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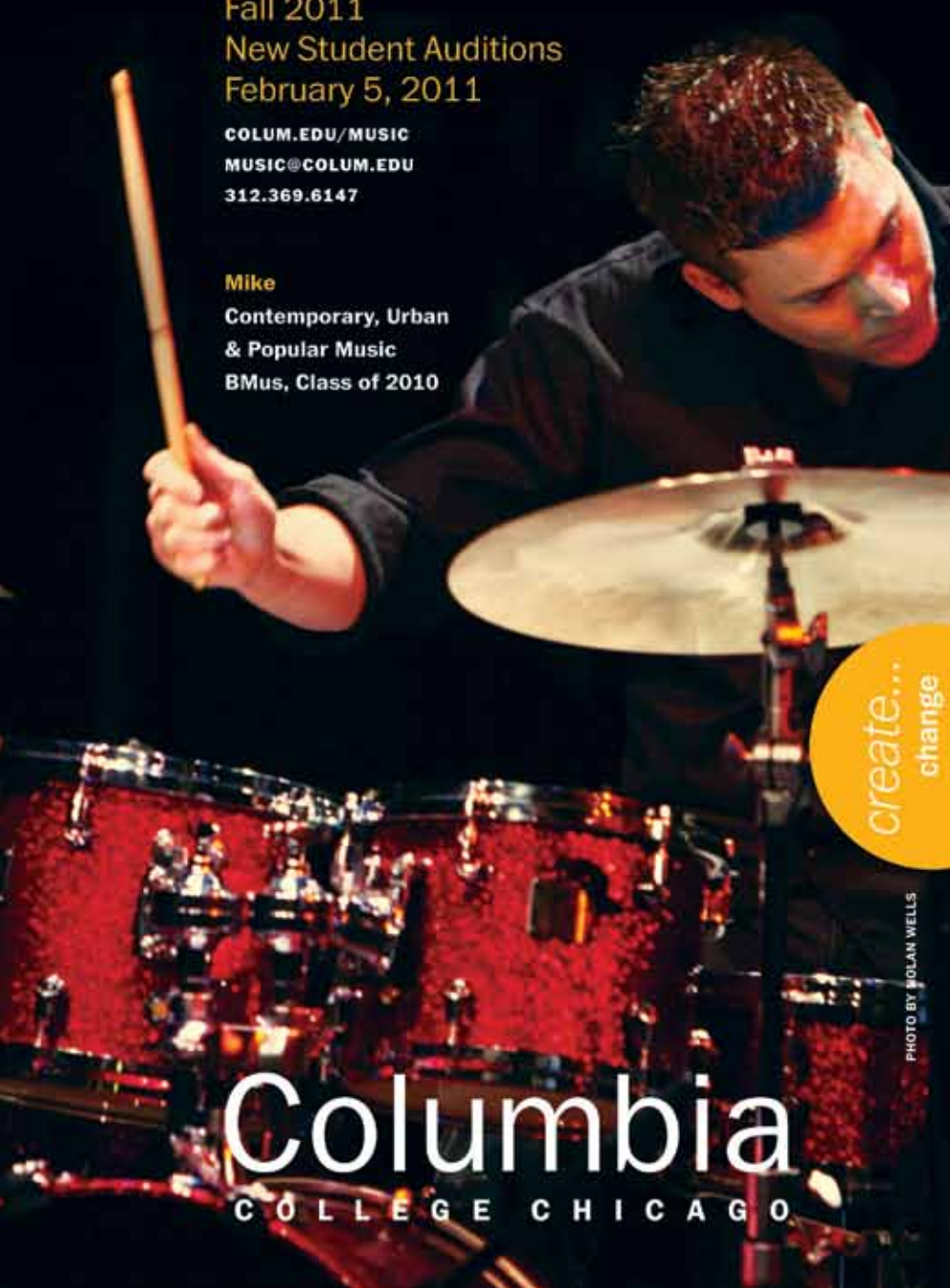
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VOLUME 78 - NUMBER 1

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# JANUARY 2011

# Inside ▶

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Hancock is firm in his conviction that his latest CD release, *The Imagine Project*, was not music-driven. In fact, the global scope of *The Imagine Project* echoes his comments about now seeing himself as being more than “just” a musician. In his 70th year on the planet, Hancock is truly celebrating his place in the world.

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Herbie Hancock, alumnus of the School of Miles Davis

## School Of Jazz

In this month’s cover story, Herbie Hancock explains how he went to the School of Miles Davis. Of course, he didn’t study formally with jazz’s legendary Prince of Darkness; rather, Hancock learned by osmosis from the many experiences—musical and otherwise—he shared with the trumpeter as a member of his historic quintet starting in 1963.

Most of us aren’t so lucky, or so gifted, to have ever received such an education from one of jazz’s most brilliant visionaries. Sure, we learn plenty of valuable lessons from our mentors and contemporaries, both on the bandstand and off. But the world of academia offers one of the best educational resources available to us: formal jazz training, starting in middle school and high school and continuing up through the college and university level.

The musicians among us who study jazz frequently supplement our classwork by doing homework that we assign ourselves: transcribing solos off records, attending master classes by professionals who come through town, jamming with jazz playalongs, pursuing various types of independent study, taking private lessons, just spending time with our instruments—essentially, woodshedding. With this month’s annual Jazz School supplement, beginning on Page 53, DownBeat aims to help ambitious jazz musicians help themselves by dedicating a special section of this month’s issue to the noble discipline of practicing jazz.

Jazz School opens with a success story from Creative Arts High School in the economically depressed town of Camden, N.J., an unlikely place for a fledgling jazz education program to thrive. A Master Class with Dave Douglas, who was in town this fall for a clinic at nearby Elmhurst College, provides insights into the art of composing as well as some hard-earned wisdom from the trumpeter. We check in with Juilliard’s performance-based jazz program 10 years after its hard-won inauguration and share a surprising discovery by researchers in the jazz department at William Paterson College regarding the original source of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.’s famous jazz quote. The woodshedding portion begins with a Pro Session by saxophonist and clinician Jody Espina on learning to solo by paraphrasing the greats, followed by an intriguing Béla Fleck banjo solo courtesy of Jimi Durso, our go-to guy for transcriptions. I take a serious look at the growing online epidemic of pirating jazz publications, print music products and educational materials in a piece that we simply call “Thief!” And be sure to check out our Toolshed review of a cool new piece of equipment geared toward the education market.

Add to that our profile of saxophonist Dave Liebman, who is among the most distinguished jazz educators working today. He will be honored as an NEA Jazz Master this January, and we extend our congratulations.

There’s the bell: Jazz School’s in session. Happy woodshedding.

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## Chords & Discords ►

### *Lose The Cursing*

I've been a subscriber for more than 10 years. It's obvious that I'm a jazz enthusiast and fan of your publication. However, I'm extremely disappointed with your article on Paul Motian. There is no need for the filthy potty mouth language to write an article. You can get your point across just the same without it. I surely don't need to read a piece peppered with cuss words to appreciate the subject. I would be remiss not to mention this isn't the first time I've witnessed this in *DownBeat*. I'm hoping it will be the last. If not, I'll be more than happy to end my subscription.

KEVIN MCINTOSH  
MICHIGAN

### *Bad Vibes*

I was quite dismayed about the fact that there was no "Vibes" category in this year's Readers Poll (December). My parents always told me that the vibes was a hard instrument to get recognition for: I knew that I should have become a Colombian harpist.

MICHAEL BENEDICT  
GREENVILLE, N.Y.

**Editor's note:** That slight was unintentional and the category will be included on next year's ballot.

### *Trio Booster*

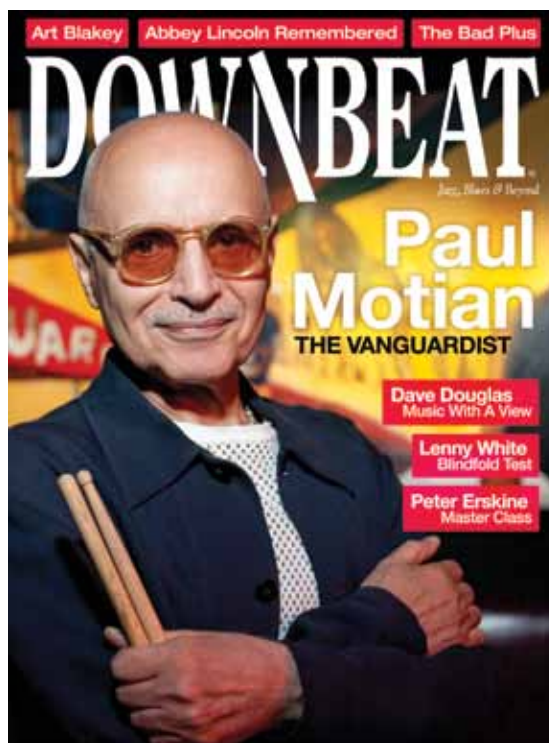
I felt compelled to write and totally disagree with all of the reviews of the *Trio of Oz* ("Hot Box," November). I am big fan of piano trios, and this disc contains some of the most inventive and enjoyable trio music that I have heard in a long time. Paul de Barros complains about the lack of melody in the modern songs and in true *DownBeat* fashion he references John Coltrane and "My Favorite Things"! He then compliments The Bad Plus, which is interesting as I recall *DownBeat* bashing them as well for their covers of Rush songs.

I agree that the bass is not as high in the mix as I would prefer, but it can be heard, particularly when Maeve Royce uses a bow. Even absent the bass, why is it so difficult for de Barros to admit that the enormous talents of Rachel Z and Omar Hakim are enough to enjoy? The trio deftly quote sections of the songs, sometimes melodies and various chords at other times, but it makes for good jazz in the end.

JAMIE MALCOLM  
ALBANY, N.Y.

### *Active Mason Brothers*

Thanks very much for reviewing our new CD *Two Sides, One Story* ("Hot Box" De-



cember). However, we're puzzled by John McDonough's assertion that our previous CD output consisted primarily of something we did 15 years ago with a youth jazz orchestra in London. In fact, during that time we've appeared together and separately on more than 40 albums, with artists including Jazz at Lincoln Center Orchestra, Randy Brecker, Lionel Loueke, Matt Garrison, David Binney and John Mayer.

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### *McDonough: Go-To Guy*

I have returned to the August issue several times and profited in rereading of numerous articles. To emphasize an unheralded aspect, the high quality of your writers, I ask all *DownBeat* readers to digest the articles on Philly Joe Jones and Billy Eckstine by John McDonough. What insightful, researched and scholarly pieces of writing, viz Jones playing "... was a conspicuous example of measured aggression that penetrated deeply into the music with striking authority without ever falling out of register or competing with it." The reviewer's work is many times an unnoticed, thankless task which suffers undeserved diatribes. Instead we should champion them for their individual opinions which allow us to judge ours in comparison. As for John, I read his Hot Box analyses first.

