thundering of Tyner and the jubilee tremolos of Gene Harris, goes on a bit long here. There is a grand pause, Reid goes back to the bow and more sections ensue. I found it all a trifle grand. By contrast, Reid's dreamy waltz "Reminiscing" is a lovely tune, and the ensemble manages to swing it beautifully even at a slow tempo. Allee's "Ebony," with its modal moves, is nicely blended, as well, with Reid tossing in what sounds like a quick allusion to "Sweet Lorraine."

A strong but not always melodically compelling soloist, Reid gives Allee an awful lot of solo time on this album. This is fine, but when Reid solos on "The Rise Of The Row," he sounds more like the leader of his trio than merely its bassist, a subtle distinction, to be sure, but one that has to do with where the emotional center of the music comes from, a role that must be challenging to take on when one is accustomed to playing support. As Reid continues to lead this excellent trio, I hope he will project that center even more strongly. —*Paul de Barros*

Out Front: Glory; Doña Maria; Reminiscing; Ebony; Caress The Thought; Dry Land; The Rise Of The Row; If You Could See Me Now; The Crying Blues. (70:05)
Personnel: Rufus Reid, bass; Steve Allee, piano; Duduka Da Fonseca, drums.
Ordering info: motema.com

Marian Petrescu Quartet
Thrivin': Live At The Jazz Standard

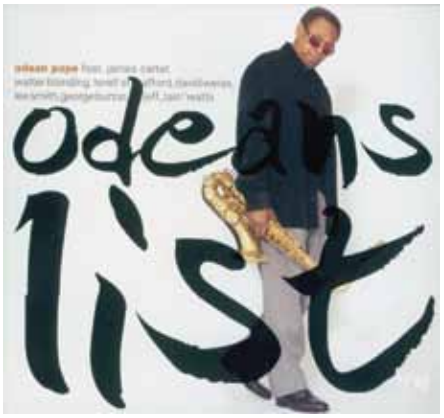
RESONANCE 1014
★★★★

Oscar Peterson was often accused of being too eclectic to have a style. Perhaps. But then why is it, I wonder, that if he had no style, one cannot listen to Marian Petrescu without being constantly reminded of Peterson? If you relish vintage Oscar at his swirling, hard-swinging best, you'll find a lot to like in the work of this man, a visitor from Romania who clearly intends such comparisons.

Like Peterson (and Art Tatum before him), Petrescu comes prepared to dazzle us first; and then, once dazzled, show us what else he can do. His opening gambit here is a furious tear through Peterson's "Cakewalk," taken at a far more aggressive pace than Oscar's original (from *Nigerian Marketplace* in 1981). It's a pretty sensational specimen of piano that, without specifically imitating its mentor, contains most of the more beguiling Peterson markers. Pacing, for example. After the initial chorus, Petrescu pulls back to give each of his five successive choruses space to grow. But even in relative repose, the rigorous and rapid iambic pentameter has an irresistible rhythmic precision that is all the more hypnotic because so much of contemporary jazz piano today seems to have grown uninterested in the elemental power of sheer swing. Woven into this regularity are the most nonchalantly placed triplets along with long, double-time strings of notes that form sweeping arcs and corkscrew patterns—the sonic equivalent of the strobe effect when waving a sparkler in the night. Yet, these breathtaking interpolations never break the momentum of the larger line. Another Peterson trademark appears as Petrescu goes into the fifth chorus of "Cakewalk" with a little right-handed Fats Waller phrase. Almost immediately his left hand picks up the line and tracks it note for note in a parallel unison voicing whose remarkable intricacy sustains until the bridge. Almost as impressive, by the way, is Andreas Öberg, whose guitar pumps out a similar level of emotional and musical abandon.

"Blues Etude," another OP opus, and "My Romance" (after a slightly florid opening) are more relaxed at mid-tempo. Öberg mirrors his guitar lines vocally on the latter and Petrescu revs up the RPMs with hammering block chords on "Etude." "On The Trail" is a piano-bass duet that otherwise preserves the essential outlines of Peterson's treatment, yet reverses the method of "Cakewalk." This time Petrescu slows the velocity to about half of what Peterson chose, only to go into battle speed in the last minute or two. "Yours Is My Heart Alone," though a ballad, gets the express treatment from bar one, as does his solo performance of "Indiana" after the first two minutes. But the feeling here is decidedly more Tatum that Peterson. In fact, the piece rather boldly contrasts the two personalities—Tatum, dizzying but formal against a stridish left hand; Peterson, swaggering and full of bravado and irregular thrusts. "Blue In Green" is the only unmitigatedly slow "mood" piece. While lovely, it doesn't really play to the high cards in Petrescu's deck, which may come from another time in jazz but still sound terrific. His major challenge now is to play those cards without inviting the comparisons to Peterson. —*John McDonough*

Thrivin': Live At The Jazz Standard: Cakewalk; My Romance; Blue In Green; Blues Etude; On The Trail; Your Is My Heart Alone; Indiana. (63:00)
Personnel: Marian Petrescu, piano; Andreas Öberg, guitar, voice (2); David Finck, bass; Mark McLean, drums.
Ordering info: resonancerecords.org



Odean Pope
Odean's List

IN + OUT 77102

★★★★½

That Odean Pope isn't better known is ridiculous. Both as a saxophonist and as a composer, he's immensely gifted, an elder statesman whose bank of knowledge is still lucid and vast.

Odean's List is a superior entry in his fine discography. The octet is top notch, beefing up to sound like a small big-band in thicker sections, paring down to reveal the group's stellar membership. The brief opener "Minor Infractions" makes clear the potential heft of the ensemble, ending in a vortex of horns, big fat bottom aided by the luscious recording, Pope's soaring solo just an appetizer. For the full meal, hear the trotting "Blues For Eight," Pope squeezing all the juice out of a three-note phrase, sometimes Sonny Rollins-ish on his longer solo spot in a trio setting featuring Lee Smith's bass and Jeff "Tain" Watts' drums. Take the drums out and slow down to a sensuous tenor/bass version of Eddie Green's "Say It Over And Over Again," bringing to mind the breathless ballad action of vintage Archie Shepp (an early colleague of Pope's, also the CD's liner notician), certain diaphanous notes ringing like tuned gongs.

Pope's compositions are direct but complex, punchy but not bombastic, always full of crunchy material for the soloists. The pieces for larger group include "Phrygian Love Theme," James Carter's baritone rising from the exotic, smeary theme, trumpeter Terell Stafford bright and shiny, a majestic blowtorch. Carter's hot-blooded tenor is the focus of "Collections," followed by a cooler-tempered trumpet spot from David Weiss. "To The Roach" honors Max Roach, in whose quartet Pope was a longterm member; Watts takes a suitably melodic drum solo. On a dedication to the leader's wife, "Cis," the program closes with elegance and sophistication, a lengthy through-composed section featuring the five horns alone, Pope's fervent solo a love-letter sealed with a thoughtful smooch.

—John Corbett

Odean's List: Minor Infractions; To The Roach; Phrygian Love Theme; Say It Over And Over Again; Little Miss Lady; Blues For Eight; Collections; Odean's List; You And Me; Cis. (64:00)
Personnel: Odean Pope, Walter Blanding, tenor saxophones; James Carter, tenor and baritone saxophone; David Weiss, Terell Stafford, trumpets; George Burton, piano; Lee Smith, bass; Jeff "Tain" Watts, drums.
Ordering info: inandout-records.com

The Hot Box

	John McDonough	John Corbett	Jim Macnie	Paul de Barros
Contact *Five On One*	★★½	★★★★	★★★½	★★★½
Marian Petrescu *Thrivin': Live At The Jazz Standard*	★★★★	★★½	★★	★★½
Rufus Reid *Out Front*	★★★	★★★½	★★★	★★★½
Odean Pope *Odean's List*	★★★	★★★★½	★★★½	★★★

Critics' Comments

Contact, *Five On One*

What a lineup: Abercrombie, Liebman, Hart, Gress and Copland. Yet despite the firepower, this music is so tender and serene, almost like a daydream rustling in the back of your mind. Nothing mind-blowing, but elegant, mature stuff. I love the way Liebman is playing these days—textural, restrained and with great mix of melodic and abstract ideas. Gress' tune "My Refrain" is a standout. *—Paul de Barros*

The Liebman-Abercrombie combination is particularly tasty in this supergrouping—the saxophonist's grit and energy complements the guitarist's smoother burnish. Lots of unexpected turns, high among them Hart's moving "Lullaby For Imke." Infused with a genuinely collective spirit. *—John Corbett*

There's a smart energy in the title track, which seems to delight in the uncertainty of its own mischief. But overall the CD is a challenge to the attention span. Despite the camaraderie and the warm fluency of Abercrombie, the reclusive modalities make the music seem alive but undernourished. *—John McDonough*

Rufus Reid, *Out Front*

It's a newish trio that manages to shoot off some sparks as they putter along with a handful of mildly engaging tunes. Reid is right about one thing: Pianist Allee warrants more notice than he currently gets; time and again he makes things happen. Secret weapon: the boss's full-on bass whomp. *—Jim Macnie*

Anchored by Allee's journeyman piano, Reid's range of mastery is manifest in support and solo roles. "Caress The Thought" is ambitious and a bit arduous, but a dramatic frame for his melancholy, bowed strokes. Reid praises the group's "inexplicable … chemistry," a claim I find elusive. Musician's talk, perhaps. I hear a good trio at work. *—John McDonough*

Change the locus and any "piano trio" could be a "drum trio" or a "bass trio." Reid's definitely in the fore, but *Out Front*'s got too much of an egalitarian vibe—well earned by Da Fonseca and Allee—to be categorized as the latter. Strong original music by all members is a plus. *—John Corbett*

Marian Petrescu, *Thrivin': Live At The Jazz Standard*

Light touch, heavy hand. Technique needs to be deployed in a compellingly musical way to avoid becoming a fetish. Lots of Peterson-esque razzle from Petrescu and company, sometimes designed to build tension or excitement, often veering into a show-offy realm. *—John Corbett*

There's something hokey about the action on this live date. Hopped-up tempos sans a real emotional purpose; glib, if impressive, chops. Seems like the pianist moves from ditty to ditty without differentiating them much (save for "Blue In Green"). Good example of craft swamping art. *—Jim Macnie*

There's no denying Petrescu's technical prowess—goodness, could anyone play faster?—and I find it quite wonderfully international that he is a Romanian living in Finland imitating a Canadian. But enough notes, already. Even when his bass player solos, Petrescu mimics his phrases. But this is surely a matter of taste. The guy can play. And swing. *—Paul de Barros*

Odean Pope, *Odean's List*

Assertive, often intense octet writing fans a pretty stormy set that sweeps Pope into some cluttered thickets crowded with unruly runs and yelps. His most amicable moments ("Blues For Eight") seem stranded in a gale. Carter is solid as a tree trunk with a bag of shrieks he uses with such precision and drive, they often sound musical. *—John McDonough*

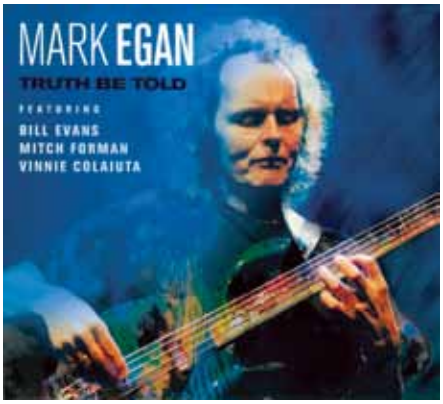
This stellar five-horn ensemble starts out really promising, with a bristling, raw pop. But despite some excellent soloing from Stafford and Carter, the writing falls far short of expectations. There should be more tracks like the thrilling, Spanish-sounding "Phrygian Love Theme" and the richly woven ballad "Cis." The rest are just strings of solos with very little ensemble interest. Pope, technically brilliant, I've always found a little dry and calculating as a soloist. *—Paul de Barros*

Pope is one of those guys who can mow you down anytime he chooses, so when he populates this hard-hitting session with like-minded compatriots (Carter, Watts), he's got a fish-in-barrel vibe going down. That's not a diss. I crank this thing up and let the lyrical aggression wash all over me. Seems like that's its purpose. *—Jim Macnie*

Mark Egan
Truth Be Told

WAVETONE 8642

★★★½



Sometimes the album title fits just right. Four friends—Mark Egan, Bill Evans, Mitch Forman, Vinnie Colaiuta—mingle jazz and r&b the only way they know: from the heart with creative spirit. Taking a breather from his long-running gig with Elements, making his sixth feature record since the mid-1980s, the former Pat Metheny Group bassist revels in interplay and groove on likable original compositions that he developed from bass lines, a computer program or scrawled compositional ideas.

Not to slight Elements' Danny Gottlieb and the other fine drummers he's teamed with over the years, Egan may have found his ultimate communicative partner in Colaiuta (like Egan, a favorite of pop and jazz notables; recently on tour with Herbie Hancock). The crux of 11 songs lies in the two's simpatico assembling of rhythm and sound. They constantly react to each other as if they were spiritualistic mediums hooked into an ineffable power; for these two, thought transference is real, with jazz messages humming mind-to-mind via display of energy on Pedulla basses, drums and cymbals. Both have the right inclinations, bold and probing, avoiding "contemporary jazz" pretension and predictability. We've known for years that lyricism is an important component of Egan's playing, so apparent throughout *Truth Be Told*.

Don't think Evans, who employs Egan in his jazz-hoedown Soulgrass band, gets relegated to the sidelines. He's actively involved in the music, pushing hard on saxophones as if trying to elicit the awe of an upward gaze at the stars on a clear night. He and Egan are really in sync as person-to-person communicators when performing a melody in unison. Heavily involved too is Forman, going about his craft on plugged-in keyboards and acoustic piano with a firm intent, though the drama generated electronically on "Shadow Play" and a few more sounds contrived in a vapid pop-jazz fashion. His Indian-classical sound-creations next to Egan's free-ranging, fretless bass make the closing ballad "After Thought" quite interesting, a direction worth further investigation.

—Frank-John Hadley

Truth Be Told: Frog Legs; Gargoyle; Truth Be Told; Sea Saw; Café Risque; Shadow Play; Blue Launch; Rhyme Or Reason; Blue Rain; Pepé; After Thought. (61:09)
Personnel: Mark Egan, fretted and fretless basses; Bill Evans, saxophones; Mitch Forman, acoustic piano, electric keyboards; Vinnie Colaiuta, drums; Roger Squitero, percussion.
Ordering info: wavetone.com

Joe Chambers
Horace To Max

SAVANT 2107

★★★½

Veteran percussionist Joe Chambers assembles young stalwarts for nine post-bop rarities written prior to his 1963 arrival in Manhattan. Three from Max Roach/Abbey Lincoln, one each from Kenny Dorham, Horace Silver, Thelonious Monk, Wayne Shorter and Marcus Miller move right along, with Chambers' cheerful capper. Showcasing his vibes and marimba as much as drums, Chambers' quintet finds a cool burn that rings true yet hangs loose. Ostensibly nods to his heroes (Chambers' time-out solo on the ballad "Mendacity" is pure Max), these period cameos don't stretch (just three exceed 5 minutes) so much as cruise by—relaxed snapshots of smiling summers.

Marimba does wonders to light up the set: "Water Babies" bubbles ineffably, "Afreeka" flits along like kalimba and kora—charming Africana. Alexander always sounds on his game: direct, amiable, burly, never surly; he delivers brisk justice to "Evidence" and keen wit on "Man From South Africa." Nicole Guiland lifts droll Lincoln sass and a bit of scat on two vocals, each featuring a bright Xavier Davis spot. Best of show may be the multi-dimensional fantasia on Silver's sprightly "Ecorah" that tools between mood and groove. *—Fred Bouchard*

Horace To Max: Asiatic Raes; Ecorah; Man From South Africa; Mendacity; Portia; Water Babies; Lonesome Lover; Evidence; Afreeka. (49:52)
Personnel: Joe Chambers, drums (1, 3–4, 6–8), vibraphone (2, 3, 4, 6, 7, 9), marimba (5, 9); Eric Alexander, tenor saxophone; Xavier Davis, piano; Dwayne Burno, bass; Steve Berrios, congas (1, 9), percussion (3, 6, 8), drums (2, 5); Nicole Guiland, voice (4, 7); Helen Sung, piano; Richie Goode, bass (7).
Ordering info: jazzdepot.com

Chris Lightcap's Bigmouth
Deluxe

CLEAN FEED 174

★★★★½

As impressive as bassist Chris Lightcap's first two albums were in showing off his distinctive two-tenor quartet, they didn't prepare us for the richness and emotional reach of *Deluxe*. Bigmouth, which takes its name from the second album, is now a quintet with the addition of Craig Taborn on Wurlitzer and piano; on three tracks, altoist Andrew D'Angelo joins tenorists Tony Malaby and Chris Cheek (who replaces Bill McHenry). Whether recalling early Return To Forever with the Spanish tinge and dancing electric keyboard of "Platform" or breaking out in free-jazz on "Two-Face," the music is brimmingly alive.

Lightcap, who wrote all of the songs and produced the album, writes spare, regal melodies—some modal, some minimalist, all streaked with possibility. Lifted skyward by the unison saxes, the glorious, South African-styled "Ting" stops just short of bursting. "Silvertone" builds slowly and mournfully to an explosive conclusion, showing off the contrasts between Malaby's dusky intensity, Cheek's hard sheen and D'Angelo's live-wire abandon.

As straightforward as the tunes can be, they gain complexity and off-center strength from the painterly blurring of the saxes, subtle out-of-phase rhythms, staggered solos and opposing dynamics. Even as Taborn's hard-edged Wurlitzer lines, Lightcap's rangy, full-wooded attack and drummer Gerald Cleaver's Elvin Jones-like orchestrations push the music relentless forward, the two- and three-note melodies keep it rooted in the moment, radiating a powerful sense of place. As fellow New York bassist Lindsey Horner did on his underrated *Never No More* (1991), Lightcap defines his role as much in ethereal terms as earthy. From start to finish, this music sings. *—Lloyd Sachs*

Deluxe: Platform, Silvertone, Ting, Year Of The Rooster, The Clutch, Two-Face, Deluxe Version, Fuzz. (56:31)
Personnel: Chris Lightcap, double bass; Chris Cheek, Tony Malaby, tenor saxophone; Craig Taborn, Wurlitzer electric piano, piano; Gerald Cleaver, drums; Andrew D'Angelo, alto saxophone (2, 3, 8).
Ordering info: cleanfeed-records.com

Sonny Fortune
Last Night At Sweet Rhythm
SOUND REASON
★★★½

Writer Russ Musto puts it best in the liners to Sonny Fortune's first live record as a leader when he talks of Fortune's "multi climactic" solos and attempts to "communicate a tale of historic proportions." The Philadephian saxist's own history includes early stints with Elvin Jones, Mongo Santamaria, Buddy Rich and McCoy Tyner, not to mention two records with Miles Davis during a short mid-'70s stay. Given the Tyner/Jones legacy and the shadow of John Coltrane, Fortune's organic style is driving and relentless but he is entirely his own man. His improvisations are fresh and unmannered, never a concoction of preconceived patterns, as with less-journeyed younger players. Tributes to the Jones brothers and Billie Holiday, plus "Never Again Is Such A Long Time" and "It Ain't What It Was," reveal Fortune's nostalgic bent, but his playing has an immediacy that vindicates the logic of a live document.

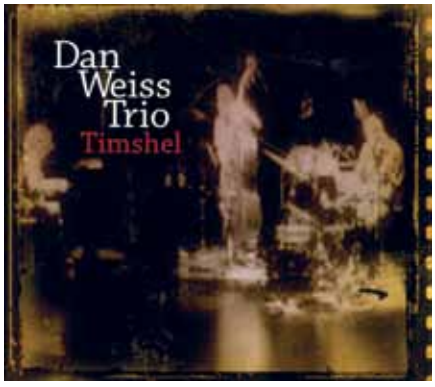
Fortune produced this for his own label, and though the mix is a bit toppy and querulous, the saxist's passion cuts through. His flute, which he phrases like a shukuhachi, opens the longest track, "The Joneses," before alto ferociously returns—always grasping bluesily in all registers for new sounds, gloriously alive. On "In Waves Of Dreams," soprano sax schmears out long tones over a deep modal base and sustains a note in the altissimo register. It's a cliché to talk of the bass as anchor, but Williams, who I hear about less these days, is one of the deepest anchors. An alto phrase cues the tolling outro to the "Joneses," with Johns' mallets and pendulous bass setting the mournful, valedictory tone. Such churning meditations are a Fortune trademark; there are bittersweet recollections but always a joyful sense of the present. —*Michael Jackson*

Last Night At Sweet Rhythm: It Ain't What It Was; The Blues Are Green; Never Again Is Such A Long Time; In Waves Of Dreams; A Tribute To A Holiday; The Joneses; Laying It Down. (50:34).
Personnel: Sonny Fortune, alto saxophone, soprano saxophone, flute; Michael Cochrane, piano; David Williams, bass; Steve Johns, drums.
Ordering info: sonnyfortune.com

Dan Weiss Trio
Timshel

SUNNYSIDE 1242

★★★½



Drummer Dan Weiss sets out an ambitious agenda for his trio's sophomore recording, which he intends to be heard as a continuous work, listened to in sequence. Drawing deeply on his tabla studies, he works with space, minimal melodic development and dramatic tension. The apprehension generated within "Frederic"—a nod to Chopin—and "Dream" recalls pianist Ran Blake's ruminations on the film noir genre.