VICTOR SNIECKUS  
KINGSTON, ONTARIO

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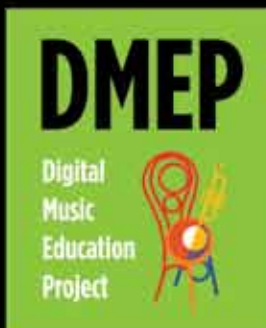
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## Beat ▶

## Scoring Without Scatting

***Cécile McLorin Salvant wins Thelonious Monk Institute Competition***

Plenty of singers graced the stage at the 2010 Thelonious Monk Institute of Jazz International Vocal Competition at the Kennedy Center in Washington, D.C., on Oct. 4. But Cécile McLorin Salvant from Miami took home the grand prize of \$20,000 and a recording contract with Concord Music Group. While second-place winner Charenée Wade (\$10,000) from Brooklyn and third-place winner Cyrille Aimée (\$5,000) from Fontainebleau, France, dazzled, Salvant distinguished herself through her authoritative musicianship and spellbinding conviction.

Salvant traded virtuosic exhibitionism for vivacious expressionism. She enveloped her vocal prowess inside the material instead of on top, demonstrating an erudite awareness and a personal connection to her material. During the finals, she opened with “If This Isn’t Love,” a song that threatened to be too cute but was saved by Salvant’s use of tension and release and unerring pitch and diction. Her ingenuity came by the way she instilled the song with cliffhangers, giving her pliant phrasing an edgy sensation as if she could possibly land on the wrong note. Yet she always managed to land on safe ground regardless of how unpredictably she took the melody, how she leaped octaves or how she animated the lyrics with auditory dynamics. Still, it was her pithy rendition of the forlorn ballad “I Wonder Where Our Love Has Gone” that became one of the most transfixing performances of the evening. And perhaps more impressively, Salvant won the top prize without scatting during the performance.

“I choose not to scat, which was a risk,” Salvant said after the competition, appearing stunned that she won. “I thought maybe they would penalize me because I didn’t scat and everyone else did. You should scat at a jazz competition, but it’s not really in my nature. I’m really more into the lyrics. When I sing, I really think about the story behind the song.”

Salvant showed that she could scat during the semifinals on “Bernie’s Tune” and “Monk’s Mood.” Yet she became the crowd’s favorite during her mesmerizing reading of Bessie Smith’s “Take It Right Back” during the finals.

“I really wanted to sing two tunes that I really love,” Salvant explained regarding her choice of repertoire. “At this point, we had all already won and singing was just for fun. And those were two tunes that weren’t recorded a lot.” (“If This Isn’t Love” was recorded by Cannonball Adderley and



Cécile McLorin Salvant

Sarah Vaughan, while Billie Holiday and Ella Fitzgerald famously sang “I Wonder Where Our Love Has Gone.”)

“Scatting is not the only device by which one displays musical mastery,” said Kurt Elling, one of the judges. “Cécile did not need to scat to prove her point. She had a well-defined point of view as a performer and had done the kind of technical work to deliver her music with utter clarity and verve. In that way, she displayed the wisdom of knowing herself as an artist and what she really had to give. Scatting would have been superfluous to her particular performance.”

Pianist Vadim Neselevsky, who won the \$10,000 BMI Composers Award for his piece “Grust,” also performed that night. —John Murph



## New Silent Film Reimagines Early Life Of Louis Armstrong

At about the two-thirds mark of *Louis*, a 70-minute silent film by Daniel Pritzker that is loosely based on Louis Armstrong's childhood, the hero—charmingly rendered by moon-faced 8-year-old actor Anthony Coleman—receives a new cornet and commences to blow. He imagines himself levitating above New Orleans, playing for the object of his innocent affections. The events transpire in the early 20th century—when Armstrong, Jelly Roll Morton, Sidney Bechet and King Oliver developed most of the foundational tropes of jazz.

The plot itself is as basic as it gets—young Armstrong is hauled off to the Colored Waif's Home for Boys, where he would learn the musical fundamentals. But *Louis* also portrays a complex social milieu, defined by subtle gradations in class and skin tone. Not least, young Armstrong sees musicians of various castes, predispositions and abilities, including an out-of-it Charles "Buddy" Bolden, New Orleans' first "cornet king," on the back of a cart en route to the asylum—in his stupor, he hands Armstrong a flimsy crown.

The live score, performed in summer and fall showings of the film across the United States, juxtaposed the Creole-Caribbean-inflected piano music of 19th century New Orleans composer Louis Gottschalk (featuring pianist Cecile Nicad) with a temp score consisting of Wynton Marsalis' compositions and arrangements of repertoire by Armstrong, Morton,



Anthony Coleman as Louis Armstrong in *Louis*

Duke Ellington and Charles Mingus.

After a decade of preparatory work, Pritzker, a guitarist-songwriter best known for the rhythm-and-blues group Sonia Dada, drew on his personal funds to make *Louis* and *Bolden!* (he wrote the screenplay for the latter, a feature-length meditation on Bolden's life that is scheduled for late 2011/early 2012 release), which he shot simultaneously between April and August 2007. He describes *Bolden!* as a dark drama, framed against the politics and social undercurrents of the time, while *Louis* is a fantasia, or, as the direc-

tor puts it, a "farcical Chaplinesque melodrama," undercranked at 18 frames per second and color-desaturated by eminent cinematographer Vilmos Zsigmond to a muted pastel palette.

"Louis Armstrong's outstanding feature is the quality of redemption," Pritzker said. "No matter how sad the song, how blue the blues, whatever you want to say about his tone or rhythmic brilliance or instant compositional skills, there's the desire to make people happy. What I tried to do, more than anything, was create 70 minutes that make people feel good." —Ted Panken

## Rhythm Summit Blends Jazz And Taiko Drumming

The contrast could not be more striking: a modest, Western-style trap set—complete with floor tom and cymbals—sitting across from what looks like an explosion of oversized, bloated congas, formally known as taiko drums. In between stands a six-string electric bass, various percussion instruments strewn on either side: Percussionists Noel Okimoto, Kenny Endo and bassist Dean Taba are manning these posts. Collectively, they are known as the East-West collaborative project Rhythm Summit (their self-titled CD is on Noel Okimoto Music).

"Kenny is a Japanese American who started as a drum set player, and studied taiko in Japan for a long time," Okimoto said. "Those sensibilities work well with Dean and I, who are jazz musicians. Taiko comes from a very strong tradition, but I think we draw more from the collective tradition of jazz."

Okimoto also plays vibes, marimba and various percussion, while Taba doubles on kalimba and percussion and Endo adds bamboo flute and percussion. Okimoto, while born in Hawaii and a first-rate vibes player, considers jazz drum set his calling card, having gigged with, among many



Noel Okimoto (left), Dean Taba and Kenny Endo

others, Ernie Watts, Freddie Hubbard and Bobby Hutcherson. Also from Hawaii, Taba's career has included extensive session work in Los Angeles as an acoustic and electric bassist, work as a jazz educator and performances and recordings with, among others, Mark Murphy, Andy Summers and the San Francisco Symphony.

As for the material itself, Okimoto adds, "Initially Kenny offered compositions already written

that he thought would work. I wrote specifically for the ensemble, and during rehearsals we came up with a couple of things collaboratively. Basically, we are two trios: drum set, taiko and bass, represented on 'Summit Meeting' with the bass as the lead voice; and vibes or marimba, taiko and bass, as evidenced on 'East Meets West.' It's pretty good sonic diversity, with the taiko as the common denominator." —John Ephland



Medeski, Martin and Wood

**Camp MMW:** Medeski, Martin and Wood have announced that their fourth annual Camp MMW will be held at Full Moon Resort in Big Indian, N.Y., July 31–Aug. 5. The camp is intended for musicians ages 16 and older. Details: [mmw.net/campmmw](http://mmw.net/campmmw)

**JazzSet Awarded:** The weekly program “JazzSet with Dee Dee Bridgewater,” which is produced at WBGO/Newark Public Radio for NPR Music, has received a \$50,000 grant from the Doris Duke Charitable Foundation. The grant supports programming over a two-year period that will feature six recent commissions created through Chamber Music America’s New Jazz Works: Commissioning and Ensemble Development program. Details: [ddcf.org](http://ddcf.org)

**New Documentarians:** The Jazz Journalists Association is seeking applicants for a four-month program of training in video jazz journalism. Its plan is to equip and train 30 people to be able to use pocket video cameras to create brief reports from the scene of jazz activities. Easy access to a computer is required, as most training will be online. Details: [jazzhouse.org](http://jazzhouse.org)

**Mehldau’s Disc, Honor:** Brad Mehldau will release his *Live In Marciac* (Nonesuch) on Jan. 11. Last Nov. 9 the pianist became the first non-classical Debs Composer chair holder at New York’s Carnegie Hall with the city’s premiere of his *Highway Rider* with the St. Paul Chamber Orchestra.

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

**Monterey Seeking:** California’s Monterey Jazz Festival is expanding its presenting partnership positions. Along with naming rights on festival events, presenting partners will be given sponsorship tickets and use of a private chalet. Long-term presenting partner Verizon has announced that it will reduce its presence at the 2011 event.

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

**Broonzy Bio:** Emerson College professor Roger House has published *Blue Smoke* (Louisiana State University Press), a biography of blues legend and folk hero Big Bill Broonzy. Details: [lsu.edu/lsupress](http://lsu.edu/lsupress)

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## Vinyl Freak | BY JOHN CORBETT

### Orchid Spangiafora *Flee Past's Ape Elf*

TWIN TONE, 1979

Dateline: A Midwestern college town, late 1970s. A budding high school music nerd, already lost to the world of vinyl freakery, who has recently moved from post-punk to jazz and improvised music, is trolling the incoming bin at his favorite record store. The front cover catches his eye, and believing that you can tell a book by its cover at least 73 percent of the time, he digs out a little expendable income from lawn-mowing and takes the plunge. The back cover successfully seals the deal, tweaking his love of Dadaism—a Hannah Höch-style collage, recontextualizing some bits of pop magazine faces. And, hey, it's got a palindrome for a title—a dumb-sounding, ungrammatical, meaningless one, which might be even better. But he's not sure exactly what kind of cool-ass cuts could be on this LP, given that it's on the Minneapolis-based Twin Tone label, which he knows for its great independent pop and rock records (later to include the Replacements and Soul Asylum), like those by the Suburbs and the killer *Big Hits Of Mid-America Volume III* compilation, which had blown his mind just a few months earlier. Seems like a good bet, he thought, walking home expectantly.



Needle hits the groove: Complete and utter confusion. Despite being adventurous and open-eared, he'd never yet heard Musique Concrete or Karlheinz Stockhausen or John Cage or concrete poetry or experimental tape music. About as close as he'd gotten to that was playing records backwards on his parents belt-driven turntable, discovering that Electric Light Orchestra had placed a secret message on one of their songs. First track kicks off with short, looping, sometimes repeating bits of commercial TV and radio, focused on funny bits of text, all pastiched into an amusing subversion of the original words. "Numbers? I worked in banks," a man's voice repeats, until the last word is suddenly replaced with "church." Game-show hosts, voices of authority, bursts of applause, no surrounding music to couch the word surgery, virtually nothing but voices, all string together into a ruthlessly pulverizing audio collage.