The mood is established by the ominous-sounding "Prelude," one of four sub-two-minute compositions that serve as thematic links, which sets the stage for the masterfully structured "Stephanie." Using a single, repeated piano note as counterpoint and subtle brush strokes to signal changes in mood, the piece leaves as much unstated as it reveals. The balance between Weiss and bandmates Jacob Sacks and Thomas Morgan seems tenuous, and the trio never allows the sense of uncertainty to fade. Only the closing three minutes, taken at a quicker tempo with more fulsome piano, point toward resolution. Another lengthy piece, "Florentino And Fermina," also follows this pattern, with the trio building intensity following spare opening statements by Sacks and Morgan.

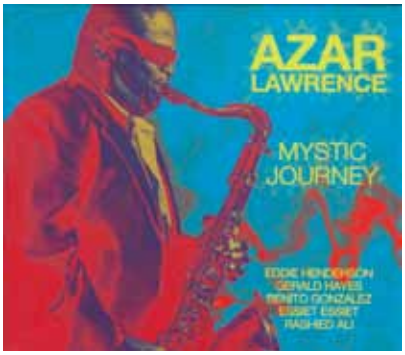
The fulcrum of Weiss' 12-part epic are two pieces that adapt the tenets of tabla playing to the trio setting, including the vocalization of a percussive rhythm on "Chakradar." While these compositions align with the conception of the longer compositions, "Always Be Closing" arrives from left field. A drum interpretation of Jack Lemmon's monologue from the 1992 film *Glengarry Glen Ross*, the piece uses techniques employed previously by drummer John Hollenbeck and pianist Jason Moran, but with less success. David Mamet's dialogue lacks the historical significance of the Martin Luther King speech Hollenbeck interpreted or the mystery and flow of the Turkish cellphone conversation Moran sampled, so the performance seems more of a curiosity than an integral component. That, and a too-long "Postlude," undercut *Timshel*'s persuasive beauty. —*James Hale*

Timshel: Prelude; Stephanie; Always Be Closing; Frederic; Teental Song; Chakradar; Interlude; Florentino And Fermina; What Do You Want To Be When You Grow Up?; Timshel; Dream; Postlude. (56:23)
Personnel: Dan Weiss, drums; Jacob Sacks, piano; Thomas Morgan, bass.
Ordering info: sunnysiderecords.com

Azar Lawrence
Mystic Journey

FURTHERMORE 004

★★★★



The John Coltrane legacy hits from the get-go on *Mystic Journey*, and Azar Lawrence is entirely unsqueamish about this association, having worked with McCoy Tyner (notably on Tyner's 1973 album *Enlightenment*). Adding further credibility to the funneling of Trane is drummer Rashied Ali, here on his last session (the recording duly dedicated to Ali). The vivid, solarized CD art suggests an acid-jazz album, but the music herein is too pummeling and intense for that moniker, despite the golden lustre of Eddie Henderson's flugelhorn and Lawrence's side career with Marvin Gaye and Earth, Wind and Fire. Check the blistering finale to the opener and the virile collective voices at the fade of "Summer Solstice."

The presence of altoist Gerald Hayes pushes this group to a sextet. With pinched tone reminiscent of Bobby Watson, Hayes gets a taste on Tyner's "Walk Spirit, Talk Spirit" after a bruising foray from the leader balanced by Henderson's clear logic and several muscular choruses by Benito Gonzalez, who lends this date an iron spine. Bassist Essiet rushes before the reprise of the cut-time head, such flurries contributing to the excitement of this disc, which seethes with feeling and energy. "Say It Over Again" adds nothing to the classic Coltrane *Ballads* rendition, but Lawrence has little interest in disguising his influence. Ali's "Adrees," named for his son, takes the group in a new direction, and his splashy turbulence gives little hint he would not be around four months later. Hayes tries rhythmical things on this vaguely South African 6/8 theme. Benito stabs out Tyner-ish chords on the dramatically climbing melody to "Journey's End."

Not massively original in essence perhaps, but this record recaptures the controlled passion maelstrom of Coltrane's transitional mid-'60s period (Lawrence ratchets intensity during Gonzalez's "Starting Point," spitting shards from under sheets of sound) and represents a rugged comeback for Lawrence plus a fine farewell for the undersung art of Ali.

—*Michael Jackson*

Mystic Journey: Mystic Journey; Summer Solstice; Quest; Walk Spirit, Talk Spirit; Say It Over Again; Adrees; Journey's End; Starting Point. (61:42).
Personnel: Azar Lawrence, tenor and soprano saxophones; Eddie Henderson, trumpet and flugelhorn; Gerald Hayes, alto saxophone; Benito Gonzalez, piano; Essiet Essiet, bass; Rashied Ali, drums.
Ordering info: furthermorerecordings.com

Mike Reed's People, Places & Things
Stories And Negotiations

482 MUSIC 1070

★★★

This is the third installment of a project by drummer Mike Reed designed to pay tribute to an overlooked era of Chicago jazz—the mid-to-late '50s. This live recording represents a step further in this endeavor since Reed invited three actual representatives of this scene to join his crew of young talents: trumpeter Art Hoyle, saxophonist Ira Sullivan and trombonist Julian Priester.

Reed, who has already transcended the racial divide in a segregated city, is now bridging gaps between musicians of two distant generations. By so doing, he is also underlining a continuum that is at work and that quite a few people fail to see in those up-and-coming musicians who are often catalogued as free-jazz players. One is struck by the fervent communion that brings those musicians together even if sometimes the less-than-adequately miked soloists slow the momentum; their interpretations are full of spirit and thoughtfulness according to the occasion. Moreover, the compositions co-written by the leader and alto saxist Greg Ward do not distract from the staples the band tackles. The lovely ballad "Third Option," with its lush arrangement and delightful ascending theme, is a true highlight.

If the set has a jam session atmosphere, the ensemble passages are often more memorable and remarkable than the solos despite the frequent quotes that make their way unexpectedly in the choruses. Fortunately, this "tribute" to times long gone is devoid of posturing or nostalgia. It simply brings them back to life with a few updates: the freely improvised preludes to some of the tunes; the collective improvisations that at times break into a firework of counterpoints; and the constantly shifting teamwork of Reed and bass player Jason Roebke that adds a definite modern vibe. —*Alain Drouot*

Stories And Negotiations: Song Of A Star; Third Option (For Art Hoyle); El Is A Sound Of Joy; Wilbur's Tune; The And Of 2 (For Ira Sullivan); Door #1 (For Julian Priester); Urnack; Lost And Found. (61:35)
Personnel: Mike Reed, drums; Art Hoyle, trumpet and flugelhorn; Julian Priester, Jeb Bishop, trombone; Ira Sullivan, Tim Haldeman, tenor saxophone; Greg Ward, alto saxophone; Jason Roebke, bass.
Ordering info: 482music.com

Matt Marantz
Offering
(SELF-RELEASE)
★★★½

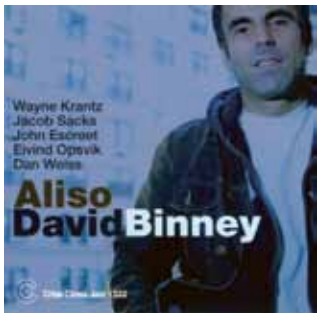
As the cover art to this CD suggests, religious conviction is a big part of tenorist Matt Marantz's life and many of his compositional ideas here are inspired by the works of The Creator, including "Hope," which dwells in awe at the midwinter night sky in Texas.

The undulating, loose rhythmic flow and somewhat somber—or "pastel," as one title suggests—hues of this record wouldn't be out of place on the ECM label. It should be noted that "Pastel" is one of the more burning tunes on this collection, rather higher in saturation than the title suggests. Despite residency in New York, Marantz is fascinated by scenes and the sea, reflected in such cuts as "Coastlines" and "Dream's Harbor" (his note about the latter, "a place where you protectively lay up treasures of ideas," is nicely evocative). Over the long haul, the cuts could use more conceptual variation or greater moodswing, but then again, there is programmatic cohesion as a result and the group (heavy but not bloated with harmony given both guitar and keys aboard) seem perfectly at ease, riding buoyant then turbulent and splashy cymbal work from Davis.

Despite flashes of Michael Brecker-ish chops here and there, Marantz is not a bombastic, vainglorious player but deeply sincere and meditative, and the "Offering" is given with an open hand, no hidden agendas, ending on a nice bowing subtone. *—Michael Jackson*

Offering: The Narrow Path; Quiet; Patience; Coastlines; Hope; Pastel; Rainfall; Sketches; Dream's Harbor; Offering; Prayer. (65:03)
Personnel: Matt Marantz, tenor saxophone; Sam Harris, piano; Martin Nevin, bass; Michael Davis, drums; Steve Cardenas, guitar (2, 4, 6, 10); Reuben Samana, bass (8).
Ordering info: mattmarantz.com

David Binney
Aliso
CRISS CROSS JAZZ 1322
★★★½



From the opening drum hit from Dan Weiss, *Aliso* imparts a rock/fusion vibe, with tight breaks, stationary rhythmic undercurrent and twisting, fractal guitar from Wayne Krantz. One wonders what Gerry Teekens made of it, since his Criss Cross label has been a bastion of straightahead acoustic jazz. With that said, apart from the stipulation that musicians include standard ballads and burners in their sets, Teekens has also provided an outlet for original compositions from the top tier of New York talent.

As well as being a jaw-drop alto technician, rivaling Rudresh Mahanthappa as prima virtuoso, Binney is a prolific writer. Liners allege this session was thrown together day of, since all were insanely busy immediately prior, which might explain some of the prosaic titles ("A Day In Music," "Bar Life") but doesn't explain how tight this unit is in the circumstances. Binney describes his 11th hour cover selections as lingua franca, but few folk play Wayne Shorter's "Toy Tune" or "Teru." Sam Rivers' "Fuschia Swing Song" and John Coltrane's "Africa" are also atypical. "Strata," inspired by Charles Tolliver's Strata East recordings, is similar elementally to the kick-off track, but with the implied beat a tad slower, allowing Weiss to interpolate other rhythms from his bag of spices as Indian percussion master. Opsvik nicely suspends the time on bass as Binney winds up a chromatic solo. Sacks gets a probing taste here (he has more fun later on the Serengeti-wild "Africa"), which turns a little classical before restatement of the bassline. Krantz fashions a subtle bubbling riff at the fade. *—Michael Jackson*

Aliso: Aliso; A Day In Music; Toy Tune; Strata; Teru; Fuchsia Swing Song; Bar Life; Think Of One; Africa. (73.23)
Personnel: David Binney, alto saxophone; Wayne Krantz, guitar; Jacob Sacks, piano; John Escreet, piano (1, 7, 9); Eivind Opsvik, bass; Dan Weiss, drums.
Ordering info: crisscrossjazz.com

Myron Walden In This World
To Feel

DEMI SOUND 0005

★★★★

What We Share

DEMI SOUND 0006

★★★★

Myron Walden is one of the latest jazz artists to illustrate the benefits of sabbaticals. Bowing out from the scene a la Sonny Rollins (or, more recently, Sam Newsome), Walden marks one of this year's most welcome returns, in which he sounds rejuvenated, focused and relaxed.

Those qualities enliven his first two self-released discs with his empathic ensemble, In This World, which nestles Walden's impassioned lyricism on tenor and soprano saxophones. Coming on the heels of *Momentum* and *Momentum Live* (both released earlier this year) arrives the ballad-heavy *What We Share* and *To Feel*. Both titles are indicative of the music, given how Walden maximizes the tremendous rapport of his ensemble and the earnestness of his improvisations and saxophone tone.

Compositions like "Giving" and "Lonesome Dwellings" (from *To Feel*) and "Gentle Embrace" and "A Love Eternal" (from *What We Share*) glimmer with succinct melodicism and highly manicured saxophone improvisations. Walden's full-bodied saxophone often glides slowly inside shimmering harmonies provided by guitarist Mike Moreno and keyboardist David Bryant, propelled by drummer Kendrick Scott and bassist Yasushi Nakamura.

There's hardly a rushed moment on these discs. But that's not to say their hypnotic lull lacks excitement. Instead of amping up fireworks, the ensemble opts for suspense. That quality enlivens the gorgeous "As She Sleeps" (from *To Feel*) and "In Search Of The Lost City" (from *What We Share*). Also, Walden offers two versions of "The Fall Of Summer" that show his mastery of the bass clarinet on one and tenor saxophone on the other.

On both discs, nothing jumps out in an obtrusive or aggressive manner, which to some listeners could become a distraction, given how the music morphs, ebbs and flows at a mostly leisure pace. Still, they seduce in a way that pulls listeners in, gently demanding repeated spins. —*John Murph*

To Feel: When All Is Said And Done; Giving; Settling Calmness; In This World; Lonesome Dwellings; The Fall Of Summer; As She Sleeps; Hope; I Believe; Gone But Not Forgotten. (48:32)
Personnel: Myron Walden, tenor saxophone (1, 2, 4, 9, 10); soprano saxophone (3, 5); bass clarinet (6, 11); David Bryant, Fender Rhodes (1, 3, 4, 5, 8, 9); Jon Cowherd, Fender Rhodes (2, 10); Mike Moreno, electric guitar (1–6, 8–10), acoustic guitar (7, 11); Yasushi Nakamura, bass (1, 3–6, 8, 9); Chris Thomas, bass (2, 10); Kendrick Scott, drums (1, 3–6, 8, 9); Brian Blade, drums (2, 10).
Ordering info: myronwalden.com

What We Share: Gentle Embrace; Tama; With Every Breath; A Love Eternal; The Promise Of Tomorrow; Endless; In Search Of The Lost City; The Fall Of Summer; Forgotten Memories. (53:54)
Personnel: Myron Walden, tenor saxophone (1–4, 6, 8, 9), soprano saxophone (1, 5, 7); David Bryant, Fender Rhodes; Mike Moreno, electric guitar; Yasushi Nakamura, bass; Kendrick Scott, drums; Jon Cowherd, Fender Rhodes (5); Chris Thomas, bass (5); Brian Blade, drums (5).
Ordering info: myronwalden.com

Rhoda Scott
Beyond The Sea

DOODLIN' RECORDS 013

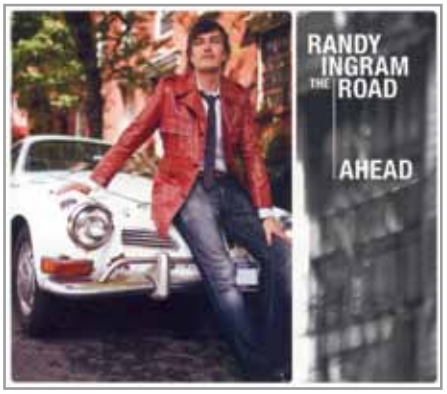
★★★

Although her penchant for performing primarily at home in Europe has dropped her somewhat off the radar of American music audiences, Hammond virtuoso Rhoda Scott remains one of the world's top organists. Her latest effort showcases the energy of a live performance recorded in Northern California to an audibly grateful room.

Beyond The Sea is rooted firmly in funk and soul from opening track, an original burner that shines as one of the album's best. "My One And Only Love" hints at the church music Scott was raised on. Her exchanges with tenor player Ricky Woodard swing in much the same way that her interplay with Joe Thomas on *Live At The Key Club* did back in 1963 when she was gigging regularly with a tenor and drums trio on the East Coast.

The addition of vocalist Kim Nalley, featured on three tracks, may be an acquired taste. Two versions of the title track—one featuring Scott's up-tempo grooves and a slower, vocal-centric ballad—create an unfortunate comparison in which Scott's rich and organic approach to her instrument is muted by Nally's cabaret-styled performance in the latter. At other times, Nalley opens up the sound of the entire band, her smart scatting on "Falling In Love With Love/By The River Saint Marie" shifting the focus from Scott's soul grooves to her impressively wide vocal range. —*Jennifer Odell*

Beyond The Sea: Half Moon Bay; My One And Only Love; Falling In Love With Love/By The River Saint Marie; Beyond The Sea; Green Dolphin Street; Beyond The Sea; Roll 'Em Pete; Secret Love; Blue Bossa. (72:58)
Personnel: Rhoda Scott, organ; Ricky Woodard, tenor saxophone; Akira Tana, drums; Kim Nalley, vocals.
Ordering info: doodlinrecords.com



Randy Ingram
The Road Ahead

BROOKLYN JAZZ UNDERGROUND 010

★★★½

Patience is one of life's more elusive lessons, especially if you're in a hurry to acquire it. Though exceptions abound, youth doesn't get it, whether hot-rodding solos with the fastest possible passagework or cramming adjectives into reviews of those eager virtuosos. Enlightenment comes in part through learning how to achieve greater results through more economical means.

In his debut as a leader, Randy Ingram makes it clear that he has absorbed this lesson into his creative DNA. Much of *The Road Ahead* feels reflective. He and his colleagues aren't trying to light any fires, which isn't to say that there isn't any heat in their playing. All four musicians are fully in command of their techniques, but they express their mastery with restraint. Some of the most impressive drumming on this disc begins at the top of the title cut, where Johann Rueckert sets the pace on ride cymbal and immediately begins varying the pulse, slipping between beats, shifting emphasis from upbeats to downbeats, sliding in and out of triplets, keeping everything to a whisper. All of it swings, in way that hovers perfectly between delicacy and drive.

Ingram has cultivated a spare style. His dynamic range is muted—but therefore, nuances within that range are vivid. His solo lines stroll rather than sprint: In a 7/8 mellow funk feel on "Rock Song #3" as well as in a subtly complex rendering of Thelonious Monk's "Think Of One," Ingram almost never pushes past a 16th-note clip. As with his dynamics, his structural inventiveness is clearer when laid out thoughtfully, especially in unaccompanied moments such as his intro to "Spring Can Really Hang You Up The Most" and throughout all of his illuminating reharmonization of "For No One." And when Ingram does kick it up in free-time interludes within the prickly swing of Ornette Coleman's "Round Trip," the impact is at least as strong as that made by his flashier peers and deeper too. —*Robert L. Doerschuk*

The Road Ahead: Rock Song #3; Dream Song; For No One; The Road Ahead; So In Love; Spring Can Really Hang You Up The Most; Round Trip; Hope; Think Of One. (61:21)
Personnel: Randy Ingram, piano; John Ellis, tenor and soprano saxophone; Matt Clohesy, bass; Johann Rueckert, drums.
Ordering info: bjurecords.com

Smooth Survivors


Jeff Lorber: revisiting '70s concept

While the so-called smooth jazz radio format has all but vanished, new contemporary instrumental recordings that might have buoyed it continue to be released by name labels and independent artists alike.

Most studio recordings heard on smooth jazz radio were far more constrained than corresponding concert versions. The late Grover Washington Jr.'s ***Grover Live*** **(G-Man/Lightyear 54875 79:36 ★★★★½)** showcases just how much of a musician he was and how his band could stretch out in a live setting. Taken from a personal digital audio tape recording of his from a June 1997 concert in Peekskill, N.Y., it showcases an accomplished instrumentalist and master entertainer at work. The hits are here, including "Just The Two Of Us," "Winelight," Paul Desmond's "Take Five (Another Five)," Marvin Gaye's "Inner City Blues" and "Let It Flow (For 'Dr. J')." The between-song banter is part of the enjoyment, with Washington's tone alternating between confidently seductive and invitingly friendly. There's a palatable sense of energy and urgency throughout, and it's impressive to hear him on soprano, alto, tenor and baritone.