The next piece proves even more beguiling: a 22-second study of a little laugh, sound of tape rolling overhead, sensual and funny and gone. Totally gone. The title-track becomes his favorite, with its goofy vocal noises and the repeated phrases "Normal? Foam, foam, foam" and "I like nudes." It's about the stupidest—and greatest—thing his wee teenage heart has ever heard (indeed, one of the most ambitious pieces on the LP is titled, appropriately, "Mondo Stupid," and it proves to be the gateway drug to a life of experimental audio). It would be a couple of decades before he found out anything detailed about this enigmatic record, which came with virtually no information on it. Like the fact that it was made by Rob Carey with assistance from Byron Coley (the great music journalist and champion of things abrasive and weird). Now, with the benefit of the Internet, you can read the entire history of Orchid Spangiafora ([orchidspangiafora.com/old/old/history.html](http://orchidspangiafora.com/old/old/history.html)), but to hear it you've got to put on your crate-digging fingers and rev up the old freak!

DB

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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.

## Solomon Burke Lived, Sang Larger Than Life

Solomon Burke, one of the soul-music pioneers in the 1960s, died of natural causes last Oct. 15 at Schiphol Airport in Amsterdam. He was 70 and on his way from his home in Los Angeles to perform a sold-out concert. The King of Rock & Soul had experienced a career revival in recent years following the release of his *Don't Give Up On Me* album in 2002. His last album, *Nothing's Impossible* (E1 Entertainment), was released last spring.

"Solomon was a genius," writer Peter Guralnick said. "It wasn't just his range or his inflections; it was his degree of subtlety that he brought to the music. He was capable of modulating his voice in all sorts of ways, whether it was coarseness in the manner of one of his idols, Brother Joe May, or singing the sweetest kind of style along the lines of another one of his mentors, Ivory Joe Hunter. He was never imitative of anyone."

Burke—also a Pentecostal minister who operated funeral homes, limo services and concession stands—was born to the pastor's life. Emulating his mother and grandmother, he combined a gift for preaching and church-singing at an early age, even fronting tent revivals in several Southern states. Burke made his first secular recordings for the Apollo label in New York—he would always view singing non-religious songs as a natural extension of his ministry. After living penniless on the streets of his native Phila-

delphia for a time, he righted his recording career upon linking up with Atlantic Records in 1960. Nineteen smash r&b hits followed ("Everybody Needs Somebody To Love," "Got To Get You Off My Mind"). The '70s were lean times, but he rebounded in the mid-1980s with Savoy gospel sides, the concert album *Soul Alive* (Rounder) and the appearance of his classic "Cry To Me" in the film *Dirty Dancing*. The flamboyant singer generated wide notice again with the release of *Don't Give Up On Me*, where he treated songs specially tailored for him by fans like Van Morrison, Bob Dylan and Elvis Costello.

"Solomon insisted I be in the vocal room with him, not in the control room," said *Don't Give Up On Me* producer Joe Henry. "He wouldn't talk to me over the headphones. It was daunting, and I became so aware of the visceral impact of his instrument. All live takes of songs, and there were very few takes. He didn't so much learn songs, as he took them, manipulated them into his own service. On 'Flesh And Blood,' you hear the tightrope walking and both ends of his four-octave range in that song."

Burke, at more than 350 pounds, was larger than life. He often dressed in royal regalia and sat on a throne when performing. There are a host of fantastic, but true, stories about him; among them, his concert for thousands of Klansmen holding



their annual convention. And he lived what he preached, highly regarded for his generosity of spirit. Even his smallest gestures were enduring.

"I never quite got over finding a note from Solomon in my electronic morning mail," Costello said. "Here were good wishes on the occasion of the birth of my twin boys from a man who had seemed, until quite recently, like an unattainable name on a record jacket." —Frank-John Hadley

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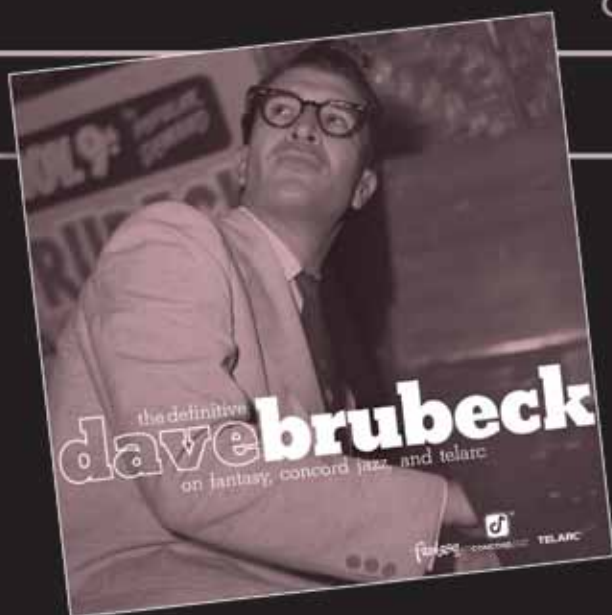
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## Jazz, Urban Renewal Intertwined at Quebec City Festival

If jazz festivals have become commonplace in North America, it's still rare to find a nascent one that is driving and reflecting the transformation of an urban neighborhood.

In its fourth year, the Quebec City Jazz Festival, which ran Sept. 29–Oct. 4, is now large enough to occupy four nights at the tony Palais Montcalm—a newly renovated concert hall perched above the ancient wall of the old city—but it remains the kind of local event that has the John Abercrombie Quartet playing what felt like a living-room concert. The intimate space is *Largo*, a restaurant opened by festival president Gino Ste-Marie in 2003, when the neighborhood of Saint-Roch was still in the throes of urban decay. Now, the area—in particular the central Rue Saint-Joseph—is bouncing back and the club is the heart of the revival.

That was clear from the communal feeling in the sold-out room for Abercrombie, violinist Mark Feldman, drummer Joey Baron and bassist Thomas Morgan, who responded with two sets of rich interaction and sudden dynamic tidal shifts. Playing with minimal amplification, Feldman mined deep veins of emotion while Abercrombie introduced subtle textural changes to his signature sound. Baron maintained tension throughout, exploding in a prolonged, roiling calypso beat that had the band evoking its inner Sonny Rollins and Abercrombie reeling off a particularly ripe solo.

At the opposite end of Saint-Joseph, in a spare, garage-like nightclub, the Montreal-based Evidence Trio channeled Thelonious Monk through the distinctive wit of saxophonist Jean Derome and drummer Pierre Tanguay. While many musicians treat Monk with kid gloves, Derome, Tanguay and supple electric bassist Pierre Cartier never lost sight of the composer's humor, joyfully exercising the license to treat "Bright Mississippi," "Four In One" and "Brilliant Cor-



Mulgrew Miller (left), Ron Carter and Russell Malone

ners" as improvisational vehicles.

If only the Mingus Dynasty had brought as much gusto to their namesake's music. With trumpeter Tatum Greenblatt and trombonist Andy Hunter joining regular saxophonists Craig Handy and Seamus Blake in the septet's front line, the band sounded listless through much of its opening set, catching fire only in the closing "Ysabel's Table Dance." Prior to that point the musicians resembled players in a pickup football game, conferencing frequently and diagramming plays with hand gestures. The second set was a radical departure, beginning with an explosive solo by Handy on John Stubblefield's arrangement of "Pedal Point Blues" and concluding with an unannounced Kurt Elling appearance for "Goodbye Pork Pie Hat." Going for broke from the opening stanza, Elling left everything he had on the stage, sweating profusely and stretching his voice through its full range.

Two nights later in the same venue, Charles

Lloyd was in beautiful voice, too. Playing only tenor, he led his estimable quartet—pianist Jason Moran, bassist Reuben Rogers and drummer Eric Harland—through a perfectly structured main set. Beginning in a funky vein and ending with a raucous version of "Passin' Thru," the band was spirited and singularly focused. But an earnest reading of the prayer-like "Tagi," with Lloyd seated beside Moran at the piano and Harland intoning dark vocals, was anti-climactic.

Less dramatic but just as polished was Ron Carter, leading a trio of pianist Mulgrew Miller and guitarist Russell Malone. Playing a borrowed bass, Carter's tone was exceptionally bright, accentuating the lead role he assumed throughout his performance. The usually volatile Malone was held in check, save for the occasional wry quote, such as a particularly apt reference to Charlie Christian's "Seven Come Eleven" solo. Carter showed his mastery on a heartfelt "My Funny Valentine," which moved from bolero to blues. —James Hale

## Geri Allen, Patrice Rushen Blend Stylistic Contrasts at Kennedy Center

One of the many joyous moments during Geri Allen's duo piano concert with Patrice Rushen at Washington, D.C.'s Kennedy Center on Oct. 23 occurred during their capricious rendition of Thelonious Monk's "Well You Needn't." While keeping the hooky melody intact, the pianists nevertheless deconstructed it and toyed with its subversive antiphonal sensibility.

First Allen jabbed at it quickly, then after momentary silence Rushen replied with a fissured, almost mocking, answer. The volleying continued, eventually gaining more momentum as both embellished their responses with tremolos, clipped

arpeggios and thunderclaps. Soon, the ricocheting melodies coalesced to form a rough-hewn tapestry.

Although this concert marked Allen and Rushen's inaugural piano duets, it wasn't the first time that they've collaborated. While they focused more on electric keyboards, the two appeared on Wayne Shorter's 1988 LP *Joy Ryder*. Since then, they've led divergent artistic trajectories. Allen became one of modern jazz's most distinguished and influential pianists. Rushen, who was winding down an acclaimed r&b career as a singer, songwriter and producer in the late '80s, focused her attention more on film and television scores.



Geri Allen

And while one is more associated with edgy jazz piano trio and the other with jazz-funk, they exhibited overlapping influences, particularly Monk, Bud Powell, Bill Evans and Herbie Hancock. With duo piano settings being one of the most challenging situations to make clear, unified statements that optimize individual voices, Allen and Rushen, for the most part, excelled at juxtaposing the complementary with the contrasting. But their opener, "I Thought About You," had its share of tentative moments as if Allen and Rushen weren't sure of each other's respective footing.

They forged a more bracing accord on a sparkling makeover of Milton Nascimento's "Cravo E Canela." Both took turns driving the danceable melody while swapping ingenious solos. Allen wielded denser harmonies than Rushen and her notes lingered longer thanks to her masterful foot-

pedal work as she accessed a wealth of piano jazz history that ranged from Chick Corea to Don Pullen with unerring acuity. Rushen's crisp improvisations bounced like freshly cut diamonds as she, too, demonstrated tendencies to veer toward the avant-garde as she injected dissonant harmonies and spiraling passages.

After an enchanting reading of "The Very Thought Of You," Allen allowed Rushen to perform a lovely solo medley that began with a gorgeous orchestral original, "Ocean Song," and included "In A Sentimental Mood" and "Night In Tunisia." Allen also delivered an intriguing solo piano set that included Thad Jones' "A Child Is Born," the gospel classic "Let Us Break Bread Together" and "Miss Mary Mack," ingeniously rearranged as "Improvisation For Children."

—John Murph



Bobby Sanabria with the Manhattan School of Music's Afro-Cuban Orchestra

## Charismatic Bobby Sanabria & Orchestra Bring New Life To Puerto Rican Classics

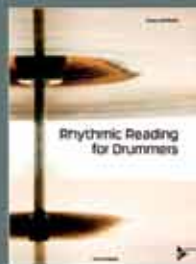
"I'm glad to see that so many of you brought young people," Bobby Sanabria said from the stage of the Manhattan School of Music's John C. Borden Auditorium on Oct. 22. He wasn't engaging in irony, even though many of the formally dressed individuals behind him were barely drinking age. Sanabria's message—that youths who update historic music need audiences that include their peers—was not lost on the sold-out crowd, who applauded themselves as well as the Manhattan School Of Music's singular Afro-Cuban Jazz Orchestra.

The evening's repertoire was momentous, indeed. Like so many treasures of 20th century Latino music, the compositions of Puerto Rican music icon Rafael Hernandez are often well-known by listeners who don't necessarily realize they're all the work of one extraordinary figure in the history of modern music in the Americas. A feverish arrangement of W.C. Handy's "St. Louis Blues" was a reminder that Hernandez came of age in

James Reese Europe's military band in World War I. The familiar Hernandez piece "Capullito De Aleli," replete with opera student Rachel Kara Perez's soprano vocal, was more statuesque than the lilting pop versions from recordings by Nat "King" Cole or Caetano Veloso.

If the concert suffered at all, it's because the latest version of Sanabria's orchestra is still finding its footing. Last year's incarnation of this ensemble, documented on *Kenya Revisited Live!!!*, was nominated for a Latin Grammy. Only the rhythm section returned, so even as sophisticated arrangements of the Tito Puente-associated mambo staple "El Cumbanchero" or the Africa-in-the-Americas dance "Cachita" juggled various native rhythms and tempo shifts, other pieces sagged despite fine individual soloing. Anthemic, heritage-based melodies like "Lamento Borincano" and "Preciosa" were calibrated to stoke island pride, while Sanabria's charismatic presence kept the proceedings tight.

—K. Leander Williams



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## Geof Bradfield ▶▶ *Out of Africa*

The green room beneath the Petrillo Music Shell in Chicago's Grant Park isn't the toniest backstage. In fact, the brightly lit cellar looks better equipped to accommodate a fleet of football players than the cast of Chicago Jazz Festival artists. Saxophonist Geof Bradfield is beaming, nonetheless, and with good reason—fresh off stage from a well-received set with Ted Sirota's Rebel Souls, filling a coveted slot on the headlining stage between the Brad Mehldau Trio and Henry Threadgill's Zooid.

It speaks to the 40-year-old father's sense of stamina that he's still raring to go, plotting a trip to the Jazz Showcase later on to sit in at one of the venue's storied post-fest jams before heading home. Then again, as much was evident from his spirited set with Sirota's band, half of which featured Bradfield's arrangements, including a Caetano Veloso number. In the past he's custom-tailored a Miriam Makeba tune for the Rebel Souls; still, that only hints at the Columbia College adjunct professor's enthusiasm for music stemming out of the African diaspora, which has grown exponentially since he visited the continent. That connection is tangible on his latest album, *African Flowers* (Origin).

The Ryan Cohan Quartet brought Bradfield to Africa in 2008 on the Rhythm Road tour, an instrument of cultural diplomacy cosponsored by Jazz at Lincoln Center and the State Department. Bradfield's experiences there play out vividly on the new disc in a continuous suite; the thematic arc is identical to his itinerary, which found the group playing a string of cities across Rwanda, Congo, Uganda and Zimbabwe. The titles tell the route: "Butare," "Lubumbashi" "Kampala" and "Harare," divided by solo interludes in addition to melodic anecdotes, like the hard-swinging postbop bustle "Nairobi Transit" and tender ballad "Mama Yemo." A sleek swing undercurrent keeps *African Flowers* filed in the jazz bin, but the syncopated countermelodies coursing through Bradfield's compositions play like a musical travelogue.

For his third album as a leader, Bradfield enlisted Cohan, a longtime cohort going back 20 years to their days as undergrads at DePaul University. Having been immersed in the same sights and sounds, the pianist brought a uniquely sympathetic understanding of the music. Remarking on the reflective, lullaby-esque "Children's Room," Cohan recalls the sobering source material, a visit to the Kigali Genocide Memorial Centre in Rwanda. "I remember walking out of that museum, and the whole band just couldn't speak—our eyes were welling up," Cohan said. "It was profound. Hearing that music and hearing him tell his story about his experience walking



through the children's room was really poignant for me. I saw directly where that came from, and it was really interesting to hear how he adapted that, how he told the story through music."

Bradfield's first authentic taste of African folk music arrived in the early '90s, while pursuing a master's degree at California Institute of the Arts under the guidance of Charlie Haden and Roscoe Mitchell. During that time he received a hands-on introduction to West African rhythms from Ghanaian percussionists and brothers Alfred and Kobla Ladzekpo, and in many ways Bradfield's latest body of work reflects the conceptual underpinnings of that multilingual education. "I wanted to put something together that was personal, beyond just reflecting the countries," says the saxophonist, with a palpable sense of enthusiasm, underscoring the passion that he brought to the project. He's humble as he describes sitting in with a local musician in Harare, which in effect planted the seed that became the titular tune. "We

played this piece and it was completely mystifying," he confesses with a smile. Though momentarily stumped, he had the foresight to record it, and upon returning to Chicago dissected the figure and worked it into his own music. "I tried to do that in each place to some extent—to bring in not just the feeling of the place, but if there was some concrete musical theme that I had contact with, then I tried to use that."

Cohan acknowledges as much. "I saw firsthand how what we'd seen was incorporated into the music," says the pianist. "[Bradfield] adapted some of the Zimbabwe guitar style and mbira playing that influenced us both a lot."

"There's a long history of that back-and-forth exchange in jazz," explains Bradfield, "for instance, Randy Weston in the early '60s with *Uhuru Afrika* and *Highlife*, and before that Dizzy Gillespie with Chano Pozo." The tenet of musical diplomacy guiding the Rhythm Road program is, after all, a two-way street. —Areif Sless-Kitain



**Orlando  
LeFleming** ▶▶  
*Gentleman's Game*

**B**assist Orlando LeFleming hasn't played cricket for a decade now. He relocated from London to Brooklyn in 2002 and, well, there aren't many immaculate village greens in NYC where one can indulge the smack of cork and willow. LeFleming played pro county cricket as a teenage pace bowler, but he was accepted to the Royal Academy of Music, and following the lead of his mother (a classical cellist) he became a working musician.

Le Fleming, now 34, quickly racked up a resume alongside a Who's Who of the finest U.K. musicians, including saxists Iain Ballamy and Tommy Smith, trumpeter Guy Barker and pianists Jason Rebello and Julian Joseph. From thence he gained opportunities touring with visiting Americans in Europe: Art Farmer, George Coleman, Dave Liebman, Joey Calderazzo.

Crediting early experience in the cutthroat arena of professional sports, LeFleming claims it thickened his skin in preparation for the vagaries of the jazz world during a hectic career as an in-demand sideman (LeFleming has worked this side of the pond with Jane Monheit, Branford Marsalis, Jeff "Tain" Watts, Seamus Blake and Billy Cobham, and one of his steadies is saxist David Sanchez's group). However, over the phone from his apartment in Brooklyn, LeFleming comes across as the perfect Englishman, bashful to a fault despite his success.

Last spring, LeFleming put out a disc under his own name, featuring a quartet with fellow ex-pat Brit Will Vinson on alto, Norwegian guitarist Lage Lund and drummer Antonio Sanchez. *From Brooklyn With Love* (19/8) features half a dozen LeFleming originals, but at least three tracks play out to more than 12 minutes. "I like things open-ended and change things up every night, I don't rely on a tested formula," says LeFleming. "I embrace rawness and the possibility of failure, if cutting past that could lead somewhere more happening."

LeFleming readily admits that for himself and Lage, the "repressed Europeans," experience alongside the Latin temperaments of David and Antonio Sanchez has added personality to their playing. LeFleming also found time in drummer Ari Hoenig's band formative. "Ari helped make my internal pulse a lot stronger," he claims.

Whereas self-promotion is simply not cricket to the British, it is expected in the U.S., and LeFleming is becoming more assertive in ancillary aspects of his career. Onstage, in the meantime, he's had no shortage of enthusiasts for his forthright playing, deep tone and expansive attitude. —Michael Jackson



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## Players ▶

### Aaron Diehl ▶ *All Gold*

Directly after he graduated high school in 2003, pianist Aaron Diehl left his home in Columbus, Ohio, to spend several weeks in Europe for a tour of one-nighters with the Wynton Marsalis Septet.

"I'd like to talk with Wynton about exactly why he called me," Diehl recalled in mid-October at a midtown Manhattan cafe. "Certain episodes I don't remember, because I'd be in a state of panic—he's an extremely intense individual, and the guys in the band not only are great musicians, but had developed the language together over a 10-year period. Towards the end, in London, I was so worn and battered, I decided, 'Screw it—I'll just play.' Wynton turned to me and said, 'Man, you sound good!' Then I got self-conscious again, and went back into my tortoise shell. He said, 'Going back to your bullshit ways.' I realized that you have to take risks in this music. Maybe it won't sound great, but a few times you'll think, 'Aha!'"

"Aha" moments are abundant on Diehl's self-released *Live At The Players*, documenting an engagement at a posh private club in Manhattan's Gramercy Park district by two editions of his trio (David Wong or Paul Sikivie on bass; Quincy Davis or Lawrence Leathers on drums). The program spans classical music, bebop, a blues at once downhome and modern, and informed readings of the Great American Songbook. Throughout, Diehl, now 25, finds fresh, idiomatic ways to mix and match vocabulary and strategies from the orchestral trio concepts of Ahmad Jamal, John Lewis and Erroll Garner.

*Live At Caramoor*, also self-released, presents a 2008 solo recital before 2,000 people. Diehl, though more risk-averse, navigates the stride piano canon with similar panache.

As timing would have it, Diehl was flying to Kalamazoo, Mich., the next morning for a half-solo, half-trio concert. "I'm feeling bipolar—the approaches are so different," he said. "On solo concerts, I can do anything I want, so I think about all the timbral and technical possibilities of the piano. I'm trying to figure out how to groove on the instrument so it still feels like jazz, but I also want to use qualities from classical music to paint with different textures in a way that creates a narrative. My overall goal is trying to figure out how to connect all the language to make an interesting and engaging performance, and also develop my own voice. Why limit yourself to just playing something here and something there? It's all gold."