Ordering info: lightyear.com

There's a trademark sense of ease to guitarist-vocalist Jonathan Butler's work that's reflected in the best tracks on ***So Strong*** **(Rendezvous 5143 58:15 ★★★)**, from the gently grooving title track to the clavé-driven "Make Room For Me" to the scat-laden breezy instrumental "Good Times," which recalls the earlier work of George Benson. The slow and mid-tempo vocal numbers such as "Be Here With You" and "I'm Right Here" aren't nearly as memorable, though the mellow "I Pay Respect," an instrumental number that closes the core album, is sweetly sentimental. Throughout *So Strong*, there's a sense that Butler simmers (as is his style) but never ignites or even sizzles. This is eventually accomplished in a pair of "So Strong" remixes that are added to the end of the album, including an "Urban AC" version that features a touch of Auto-Tune.

Ordering info: mackavenue.com

Before keyboardist Jeff Lorber embarked on a successful solo and sideman career as an urban contemporary player, the Berklee grad was the leader of Jeff Lorber Fusion (JLF). On ***Now Is The Time*** **(Heads Up 32092-020 47:37 ★★★)**, he revisits that concept with a new band of all-star musicians, including bass guitarist and album co-producer Jimmy Haslip of The Yellowjackets, drummers Vinnie Colaiuta and Dave Weckl and saxophonist Eric Marienthal. He revisits some of his JLF compositions, including the spritely "Chinese Medicinal Herbs" from its 1977 self-titled debut. Drummer Bobby Colomby co-produced the album and co-wrote three numbers, and a standout among the 11 tracks is the new JLF's muscular reading of Wayne Shorter's "Mysterious Traveler."

Ordering info: concordmusicgroup.com

An alumnus of bands led by pianist Bobo Stenson (to whom he pays tribute on the lively "Bobo's Groove") and keyboardist-vocalist Patrice Rushen, saxophonist Gerald Albright traverses the intersections of soul and pop. On ***Pushing The Envelope*** **(Heads Up 31976-02 52:40 ★★½)**, he excels when playing in atypical settings such as the upbeat, South African-flavored "Capetown Strut." Upping the performance ante are guests trombonist Fred Wesley on the nicely funky "What Would James Do?" and George Duke's acoustic piano work on the reflective and fluid track "The Road To Peace (A Prayer For Haiti)." Of the two covers, Michael Jackson's "On The Floor" gets a nice retro-'70s nightclub treatment, while the arrangement of Burt Bacharach's "Close To You" doesn't particularly distinguish itself.

Ordering info: concordmusicgroup.com

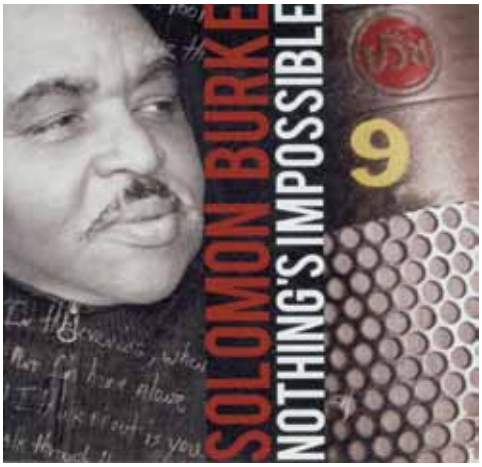
Guitarist Yarone Levy showcases different aspects of his artistry on ***Blue And Yellow*** **(Yarone Levy Music 45:39 ★★★½)**. In addition to acoustic and electric guitars, he also plays synthesizers, sings on two songs and was responsible for the album's arrangement and production. Levy covers a broad range of styles, from aggressive bluesy rock to '70s-era singer-songwriter to atmospheric filmic, and locks in nicely throughout with pianist-keyboardist-organist Michael Bluestein. **DB**

Ordering info: yaronelevy.com

Solomon Burke
Nothing's Impossible

E1 ENTERTAINMENT 2086

★★★★



Atlantic Records' Ahmet Ertegun had it right years ago when he called Solomon Burke "a great soul singer, probably the greatest."

Burke does nothing to dispute the timelessness of that statement on his new album produced by since-deceased Willie Mitchell of Memphis soul fame. Endued with the ability to sermonize secular lyrics, the big man is impressive for his convictive assessments of love's various conditions: sad, unstable, secure, imaginary. Burke's emotional tone is generally careful and reasoned, never complacent, with occasional outpourings of charged feeling that signify a flesh-versus-spirit tussle going on inside him. On "Dreams" in particular, Burke edges close to speaking-in-tongues abandon, the excitement masterfully built by increments.

The strength of the 69-year-old's great vocal emanations on things romantic lies in the balance created by his soul-probing and what listeners feel for themselves. With one exception, all the songs came from Burke or Mitchell (some with others helping out; only "Dreams" was jointly composed by the two principals). Generating blues tension, the singer fesses up to "learning a few things" in his remorseful declaration "The Error Of My Ways" (credited to Mitchell and Solomon's daughter, Candy), and he even manages to squeeze honest emotion out of the vacuous, maudlin lyrics to "You Needed Me," from country songwriter Randy Goodrum. These performances and all the rest—no harm if many cleave to a slow tempo—have the freshness of mountain night air.

For his part, Mitchell acquits himself well with the steady marshalling of horns, strings and rhythm section, so supportive of the world of conviction Burke resides in. (In Mitchell's own studio, keyboard player Lester Snell helped out with string and horn arrangements.) The intros to "Oh, What A Feeling" and several more are things of beauty. Mitchell's lovely, never oversweet, contributions are the perfect complement to those stentorian vocals. As a bonus, Stax veteran Lannie McMillan's stirring sax sometimes elevates out of the magical made-in-Memphis grooves. A minor blemish: the awkwardly engineered ending of "Dreams." The album brims with marvelous soul music.

—Frank-John Hadley

Nothing's Impossible: Oh, What A Feeling; Everything About You; Dreams; Nothing's Impossible; It Must Be Love; You Needed Me; Say You Love Me Too; You're Not Alone; New Company; When You're Not Here; The Error Of My Ways; I'm Leavin'. (49:42)
Personnel: Solomon Burke, vocals; Bobby Manuel (1, 4–12), Teenie Hodges (2, 3), guitars; Dave Smith, bass; Lester Snell, organ, pianos; Steve Potts, drums; Archie Mitchell, conga (4, 9); Lannie McMillan, saxophone (2, 4, 5, 9–12); Spencer Randolph (5, 7), Jackie Johnson (6), Pie Hill (6), Susan Marshall (6), backup vocals; The Royal Horns; The New Memphis Strings.
Ordering info: kochrecords.com

Petra van Nuis/Andy Brown
Far Away Places

STRING DAMPER 2133

★★★½

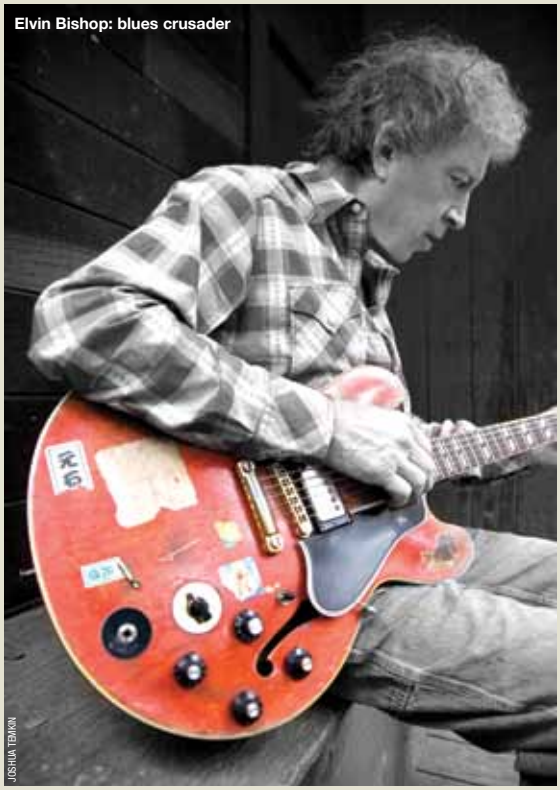
Vocalist Petra van Nuis and guitarist Andy Brown, a married jazz couple, have been performing as a duo in the Chicago metropolitan area since 2006. Though they have other gigs, this state of affairs is their pride and joy. Throughout their first album together, they seem to have an exceptional, telepathic rapport that obviates the need for complicated arrangements. For van Nuis, who has a light, gorgeous and fairly delicate voice, there is both security and risk in striving to have a blended sound with the guitar *and* in mirroring her man's spare, uncluttered, less-is-more style. Brown, a protege of Cincinnati guitar master Kenny Poole, happens to be an uncommonly good player, with a modesty that brings to mind the fine Canadian guitarist Ed Bickert and a warmth suggestive of Joe Pass.

Joined at the conjugal hip, Brown and van Nuis share a gift for melody and have plenty of rhythmic confidence. They project naturalness when phrasing, and their overall intelligence makes understatement and subtlety virtues. They also merit praise for the integrity informing their choice of songs from the past and for their personal involvement with a lyric. The couple endows "Invitation," from the soundtracks of two early 1950s films, with an undercurrent of quizzical tension that keeps their sentimental impulses in check. "I'll Never Stop Loving You," identified with mid-1950s Doris Day, is beautifully rendered (Nellie McKay and Jay Berliner couldn't do it any better), and their convincing study of Cole Porter's "Let's Do It" posits love as quiet ecstasy. Escapist fare like the Bing Crosby-identified title track and "Destination Moon," launched by Nat Cole decades ago, are too much of a nice-and-sweet thing, but, then again, in this time of billion-dollar bailouts, global strife and environmental distress, maybe songs about dream-castles are what we need as a restorative break from everyday chaos.

—Frank-John Hadley

Far Away Places: Destination Moon; Far Away Places; From This Moment On; I'll Never Stop Loving You; Caravan; Born To Blow The Blues; Let's Do It; Bim Bom; A Cottage For Sale; How Little We Know; Invitation; Me, Myself And I; With A Song In My Heart. (51:02)
Personnel: Petra van Nuis, vocals; Andy Brown, guitar.
Ordering info: andybrownguitar.com

Elvin And The Upstarts


Elvin Bishop: blues crusader

JOSHUA TEMKIN

Little Joe McLerran: *Believe I'll Make A Change* (Root Blues Reborn 06006; 39:19 ★★★½) Singer-guitarist McLerran, at 26 a mere toddler in blues chronology, broke through last year winning the solo/duo category at the International Blues Challenge in Memphis. The fix wasn't in; he deserved it. The Oklahoman's grasp of pre-World War II Piedmont blues sensibilities makes his restorations of 13 artifacts enjoyable listening all through his latest album. Three original songs pass muster as offerings to that era. Not unexpectedly, emotions expressed by his singing and guitar playing are still lacking in complexity—give him more time. Occasional, unobtrusive accompanists include veteran harmonica and reeds player Dexter Payne, from Colorado, and a rhythm section.

Ordering info: littlejoeblues.com

Matthew Stubbs: *Medford & Main* (Blue Bella 1013; 35:11 ★★★½) Widely known as the guitarist in Charlie Musslewhite's touring band, Stubbs goes his own way in the studio and fills albums with exciting instrumentals that show he relishes building riffs and rhythms out of Memphis soul, Chicago blues and early strains of rock 'n' roll rather than being servile to one root music or another. Among the heroes channeling though his trusty old guitars are Lonnie Mack and Freddie King, when they recorded for labels in Cincinnati. Nice deployment of horns, with saxophone honker Gordon Beadle showing more restraint than on Stubbs' debut album, *Soul Bender*.

Ordering info: bluebellarecords.com

Diabel Cissokho & Ramon Goose: *Mansana Blues* (Dixie Frog 8683; 52:58 ★★★½) Goose, the leader of the hip-hop blues band NuBlues in England, has a new Afro-blues project with a young Senegalese griot who used to play in Baaba Maal's band. The textural relation between blues slide guitar and African instruments (kora, n'goni/small banjo, percussion) generally yields striking results. The young man from Dakar sings in three West African languages with a carmel-rich voice that communicates sentiments to listeners despite a language barrier (no translations provided). Reining his guitar, Goose respects both the meditative and more expressive properties of their hybrid music. So does the jazz rhythm section, including Hungarian bassist Akos Hasznos. Best bet for trance-dancing: "Papa."

Ordering info: bluesweb.com

Frank Fairfield: *Frank Fairfield* (Tompkins Square 2257; 41:27 ★★★) Talk about time traveling. Here's the ticket back to the rural South in the Great Depression. Based in Los Angeles, of all places, the eccentric 26-year-old singer and rapt practitioner of old-timey banjo, fiddle and guitar replicates traditional material like "The Train That Took My Girl From Town" and "John Hardy" (the most accessible track for anyone unfamiliar with ethnomusicologist Harry Smith's 78s). This is serious business, more than lip service to the past, and not the least bit ironic. Fairfield, performing solo, sure makes up in archival integrity what he lacks in creativity.

Ordering info: tompkinssquare.com

Elvin Bishop: *Red Dog Speaks* (Delta Groove 138; 39:56 ★★★) Forever a crusader for fun blues and rock 'n' roll, Bishop gives his cherry red 1959 Gibson ES 345 a hug and places emphasis on his terrific slide guitar chops this time out. He's generous with hokey hilarity ("Fat & Sassy" measures his waistline; "Clean Livin'" lists his vices), and even dishes out samplings of gospel ("His Eye Is On The Sparrow") and early r&b ("Doo-Wop Melody"). He employs two really good supporting guitarists in youngbloods Kid Andersen and Mike Schermer. But Bishop miscalculates when he quiets his quirky, one-of-a-kind singing in favor of thirty-something John Nemeth's affected, hollow vocals. **DB**

Ordering info: deltagroovemusic.com

Barry Romberg's Random Access
Was, Shall, Why, Because

ROMHOG 118

★★★½

Barry Romberg is a Canadian drummer who has pioneered improvised formats in large ensemble settings, employing rock aesthetics and overdub techniques to defy traditional conceptions of big band music.

On this disc Romberg deploys his 16-strong Random Access Large Ensemble and a smaller unit featuring guitarist Geoff Young, trumpeter Kevin Turcotte, veteran saxist Kirk MacDonald and innovative violinist Hugh Marsh.

The fulcrum for blowing is Rich Brown's motile electric bass, around which Romberg sets up chopsy drum patterns and electric percussion sounds with Dave Weckl-like bravura. On "After Hours," the third movement in Romberg's 40-minute "Suite For The Wolfman," Marsh (I assume) manipulates robotic frog effects as a backdrop for refracted blowing over the M-Base ostinatos of Brown (who has worked with Steve Coleman).

"Love" is an unaccompanied drum solo heralding the 15-minute "The Tribe," which, with MacDonald's squirrelly then surgical soprano, roving fretless bass and distorted electronic swathes in back, recalls Weather Report. When Turcotte's spiraling trumpet enters, Miles Davis' fusion experiments become an obvious reference point, but the fascinating sci-fi of "I Was A Celestial Body In A Contents Sale" (which presages the theme of the following suite with ominous tremolo guitar and Peter Lutek's wolf-like baritone) hangs like fog in the forest before spilling into a whirlpool of dissonantly contrapuntal horns. Think George Russell ("Urban Landscape"), Django Bates' wiry writing for Loose Tubes (during the vaguely ecological meteorology of "Stratus Fractus"), Australia's Ten-Part invention, and maybe a sans fromage smattering of Zappa, but these intriguing, evocative ensembles defy pigeonholing, thanks to the adaptability of their moods and semi-structures.

With that said, the CD could have used trimming in places, and Romberg's indulgent selection of a picture of his newborn kid to grace the cover may throw off serious reviews for this stellar aggregation, Random Access or not.

—Michael Jackson

Was, Shall, Why, Because: Intro; Urban Landscape; I Was A Celestial Body In A Contents Sale; Suite For The Wolfman; Stratus Fractus. (76:58).
Personnel: Barry Romberg, drums, electric percussion, keys; Geoff Young, guitars; Rich Brown, bass; Hugh Marsh, violin/effects; David Occhipinti, guitars; Kevin Turcotte, trumpet; Jason Logue, trumpet; Brian O'Kane, trumpet; Kirk MacDonald, tenor and soprano saxophones; Kelly Jefferson, tenor and soprano saxophones, clarinet; John Johnson, alto saxophone, clarinet; Peter Lutek, baritone saxophone, bassoon; William Carn, trombone; Andrew Jones, trombone; Gord Meyers, bass trombone; Blair Mackay, percussion.
Ordering info: barryromberg.com

Raul De Souza
Bossa Eterna

BISCOITOFINO 847

★★★

Recorded in 2008 as part of a 50th anniversary commemoration of the genre, this album of instrumental MPB (*música popular brasileira*) proclaims the eternality of bossa nova. Conceptually audacious it's not; it's a loving backward glance by a quartet of veterans.

Front man Raul De Souza's lyrical trombone functions as the album's main voice, but at its center is first-generation bossa nova pianist João Donato. The musicians are deep within their comfort zone; this is the first time septuagenarians De Souza and Donato have recorded together, but bassist Luiz Alves and drummer Robertinho Silva are Donato's longtime trio players, and they lock in perfectly with him. The repertoire draws on familiar MPB composers while avoiding the warhorse tunes, along with originals by De Souza and Donato.

The modesty of the production, as well as the game plan, will be familiar to jazz listeners. The sonic limitations of a small group work to some degree against the lushness of the music. In the absence of lyrics, normally one of the strong suits of bossa nova, the arrangements tend toward the formulaic: number after number begins with a piano intro, followed by the 'bone playing the tune before improvising over the changes, then over to piano solo, etc. Seven tracks into the set, a harmonica solo by Mauricio Einhorn on "Nuvens" comes as welcome timbral relief; there are also two cuts featuring De Souza on a four-valved, electronically harmonized "souzabone."

—Ned Sublette

Bossa Eterna: Bossa Eterna; Só Por Amor; Fim De Sonho; Balanço Zona Sul; A La Donato; Malandro; Nuvens; Lugar Comum; Pingo D'Água; Bonita. (42:58)
Personnel: Raul De Souza, trombone, souzabone; João Donato, piano; Robertinho Silva, drums, percussion; Luiz Alves, bass.
Ordering info: biscoitofino.com

The Reese Project
Eastern Standard Time

IN THE GROOVE 1006

★★★

Tom and Laurie Reese may live in the same time zone as New York, D.C., Philly and other bustling metropolises, but the clocks still seem to run a little slower in Lancaster, Pa., where the husband-and-wife flutist and cellist have co-led The Reese Project for more than a decade. Both their longevity and the blood pressure-lowering atmosphere of their surroundings are evident on *Eastern Standard Time*, the Project's eighth release; the group feels utterly relaxed on this set of standards and originals that stays cool without ever losing the warmth of the players' deep camaraderie.

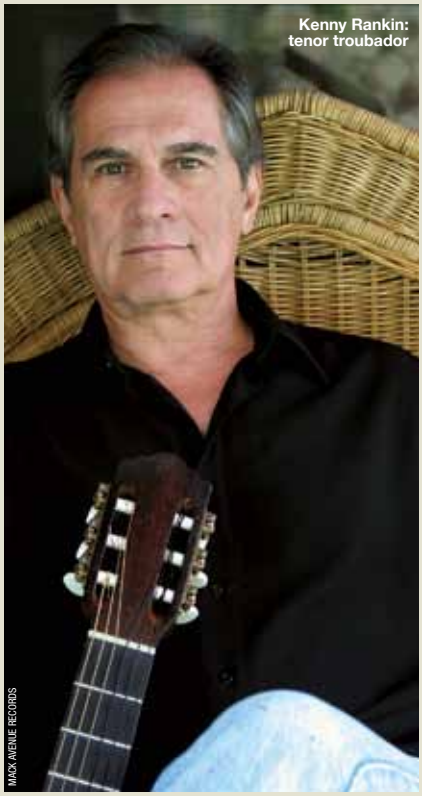
The core quartet remains the same as on the Project's last CD, 2008's *This Just In*, with the Reeses joined by longtime drummer Aaron Walker and guitarist Bobby Brewer. Guest percussionist Johnny "Bravo" Acevedo adds a touch of Latin flavor to several tracks.

Tom's vigorous, steely playing, far removed from the strained breathiness that afflicts so many who add the flute as a supplemental axe, shines particularly on the standards and his own "Altoid Junkie." The album opens strongly with the pairing of "Just Friends," which begins with a brief, fluttering flute solo that seems to alight upon the gently swinging tune, followed by a more intense "Alone Together" that features a scintillating dialogue between Tom and Brewer's blues-accented guitar.

Laurie Reese's cello adds a unique twist, filling the bass role with an alluringly dusky sound. Her elegant bowed solos are held in reserve, providing a welcome surprise whenever they do emerge; her first on the album transforms her husband's "Heads-Up & Gone" from a sly bopper into an eccentric chamber piece. She also lends a sense of wistfulness to an otherwise uptempo rendition of the Green/Heyman standard "Out Of Nowhere." *—Shaun Brady*

Eastern Standard Time: Just Friends; Alone Together; Heads-Up & Gone; Blue Dali; Meditation; Out Of Nowhere; Somethin's Brewin'; When Sunny Gets Blue; Eastern Standard Time; Moment In Blue; Black Orpheus; Altoid Junkie. (58:55)
Personnel: Tom Reese, flute; Laurie Reese, cello; Bobby Brewer, guitar; Aaron Walker, drums; Johnny "Bravo" Acevedo, percussion.
Ordering info: allegro-music.com

Countercultural Crooner


Kenny Rankin: tenor troubador

MACK AVENUE RECORDS

While his early live shows usually had him going it alone, Kenny Rankin wasn't just a singer with an acoustic guitar. Six recently reissued titles (on Mack Avenue's Sly Dog imprint) are the proof. Like predecessors Perry Como and Andy Williams, Rankin shared not only big studio productions but, more importantly, a smooth, lilting, almost breathless singing voice expressed across various genres and styles. What made him distinctive was his more personal, autobiographical songwriting.

***Mind Dusters* (3005; 32:51 ★★)**, from 1967, and 1970's ***Family* (3006; 35:24 ★★)** are the first examples of Rankin's unique mix of folk and pop, complete with strings and horns. "Cotton Candy Sandman" and "The Dolphin" introduce this tenor troubadour in songs about characters and searches, the light rock beat of "Every Passing Moment" prodding this song along about what his life means. Once a former sideman to Bob Dylan, his cover of Dylan's "Mr. Tambourine Man" is emptied of its mystery and played as pop fluff, with another light backbeat and more ubiquitous horns and strings. His much-covered "Peaceful" is here, and "Minuet" gives the first glimpse of Rankin's wordless vocal approach. *Family* is mostly covers, his versions of "Up On The Roof" and "While My Guitar Gently Weeps" naturals for his style, played straight again but believable; others border on corny.

***Like A Seed* (3007; 43:16 ★★★)**, from 1972, reflects a more mature artist, the title song already indicating some sophistication, harmonically, instrumentally (e.g., flute and vibes replacing those horns and strings most often). His singing is more soulful, more relaxed, hinting at the jazzier styles he was heading toward. The music, despite some busy vocal choruses, is simpler, the stories more interesting, as with the mournful "Yesterday's Lies" and "Sometimes" (evocative electric guitar and flute). The whimsical "Stringman" is memorable; another, pared-down "Peaceful" is heard. "Comin' Down" and "Bad Times," while also dated, let him strut his funkier, rockier sides.

Three years later, ***Silver Morning* (3008; 36:06 ★★★★)** showcased more distilled orchestration, and the best examples of his writing, his trademark talent for octave-jumping avoiding the distracting swoops and swirls of other efforts. It's also his most natural embrace of a jazz aesthetic (the playful waltzes "In The Name Of Love" and "Haven't We Met"), and a more organic approach to other people's music ("People Get Ready" with soulful organ, harmonica and backing vocals). One of his best songs, "Killed A Cat" (co-written with then-wife Yvonne) is both poignant and sad, partly expressed through wordless vocals.

***Inside* (3009; 30:41 ★★★½)**, also from 1975, continues with more sophistication and more top-drawer studio talent (e.g., John Guerin, Deniece Williams, Michael Omartian, Gary Burton). A couple of lounge love songs surface with the sweet and lovely "Lost Up In Love With You" (great backing vocals with Rankin's octave-hopping nailing it) and Louis Prima's "A Sunday Kind Of Love." Trio versions of Jimi Hendrix's swinging "Up From The Skies" and Randy Newman's touching "Marie" connect, John Sebastian's "She's A Lady" making one wish Rankin would have just put out one album of him and his guitar alone together. Again, simpler, pared-down is better.

***The Kenny Rankin Album* (3010; 35:33 ★★★½)**, from 1976, seemed inevitable (and makes sense musically), as the singer led the now-vogue charge for popsters to go the standards route. Tastefully arranged and conducted by the legendary Don Costa, it's a strings album, with Rankin returning to some favorites (George Harrison's "While My Guitar Gently Weeps" with Nino Tempo doing a decent Stan Getz) and covering "Here's That Rainy Day," "You Are So Beautiful" (too much vocal swooping) and "When Sunny Gets Blue" (more Tempo channeling Getz). Low point of recognition: Stephen Bishop's wimpy "On And On." Best songs: Rankin's "I Love You," a direct, simple love song, and the prescient "Through The Eye Of The Eagle," with evocative strings supporting him all the way. **DB**

Ordering info: mackavenue.com/sly_dog_records

Will Vinson
The World (Through My Shoes), Live In Brooklyn

19/8 1012
★★★½

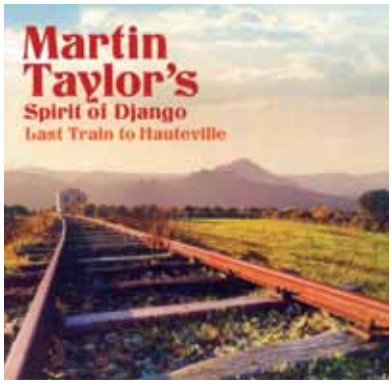
If this were a Blindfold Test, within two notes of Vinson's a cappella intro to "I *Am* James Bond" I would have assumed Miguel Zenón was the alto player. Not only does Vinson share the smeary, mournful tone and urgent trajectory of Zenón, but his compositions and improvisations have a similar contour and impact. That's high praise, but not if Vinson wants to bag a Guggenheim and a MacArthur any time soon. I'll stop there, because the uncanny resemblance may be coincidental, Vinson is a quite marvelous player and this is a cracking band, very nicely recorded, who prove they deliver in spades in a live situation.

The 007 connotation of the opener might suggest a (Steve Bernstein's) Sex Mob aesthetic, and punning titles like "Limp Of Faith" and "Philos O'Fur" further hint that Vinson is a wiseguy, but his blowing is strictly intravenous. He drills a hole through "Philos O'Fur," boxing like a sprightly Olympic welterweight; it's a cool tune that permits a strictly-no-fat bass solo from Orlando le Fleming (who is a superb counterweight throughout). There is a lot of excitement in this band: Guitarist Lund provides lovely shadowing on the ballads (notably "Pretty Things"), and Rueckert is all over it, completely in sync with the leader's moves. They bring their considerable simpatico together for a roaring version of "The End Of A Love Affair," where this transplant from Britain ("Dean Street Rundown," suggesting a Soho London location, is a clue) deals in with authoritative gusto, especially in passages where his harmonic domination is emphasized (just before the head release to Lund's guitar solo) and masterful control of time is relished (an inadvertent paraphrase of the "Love Supreme" refrain after a sequence of tobogganing lines). *—Michael Jackson*

The World (Through My Shoes), Live In Brooklyn: I Am James Bond; Dean Street Rundown; Limp Of Faith; The End Of A Love Affair; Philos O'Fur; Pretty Things; The World Through My Shoes. (48:10)
Personnel: Will Vinson, alto saxophone; Lage Lund, guitar; Orlando De Fleming, bass; Jochen Rueckert, drums.
Ordering info: willvinson.com

Martin Taylor's Spirit Of Django
Last Train To Hauteville

P3 MUSIC 023
★★★½



Django Reinhardt's centennial has brought out the caravans in droves. There are Gypsy swing guitarists, and then there's Martin Taylor. This Englishman with authentic Gypsy bloodlines first made his name as a disciple of the Quintette du Hot Club de France working in the 1980s with Reinhardt's famous partner, Stephane Grappelli. Taylor and the violinist made an excellent album, *Reunion* (Linn, rec. 1992), before ending their 11-year affiliation. Taylor then went on to form a drumless band called Spirit Of Django; among its members were accordion player Jack Emblow and saxophonist Dave O'Higgins. The resulting album, *Spirit Of Django* (Linn, rec. 1994), is simply one of the best Django-centric albums ever made; two more records from later in the 1990s paled in comparison. Despite crossover attention for his version of pop/r&b star Robert Palmer's "Johnny & Mary," Taylor folded the band in order to concentrate on solo performances and other projects. Well, until the centennial hoopla; Taylor couldn't resist reviving SOD, with Alan Barnes taking over for O'Higgins and the additions of his daughter-in-law, the Scottish singer Alison Burns, and his son James on drums.

Welcome back. On a program weighed heavily in favor of original compositions, Taylor shows his great command of his instrument and why he is widely known as one of the finest jazz guitarists alive. Words can't adequately express the melodious beauty of his playing on "Roberta." The swinging gaiety of "Madame Haricot" and "Le Touch" is upheld by inventive, fluid guitar lines born of sincere not cheap sentiment, while dizzily swinging "Monsieur Jacques," a salute to a daft unicycle-riding neighbor of Taylor's in France, provides frissons of wit and excitement. Most everywhere, even when the rhythm section goes bland with a relaxed (sometimes Latinized) pleasantness, Taylor expresses shades of joy with deceptive ease; to call him too groomed and precise a player is to miss the strength, lyricism and inspiration pushing his fingers on the strings. *—Frank-John Hadley*

Last Train To Hauteville: Last Train To Hautevlle; Rue De Dinan; Le Jardin Anglais; Double Scotch; La Mer; Madame Haricot; Roberta; Mirette; La Javanaise; Le Touch; J'Attendral; Monsieur Jacques; La Belle Dundee. (58:05)
Personnel: Martin Taylor, guitar, mandolin; Jack Emblow, accordion; Alan Barnes, clarinet, soprano saxophone; Alison Burns, vocals; John Goldie, rhythm guitar; Terry Gregory, bass; James Taylor, drums, percussion.
Ordering info: theguitarlabel.com

Erik Friedlander
Alchemy

HROMIR (10" VINYL EP)
★★★★

You can't beat downloads and CDs for abundance, but there's something to be said for the succinctness of a side of vinyl. Cellist Erik Friedlander, who has created soundtracks of commercials for Canon, Volvo and the U.S. Census Bureau, knows all about doing a lot with a short time span. On *Alchemy* he quite comfortably inhabits the slightly roomier confines of a 10-inch vinyl record. Beautifully packaged and excellently pressed, it is a physically appealing document. Its dimensions alone might warm the heart of an old jazz fan, but this disc has more to recommend it than nostalgia for the days when Duke Ellington's latest sides were two inches short of a foot; it takes the talent for sustaining a sonic narrative that Friedlander displayed on his solo album *Block Ice & Propane* and condenses it into seven cuts that unfold with short story-like vividness.

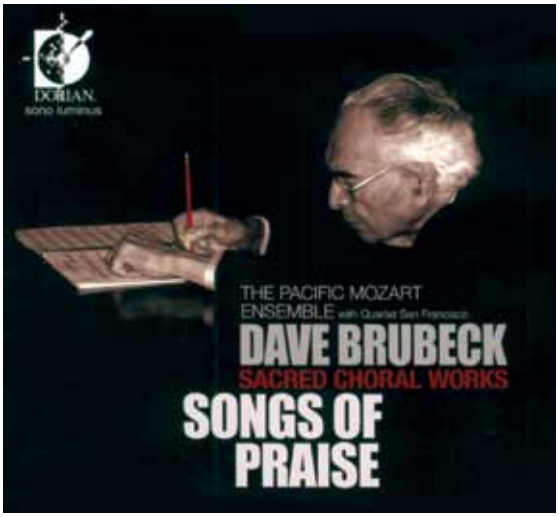
"Glow" opens with a sampled burst of sampled public address that instantly evokes mental images of a train station. A moody dialogue ensues between creeping pizzicato figures and melancholy bowed lines, while further multi-tracked cellos create background swells that bring to mind Astor Piazzolla's eerie bandoneon work. Next up is "Wag," which will jolt you out of reverie with one-and-a-half minutes of bracing scrapes and dizzying swoops. Friedlander plucks his cello like a guitar on "Lee Ave," whose slow, rustic melody is as American as a sunset behind corn silos. The other side of the record opens with "Assassins Or Bridge Blowers," Scott Solter's signal processing lends an alien quality to Friedlander's dive-bombing attack and eeriness to the music's fraught silences. Elsewhere Friedlander goes it alone, veering between hackle-raising and lyricism. When the record ends you feel like you've been to some very different places, but you haven't been traveling long enough to forget where you started.

—Bill Meyer

Alchemy: Glow; Wag; Lee Ave; Assassins Or Bridge Blowers; Alchemy; Halo; Out. (26:12)
Personnel: Erik Friedlander, cello, sample programming, mixing; Scott Solter, engineer and live processing.
Ordering info: erikfriedlander.com

Quartet San Francisco
QSF Plays Brubeck
VIOLIN JAZZ 106
★★★

The Pacific Mozart Ensemble with Quartet San Francisco
Dave Brubeck: Songs Of Praise
DORIAN SOLO LUMINOUS 92101
★★½



It's no secret that Dave Brubeck has long composed for formats other than jazz quartet. The vogue of string quartets essaying jazz composers over the last 20 years ensured that Brubeck would be given the chamber music treatment. A simultaneous release of his choral devotional music offers the possibility that Brubeck's full musical measure has yet to be taken.

Quartet San Francisco is a capable unit that plays Brubeck as a classical string quartet would be expected to: as quasi-classical music. All of the familiar Brubeck themes (plus Paul Desmond's anthem "Take Five") are contained here, and the arrangements de-emphasize swing for an ensemble unity and synchronicity. "Kathy's Waltz" fares better than, say, "Take Five," because it's played as a dainty waltz.

While there are harmonically engaging solos (none of them identified), it's no surprise that they don't channel Stuff Smith for syncopated verve. Interestingly, though, one violin excursion on "Blue Rondo" touches on country fiddling. What's missing in this collection is the fundamental tension between Brubeck's pounding piano and Desmond's liquid alto saxophone. The written material was only one component of the Brubeck Quartet.

Thematically, most of the sacred music album is Nativity-centered and Christmas-directed, but it's tough sledding for jazz ears across the board. Brubeck has sampled his own extensive liturgical compositions and arrangements, often with texts translated by his wife, Iola. The temptation is to listen to these scattershot selections as a larger work, especially in light of the similarity of texture and movement. The three Canticles, for example, are choral hymns that mostly plod along ("Concordi Laetitia" has a nice string quartet-accompanied gambol) and as a whole can be pretty dreary.

So often the songs sway back and forth, never really going anywhere ("Why We Sing At Christmas," with its pluck, is an exception). "The Commandments," "Psalm 23" and "Benediction" all are of the late 20th Century classical mode, which is to say, nonmelodic and static. Whatever happened to "make a joyful noise"?

—Kirk Silsbee

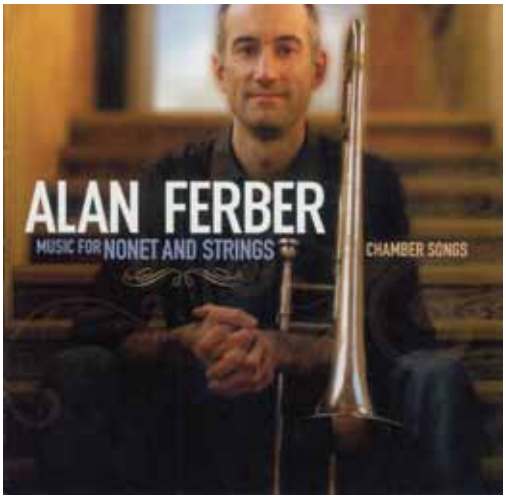
QSF Plays Brubeck: Three To Get Ready; Strange Meadowlark; The Golden Horn; The Duke; Take Five; Kathy's Waltz; Blue Rondo A La Turk; Bluette; Unsquare Dance; It's A Raggy Waltz; Forty Days; What Child Is This? (50:31)
Personnel: Jeremy Cohen, violin, arranger; Alisa Rose, violin; Keith Lawrence, viola; Michelle Djokic, cello; Matt Brubeck (4), Larry Dunlap (8), Robert Gilmore (11), arrangers.
Ordering info: **violinjazz.com**

Dave Brubeck: Songs Of Praise: Canticles: Ave Maria, Concordi Laetitia (Nativity), Salve Mater (Crucifixion); Every Christmas I Hear Bells; Sleep, Holy Infant, Sleep; Why We Sing At Christmas; Precious Gift His Wondrous Birth; The Commandments; Psalm; Credo; Benediction. (58:33)
Personnel: Pacific Mozart Ensemble, choral vocals; Tanya Sum (1), Mari Maryamaa (2), Maria Mikheyenko (3), soprano soloists; Victor Floyd, tenor soloist (1); Kymry Esainko, piano; Quartet San Francisco (as above; 1, 2, 3); Lynne Morrow, conductor.
Ordering info: dorian.com

Alan Ferber
Music For Nonet And Strings/Chamber Songs

SUNNYSIDE 1254

★★★★



An ambitious outing, trombonist Alan Ferber combines his more conventional nine-piece jazz group (an outfit since 2004) with a nine-piece string section for *Chamber Songs*. To call it *Chamber Songs* might be a stretch, given the number of musicians, but the overall feel does lend itself to a kind of intimate, close-in affair. In Ferber's words, the nonet is "an elastic chamber ensemble rather than a big band." Labels aside, this is territory Ferber has become quite familiar with in recent years, including using strings.

Written with individual musicians from the original nonet in mind, Ferber extends that aesthetic to the strings in a selective way, incorporating their ensemble passages organically, thoughtfully, refraining from overusing them like a gimmick. The affect furthers his notions of chamber music, with single voices heard throughout in the context of the larger ensemble. To begin, though, Ferber's first impression is a kind of Copland-esque musical landscape, the full double-nonet getting into the act with a fanfare-ish take on Keith Jarrett's "The River," followed by a quiet, seamless lead-in with pianist Bryn Roberts before a smattering of horns and drums suggest more of that Copland feel but with more of a jazz feel seeping in.

By the time we get to "Paradox," the tone and manner of *Chamber Songs* begins to sink in, the classical overtones from track to track melding more and more with a jazz attitude. The first real jazz tune, "Paradox," includes horn charts, a hint of swing with a backbeat, a vibrant string section and a series of solos, most prominently from alto saxist Jon Gordon but also including what seems to be the rest of the nonet (plus violinist Zach Brock) getting into the act trading fours from instrument to instrument. "Paradox" gives us our first real glimpse of Ferber's writing for individuals within the context of the larger ensemble. The sound recombines on a smaller level with the ballad "Magnolia," featuring expressive solos from violinist Sara Caswell, Roberts and Ferber, the string section gradually entering to help finish the song. The swinging waltz "Fables" brings the jazz impulse front and center, sans strings, lush horn sections filling in, while the mysterious, brooding rubato of "Ice Cave" allows so many individual voices to be heard simultaneously and independently before lightening up with the sluggishly drunk smirk of "Union Blues," and more solos. It's unique, inventive writing, somewhat light despite the number of players.

From tune to tune, *Chamber Songs* plays like a suite, an expression of one man's intent and desire to convey through this larger yet still intimate setting how natural and complementary jazz orchestration works with strings. There is a flow, and each song has its place in the imaginative telling of this story.

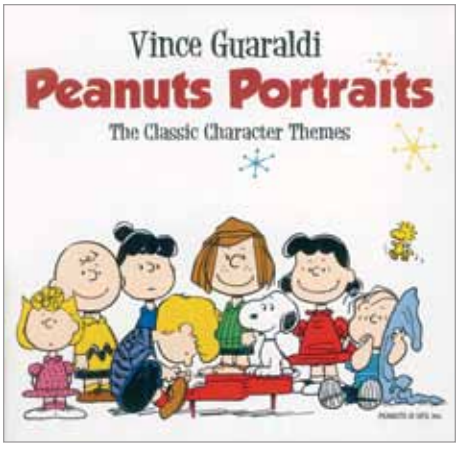
—John Ephland

Chamber Songs: The River; Interlude; Paradox; Magnolia; Fables; Ice Cave; Union Blues; Sedona; In Memorium. (63:16)
Personnel: Alan Ferber, trombone; Scott Wendholt, trumpet; Jon Gordon, alto and soprano saxophones; John Ellis, tenor saxophone; Douglas Yates, bass clarinet; Nate Radley, guitar; Bryn Roberts, piano; Matt Clohesy, bass; Mark Ferber, drums.
Ordering info: sunnysiderecords.com

Vince Guaraldi
Peanuts Portraits

CONCORD FAN-32033

★½



Peanuts was a phenomenon without parallel in American popular culture. In the comic strip medium, long dominated by the imperative to entertain and inform children, not yet adulterated by the smarmy ironies of the counterculture, it bridged generations with its mix of innocence and insight, hipness and sophistication.