The classical music trope arose when Diehl discussed his early affinity for Marsalis' "all jazz is modern" mantra. "I started with Bach, so although I love Bill Evans' solo piano, it's less technically virtuosic than hearing Art Tatum *kill* the piano," he said. "It could also be from growing up in the black church. That's where James P. Johnson comes from."

Playing services in the Catholic Church that his parents attended—and also for the primarily African-American clientele of his father, a funeral director—helped Diehl, who is musical director at the St. Joseph of the Holy Family Church in his Harlem neighborhood, to assimilate the functional role of music early on. At 8 he tried to emulate Marcus Roberts' arrangement of "Summertime" on *Gershwin For Lovers*, and at 13 he joined local educator Todd Stoll's Columbus Youth Jazz Orchestra, a platform that put him on Marsalis' radar. In 2003 he attended Juilliard, where Oksana Yablonskaya worked with him on developing aspects of his sound.

Diehl spent the last six months of his sophomore year helping pianist John Lewis' widow, Mirjana, organize her husband's archive; the quality time with Lewis' Bach-to-blues oeuvre helped him find a conceptual space in which to coalesce his interests.

"There's something magical about the way John Lewis or Duke Ellington synthesized high-brow music with folk music," said Diehl, whose performance of MJQ repertoire at Dizzy's Club Coca-Cola is available on separate YouTube clips. "I always want to remember to play who I am and where I came from. My tradition comes from the church, from classical music, from swinging jazz—that's who I am." —Ted Panken

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## Harold O'Neal ► *Moving Meditations*

For most musicians, simply mastering their instrument is a lifelong pursuit. But for pianist Harold O'Neal, jazz has become a stepping stone to multiple modes of expression. An actor, break-dancer (seen in Jay-Z's "Forever Young" video), kickboxer, Kenpo karate master and Shiatsu healer, O'Neal views his many talents organically, describing them as "moving meditations." *Whirling Mantis* (Smalls), his second record as a leader, confirms his muscular, swinging piano style and burnished compositions.

"This is my thing, my approach," O'Neal explains from New York. "It's really swinging, and that's my favorite kind of stuff. I really like the music that was coming out when I first began playing jazz in the early '90s, guys like Kenny Kirkland, Branford Marsalis, Herbie Hancock's *The New Standard*; those records are special to me just because of that period of my life. I started with those albums, then went back to see where those cats were coming from to build my foundation."

O'Neal's impressive foundation, a combination of classical, stride and straightahead styles, is shown in high relief on the HBO series "Boardwalk Empire," where he is cast as none other than James P. Johnson. Set in Atlantic City, N.J., during prohibition, Boardwalk Empire employs O'Neal to faithfully perform Johnson's original stride piano compositions, but he quickly made his multiple gifts known to cast and crew.

"When I got called for the gig," the 29-year-old says, "they told me it would be a recurring role. While I was on the set I began doing body work for the director, assistant director; they all had aches and pains. I worked on them, and helped them. I am not a shy guy, so I told them, 'I do a lot of things, I want you all to know.' But they knew all about me already, and they plan to use my different talents in the James P. Johnson character."

*Whirling Mantis* is no less shy than O'Neal himself. Featuring saxophonist Jaleel Shaw, drummer Rodney Green and bassist Joe Sanders, the album swings hard, offers a handful of bitter-sweet ballads and definitely recalls the early '90s in tone and scope. What it doesn't always reveal is O'Neal's monstrous technique, which helped him land his first major gig with Bobby Watson, followed by recording sessions for Greg Osby's 2003 release *St. Louis Shoes* (he's also recorded or toured with Elvin Jones, Kenny Garrett, Nicholas Payton, Joe Chambers, Roy Hargrove, Jeff "Tain" Watts, Clark Terry and Wynton Marsalis). In 2007, O'Neal recorded *Charlie's Suite*, which musically describes his ancestral heritage and reveals further layers to his extraordinary resume.

"I was born in Tanzania, and we moved to Kansas City when I was 3," O'Neal recalls. "That's where my uncle lived. He led the local Black Panther Party, then he had to leave as the FBI was chasing him all over the place. He went to Algiers, then he became head of the entire Black Panther Party. He still can't return to America. He's still in exile. My dad was in the Black Panther Party as well; he always educated us as to what is on the surface and what's not on the surface. He told us to watch out, be careful and pay attention."

Currently writing the followup to *Whirling Mantis* and awaiting the filming of next season's Boardwalk Empire, O'Neal sees nothing unusual in life's manifold missions. He also understands the power of inward reflection.

"The more I get into these different things, the more I realize how much they're the same. What is common is they provide a form of moving meditation. This concept is from the martial arts. The forms we do we see as a form of meditation and movement. That's anything you do over and over again. Something you meditate on."

—Ken Micallef

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**Herbie Hancock**

# Global Collaborator

By John Ephland

**“With most of us,” Quincy Jones once wrote in *The Jazz Review*, “after we get the technique and basic conception, the biggest problem is to find the right medium in which to express ourselves.”**

With Herbie Hancock, the “right medium” has been changing ever since he joined forces with Miles Davis as a ripe, young 23-year-old back in 1963.

And now, at 70, the young man continues to blaze new trails, and not just musical ones, his “mediums” continuing to change from project to project. Some of those mediums go beyond the bench. Hancock is current Creative Chair for Jazz for the Los Angeles Philharmonic Association (2010–2011) and serves as Institute Chairman of the Thelonious Monk Institute of Jazz. He’s also a founder of The International Committee of Artists for Peace (ICAP).





As a creative artist, the seeds for such recent successes as the ambitious, award-winning crossover collaborations *Possibilities*, *River: the joni letters* and now *The Imagine Project* lie deep in Hancock's musical roots. "Within the category of music," he says from his home in Los Angeles, having just finished his Imagine tour, "I think of myself as a jazz musician, because that's my foundation."

And yet, when considering Hancock's contributions as a whole, he challenges us to think beyond the obvious. "The real question is," according to Hancock, "how do I perceive myself? Because most people perceive themselves by their job, by what they do; which I used to do, defining myself as a musician. Then, I stopped doing that, maybe, 10 years ago. Because I had a big revelation: It occurred to me that if I define myself as a jazz musician, for one thing, it separates me and other jazz musicians. Or even if I define myself as a musician, it separates me and other musicians from anyone who's not a musician. Not only that: I'm only a musician when I'm either writing music or playing music, or sometimes listening to music. But I'm not a musician to my daughter or to my wife or my next-door neighbor, or somebody I knew from grammar school or high school."

And it's just this kind of thinking outside the box that has led Hancock to get beyond seeing himself not only in terms of being a piano man

or even a jazz musician, but as a member of the human family, where music becomes a means to some greater good. "When I go to vote, which we all should be doing, I don't go in there as a musician," he continues. "I go in there as a citizen. So, what is it that connects all these different aspects of myself? It's one thing: that I'm a human being. And it occurred to me that I've been defining myself the wrong way, a delusory way of looking at myself. I'm a human being. And also, when I define myself as a human being there are no walls between myself and other people. We're all in the same boat and the same family. That is a true way of defining one's self."

"And so, now," he adds, "when I look at music ... and I'm still working on this new perspective of how I view myself ... I look at music from the standpoint of being a human being, which can include being a musician."

When asked if that includes not calling yourself a jazz musician, but just a musician, Hancock responds, "Oh, yeah. I'm not in that box that's called a jazz musician." Still, he counters, "I mean, that's my foundation, that's where I come from, it's the jazz ethic that I use whenever I'm playing. So, in an extended sense, in a broader sense, whenever I'm involved with music, I'm coming from the place of being a jazz musician, even when I play classical music, because that's so ingrained in my head, the idea of being in the moment."

And it is here where Hancock's definition of

a jazz musician really takes flight. "The attributes," he says, "the characteristics of the way I define jazz have become, in a way, part of my DNA. The concept of sharing, the concept of being non-judgmental; when you're performing with a group, the idea of having the courage to be vulnerable ... these are all the best characteristics of jazz, characteristics that the masters of jazz understand. It took me a long time to develop an understanding of several of these characteristics."

Weren't these characteristics there already, since, as he said, they were in his DNA? "Actually," he clarifies, "what I meant is, I put it in my DNA by being a jazz musician. Jazz taught me those lessons. And now that I've been practicing Buddhism for 38 years, Buddhism allowed me to see those same lessons as crucial and important in living a wholesome and well-balanced life. Being non-judgmental, being courageous enough, to be expressive enough, to be naked or vulnerable, sharing, being in the moment. And also, having the courage to explore what you don't know. A lot of those things I got from Miles."

Instead of being taught formally by Davis, however, Hancock says he learned "more by his example. I have a solid foundation. I've had the great fortune to work with great musicians, and to get great training and encouragement from a lot of people. Many who came before me shared their experiences with me, and I'm at the point now where that's what I'm trying to do."

# Goin' Back Home

He and his music have come a long way, and he's brought quite a few people with him, and with it. This past summer, Herbie Hancock's Imagine band was on tour. One of their stops was at Chicago's Symphony Center. In the audience were friends and family of the Chicago native. There were also scores of people from all walks of life and generations, including this writer's 19-year-old son, Sam. Having confessed that he grew up listening to Hancock's *Head Hunters* album as part of his early soundtrack to life, Sam was among the first to notice the band's opening tune that night: "Actual Proof," from 1974's very funky followup to more popular *Head Hunters*, namely *Thrust*.

It was a signal to his dad that Hancock's music had and has staying power, even beneath what was clearly a more layered and intricate arrangement of this already irresistible upbeat number. (A number yours truly didn't recognize until he hipped me to it.) Sam heard it underneath drummer Vinnie Colaiuta's busy, thorough beats and syncopations;

Hancock's reharmonizations and alternate instrumental voicings; as well as the substitution of reeds for Lionel Loueke's distinctive electric guitar lines, all of it buttressed by the lively (yet somewhat muffled) basslines of Pino Palladino.

The show, overall, was an indicator of how far Hancock's music has come that he could combine early classics like "Maiden Voyage" and "Watermelon Man" with material from what has been 2010's signal event, *The Imagine Project*. Unlike his mentor Miles Davis, Hancock has shown that he can go home again, literally, and revisit "it" in new ways, not simply recreating the music of another bygone era for the sake of crowd appeal or ease of access but to inform and inject new life into what seems to be music with no bottom, with no limit to finding new treasures. (There were stretches where he spent a fair amount of time speaking to the audience about the music, the musicians and his "coming home.") Playing mostly his acoustic piano, Hancock was freed—thanks to fellow keyboardist Greg Phillinganes—to explore and

linger. That's when he wasn't prancing around the stage like a kid in a candy store, playing his keyboard controller like the wannabe rock guitarist he emulates, as he did with the encore, emerging from backstage already playing the instantly recognizable lines to his reinvented "Chameleon." Along with Phillinganes, both Loueke and Palladino helped free up Hancock as the leader found himself trading fours with each, especially Loueke. Adding another voice, and to provide an indispensable quality to the show here and there, Hancock brought singer Kristina Train on to sing music from that imaginative *Imagine Project*. That's when she wasn't doubling on violin.