That combination of elements made it almost inevitable that when *Peanuts* leaped to television as a series of animated specials, jazz would be its soundtrack—specifically, the jazz of Vince Guaraldi. The San Francisco-based pianist's sound had been established through his single "Cast Your Fate To The Wind," whose laid-back segues between dreamy funk and finger-snap swing made it accessible to pop as well as jazz audiences.

This is one reason why some of the music he created for *Peanuts* has survived. Specifically, the "Linus And Lucy" theme is as embedded into our perception of *Peanuts* as images of Snoopy atop his doghouse. Unfortunately, aside from a few other items, not much of the Guaraldi's *Peanuts* oeuvre can stand on its own to any comparable degree.

That's not to say that there aren't amiable moments throughout these portraits of characters from the series. "Frieda (With the Naturally Curly Hair)" is a bluesy breeze, with Guaraldi alternating two-fisted chords and more minimal single lines over Monty Budwig's bass and Colin Bailey's feathery rhythm. Still, there isn't much to this track as a composition—a noodly motif at the top and the end, and everything in between involves predictable blowing through changes that foreshadow those of another tot tune—Ernie's "Rubber Ducky" ode on *Sesame Street*.

Aside from his appealing vocal and tasteful brass chart on "Little Birdie," the rest of Guaraldi's performances are equally generic but also marred by sonic qualities that are both murky and dated. Seward McCain's bass guitar overpowers the mix on "Sally's Blues"; it's louder even that the solo by the saxophonist whose name was omitted from the personnel for that track. "Blue Charlie Brown" is a I–IV vamp over a listless funk beat; here, too, credit is missing for the soloist, a guitarist who doodles over Guaraldi's uninspired comp on Wurlitzer electric piano.

So it is all the way up to the two last tracks, an obeisance to Guaraldi by George Winston. His unaccompanied renderings are precise, with a meticulous articulation that feels almost more like typing than playing. In place of the swing that animates the bridge on the original version of "Linus And Lucy," Winston removes the bass element and substitutes a series of mid-range chords in his left hand, voiced without the root on the bottom; it draws our focus from the rhythm toward the harmony in an intriguing way. His affection for Guaraldi is obvious. It's also common among those who grew up loving this music in the context of *Peanuts* and may be more perplexed than pleased when hearing these selections on their own.

—Robert L. Doerschuk

Peanuts Portraits: Linus And Lucy; Sally's Blues; Blue Charlie Brown; Peppermint Patty; Charlie's Blues; Joe Cool; Frieda (with the Naturally Curly Hair); Schroeder; Little Birdie; The Masked Marvel; Linus And Lucy. (37:31)
Personnel: Vince Guaraldi, piano, electric piano; George Winston, piano; Tom Harrell, trumpet; Chuck Bennett, trombone; Monty Budwig, Seward McCain, bass; Colin Bailey, Mike Clark, drums.
Ordering info: concordmusicgroup.com

Classic Rousers


Nat King Cole: musical revolutionary

DOWNBEAT ARCHIVES

When you hit on a winning formula, stay with it. Last year Hip-O Select/Verve struck a nice chord with its *Ella Fitzgerland: Twelve Nights In Hollywood* set. It also brought more attention to this Universal imprint. Now the same spiffy book-style packaging has been extended to Nat Cole.

Appearances aside, though, **Nat King Cole & Friends: *Riffin'* (Hip-O Select B0013384; 74:18/75:52/65:36 ★★★★)** comes with a significant difference. *Twelve Nights In Hollywood* was all new material. *Riffin'* offers nothing fresh. Still, this smart three-CD collection catches a very un-Capitol Cole in transition when he was still working as a serious jazz pianist. These non-Capitol orphans are the main focus here and include all four 1940–'41 trio sessions for Decca and, most importantly, the work for Norman Granz and Harry Lim in the mid-'40s.

The trios are mostly jivey little riff trifles with novelty lyrics, intended for the hip and the would-be-hip and often laced with contemporary references. "Gone With The Draft" crosses Margaret Mitchell with America's first peacetime draft bill signed just two months before. Between the hijinks, though, Cole's piano is caught in a kind of golden mean somewhere between Earl Hines' octaves and tremolos ("Sweet Loraine") and the crisp single-note lines and punchy riffs of Art Tatum ("Honeysuckle Rose," "This Side Up"). But when your hear Cole's debut at 17 in 1936 as a sideman with his brother Eddie, there is no question that his adolescent anchor was Hines.

From November 1943 on, Cole was Capitol's property. But his most striking piano performances were recorded by Granz in the first Jazz At The Philharmonic concert of July 2, 1944. This is the business of CD number two, plus two incomplete numbers from the second JATP, July 30, otherwise available only on the big 10-CD *Complete JATP 1944–'49* edition. This is the place for them, because Cole has his say before the time runs out. Overall, the music is unbelievably rich, raucous, rowdy and rousing, from Illinois Jacquet's heaving tenor orgasms to the quiet and witty parries between Cole and Les Paul ("Blues"). And one more R word: revolutionary, for these were the first live concerts recorded for commercial record release.

On the third CD Granz takes Cole into the studio, first for the 1944 debut date of Dexter Gordon as leader, and two years later for the famous Lester Young trio session with Cole and Buddy Rich. Gordon is terrific, playing Pres' younger twin at the time. Meanwhile, Cole had developed enormous authority and confidence, especially on the JATP and Gordon sides, despite a somewhat tinny recording on the latter. There is also a sparkling set of encounters with altoist Willie Smith from Harry Lim's Keynote series. Together they explain why even after decades of fame as a pop singer, he remains an indispensable figure of early modern jazz piano.

Unfortunately, a few Cole essentials of the period are missing, especially the four Cole-Young trio sides from July 1942 for Aladdin; and the less-well-known King Cole Quintet date with Jacquet and Shad Collins from 1944. They would have required a fourth CD, but it would have been worth it. This is where they belong, as do the two of Cole-JATP appearances from the Jubilee series early in 1946 and even the 1945 Sunset date with Charlie Shavers.

Complete on a single CD, by contrast, is ***Lena Horne Sings: The M-G-M Singles Collection* (Hip-O Select B0013794; 46:35 ★★★)**, which arrived a few weeks before her death in May. A former big band chanteuse who had become a major star by 1947–'48, Horne brings a warm, low-key but considered sense of theater to the material, mostly of the American Songbook variety, which is well-served and elegantly executed. Yet the sly jazz sensibility that lurked beneath the beautiful star peeks through on only a couple of the more casual small-group items with Luther Henderson. Horne's spectacular presence could never be fully caught on mere records. **DB**

Ordering info: hip-oselect.com

Fred Hersch Trio
Whirl

PALMETTO 2143
★★★½

Fred Hersch's recovery from a harrowing near-death experience would be reason enough to celebrate. But even more rejoicing is in order, as *Whirl* demonstrates that he returns with his artistry undiminished.

The trio format has always suited Hersch, in that he possesses an ideal balance of sophisticated, compositional conceptualization as well as an uncanny ability to listen and interact with substance in this intimate setting. With experience as both high-profile sidemen and leaders, bassist John Hébert and drummer Eric McPherson maintain an ongoing musical conversation on each track. You could say that Hersch maintains the soloist role except for the fact that all three musicians extemporize nonstop with equal freedom. In fact, you could listen to the title cut as an especially dynamic rhythm section exhibition, with the piano threading it together through chords and lines.

"Whirl" is one of six Hersch compositions presented here. The match of its name to the music's swirling momentum is hardly accidental. We hear similar synchronicity on "Sad Poet," which begins with the theme played alone on piano. The depth implied by the title's evocation of thoughtful sorrow characterizes the musical theme as well as Hersch's elaborations on it. He plays these with restraint, delicate pedaling and a multi-layered approach that moves gracefully, at times through nearly contrapuntal passages, with a few brief but non-disruptive surges in dynamic, toward a closing section. Here, for the first time, the fluidity of the performance solidifies over steady, repeated chords and a bass-register motif, which give McPherson a foundation over which to stretch a bit while also suggesting a fatalistic march toward uncertain destinies.

The programmatic title is even clearer on "Snow Is Falling…" That ellipse implies something left unresolved, yet this music paints a picture clearly formed. A Satie-like opening figure conjures both wonder and apprehension; Hersch revisits these harmonies periodically throughout a free-waltz feel that focuses on details of this tableau: a trill that sparkles like sunlight on frozen ground, high-register lines that lure our gaze upward toward cold, starry skies. "Snow Is Falling …" doesn't so much tell a story as bring us to a point of stillness and contemplation.

And, yes, Hersch swings too, mainly on tunes he covers. Even so, his treatment of Jaki Byard's "Mrs. Parker Of K.C." is radically spare, as this most harmonic of pianists threads the blues changes with a single, somewhat angular line. His left hand doesn't even engage until fully three minutes into the action—just in time to dig into the groove for a few seconds before withdrawing back to a bare-bones reprise in the final verse. Emotion hangs in the silences, in spaces left empty like fateful words left unsaid. The closest we come to that articulation is again in a title, this one for the closing track—simply, eloquently, "Still Here." —*Robert L. Doerschuk*

Whirl: You're My Everything; Snow Is Falling…; Blue Midnight; Skipping; Mandevilla; When Your Lover Has Gone; Whirl; Sad Poet; Mrs. Parker Of K.C.; Still Here. (46:05)
Personnel: Fred Hersch, piano; John Hébert, bass; Eric McPherson, drums.
Ordering info: palmetto-records.com

Mark Levine and the Latin Tinge
Off & On

LEFT COAST CLAVE 004
★★

In his notes for *Off & On*, pianist Mark Levine eulogizes the late Moacir Santos, whom he identifies as "the greatest Brazilian songwriter of the 20th century." His music is the focus on this project for Levine for his Latin Tinge ensemble, which has dedicated itself for a little more than a decade to adapting standards and recent jazz tunes to a variety of Cuban settings.

That is the background. In the foreground is the music, and regardless of the fact that it celebrates the memory of Santos, little of it leaves much of a memory of its own. That's not to say that the group's performance isn't up to par. In fact, each track is conceived and executed smoothly. Of course, the word "smooth" is a two-sided coin: A shortage of brilliant flashes, or even idiosyncrasy, can counter whatever positive impressions a clean performance can make.

And this group is clean. Glitches, clinkers, hiccups: There isn't one anywhere in *Off & On*, for two reasons: the polished skills of each player and the absence of any risks. The rhythm beds vary, from the syncopated call-and-answer pattern between Levine's chords and John Wiitala's bass from the top up to the piano solo on "April Child (aka Marcatu)" to a percolating 5/4 set against a steady cymbal tap shifting from the up to the down beats with every bar up to the bridge on "Kathy." Still, for all the attention paid to their construction, the unrelenting moderation of the tempos and the tendency of the percussion to delineate rather than drive the beat, contributes to a sense of sameness from one track to the next.

The same can be said for the solos. Levine likes to invent long, coherent melodies that thread through Santos' sophisticated changes without leaving much of a ripple. He stays mainly in the midrange while maintaining an even dynamic; almost never does he spiral up to the top of the keyboard or jab an emphatic accent on the low end.

Mary Fettig applies a similar aesthetic to her playing. Flute is her main instrument, and she plays it fluently. Yet she, too, emphasizes taste over drama; her chorus on "What's My Name (aka Odudua)" unfolds carefully, as if she were picking her way through a path without daring to take a leap now and then. —*Robert L. Doerschuk*

Off & On: Nona; Early Morning Love; Off And On; April Child (aka Marcatu); Suk-Cha; Kathy; Jeauié; Tomorrow Is Mine; Haply Happy; What's My Name (aka Odudua); Luanne (aka Sou Eu); A Saudade Mata a Gente. (55:30)
Personnel: Mark Levine, piano; Mary Fettig, reeds; John Wiitala, bass; Michael Spiro, percussion; Paul van Wageningen, drums.
Ordering info: marklevine.com

Analog Hendrix Mesmerizes

Jimi Hendrix: definitive editions

Despite making only three official studio albums during his lifetime, Jimi Hendrix remains one of the most documented artists in history. A name-specific search on Amazon.com returns a whopping 289 available titles that range from live sets to hastily assembled compilations. What's more, various parties repeatedly reissued Hendrix's standard material, furthering the confusion. Battles over the guitarist's estate lingered until the mid-'90s when the Experience Hendrix corporation (owned and operated by Hendrix family members) finally assumed control.

Even then, it took another 15 years for the powers that be to make things right—specifically, cull the music from the correct sources and issue definitive-sounding editions of the Seattle native's core work. Released in partnership with Sony/Legacy, Experience Hendrix's analog versions of ***Are You Experienced*** **(8869762395 40:12 ★★★★★)**, ***Axis: Bold As Love*** **(8869762396 38:49 ★★★★★)** and ***Electric Ladyland*** **(8869762398 75:47 ★★★★★)** all hit the mark. Cut from the original analog master tapes by legendary engineer George Marino at Sterling Sound, pressed on 180-gram vinyl and packaged in gatefold jackets with the original artwork and supplemental booklets full of rare photos, these "audiophile" editions surpass all prior attempts. The 1997 collection ***First Rays Of The New Rising Sun*** **(8869763403 69:27 ★★★)** and a brand-new compendium of 12 unreleased studio songs, ***Valleys Of Neptune*** **(8869764059 61:57 ★★★½)**, received similar treatment. (All are also available on deluxe CD sets.)

Listeners won't need a pricey stereo to detect the staggering improvements. In addition to tremendous gains in bass, warmth and detail, the genius of Hendrix's groundbreaking production ideas is exposed via the uncovering of multiple layers and then unheard-of tricks like underwater sound effects. Mitch Mitchell's percussion possesses a transparency that allows each drum to be identified across wide, deep soundstages. The sibilance of Hendrix's voice, too, comes across in an intimate, realistic fashion. Most importantly, Hendrix's brilliant instrumental palette is brought to the fore in a nuanced albeit vivid manner that makes the familiar seem new again.

Whether it's the discernible flicker of Hendrix's toggle switch on "I Don't Live Today" or the tonal sustain during "Foxy Lady," *Experienced* sounds three-dimensional. The dives, dips and dimples of Hendrix's notes are practically visible; play along at home if you can follow the lead. Even better, Axis finds the band dreaming in colors. The psychedelic "EXP" finally arrives as intended: a mystical outer-space conversation created by alternating speeds, manipulating voices and panning reverb. The 1967 record also witnesses Mitchell flex his jazz muscles, with bop influences never as apparent than on such songs as "Wait Until Tomorrow." Available for the first time on an audiophile-quality pressing, *Ladyland* mesmerizes with delicate phrasing, stellar dynamics and fresh revelations: like the organ immediately at the beginning of "Voodoo Chile." "All Along the Watchtower" now blows with the strength of Category 1 hurricane, complete with Hendrix's cigarette-lighter slide solo.

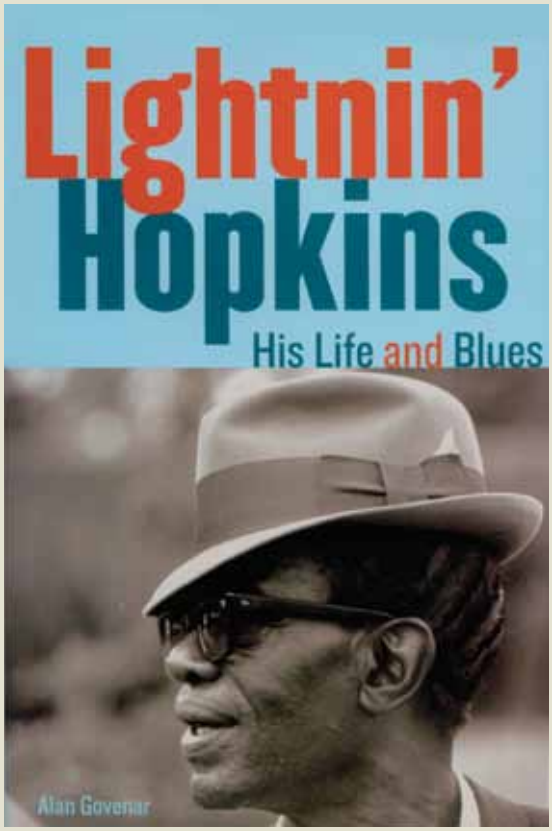
The two posthumous releases aren't as essential, though each boasts myriad merits. *Rising Sun* attempts to realize Hendrix's concepts for a planned fourth double album via songs obtained from mostly finished sessions (to which collaborators later added spare parts). The music owes to blacker roots than Hendrix's earlier fare. "Freedom" and "Ezy Ryder" wholeheartedly embrace funk, r&b and soul, while "Earth Blues" even features cameo vocals by the Ronettes. Despite the good intent, the reconstructed tunes still occasionally feel incomplete.

Valleys fares better, as it's largely devoid of overdubs and retains a raw atmosphere that suits inspired cuts such as a cover of Cream's "Sunshine Of Your Love," on which the power trio carves a foreign vocabulary out of trembling feedback, exotic power and sultry swagger. Mandatory for diehards, casual fans can explore it in the future, the time period from which all of Hendrix's music seems to emanate. **DB**

Ordering info: legacyrecordings.com

Books | BY JAMES PORTER

Lightnin' Hopkins Kept Rural Blues Burning



"Lightnin' change when Lightnin' want to." That's what famed Texas bluesman Samuel "Lightnin'" Hopkins said to a young, white, upstart blues-rocker back in the late '60s or early '70s. Apparently Billy Gibbons (who would soon become famous with the blues-rock trio Z.Z. Top) had the job of backing up this unpredictable singer-guitarist at a gig one night. Hopkins is seemingly changing chords, rhythm and timing at will; Gibbons and the rest of the band were sweating bullets trying to keep up. Between sets, Hopkins overheard Gibbons complaining to a friend about Hopkins and how he never changes chords at the right time. And that's when Hopkins himself rolled up on Gibbons.

This could be seen as a metaphor for Hopkins' 70 years on Earth, and Alan Govenar has done his research well in the biography ***Lightnin' Hopkins: His Life And Blues*** **(Chicago Review Press)**. Hopkins was a feisty, independent soul, and as time proved, could adapt to almost any situation while remaining "Po' Lightnin'" all the while. When T-Bone Walker, Clarence "Gatemouth" Brown and others were pioneering an almost urbane Texas blues sound, Hopkins was defiantly rural. He may have electrified his guitar in the '40s to keep up with the technology, but that was his only modern-day concession. Otherwise, at a time when the old country-blues sound was almost left for dead, Hopkins managed to chart five singles in Billboard's r&b Top 20 during 1949–'52, with several other songs hitting regionally. And when the early '60s folk revival started, he was on top of that development, too. All he asked was a few dollars up front before each session.

Considering the obstacles that Governar faced in getting the book done, the amount of scholarship is impressive. Other scholars like Chris Strachwitz (owner of Arhoolie Records, which boasts a large number of Hopkins albums in its catalog) generously opened their vaults for this tome. On the other hand, residents of Centerville, Texas, where the artist grew up, greeted the author with much suspicion. Two key sources (Hopkins' wife and manager, respectively), declined to talk at all. As he uncovered the puzzle, the results weren't always conclusive, but then again Hopkins was a master at presenting different versions of the truth. The book still managed to overcome all this to present a clear picture.

Interestingly enough, the book really starts to catch fire when Hopkins starts attracting more white followers. The times and social conditions are slowly changing; this is not lost on Hopkins, but he still reacts with a bit of initial suspicion. The tale of the making of the 1967 documentary *The Blues According To Lightnin' Hopkins* is priceless, and there's even an entire chapter devoted to J.J. Phillips, a Los Angeles college student who had a fleeting affair with Hopkins and would later write a book called *Mojo Hand*, a 1966 tome that was loosely based on their liason. Govenar also does a good job of detailing Hopkins' slow downfall; after the whirlwind of the '60s, which had him playing for more audiences and issuing more records than previously, his pace slowly wound down as his drinking increased and his live shows became more uninspired, leading up to his death from cancer in 1982. But by that time, the legend was long established. *Lightnin' Hopkins: His Life And Blues* does a good job of telling the tale. **DB**

Ordering info: chicagoreviewpress.com

David Weiss & Point of Departure
Snuck In

SUNNYSIDE 1256

★★★★

The Cookers
Warriors

JAZZ LEGACY 1001009

★★★½

Snuck In is a hearty brew of jazz, five beefy songs ranging in size from nine to 19-plus minutes. Recorded live at New York's Jazz Standard in 2008, every one of the tunes is written from another era, trumpeter David Weiss' band forgoing the all-originals format, instead looking to reinterpret material not often covered but welcomed nonetheless. *Point Of Departure* is Weiss' followup to his New Jazz Composers Octet work and includes the highly interactive collective of J.D. Allen on tenor, guitarist Nir Felder, bassist Matt Clohesy and Jamire Williams on drums.

Recalling the hot jazz of 1960s and '70s bands fronted by trumpeters Miles Davis, Freddie Hubbard, Lee Morgan and Woody Shaw, Weiss' *Point Of Departure* immerses itself in true-to-form reinventions of Herbie Hancock's equally long-form "I Have A Dream," Tony Williams' riff-based , impatient "Black Comedy" and Andrew Hill's tender "Erato" (the CD's lone ballad and a bit of a breather), along with two by the relatively obscure but influential Charles Moore with the rhythmically novel "Number 4" and the title track. In each case, Weiss and company stretch out, blow and ruminate, Weiss sounding like a amalgamation of influences already stated but his own man as well, with Allen dipping into (among other places) Wayne Shorter territory here and there, Felder a kind of otherwordly presence that counters Weiss and Allen's more formidable attacks, and Clohesy and Williams both aggressive and pliable as the band works the contours of this material through alternating meters, moods and grooves.

Likewise, the Cookers' *Warriors* is a project that seeks to hearken back to, more literally, the classic *Night Of The Cookers*/Blue Note days of the '60s. In this case, it's a septet with Weiss joined by six of his elders: saxist Billy Harper, drummer Billy Hart, bassist Cecil McBee, trumpeter Eddie Henderson, pianist George Cables and alto saxist/flautist Craig Handy. And while one might think that this band of relatively older players would end up playing it closer to the hard-bop vest, the tunes more heat than light, the actual result is *Warriors* ends up sounding more orchestral, more writerly.

The gist of the group (formed in 2007) is performing newly arranged versions of classic material by Harper, McBee and Cables along with some new tunes (none of the Cookers' Blue Note repertoire is here). Room doesn't allow for a full accounting of the music, only to detail that this band of seasoned players is one to check out as they rummage and expand on songs like Harper's stately "Capra Black," McBee's sweet ballad "Close To You Alone" and sauntering "Lady Bugg" (featuring extra ensemble horn lines), and Harper's rockish, stately "The Priestess." The band comes closest to its namesake with a lit-up version of the one truly hard-boppish cut here, Freddie Hubbard's "The Core," most famously heard on Art Blakey's classic *Free For All*, from 1964. In the end, *Warriors* really isn't a return to hard-bop form but rather a kind of re-translation through a more Afro-centric lens with an emphasis on writing, arranging and delivery.

—John Ephland

Snuck In: I Have A Dream; Black Comedy; Number 4; Erato; Snuck In. (61:20)
Personnel: David Weiss, trumpet; J.D. Allen, tenor saxophone; Nir Felder, guitar; Matt Clohesy, bass; Jamire Williams, drums.
Ordering info: sunnysiderecords.com

Warriors: Capra Black; Lady Bugg; Sweet Rita Suite; The Core; Close To You Alone; U-Phoria; Spookarella; Priestess. (57:15)
Personnel: Eddie Henderson, trumpet and flugelhorn; David Weiss, trumpet; Craig Handy, alto saxophone, flute; Billy Harper, tenor saxophone; George Cables, piano; Cecil McBee, bass; Billy Hart; drums.
Ordering info: jazzlegacyproductions.com

Lampifier Programmable Microphones
A Bright Idea

Microphones are a key component to any musical situation, and choosing the proper one can have a significant impact on the outcome of your performance or recording. Fortunately, the new Lampifier dynamic mics provide great audio quality along with fully programmable audio processing capabilities built right into the microphone's housing, all at a surprisingly affordable price.

What sets the Lampifier mics apart from the pack is the use of a custom-designed "audio bulb" in its signal path. Much like a standard light bulb, it contains a specially designed filament through which the audio is passed. The filament actually generates a very natural and smooth compression on the audio with virtually no unpleasant artifacts. "I had been tinkering with the audio bulb technology for several years and finally determined that a microphone was the perfect application for it," said product designer Gary Osborne. Using light bulbs for audio compression actually dates back to the 1930s, when they were used regularly for motion pictures and radio broadcasts.

Osborne and his team developed two basic hardware designs, the Model 111 and the Model 711. Although both microphones feature the same phantom-powered internal audio processors, they differ slightly in their polar patterns and frequency response characteristics. The 111 is a supercardioid mic with a frequency range and response designed for vocals and instruments. It uses an industry-standard upper-mid-range boost common to other mics like the Shure SM58. The Model 711 is a cardioid mic with a flatter response curve and slightly wider frequency range. In general, the 111 is geared toward higher-volume situations where you need to cut through a loud mix, and the 711 is better suited for moderate to low volumes such as churches, small clubs or the recording studio.

In addition to the natural compression capabilities of the audio bulb technology, the Lampifier microphones contain an internal audio processor that controls a noise gate as well as overall output volume levels. Although there are actually only two hardware designs, Lampifier offers them pre-programmed with your choice of many field-tested settings suitable for a wide variety of applications.

Taking things one step further, the microphone's internal settings can be customized by simply relocating a few shunts on its internal pins. In fact, the company even offers online tools for creating custom programs.

I tested both the model 111 and 711 microphones with several of the available program options and was impressed all around. The mics sounded great, and the built-in compression alone is worth the price. The 111 with the Pro Concert program really delivered with a great in-your-face quality. The 711 with the Infinite Stage setting was also wonderful with a slightly softer delivery. In addition, the noise gate kept feedback problems to a bare minimum.

The Lampifier microphones are definitely worth checking into. The ability to tailor a microphone to your specific needs is an invaluable tool, particularly when dealing with the inconsistencies of sound systems. Innovative, affordable and built in the USA—now that's a bright idea.

—Keith Baumann

Ordering info: lampifier.com

Golden Age Project PRE-73 » *Clone With Serious Tone*

Anyone who is into audio recording learns quickly that quality gear is expensive, particularly the highly coveted vintage pieces. A top-of-the-line microphone preamp can set you back thousands of dollars and is out of reach for most small project studios. Answering the need for affordable components, Bo Medin of Golden Age Audio has introduced the PRE-73, an amazingly good mic preamp that delivers

fantastic tone with classic vintage warmth and goes far beyond its $299 price tag.

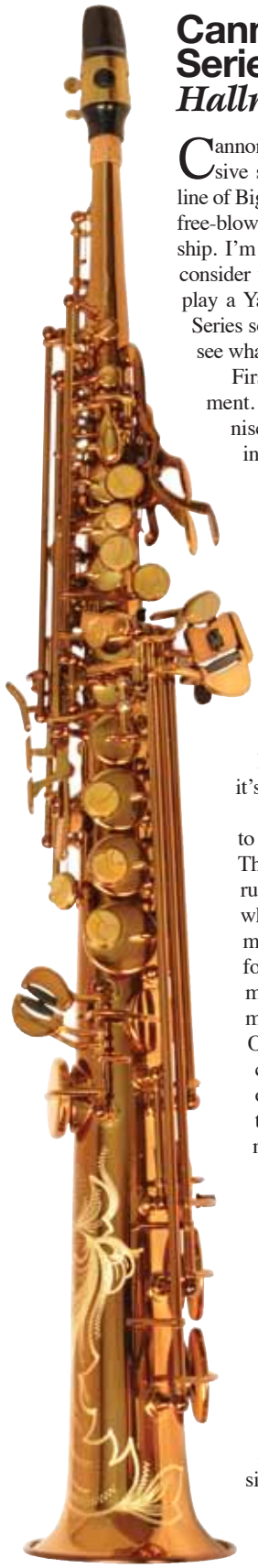
Medin founded Golden Age Audio in 1982 as a recording company and later moved into sales and distribution of high-end audio gear. "Looking back to the early years, I remember how frustrating it was that recording gear was so expensive," Medin said. This led to the development of the company's own product line, Golden Age Project, which focused on affordable audio gear. According to Medin, "The PRE-73 is the first product in a line that is fulfilling a dream I have had for a many years: to offer musicians low-cost vintage-style units that have that wonderful vintage sound."

The design of the PRE-73 is based on the legendary Neve 1073. Originally introduced by Rupert Neve in the early 1970s, the preamp sections of these vintage consoles remain the gold standard in high-end recording studios today. However, acquiring an original vintage Neve pre will require a second mortgage on your house, and even the modern reproductions will put a serious dent in your wallet. What makes these units so desirable is the unique coloration that they place on the audio signal. This "warmth" or "punch," as it is often described, can really help bring a track to life and has become even more essential with digital recording technology. "The PRE-73 builds on a classic design that has been copied many times and has a sound that has proved its worth," Medin said. "Having it produced in China and making some compromises has allowed us to sell it for a price that almost anyone can afford."

The PRE-73 uses a fairly straightforward design offering input gain, output gain, phantom power and phase switching on the front panel. In the rear, it has combo XLR/TRS inputs for accepting either mic or line inputs. There is also a DI input on the front for direct recording of instruments. Like the original Neves, the PRE-73 does not contain any integrated circuit chips in its design and uses a fully discreet signal with three separate transformers for the balanced microphone input, the line input and the output.

During a test-run, the Golden Age Project PRE-73 produced great tones on a wide variety of microphones. Adjusting the input and output settings allows you to control the amount of coloration applied to your signal and to achieve a range of tonal characteristics. The DI also functioned surprisingly well on both guitar and bass. The PRE-73 will probably not replace your expensive vintage or boutique preamps, but it may find itself sharing rack space alongside them. *—Keith Baumann*

Ordering info: mamut.net/goldenagemusic



Cannonball Vintage Series Soprano
Hallmark Of Control

Cannonball Musical Instruments has been making impressive strides within the saxophone world with its popular line of Big Bell instruments. Many players rave about their big, free-blowing, resonant sound and their attention to craftsmanship. I'm one of the many saxophonists who generally only consider vintage Selmer Mark VI saxophones (although I do play a Yamaha soprano). But when the Cannonball Vintage Series soprano saxophone arrived at my door, I was eager to see what this innovative horn manufacturer has been up to.

First, the Vintage Series Soprano is a beautiful instrument. This particular horn has a dark amber lacquer reminiscent of a beautifully maintained vintage VI. Further inspection reveals impressive hand-carved engraving on the bell and up the tube, all the way up to the upper-stack thumb rest. The key buttons have a patina of semi-precious stones, and the overall look of the horn is high-end. The horn is one piece (no removable necks) and feels well built and substantial. Cannonball is aiming for a vintage ergonomic feel with modern keywork, and they've achieved just that. The horn feels smaller than my Yamaha due to key placement, but everything is very comfortable in the hands, especially the palm and side keys (including the high F#). The action on this horn is light and quick, and it's set up well, suitable for professional use.

With the visual inspection complete, let's move on to more significant matters: How does the horn play? The Vintage Series Soprano ships with a Cannonball rubber C-star mouthpiece, ligature and cap—and while many players will likely want a more open mouthpiece, the one that's included might do the trick for concert band or saxophone quartet settings. Using my soprano setup (a rubber Selmer Super Session F mouthpiece, Vandoren ZZ 3.5 reed and a Vandoren Optimum ligature), I was immediately struck by how centered and focused this horn plays. Unlike many other sopranos, this instrument seems to have control as a hallmark of its identity. The mid-range dynamics were even and round and displayed a warmth I'm not used to hearing from a soprano. Finally, intonation was a pleasant surprise. I was particularly impressed with the stability and accuracy of the palm keys, and once I adjusted to the octave break (every horn is different here) things settled in quite easily.

As with any acoustic instrument, each player will experience his or her own results. This is obviously a well-built instrument from a company that is serious about producing professional-level saxophones. Players in the market for a new soprano will probably need to add this instrument to their list of possibilities, especially if they like the sound, look and feel of vintage horns. To find a dealer who carries Cannonball's Vintage Series saxophones, go to cannonballmusic.com. *—Nic Meyer*

{1} BREAKING JAZZ BARRIERS

Rock House has released *Jazz Guitar, Breaking Traditional Barriers*, an instructional three-DVD package featuring guitarist Alex Skolnick, who's known for blending metal with elements of jazz. Using basic blues progressions, Skolnick guides the viewer through basic jazz concepts and demonstrates how to follow chord progressions by targeting chord tones, triads, embellishments, modes and patterns. The program includes more than 40 lessons, a 52-page tab E-book, live performances and iPod-ready video.

More info: rockhousemethod.com

{2} STYLIN' GIG BAGS

The Madarozzo 2010 band instrument gig bag couture line, designed by Martin Ritter, features 12 different models. The new B050 model (pictured) is available in a range of colors for trumpet, triple trumpet, alto saxophone, tenor saxophone and trombone. The fashionable bags feature a soft nylon interior, detachable backpack system, integrated semi-rigid panels, pockets and pouches.

More info: madarozzo.com

{3} NIGHT STALKER

Grover Pro Percussion has added the Nitestalk to its SilverFox line of sticks and mallets. It's a 16-inch-long multirod with 25 nylon bristles secured to a 5/8-diameter high-impact plastic handle. Nitestalks have a balanced, natural feel on both drums and cymbals. Each rod features a firmness adjustment band that controls the feel and flex of the nylon bristles.

More info: groverpro.com


{4}

{1}

{6}

{3}


{5}

{2}

{4} PIANO CONSISTENCY

Earthworks' new PM40T Touring PianoMic System provides quick, simple setup in a compact carry-on case. With a frequency response ranging from 4Hz–40kHz, these mics feature short diaphragm setting times, making them well suited for a piano's diffused sound field. They exhibit no proximity effect regardless of distance from the strings or soundboard. The result is a consistent piano sound across the entire instrument.

More info: earthworksaudio.com

{5} PEDAL BOARD CASE

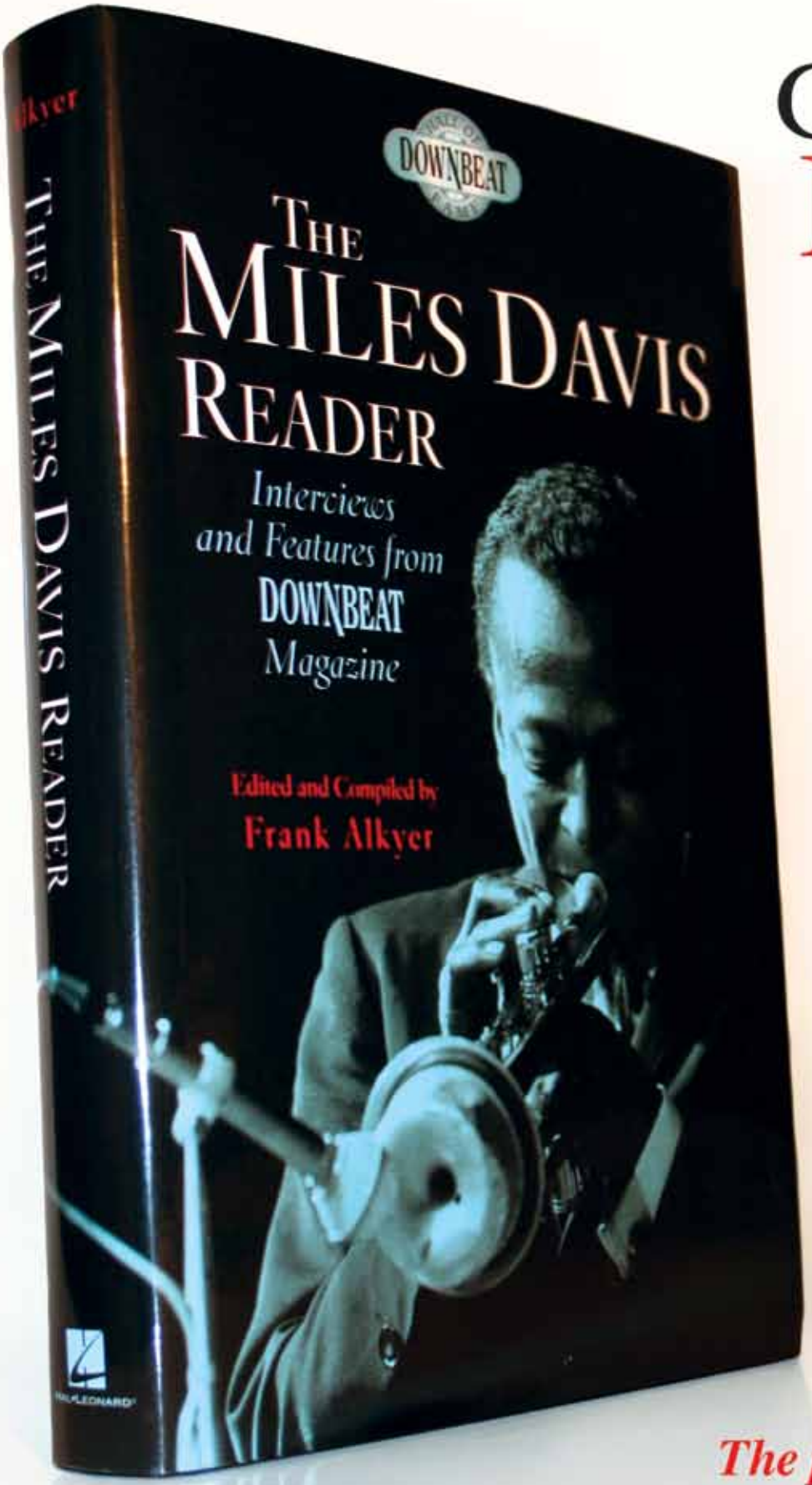
Gator's new nylon Multi-FX bags are designed to take multieffects pedal boards on the road. The bags feature a 1/2-inch padded interior with a large zippered accessory pocket for storing cables, tuners and capos. They have an adjustable shoulder strap and padded-grip handle. The Multi-FX bags are available in three sizes to fit various pedal boards.

More info: gatorcases.com

{6} GOOSENECK TUNER

The flexible gooseneck mount featured on the Meisel COM-90 clip-on tuner lets guitarists adjust the display so they can see it while they play. The COM-90 is chromatic and can tune a variety of instruments with selectable calibration for guitar, bass, violin and ukulele. Players can tune with the built-in microphone or use the contact transducer in the gel-padded clip.

More info: meiselaccessories.com



Get The Miles Files!

For the first time ever, DownBeat has compiled its archives of the great Miles Davis in one hardcover volume.

The DownBeat Miles Davis Reader *includes:*

- *More than 350 pages of notes, news, features and reviews.*
- *Everything from the first mention of Davis in 1946 to our latest reviews.*
- *Classic Miles covers and photos.*
- *Blindfold Tests, wild conversations, legendary writers and more.*

$24.95
(plus $10 for Int'l S&H)

The perfect gift for the Miles fan & collector.

To order your copy…
Call **1-800-959-5299** or go to **downbeat.com** & click on the Miles book cover

A Melodic/Harmonic Approach To Playing Drum Set Solos

The extended drum solo is a display of technique, endurance and, sometimes, even musicality. However, drum features and show drumming aside, the majority of solos a drummer plays in a jazz context are based upon the piece of music being performed. When playing creative music with a combo, or even a big band, the drum solo should be related to the basic form of the tune.

All music is written with definite patterns or sequences of melody, harmony and rhythm that constitute the "form" of the music. Even avant-garde or "free" music can be considered to have form based on changes that occur in tonality or rhythm within the course of the composition/improvisation.