Yes, Hancock's name and music continue to come a long way, impressing the likes of multiple generations of fans and music lovers. And not a calculated gesture, the whole of Hancock's musical life and persona is still about genuine expression, a living embodiment of what it means to be open, talented and, above all, generous with his musings.

—John Ephland

A symbolic pivot in Hancock's musical career took place after he left his longtime label Columbia, soon to collaborate with former Davis bandmates Wayne Shorter, Tony Williams and Ron Carter along with trumpeter Wallace Roney on 1992's *A Tribute To Miles*. Other projects—including *Dis Is Da Drum* (1994); *The New Standard* the following year with John Scofield, Dave Holland, Jack DeJohnette and Michael Brecker; a duet album with Shorter (*I+I*, 1997); *Gershwin's World* (with Joni Mitchell and Stevie Wonder, among others) and a reunited Headhunters band (both in '98); 2001's *Future2Future* with Bill Laswell (of *Rockit* fame from '83) and a 2002 tribute concert for John Coltrane and Miles Davis with Brecker and Roy Hargrove, *Directions In Music: Live At Massey Hall*—garnered Grammys along with other awards and pointed to Hancock's creative decision 12 years ago to make each album different from the one that came before. These releases all contained a spirit that's expressed more fully on his most recent projects, namely, that spirit of collaboration. And, in the case of his last spate of recordings, the presence of singers (once a strictly occasional musical choice) and lyrics has seemed to take on a life of its own, continuing to expand the musical and cultural reach of this "former" jazz musician.

Beginning with 2005's *Possibilities* (nominated for two Grammys, and including a feature-length film), that collaborative spirit that's been with him for decades was transformed into something altogether different. "When I did *Possibilities*," he recalls, "I wanted *Possibilities* to be specifically a collaborative record. So, we started to make a list of artists I might want to work with; we had a pretty sizeable list. And, little by little, through the process of asking them, we whittled it down to a master list. Some of them were not able to do it because they were on tour or recording or something. And because many of the artists have thriving careers going—they're big-name artists—I wanted to make it as painless as possible, but as inclusive as possible."

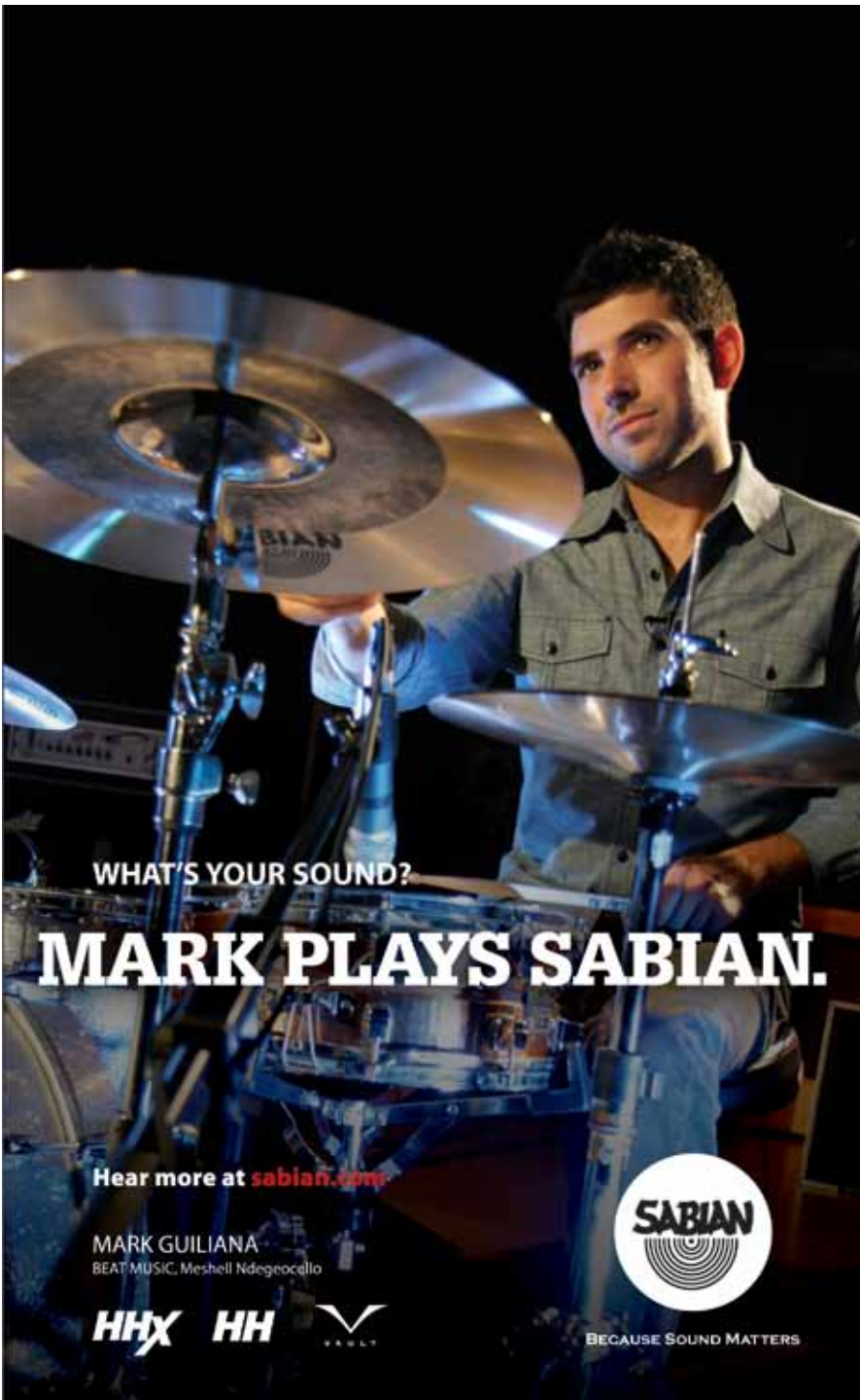
Landing such artists as John Mayer, Carlos Santana and Christina Aguilera, Hancock was smart to make sure the repertoire was loaded with songs they either knew or were ones they'd written themselves. Eventually taking the same approach with 2010's *The Imagine Project*, Hancock realized, "When you ask artists who have major careers going, in order to help get them to say yes to a project, you try to make the pieces as famous as possible."

Hancock remembers a heartwarming example of this process right off. "We had already spoken to Paul Simon, and thought maybe there's a piece that he wrote that he might want me to do. He chose [Simon's] 'I Do It For Your Love.' And so, I was thinking, I heard [Bill Evans' famous version], and somebody else did it, too. I was thinking these are real jazz versions, but I don't want to do just a jazz version; that would be easy to do. So, I had a meeting with Paul out here [in Los Angeles], and I had another idea that maybe we could use some kind of percussion, rhythmic

background rather than traps drums, and have that percussion background be the rhythmic controller. And he liked that idea.

"When we got to New York," he adds, "the day we were to record, Paul was going to show up the next day. When I got to the studio, he was in the studio! He was already working with the percussionist. He got excited about it, and he wanted to be there from the get-go. And he already had something going. And I went, 'Shit. This is cool.' And then he said to me, 'Now, you know that song. It has a lot of chords in it, right?' I mean, even for Paul Simon, that's a lot of chords.

After listening to this rhythmic thing, which he liked, Paul says, 'Do you think you can figure out a way to do the whole song with just one chord?' He wanted to, like, have the melody float over one chord. And I'm going over it in my head: 'No. There's no way to do that and have it sound like it makes any kind of sense!' But I'm not a quitter, and when something gets put in the air, I have to find a way to approach it. So, I found something. I used a pedal note on the bottom, that was kind of the foundation of this arrangement. And I constructed different chords on top of that pedal note, so it gave a sense of being the



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anchor to one thing. But then, as a kind of release, there were some chord changes between the verses. So I worked on that, and I found something that worked."

**B**ingo. And it was that same joyous collaborative spirit that animated his next project, 2007's Grammy-winning *River: the joni letters*. Like the album that preceded it and the one that would follow, *River* had vocalists on board, among them Norah Jones, Luciana Souza and Sonya Kitchell. "If you look at my whole catalog, there are very few albums where I have singers," Hancock notes. "Like many jazz musicians, but not all, I almost never paid attention to lyrics, 'cause I don't know any lyrics." He refers to having a kind of "tunnel vision" about jazz and classical music growing up, with singers on the outskirts of his musical life. That was until he started to see what his former boss Davis was listening to. "I noticed when I would go to Miles' house, he had jazz albums around, but he also had Jimi Hendrix, he had Janis Joplin, the Stones, the Beatles. Miles was the epitome of cool. So I thought, 'Wow! If Miles is open, it must be cool to be open!'"

In 1978, Hancock crossed paths with another singer, Joni Mitchell. The occasion was for a recording session. "The way I got onto Joni's *Mingus* album," he recalls, "was that one day Jaco Pastorius called me up in the evening, and he said, 'Herbie, you gotta come over to the studio. We need you.' And I said, 'What's goin' on?' And he said, 'We're doing this record with Joni Mitchell about *Mingus*.' And I said, 'Who's on it?' And he said, 'Wayne.' And I said, 'I'll be right there!' [laughs] All you had to say was Wayne, Wayne and Jaco, and I'm there, right out the door!"

As for *River*, the repertoire is far-reaching, including songs by others as well as by Mitchell. "Joni told me Wayne's 'Nefertiti' is one of her favorites. She also said that when she was a kid, her parents played jazz in the house, and, I think she said, when she was nine years old, she heard Billie Holiday sing 'Solitude.' And, that was it for her. That was the spark. And so, jazz is part of her youth, and part of her foundation."

Speaking of his attraction to her own songs, Hancock says, "Her pieces were always a little quirky and interesting and provocative. But still, I didn't know her lyrics." Instead, working with Mitchell over the years, he got to know her as a human being. As for *River*, "I don't know if I was thinking about Joni first, or thinking about why I wanted to do something with lyrics. I think it was about doing something about Joni. It kinda made sense; I hadn't done anything like that before. It's a stretch. I could do a dedication to Miles or Oscar Peterson, but Joni Mitchell? So, that was outside the box. But it made sense. It made sense in a way that I would know and she would know, because we know our relationship. And who better could I get to satisfy many of the positive aspects of that project? I knew it would be a challenge; and the fact that her arrangements from her original recordings were always daring arrangements. They weren't typical rock 'n' roll changes or rock 'n' roll voicings. I mean, she was always pushing the envelope. And, she worked with a lot of jazz musicians. Jaco, Michael Brecker and Pat Metheny. Didn't Peter Erskine work with her? And Vinnie Colaiuta. So, to me, it was perfect. I knew Larry Klein, who had been married to Joni at one time, played bass for her for many years and was a great Grammy award-winning producer. And I had been on some of Joni's records, too. So I told him what I wanted to do, and he said, 'I'm in.'"