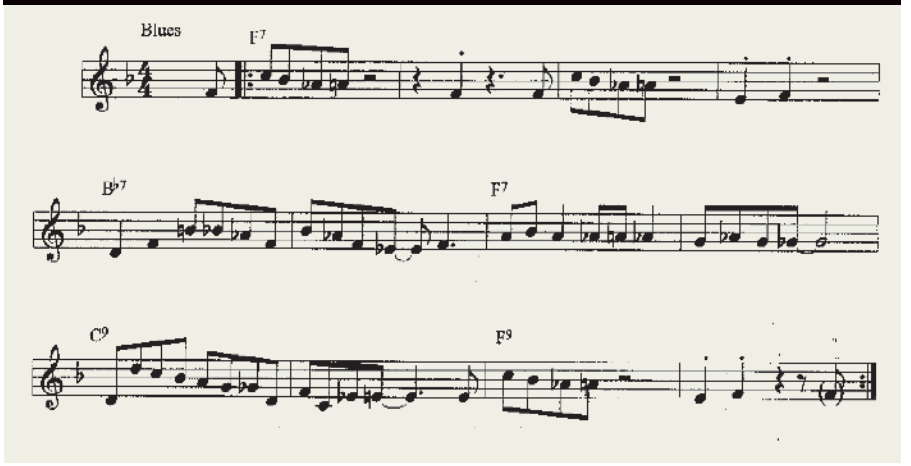
The two most common musical forms the drum set player is likely to encounter are the 12-bar blues and the 32-bar song. The 12-bar blues or some derivative of it is used in all styles of popular music from country to rock to jazz. This progression is usualy written like this: I (four bars); IV (two bars); I (two bars); V (two bars); I (two bars). The 32-bar song form is widely used in contemporary music from pop to jazz to Broadway shows and movies. This form is designated AABA and is constructed as follows: (A) an eight-bar phrase of a melody and chord progression; (A) the same phrase repeated; (B) a completely different phrase, called the "bridge" or "release"; (A) the original phrase repeated again.

Some examples of other common forms are as follows:

1) **ABA:** (A) first phrase; (B) bridge; (A) first phrase repeated.
2) **AB:** (A) eight-bar phrase; (B) different eight-bar phrase (also considered a 16-bar song form).
3) **ABCA:** (A) eight-bar phrase; (B) different phrase; (C) a third phrase; (A) the original phrase.
4) **ABACA:** (A) phrase; (B) different phrase; (A) the original phrase; (C) a third phrase; (A) the original phrase. This is a rondo-type form because the original phrase keeps recurring between additional phrases.

Knowing the form of a piece is a necessity in making logical sense of the music and following any type of arrangement of that music. Everything that is played by the drummer must be in correlation to that particular form of the music or it is inappropriate. The drummer must play the tune!

Example



All this means that when the drummer is playing fours, eights or an extended solo, he should improvise within the form of the song being played. If soloing on a 12-bar blues, the solo should be 12 bars long or multiples of 12 bars (e.g., 24, 36, 48).

Each time the form of the tune is played during a solo, it is called a "chorus." If someone says, "Take a chorus," on a blues, the soloist would play 12 bars. If playing a 32-bar song form, the soloist would play 32 bars, and so forth. When trading fours or eights, they also have to fit within the framework of the musical form.

There are some exceptions, such as when a drum soloist finds himself in an avant-garde or free improvisation mode with no set framework. In these situations not only is the form stretched or extended, but the time can be broken and abstracted while the drummer plays creatively, even having the freedom to change the direction of the music while doing so. These avant-garde situations are not as common as playing within musical form, but I have found that the knowledge and discipline of playing according to form can actually be a benefit in the free improvisation genre. To paraphrase a saying, you need to have something from which to be free—a starting point, time signature, tonality, something—or else you will simply have chaos.

Take a look at "Gratuitous Verisimilitudes" (see Example), which is a very simple blues in the key of F. The I chord is the basis of the first four bars; a suggestion could be to start the solo on the snare drum for this first chord.

In bar 5, the chord changes to B♭ (the IV chord) for two bars; here the solo could move to the small mounted tom. At measure 7, the harmony changes back to the I chord (B♭) for two bars; the solo could then move back to the snare. Bar 9 is a C chord (V) for two bars, and the solo could now be played on the floor tom. At bar 11, it is back to the I chord (B♭) and could again go to the snare.

The sequence mentioned above for the blues form of I–IV–I–V–I has now been completed and a full chorus has been played. Going through the whole form again would be a second chorus, and so on. Keep in mind that a blues will often have additional chords in the form to add color and movement. But even when this is the case, the I–IV–I–V–I chords will generally fall in their natural places.

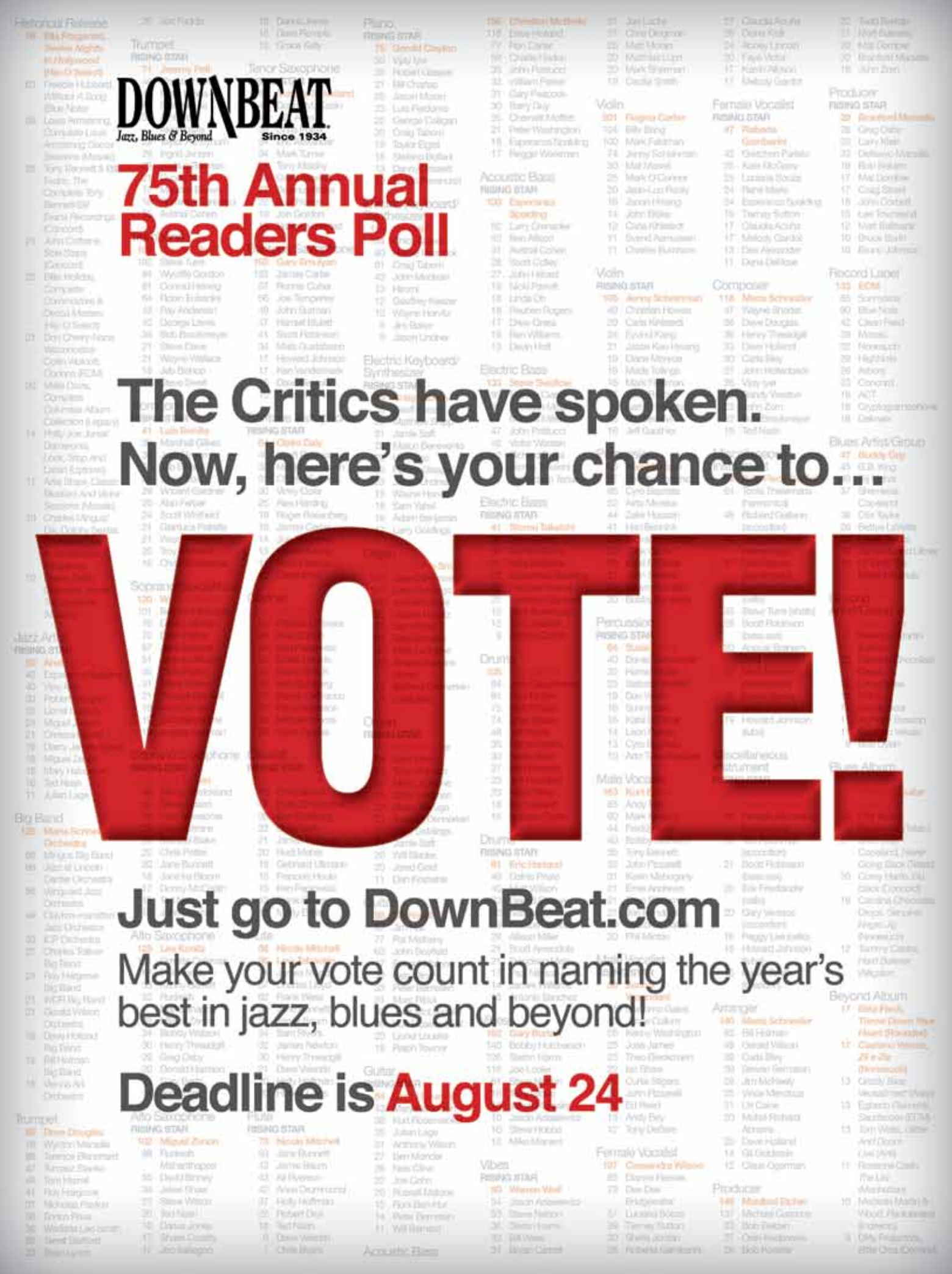
The next step is to try and play melodically, meaning to follow the melody. This can be a real asset when playing more than one chorus of an intricate piece of music. By simulating the melody in your solo, you will make the other musicians (and some listeners) aware of exactly where you are in the music. It also can help to cue the rest of the band when it's time to come back in.

A good exercise is to mimic the movement of the melody on the drums. When the melody is ascending, try to move from lower- to higher-pitched drums. Vice-versa when the melody is descending. Play through the blues example again using this technique. Keep in mind that the eighth notes, while written straight, are actually swung or played as what are called "rounded" eighths (broken eighth-note triplets).

Drummers can improvise on any standard or jazz composition using this same system, simulating the movement of the melody. The whole point is to play in the context of the specific musical situation. Develop your musical vocabulary, creativity and musicality so you will be an asset to the band, your fellow musicians and the music. One of the best compliments a drummer can receive is, "When you play, I can hear the tune."

DB

MAT MARUCCI IS A RECORDING ARTIST FOR CIMP AND CADENCE JAZZ RECORDS. HE HAS ALSO AUTHORED SEVERAL BOOKS FOR MEL BAY PUBLICATIONS, INCLUDING *JAZZ DRUMMING ESSENTIALS (AND MORE)*, *DRUMSTICK FINGER SYSTEMS AND TECHNIQUES* AND *GETTING INTO SNARE DRUM*. FOR MORE INFORMATION ON MARUCCI, VISIT MATMARUCCI.COM.


DOWNBEAT
Jazz, Blues & Beyond
Since 1934
75th Annual Readers Poll
The Critics have spoken.
Now, here's your chance to...
VOTE!
Just go to DownBeat.com
Make your vote count in naming the year's best in jazz, blues and beyond!
Deadline is August 24


Clifford Brown

HERMAN LEONARD PHOTOGRAPHY/CTSIMAGES.COM

Clifford Brown's Trumpet Solo On 'Joy Spring'

"Joy Spring" is likely trumpeter Clifford Brown's most well-known composition. Originally recorded in 1954 by Brown's quintet with drummer Max Roach for the Pacific Jazz label, the song is a standard 32-bar AABA form, but with a serious twist: the first "A" section is in F major, but the second "A" is the same chord progression transposed up a half-step. The bridge moves up another half-step to G, and then follows a series of II–Vs to eventually lead back to F for the final "A" section.

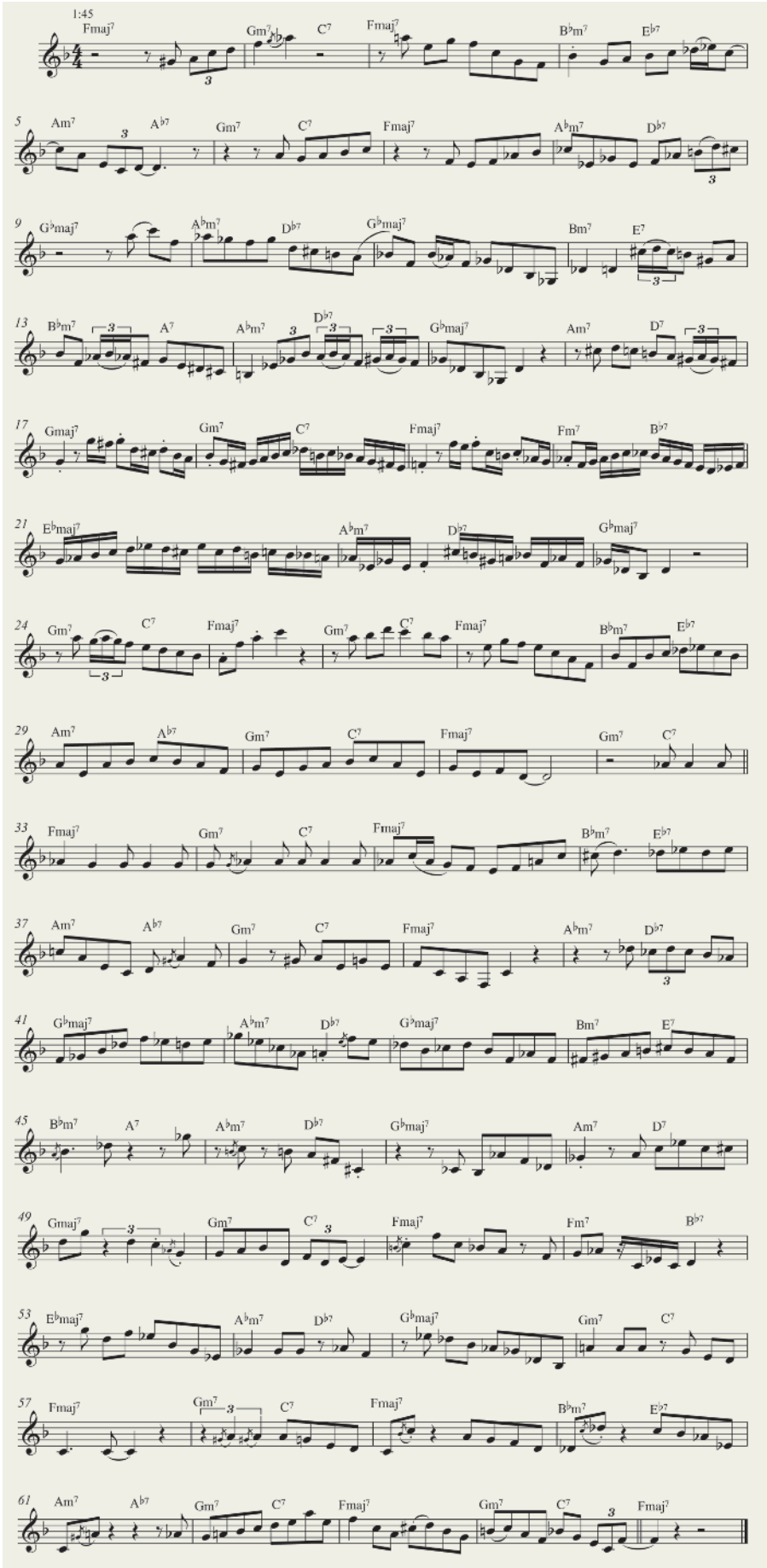
Brown develops some specific ideas to make his solo sound connected over the composition's key changes. One example is the major arpeggio descending down from root to root and then jumping back up to the fifth. This idea appears in measure 15 (in G♭) and again in measure 39 (in F). This idea had first appeared at the end of measure 11, starting on beat three instead of beat one so the jump to the fifth lands on the downbeat of the next measure.

Measures 58–61 are a great example of developing an idea. Starting on beat three, Brown plays descending eighth notes to beat one and then makes an interval jump on the "and" of one. But the scales and notes are changed to fit the chord. In measure 58, Brown plays a descending C major pentatonic scale against the C7, and in the next measure an F major pentatonic on the Fmaj7, though he starts both scales on the same note, A. Curiously, on the E♭7 in the next measure Brown plays F minor pentatonic. Though this scale has little to do with E♭7, it does relate the chord back to the key of this section.

Brown uses pentatonic scales frequently throughout his solo, which not only helps to create cohesiveness in the solo but also provides a soulful quality. Often the scale choices match the chords, as in measure 55 where he plays G♭ major pentatonic against a G♭maj7 chord, and the second half of the next measure with the C major pentatonic on the C7 chord. There are other places where Brown makes some more unusual choices. In the second half of measure 43, against the G♭maj7, Brown plays an F minor lick. This is particularly effective: The scale choice emphasizes non-triad tones of the G♭ chord, in this case the major seventh and ninth, but also relates the chord to the key of the song.

Some other examples of this kind of creativity are against the E7 in measure 44, where Brown plays F# minor pentatonic, again emphasizing extensions (sixth, fourth and ninth). And in measure 46, where we have a II–V leading to G♭maj7, Brown plays the minor pentatonic of that key, but includes the flat-fifth, giving it more of a bluesy sound. Brown had heralded this in the opening lick of his solo, when he played a D blues scale (or F major pentatonic with an added flat-third). He even started and ended this lick on the flat-third, which really brings out the bluesiness. **DB**

JIMI DURSO IS A GUITARIST AND BASSIST IN THE NEW YORK AREA. HE CAN BE REACHED AT JIMIDURSO.COM.



Hacettepe University Introduces Turkey's 1st Jazz Performance College Degree Program


Emre Kartari

REBECCA D'ANGELO

In October, drummer Emre Kartari will welcome 10 Turkish students to Hacettepe University in Ankara, Turkey, for the country's first four-year jazz performance degree. Professors at the conservatory, which counted the composer Paul Hindemith among its early teachers, instruct classical musicians as young as 10 years old, and music degree programs are offered up to the Ph.D. level. But until now, Turkey's young jazz lovers have had no options if they wanted to learn about jazz without traveling abroad.

"The whole country did not have a jazz program. If you were a kid growing up in Turkey and you really liked jazz, there was absolutely nowhere you could go to study. The only option was to go to the U.S.," said Kartari, the department's founder. State officials limited the university's initial jazz cohort to 10 musicians, and, for the first year, students all had to come from within Turkey.

Kartari, who was born in Turkey but has lived in the United States for most of his life, modeled the jazz program after his experience as a student at Virginia Commonwealth University, where he studied with George "Skip" Gailes and Doug Richards. Both musicians are involved with the new program; Richards will write a signature composition for the university's orchestra and a septet of guest artists, to be premiered in November, and Gailes will spend up to 10 weeks in Turkey firming up the program's curriculum.

"My greatest task is to establish how to practice the music—what technique means in the jazz context," Gailes said.

As many of the students will only be familiar with classical performance, Gailes' time will mostly be dedicated to teaching the jazz students theory, history and improvisation with the goal of creating musicians who can serve as a foundation for future classes of students.

When Gailes came to Turkey before the school year to visit, he heard musicians playing jazz, but there was something a bit off. The players didn't have the knowledge and experience needed to play the music convincingly. This program, he said, will help provide a base in American jazz for the students, allowing them to eventually weave bits of Turkish culture into their sound. "Emre is going to need a group of students that can represent the university and the program in order to attract more students and faculty from around the country," Gailes said. "What Emre really needs, ultimately, is a core group of kids that can play in an authentic fashion."

Gailes will be the first of a number of Fulbright specialists who will journey to Ankara to help establish the program. Kartari is the only full-time faculty member, so these visitors will teach classes and provide students with another direct link to the American method of teaching jazz. During the second semester, drummer Howard Curtis and singer Dena DeRose will come to Ankara to teach.

"The new jazz department is bringing great jazz musicians to the city," said Ayça Gündüz, a singer who is vying for a place in the program. "It'll be an incredible opportunity for us to have the chance to study jazz with such professional and inspiring musicians."

Officials at nearby music schools will be watching Ankara closely. Gailes has heard about programs throughout the region looking to start jazz degrees, and he said Kartari's department could provide a method for bringing jazz to other schools.

"If he can establish a successful model," Gailes said, "it will be much easier for the other administrators to start, if not full-blown degree programs, at least programs within the existing structure."

—Jon Ross

School Notes


Richard DeRosa

New Texan: Composer Richard DeRosa has joined the faculty at the University of North Texas in Denton. He will teach composition and arranging for the fall 2010 semester. **Details:** jazz.unt.edu

Juilliard @ 10: Juilliard Jazz will celebrate its 10th year with a series of concerts during the next few months. The New York school's jazz orchestra will perform with John Clayton on Oct. 19. Jon Faddis will be the guest soloist for the orchestra's production of the Miles Davis/Gil Evans arrangement of *Porgy And Bess* on Feb. 25, 2011. **Details:** juilliard.edu

Dr. Hernandez: Berklee awarded an honorary doctorate to drummer Horacio "El Negro" Hernandez at the Umbria Jazz Festival on July 15. **Details:** berklee.edu

Williams' Words: New York Yankee-turned-jazz guitarist Bernie Williams will speak at William Paterson University and perform with the school's jazz orchestra at the Shea Center for Performing Arts in Wayne, N.J., on Nov. 12. **Details:** wpunj.edu

Eastman Expansion: The Louis S. & Molly B. Wolk Foundation has made a $1.5 million commitment to the University of Rochester and its Eastman School of Music to support the renovation and expansion of Eastman Theatre. In recognition of the foundation's support, the atrium in the new addition being built next to the theatre will be named Wolk Atrium. **Details:** esm.rochester.edu

RIP, Wendell Logan: Wendell Logan, who founded Oberlin Conservatory's jazz studies department, died on June 15 in Cleveland, Ohio. He was 69. A feature on Logan and his work at Oberlin will be in the October issue of DownBeat.

When the BUDGETS get cut the MUSIC STOPS. And it REALLY HURTS. That's because MUSIC and ARTS instruction is extremely vital for a COMPLETE education. Half measures leave us flat. THE MR. HOLLAND'S OPUS FOUNDATION provides new and refurbished INSTRUMENTS to qualified schools and individuals in AMERICA that have been adversely affected by budget cuts. If you have any used WOODWIND, STRINGED or BRASS instruments lying around collecting dust, we'll gladly take them off your hands.