"One thing that I wanted," Hancock continues, "was to do everything I could to be true to Joni Mitchell's spirit. I assumed that her songs were driven by her words. So, I wanted to really place a lot of attention on the words, I wanted to know what she meant and go line by line and analyze them, and try to find out as much as I could about her intent and how it applied to, maybe, her personal life or what was happening at the time she wrote the songs. And Larry knew that information. So, I depended completely on Larry."

It is in instances like these that we get a serious peek into the creative mind of Hancock. "I didn't want to disturb Joni with this," he adds. "And it was still gonna be my record. So, it wasn't that I would only be satisfied if Joni was pleased with all my choices; she might not be pleased with all my choices. I knew I was making my record, it wasn't her record. But I hoped she would be pleased with my choices. And I also wanted singers who she liked. We found out that she really liked Tina Turner. I mean, I had no idea



that she liked Tina Turner. Neither did Larry. He asked her, [Turner delivers an uncanny, heartfelt take on Mitchell's plaintive "Edith And The Kingpin."] Anyway, Joni was also working on her record, the one called *Shine*. So we didn't want to take up a lot of her time. We were hoping that she would appear on one or two songs, which she did, on 'Tea Leaf Prophecy.' We thought she might like Corinne Bailey Rae, and it was Larry's subjective opinion that she might like a singer like her. There was something about her that feels honest."

And then there was Leonard Cohen, who recited the lyrics to Mitchell's "The Jungle Line." "That was Larry's idea," Hancock recalls. "Larry knew that Joni really had a deep respect for and friendship with Leonard Cohen. He was thinking that since I'd had some experience doing film scores, maybe we could do a spoken-word delivery. That was something that occurred to me, too. I was thinking, we're in a world where rap is happening; not that we have to put rap on here ... it was sort of, we tend to look outside the box. And so, Larry came up with the idea, 'How about spoken-word?' Cool. Then he came up with Leonard doing that particular piece, because in Joni's version it really was not as dependent on the melody or a particular kind of rhythm, with almost a kind of tribal thing happening there. And he thought of me improvising a 'cinematic approach' on what I'm hearing. Unfortunately, just because of time constraints and scheduling, we weren't able to put Leonard together with me in the studio. So Leonard actually recorded the spoken-word first, and then, at a later date, I listened and I improvised. It took me ... I think the second or third take is what we have on the record; I had to kind of find my place, I had to study the lyrics. Also, not only with 'The Jungle Line,' but all the other pieces where we add Wayne and Dave Holland and Lionel Loueke and Vinnie ... before we recorded any of the pieces, we all went into the engineer's booth and I handed out the lyrics to the song we were gettin' ready to record, and we would discuss the lyrics. I'd never done that before. But I thought that would be a good idea, so that we all have an understanding of the lyrics. Because I was trying to get as close to Joni's spirit as I could."

The major difference between *The Imagine Project* and anything else Hancock has done is that *The Imagine Project* was designed to be a global record. “That’s why it’s in multiple languages,” he states. “Because, I thought, ‘What could I do that hasn’t been done?’ I don’t know anybody who’s made a global record. I’ve heard of a record that has two languages, or maybe a compilation that was put together.”

“If you listen to the record,” he goes on to note, “you’ll hear the first piece is ‘Imagine.’” From here, Hancock starts to describe what was typical of the creative process that went into the making of *The Imagine Project*. “It started out with an intro with Pink and Seal,” he says. “And then a rhythm comes in. The rhythm is actually a group called Konono No. 1; they’re from the Congo, and they play thumb pianos. And then with Vinnie Colaiuta and me and Lionel Loueke on guitar. And then, India.Arie sings the melody of ‘Imagine.’ It’s a happier version, more upbeat version of ‘Imagine.’ And then, after she sings a couple verses, and the rhythm plays, then you hear an African vocalist, Oumou Sangare from Mali. She’s singing in Bambara. It’s not the melody of ‘Imagine,’ it’s a melody that she created. We use that between verses of John Lennon’s ‘Imagine,’ and we also use the end of John Lennon’s song. We end up with the thing that she wrote in her language, and it plays out on that.”

A common feature to *The Imagine Project*—which also includes appearances by, among many others, co-producer/bassist Klein, Marcus Miller, Alex Acuna, John Legend, Derek Trucks, Susan Tedeschi, Chaka Khan, Shorter and Dave Matthews—is the use of multiple languages, thus accenting the album’s global reach. “There’s another piece, ‘The Times, They Are A’ Changin’,’ and Lisa Hannigan sings in English,” Hancock says. “But we have the Chieftains on that, too. So I wanted this Irish and sort of a hybrid African track, partly African, a mixture of elements on the rhythm track. And, it’s also kind of out there, too. So Lisa Hannigan sings Bob Dylan’s ‘The Times, They Are A’ Changin’,’ but, there’s a place where the Chieftains play this beautiful, haunting, tear-jerking melody. I don’t know where that melody came from. I don’t know if Paddy [Moloney, the leader of the Chieftains] wrote that or if it’s some traditional folk piece. I think he just came up with it. Anyway, we took some of the lyrics of ‘The Times, They Are A’ Changin’,’ translated them into Irish-Gaelic, and retro-fitted it on this new melody [that Paddy came up with]. So we put an Irish translation on a certain part of ‘The Times, They Are A’ Changin’,’ and you’ve got both those languages on that track.”

Hancock is firm in his conviction that *The Imagine Project* (by my count, his 54th album as a leader thus far) was not music-driven. In fact, *The Imagine Project* echoes his comments about now seeing himself as being more than “just” a musician. Herbie Hancock, in his 70th year on the planet, is truly celebrating his place in the world.

“It wasn’t coming from that place,” he insists. “Music is the means.”

“To what end?” he is asked.

“Peace,” Hancock forcefully states. “It’s about peace through global collaboration. That’s what drove everything. Because the 21st century will be the century of globalization. And I’m tired of people giving up their power so that someone else writes what globalization is gonna be like. It’s like giving up your power as a human being to let someone else determine your destiny. What I’m tryin’ to encourage people to do is participate in the designing of the kind of globalized world that you wanna live in, instead of waiting for someone to make one that you don’t want to be involved with. And so, I’m showing a positive result of what global collaboration can bring. Global collaboration is a path toward peace.”

“The record’s not about me,” Hancock concludes. “It’s about we. We human beings on the planet Earth. [There are people who ask,] ‘Where are you on this record?’ because they’re used to listening to records and music as separate from other things in your world. But this is about the world. It’s about all the other things, but it uses music as the medium. So it doesn’t focus on me. This is my mindset. I will always be thinking about that. Because I’m living in the 21st century now, and I’m concerned about the world that I live in. Rather than being a part of the problem, I wanna be a part of the solution.”

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DAVE LIEBMAN

# No Slowing Down

By Ted Panken

**R**ight after the Dave Liebman Group's first set at 55 Bar in Greenwich Village last September, the leader stepped to the bar and ordered a shot of Stoli, water back. Coffee might have been a more predictable beverage of choice—Liebman had just arrived from Boston after a seven-hour crawl along I-95, with only a quick bite and shave before hit time. He observed that at 64 his famously kinetic personality remains Type A. "It's the reverse of most people—coffee slows me down," Liebman said.

Liebman was supporting a new Decca Label Group release, *Turnaround: The Music Of Ornette Coleman* (Jazz Werkstatt), which earned a German Jazz Journalists Best Record of 2010 award, but on this evening he offered no Coleman repertoire, instead presenting a plugged-in set comprising originals by guitarist Vic Juris, electric bassist Tony Marino and himself, from an 80-tune book accrued over two decades as a unit. The tunes were heavy on sonic texture, straight eighths and odd meters, stroked declaratively by drummer Marko Marcinko; playing only soprano saxophone, Liebman darted through them like a trumpeter, placing his phrases carefully, surefootedly inserting polyrhythms into his line, projecting an array of tonal attacks while retaining precise pitch however extreme the register or interval.

Liebman remarked that the previous evening's program at Sculler's, before "an older audience, not quite suit-and-tie" who had paid a \$20 cover (\$58 with dinner) for the privilege, contained three Coleman tunes. "This is a \$150 door gig," he said, noting the 55 Bar's \$10 admission and narrow confines. "I'm going to play whatever the fuck I want." He fleshed out that sentiment

over the phone 36 hours later, refreshed from sleeping in after a third consecutive one-nighter, also a door gig, at the Falcon in Piermont, N.Y., 25 miles up the Hudson River.

"The audience at a place like Sculler's knows me from Lookout Farm or Elvin Jones," Liebman said, referencing his popular mid-'70s ensemble and the 1971-'72 sideman gig that launched his name into the international jazz conversation. "I'm not going to hit them with our strongest, most obscure stuff—you don't gather that many more people over the years unless you have a machine, which I don't. The Ornette tunes are a hook and there's a certain cache to getting that prize, but we're done with it. The truth is that nobody knows the record, and nobody ever will."

It was observed that Liebman, a 2011 NEA Jazz Master and, as of December 2009, *Officier* in France's Order of Arts and Letters, had gone to considerable pains to play a pair of door gigs.

"It's below me," he acknowledged. "But I can't get this group a five-night gig in a New York club because they think we won't do enough business. I believe in longevity—loyal-







ty to the guys, and vice-versa, loyalty to me as a leader. To keep them together, I've got to keep them busy and interested, which means music that keeps them challenged. At 55 Bar we played a new regime of music I settled on three months ago when I saw the next bunch of work coming."

Four days hence, piggybacking on the NEA honorific, Liebman and crew would embark on a nine-day, six-gig, San Diego-to-Portland van trip—no door gigs—to be followed by a final East Coast leg comprising a celebratory concert at the Deer Head Inn, a few miles from his eastern Pennsylvania home, and weekend one-offs in Vermont and Maine. Between then and December, when the group was booked for several weeks in Europe, Liebman, who had spent the summer participating in various master class workshops and 20th anniversary festivities for the International Association of Jazz Schools, which he co-founded and artistic-directs, would resume his position at Manhattan School of Music, where he teaches chromatic harmony. Midway through October, backed by MSM's Chamber Jazz Ensemble, he'd perform original music composed for the concert attendant to his *Officier* designation, sandwiched by two appearances by the Dave Liebman Big Band in support of *As Always* (MAMA), a 2010 release on which he fronts an ensemble of various New York best-and-brightests, playing their charts of tunes that span his entire timeline as a profes-

sional musician.

These events made up only a small portion of an exceptionally prolific period of musical production in which Liebman intersects primarily with associates of long acquaintance. "I'm pretty good at adapting myself in a lot of situations," Liebman remarked. "If I can do something once every 18 months to two years, there's continuity." He could now retrospect on a post-Labor Day week at Birdland playing tunes with an all-star quartet—pianist Steve Kuhn, electric bassist Steve Swallow and drummer Billy Drummond. He'd return in February, beginning the month with Saxophone Summit, the collective sextet in which he, Joe Lovano and Ravi Coltrane, propelled by pianist Phil Markowitz, bassist Cecil McBee and drummer Billy Hart, refract repertoire from the various stages of John Coltrane's career; and ending it with Quest, the collective, open-ended quartet that Liebman describes as "Miles and Coltrane—the '60s, distilled down," with pianist Richie Beirach, bassist Ron McClure and drummer Billy Hart, which began a second run in 2005 after a 15-year hiatus.