HELP us keep the music ALIVE AND FREE in our schools.
Call 877-MR-HOLLAND or you can visit www.mhopus.org

DB Music Shop

Rates: Minimum 15 words per ad. Advertise in one issue for $1.70/word, 3 consecutive issues for $1.40/word, 6 consecutive issues for $1.25/word, 12 consecutive issues for $1.10/word. **Display ads:** call (630) 941-2030 Ext.100 for rate card. All ads are prepaid, no agency commission. Send check or money order. Visa and MasterCard are accepted. **Deadline:** Ad copy and full payment must arrive 2 months prior to DB cover date. **Send your advertisement to:** DownBeat Classifieds, Att. Sue Mahal,102 N. Haven Road, Elmhurst, Illinois, 60126; **or FAX your ad to:** (630) 941-3210.

ALBUMS & VIDEOS

RARE JAZZ LP AUCTIONS
All instrumental styles plus vocals and Latin. Free lists sent worldwide. A. Lewis, P.O. Box 4834, N. Hollywood, CA 91617. Fax: 818-762-3563, e-mail: mrbluenote@peoplepc.com

WWW.EASTWINDIMPORT.COM
Japanese import CDs & LPs: Venus, Marshmallow, Sawano and more! We ship worldwide.

CIMP RECORDS, CADENCE RECORDS
Over 1,400 labels 34,000 LPs/CDs/Books stocked www.cadencebuilding.com, 315-287-2852

TOP $$ PAID FOR YOUR JAZZ LPS, CDS & MORE MUSIC. No Collection Too Large. We Buy and Sell, New and Used. 150,000 CDs, LPs, DVDs in stock: Modern Jazz: Blue Note, Prestige, Mosaic, etc. as well as Blues, Rock, Classical, and more. PRINCETON RECORD EXCHANGE (609) 921-0881, 20 South Tulane St. Princeton, NJ 08542, www.prex.com. Since 1980. WeBuyCDs&LPs@prex.com

WWW.JAZZLOFT.COM
Jazz, Blues, Experimental & Modern Classical CDs & DVDs. Now featuring Black Saint, Soul Note & HatHut Records. Music for people who listen.

JAZZ DVDs / VIDEO
1,300 Concerts, Documentaries, TV, Instructional. DVDs, Videotapes or Laserdiscs. **FREE CATALOG.** JAZZWEST, Box 3515 (DB), Ashland, OR 97520 (541) 482-5529 www.jazzwestdvd.com

VINYL JAZZ AT SET PRICES
Over 30,000 rare, out of print Vinyl JAZZ LPs at set prices, searchable on our web site. Over 30 years of international service. Foreign inquiry welcomed. Also rare jazz publications and literature sold. Gary Alderman G's Jazz Inc. P.O. Box 259164 Madison, WI 53725 USA e-mail: gjazz@tds.net
www.gjazz.com www.vinyljazz.com

CDs by
Reservoir
Pepper Adams, Kenny Barron, Nick Brignola, John Fedchock, Barry Harris, John Hicks,Steve Kuhn, Peter Leitch, Joe Magnarelli, Pete Malinverni, Valery Ponomarev, Claudio Roditi, Gary Smulyan and others.

www.reservoirmusic.com
www.rsrjazz.com

INSTRUMENTS & ACCESSORIES

SERIOUS CD STORAGE
Save space by replacing bulky jewel boxes with the Jewelsleeve. Call for a free sample at 1-800-863-3312 or visit www.jewelsleeve.com

CD MANUFACTURING DIRECT – replicated full-color CDs in full color Sleeves, 500 only $425. 100 piece minimum. 1-800-591-4837 WTSduplication.com

WWW.EMWINSTON.COM

INSTRUMENTS & ACCESSORIES

JOE SAX
Woodwinds
Known worldwide for expert repair
Always a great selection of used instruments
www.joesax.com
(800) 876-8771 (607) 865-8088
Fax (607) 865-8010

PROMOTION & PUBLISHING

CLIENTS WANTED!!
Donald Elfman—a 20-year-plus veteran of the jazz record industry—is working on his own!
Publicity, promotion and more ... at reasonable rates!
Reach "Big Elf" at 215-268-2259 or at donald.elfman@comcast.net.

JAZZ PROMO SERVICES,
Get your new CDs/DVDs/Jazz Books Reviewed
Offering press mailings for National Publicity, Campaigns/Tour Support/Gig Alerts. Service to NPR/DownBeat voting Critics/Jazz Journalists Association and allmajor media outlets. Promote Yourself! Email is the quickest, most cost effective way to promote events, recordings and venues.
Contact: Jim Eigo Jazz Promo Services,
269 S. Route 94, Warwick, NY 10990
P: 845 986 1677; jazzpromo@earthlink.net
www.jazzpromoservices.com
Specializing in Media Campaigns for the music community, artists, labels, venues and events.

ED BAGATINI—Trombone Handslide Adjustment, Composer/Arranger of Jazz
Ph: 269-983-1872; bagatini@juno.com

LESSONS

LEARN JAZZ PIANO ON THE INTERNET

www.JazzPianoOnline.com

INTERNATIONAL ONLINE LESSONS BY INTERNET, MAIL OR PHONE.
Study all styles/aspects of jazz improvisation and saxophone with Jeff Harrington, Berklee Professor, MIT Affiliated Artist, Harvard University MLSP Instructor.
Website: jeffharrington.com
E-mail: lessons@jeffharrington.com
(781) 643-0704. P.O. Box 1257, Arlington, MA 02474

NEW YORK JAZZ ACADEMY
NYC private lessons, ensemble workshops/ classes, summer programs. Featured on NBC television. Instrumentalists/Vocalists welcome. Easy online payments. Kids,Teens, Adults. Enroll today! nyjazzacademy.com

EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES

NEED WORK? Find paying gigs, locate players. Thousands of employed musicians since 1969. www.MusiciansContact.com 818-888-7879

BOOKS & MAGAZINES

VINTAGE JAZZ BOOKS
I have more than 2,000 books in stock.
History, biography, criticism and ephemera.
Send for my latest catalogue.
David Stimpson Books on Jazz and Blues
164 Hillsdale Ave. East
Toronto, Ontario Canada M4S 1T5
(416) 484-8296
fax: (416) 484-0602
e-mail: dcstimpson@yahoo.com

DB Reader Services

Send address changes to:

DownBeat (Change of Address)
P.O. Box 11688
St. Paul, MN 55111-0688

fax: **651-686-0366**

email: **downbeat@subforms.com**

Please allow six weeks for your change to become effective. When submitting an address change, include current DB label showing old address.

877-904-5299 (U.S & Canada)
651-251-9682 (Foreign)

DB Buyers Guide

AAM Music {antonioadolfo.com}	50
Akbank Jazz Festival {akbankjazz.com}	5
Allegro Corporation {allegro-music.com}	25, 56, 71
Ambient Records {ambientrecords.com}	55
Bari Mouthpieces {bariwoodwind.com}	26
Berklee College of Music {berklee.edu}	31
Borgani Saxophones {borgani.com}	23
Britton Brothers {thebrittonbrothers.com}	50
Buckyball Records {buckyballmusic.com}	76
Butman Music {igorbutman.com}	27
Cannonball Music {cannonballmusic.com}	17
Capri Records {caprirecords.com}	52
Charlie Boy Records {sandysasso.com}	20
Chicago Sessions {chicagosessions.com}	54
Chicago Symphony Orchestra {cso.org}	77
Chronograph Records {chronographrecords.com}	55
Columbia College Chicago {colum.edu/music}	4
Czech Ease {czech-ease.com}	20
D'Addario {daddario.com}	42
Doodlin' Records {doodlinrecords.com}	53
Dream Cymbals {dreamcymbals.com}	15
ECM Records {ecmrecords.com}	2
Fuzzy Music {fuzzymusic.com}	55
Harmonia Mundi {harmoniamundi.com}	50
Hep Jazz {hepjaz.com}	47
Hyde Park Jazz Festival {hydeparkjazzfestival.org}	10
Intakt Records {intaktrec.ch}	12
J.J. Babbitt {jjbabbitt.com}	47
Jamey Aebersold {jazzbooks.com}	11
Jeff Antoniuk and the Jazz Update {jeffantoniuk.com}	55
JSR Productions {koorax.com}	73
Juilliard School of Music {juillard.edu/jazz}	43
Korg {korg.com}	9
LA Sax {lasax.com}	34, 35
Lisa Hilton Music {lisahiltonmusic.com}	74
Manhattan School of Music {msmnyc.edu}	38
Marsalis Music {marsalismusic.com}	61
Motéma Records {motema.com}	92
Mr. Holland's Opus Foundation {mhopus.org}	87
Myron Walden Music {myronwalden.com}	21
Native Language Music {nativelanguage.com}	52
New School {newschool.edu/jazz34}	8
NYC Records {nycrecords.com}	75
Patois Records {patoisrecords.com}	55
Pazz Productions {gracekellymusic.com}	54
Porter Records {porterrecords.com}	52
Resonance Records {resonancerecords.org}	91
Rico Reeds {ricoreeds.com}	7
Robin Aleman Music {robinaleman.com}	52
Sam Ash {samash.com}	84
Sam Newsome Music {samnewsome.com}	54
Samson {zoomfx.com/H1}	33
Sunnyside Records {sunnysiderecords.com}	65, 67, 69
Superscope {superscopetechnologies.com}	38
Telarc/Heads Up {headsup.com}	19, 63
The Many Colors of a Woman {themanycolorsofawomanincorporated.webs.com}	66
Theo Wanne Mouthpieces {theowanne.com}	85
Three Handed Records {pamelarose.com}	50
Universal Music Group - EmArcy {emarcy.com}	39
Vandoren {vandojazzusa.com}	3
William Paterson {wpunj.edu}	16

Blindfold Test | BY TED PANKEN

Steven Bernstein


JACK VARTOOGIAN/FRONTROWPHOTOS

"I'm Neil Hefti with an earring," trumpeter Steven Bernstein once joked, referencing both his predilection for arranging and his old-school penchant for mixing as comfortably with musical elders as post-jazz peers, qualities he brings to such projects as the Millennial Territory Orchestra and Sex Mob.

Wynton Marsalis

"School Boy" (from *He And She*, Blue Note, 2009) Marsalis, trumpet; Walter Blanding, tenor saxophone; Dan Nimmer, piano; Carlos Henriquez, bass; Ali Jackson, drums.

Sounds like Wynton. 5 stars for a guy with a totally recognizable sound even playing an older style. In the second eight bars, I think, before the saxophone entered, was a beautiful arco bass countermelody, so high it almost sounds like a cello. That makes the whole arrangement. Is this his new piano player? He's good. Wynton's been playing this kind of music for a long time, and does it uniquely. There's his phrasing and dynamics—even when he plays eighth notes, you can still hear how he played with Art Blakey. He's integrated so many different techniques for the trumpet. For example, in the old days, when people split notes, it's because they missed them. But Wynton made it part of jazz technique. He knows how to get house; waits 'til the very end to do the flutter notes. Ends on a major-seventh. He has his world, and he's done a great job surrounding himself with people who populate his vision. That's what a musician is supposed to do.

Wallace Roney

"Miles Runs The Voodoo Down" (from *Miles In India*, Times Square, 2008) Roney, trumpet; Lenny White, drums; Pete Cosey, guitar; Michael Henderson, electric bass; Adam Holzman, keyboards; A. Sivamani, percussion; Vikku Vinayakram, ghalam.

Wallace Roney. Another master trumpeter—5 stars. All techniques now basically are old ones that people have been able to incorporate, so it's all fair game, whether it's Miles [Davis] from *Jack Johnson* in 1972, like this, or Louis Armstrong in 1928. Of course, Wallace has done an incredible job taking a particular part of Miles' technique and making it his own. That's how he hears music. He's incredible. Trumpet is such a knocking-down-the-walls-of-Jericho instrument that it's hard to put it in this kind of sound and not feel corny, but it fits nicely into the mix. Good guitar, too. Reminds me of Pete Cosey. It's him? He's also a master. Is this *Miles In India*? No wonder it sounds so good—Bob Belden is great at arranging records. It's a wide soundscape. But there were so many low tones, I was surprised they didn't have that high tabla sound running through in the mix.

Terence Blanchard

"Levee" (from *A Tale Of God's Will (A Requiem For Katrina)*, Blue Note, 2007) Blanchard, trumpet; Brice Winston, tenor saxophone; Aaron Parks, piano; Derrick Hodge, bass; Kendrick Scott, drums.

Terence. 6 stars. I like the string passage in the beginning. As a writer, I like things with a little more roughness, but Terence's sound up against it is a nice foil. He probably recorded it in L.A. with studio musicians—it's an orchestral piece, which is why they play it that way. Oh, this is from that big piece from that beautiful soundtrack he wrote for the TV show. You can feel the pain—I love that Terence wears his heart on his sleeve. His scope is huge and he has a great working band. He's made the trumpet his own instrument. Wynton, Wallace and Terence all played similarly when they were young, but now each has a distinct sound and style. See, *that* phrase comes from the style that Terence and Wynton shared. If you're not a trumpet player, you can't understand it, because it didn't exist before them. Like a lot of young guys, Wynton and Terence both play a thick trumpet. I'm a fan of older trumpet styles, and a certain vibrational thing can't happen physically with the metal that heavy, but with Terence I don't miss it. As great as Wynton is, I've never heard him do what Terence just did—blow so hard that you don't know what's going to come out of the trumpet.

Art Ensemble of Chicago

"Malachi" (from *Non-Cognitive Aspects Of The City: Live At Iridium*, Pi, 2006) Corey Wilkes, trumpet; Joseph Jarman, tenor saxophone; Roscoe Mitchell, reeds, percussion; Jaribu Shahid, bass; Famoudou Don Moye, drums, percussion.

It sounds like the Art Ensemble without Lester Bowie. So this is Corey Wilkes. The bassline made me think it was Malachi Favors, but it could be that Don and Roscoe made me think so—it sounds stronger than Malachi would be at that age, so it's probably Jaribu. Well-written piece—by Roscoe, I assume. The trumpeter has listened to Lester. A lot of fire. It's a live gig and he's not close enough to the mic, but he's really going for it. 4½ stars.

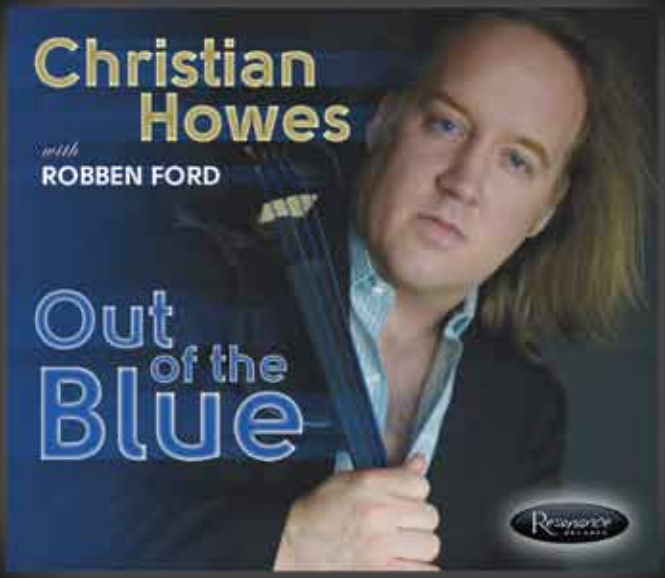
John Zorn

"Ash-nah" (from *Masada: 50th Anniversary, #7*, Tzadik, 2003) John Zorn, alto saxophone; Dave Douglas, trumpet; Greg Cohen, bass; Joey Baron, drums.

This has mystery. Right there sounds like something Dave Douglas would do, though I don't know if it's Dave. Oh, it's Zorn and Dave. Dave wouldn't play those sounds on his own record. He played that here, because, as any great sideman, you serve your leader. Zorn is a master organizer. 5 stars—I've heard this band so much and it's consistently invigorating. Dave's a non-traditional virtuosic trumpeter. Not a classical trumpeter. Very much a jazz trumpet player. The idea of creating your own technique and taking that to virtuosic levels is different than having classical technique and being a jazz virtuoso. Dave has both. That didn't exist before. **DB**

THE "BLINDFOLD TEST" IS A LISTENING TEST THAT CHALLENGES THE FEATURED ARTIST TO DISCUSS AND IDENTIFY THE MUSIC AND MUSICIANS WHO PERFORMED ON SELECTED RECORDINGS. THE ARTIST IS THEN ASKED TO RATE EACH TUNE USING A 5-STAR SYSTEM. NO INFORMATION IS GIVEN TO THE ARTIST PRIOR TO THE TEST.

A Non-Profit Jazz Label With a Mission.
Devoted to Preserving Jazz and Discovering the Rising Stars of Tomorrow.



Christian Howes
With Robben Ford
"Out of the Blue"

Jazz violin meets blues guitar in the follow up to **Christian Howes's** Resonance debut *Heartfelt*. Features acclaimed pianist **Tamir Hendelman** and drummer **Joel Rosenblatt.**

"There is nobody better than this guy"
- Les Paul

GET A FREE MP3 FROM *"OUT OF THE BLUE"*
www.resonancerecords.org/outoftheblue

Tamir Hendelman
"Destinations"

The Resonance Records debut recording from virtuoso pianist **Tamir Hendelman** and an international trio featuring **Lewis Nash** (drums) and **Marco Panascia** (bass).

"a sonic storm of modern inspiration from acclaimed jazz pianist-composer"
- Jon Regen

GET A FREE MP3 FROM *"DESTINATIONS"*
www.resonancerecords.org/destinations

Check our website for upcoming shows and tour dates!

Available at
amazon.com ALLEGRO YAMAHA

STAY CONNECTED WITH US

twitter facebook YouTube

resonancerecords.org
facebook.com/resonancejazz

motéma.com

PROMOTING ARTISTS OF POWER AND DISTINCTION SINCE 2003

In stores 9.14

RYAN COHEN
ANOTHER LOOK

featuring JOE LOCKE

"A restless, creative talent." **– Downbeat**

Multi-award-winning composer Ryan Cohan, a frequent writer for NEA Jazz Master Ramsey Lewis, made several 'best of' lists with his acclaimed 2007 release **One Sky.** With **Another Look**, Cohan takes the game to yet a higher dimension as his explosive and dynamic quartet joins forces with percussionist Steve Kroon and the formidable vibraphonist Joe Locke to create a highly entertaining, groove heavy set of spellbinding straight-ahead jazz.

"Cohan is unafraid of tackling big issues as well as big sounds... a great writer and musician."
– All About Jazz

CHARNETT MOFFETT
TREASURE

featuring **STANLEY JORDAN**

"beautiful, outrageous... a singular voice"
– Audiophile Audition

"staggering technique"
– Jazz Times

The virtuosic bass maverick transcends as a leader and composer on **Treasure**. Rated with four-and-a-half stars in Audiophile Audition, this cinematic and thoroughly unique set is propelled by Moffett's impeccable groove and enriched by a stellar jazz and world ensemble.

"An undisputed champion of the bass."
– Audiophile Audition

RUFUS REID
OUT FRONT

featuring
DUDUKA
DA FONSECA
& STEVE ALLEE

"Exceptional music"
– Allmusic.com

"A cracking trio set"
– Jazz Journal

#1 JAZZWEEK

On his chart-topping **Out Front**, legendary bassist Rufus Reid brilliantly reinvents himself as he unveils the uncanny chemistry of his extraordinary new **Out Front Trio**.

"These guys play bigger than a trio"
– Philadelphia Inquirer

GREGORY PORTER
WATER

"An early contender for album of the year."
– Shook Magazine

Gregory Porter burns with such an intensity on this disc that reviewers from L.A. to Germany are crowning him as the next big voice in jazz. This thespian and deeply poetic songwriter/vocalist has a lot to say and says it with an irresistable passion. If you love vocals you owe it to yourself to check him out.

"Quite possibly the year's best jazz recording." **– Soulmatters.com**

Get free music monthly...

Join the e-mail list at motema.com

MARC CARY
FOCUS TRIO LIVE 2009

This disc captures the fiery dynamics of acclaimed pianist Marc Cary's popular, long-standing trio on tour in Europe. Cary shifts effortlessly from deeply romantic melodies to hard-hitting grooves with Indian, African and Native American influences.

"Musicians like Marc Cary bring art into jazz."
–Audiophile Audition

TWO FROM GERI ALLEN

FLYING TOWARD THE SOUND

NPR.COM: Best New Jazz of 2010 (So Far)

TIMELINE LIVE

"Some of her best work in years."
– The NY Times

"Soars toward an infinite space and time that defines modern jazz."
– Jazzpolice.com

Distibuted in the US & Canada by Allegro Media Group. Distributed in the European Union by Membran International