Four encounters with Beirach ("our relationship is probably the closest I've ever had in my life," Liebman says) figure prominently in a suite of just-issued or imminent additions to his voluminous discography, including an inspired Quest radio concert titled *Re-Dial: Live In Hamburg* (Out Note) and *Quest For Freedom* (Sunnyside), in which Liebman and Beirach, supported by the Frankfurt Radio Big Band, navigate a suite of Jim McNeely's ingenious constructions. Also on Out Note are *Unspoken*, an 11-tune Liebman-Beirach recital that exemplifies their expansive harmonic simpatico, and *Knowing-Lee*, a melody-centric triologue with Lee Konitz.

Coltrane is the explicit subject of *Compassion*, a forthcoming RKM release of a high-energy 2007 BBC concert by Liebman and Lovano with the Saxophone Summit rhythm section, and of *Liebman Plays Coltrane Blues* (Daybreak), on which Liebman blows with a Flemish bassist and drummer. He's the implicit subject of *Relevance* (Toucan), documenting two extended improvisations by lifelong Coltraneophiles Liebman and Evan Parker, prodded by drummer Tony Bianco, and of *Air* (Finetunes), a solo saxophone-plus-effects recital that Liebman calls "my solo kind of out shit."

Liebman, Swallow and drummer Adam Nussbaum achieve equilateral triangle interplay on *We Three*, still label-less, following their excellent 2006 session *Three For All* (Challenge). On 2010's *Five In One* (Piouet), Liebman, John Abercrombie, Marc Copland, Drew Gress and Billy Hart navigate repertoire by the members, while 2009's *Something Sentimental* (Kind of Blue) is a "B-flat" standards date with Liebman, Abercrombie, Nussbaum and bassist Jay Anderson. Chops abound on *The Bickel/Marks Group With Dave Liebman* (Zoho, 2010), which found the saxophonist in the company of a seasoned group led by pianist Doug Bickel and bassist Dennis Marks.

"I like the challenge of playing in different situations," Liebman said. "Your musical DNA is what it is; how I hear harmonically and rhythmically will permeate the context. All my basic currents of development were on my first record, *Lookout Farm*, and my records are basically the same thing over and over. I also like a menu with a lot of different things. If a listener hears a funk tune, and then a beautiful tune with chord changes, and then a free energetic tune, they're going to like one of them.

"I don't have a contract, so I don't do one thing a year for a record label, and I travel, so I find a label that enjoys one thing, another that enjoys something else. From the business side, there's always the difficulty of having too much product competing against your other product, which the labels hate. On the other hand, more is always better in the sense that at least people who are listeners will hear more music that you're part of. If I can find a way to express myself and someone is interested, I'll do it. If it's crowding the other thing, what can I do about it?"

Liebman describes himself as "pessimistic by nature," and it is tempting to attribute the fatalistic, glass-half-full and half-empty assessments of his protean activity to what the Flatbush native describes as his "Jewish shit." In addition to such morphological signifiers as Liebman's palpable Brooklyn accent, facial profile and pattern baldness, there's also the admixture of pedagogic rigor (he graduated from NYU in 1968 with a B.A. in American History, and cites 22 published works on his website) with the spiritual, pipeline-to-the-Creator intention that marks his most personal music.

That "Jewish shit" may also inflect Liebman's ambivalence about Ornette Coleman's compositions. "Ornette was nowhere near Trane or Sonny [Rollins] or Wayne [Shorter] as a saxophone player," Liebman said. "Apart from his melodicism, his music never got to me emotionally. It's so *joie de vivre*; even when he plays sad, it's kind of happy and life-giving. For me, that's not enough! Coltrane is the complete opposite. Even when he plays a major tune, there's a sense of melancholy. It's his sound."

Liebman also projects identity through his soprano saxophone tone, which, without being too essentialist about it, often projects the keening, ululating quality of a *shofer*. "I love the tenor, and I'll probably always play it to one extent or another, but in the end I've found my voice with the soprano," he said. "It's something about my Bedouin, Semitic desert roots. I don't feel that on tenor. On tenor, it's Trane, it's Sonny, it's Wayne. It's jazz! The soprano is a world instrument for me. It's a vocalist, a singer. It's Miles. It's Indian. It's ethnic. It's the *On The Corner* screeching shit. It's got everything. It's made my personality. Thank god I found it. The tenor would have been me hitting that nail I can't get in the wall, because there were too many great people ahead of me. After Trane, there ain't nothin' else to play on that instrument."



Ergonomic considerations also influence Liebman's instrumental preference. "I'm not a big guy," he said, adding that the weight of the tenor around his neck was "like towing a truck," whereas the soprano "fits my physique better—it's like my toothbrush; it feels like an extension of my arm." In speaking of physical limitations, he inferred another source of his pessimism and also his constant determination to transcend it.

Stricken with polio at age 3, Liebman walks with a pronounced limp. "Going to the doctor was like going to see Moses," he said. "My mother kept taking me to the next guy who was going to fix my leg and get me out of this shit. It definitely gets in your way. I can't run. I have trouble walking now. But it builds a character that otherwise you probably wouldn't have. You're not given a choice but to build an inner core of strength and compensate if you don't want to die and crawl into the hole. That's maybe where the extra shit comes from."

It is Liebman's opinion that Elvin Jones and Miles Davis, who both received considerable flak for hiring him during an era of deep black-on-white racial mistrust, took notice. "I can't tell you that the leg didn't have something to do with it," he said. "Guys like that listened to the way you play, of course, but they also knew about character, and about lack of character, and I guess they thought, 'He's got what it's supposed to be.' I can't tell you that everything was lovely with Miles. If you look at videos of Miles' band on YouTube, you see the Black Panther flag—the three stripes—on the equipment, and I'm there, the saxophone player ... like, not that happy. But Miles was very clear about it. This was during the period when his legs were screwed up. He said, 'I don't know how you do what you do. You carry three horns, nothing stops you.'"

"Certainly, Elvin and Miles addressed everything they did with complete seriousness. Before and after the bandstand, everything could be completely out—and sometimes was. But when the horn is in your mouth, it's the most important thing in the world. It is business. You owe it to the music, to the tradition, let alone your audience. And *do not* fuck around, and do not treat it with anything less than total, 100 percent seriousness. Being in that culture helped me be who I am, and I'm very proud that I was able to do it. I had been sitting at Coltrane's feet, and now I'm playing with his engine, and then with the guy who hired him and made him famous, and then hired Wayne Shorter. With the weight of the tradition and how good these guys were, how could you not be self-conscious and a little uptight? I wasn't *that* good, man. I was OK, I guess, and I was like, 'How can I be here?'"

Like many of his saxophonist contemporaries, Joe Lovano—who listened intently to Liebman and Steve Grossman on the 1972 Elvin Jones recording *Live At The Lighthouse*—considered Liebman well beyond OK. "The energy and attitude that they played with was so strong and real," Lovano said. "It felt like my generation. It was clear that here were two incredible,

inspired players, and I had to reach for that level of energy and sound. After that, the way Dave channeled his ideas into that real electronic period of Miles' music was amazing—he was the sound Miles needed at the time."

Indeed, by the end of 1974, when he launched Lookout Farm with Beirach, bassist Frank Tusa, drummer Jeff Williams and tabla player Badal Roy, Liebman was, as he puts it, "on the front line of the first younger post-Coltrane generation," a highly influential figure. By 1980, he recalls, "I became cognizant that guys were copying me and Steve copying Trane. Elvin and Miles put us in the sun, and that's how we played. We didn't think about it. What else were we going to do?"

A few hours before hit time on his final day at Birdland with Kuhn, Swallow and Drummond, Liebman sat on the balcony of a 21st floor suite in the midtown time-share building that he bought into several years ago in order to sustain a New York presence, and reflected on the implications of an early Baby Boomer joining the pantheon of NEA Jazz Masters.

"It's significant in that I'm able to tour, but it's also a personal thrill to be in the same company as my idols and mentors," he said. "It's the old adage that if you're on line long enough, eventually your time comes to get whatever rewards there are. It's interesting I'm getting the award with Wynton Marsalis, who embodies the opinion that the '70s was the time when we lost our way. Perhaps the establishment is finally recognizing that the '70s wasn't such a waste. It will always be called the Fusion Era, and rightfully so. But that shouldn't be a black mark, because it was a great period."

"To me, 'fusion' doesn't mean a rock beat or an Indian drum. It's a technical word which means to put together. The word 'eclecticism,' which also used to be a dirty word but is now completely kosher, definitely represents my generation; we had easy access to so many idioms and styles in the '60s, our teenage years, and our interests were spread very wide. We were of a type sociologically—mostly white guys, middle class (we didn't have to do this), formally educated. And we had rock 'n' roll—James Brown, Sly [and the Family Stone], Stevie Wonder, the Beatles, Jimi Hendrix. Of course, all music is a fusion. But this was an acknowledged mixture of styles that seemed incompatible or unlikely. Before that, jazz was a blues, a standard, II-V-I, with more or less a common vocabulary that existed from [Louis] Armstrong to Coltrane, played by musicians who came up in the same root. Now, of course, it's commonplace to put together styles; everybody does this every day."

As Liebman intends to do at full tilt for the foreseeable future. "I'm going to keep this energy going until the gas runs out," he said. "In my case, it's inevitable that I will not be walking so easily in 10 years or so. I know it will not go on forever. I mean, Roy Haynes is unbelievable. Sonny, too. But they're rarities. Most guys don't. Maybe I will. But I don't count on that."

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# Sidewomen Of Soul

**Strong Jazz Backgrounds Carry Tia Fuller, Kim Thompson, Katty Rodriguez-Harrold, Marcie Chapas & Crystal J Torres  
A Long Way In Pop Superstar Beyoncé's Suga Mama Band**

By Dan Ouellette

In August 2009 during her worldwide *I Am ... Yours* tour, r&b superstar Beyoncé Knowles checked into the Wynn Las Vegas Encore Theater to perform what was billed as an “intimate” concert. It was filmed for a DVD release. While the show zipped into a typical high-energy, dance-infused affair, about halfway through, with her 10-piece, all-female band Suga Mama ready to blaze, Knowles threw a curve ball at the audience. She declared, “Now it’s time for us to have some fun. But you have to get up out of your seats.” She then explained that among her many influences, she’s indebted to Aretha Franklin, Josephine Baker and Ella Fitzgerald.



MOHAMED SAWYER/THOMAS

Crystal J Torres



JOS M. JENSEN

Kim Thompson



Tia Fuller



"I want to give you a little bit of Ella," she said and proceeded to get the crowd clapping. "Are you ready to make it swing?" she asked and then engaged in a husky-voiced "say, hey" call-and-response chant with the audience. With the crowd on its feet, Knowles launched into a killer scat of Charlie Parker's "Ornithology" with the three-piece horn section echoing her wordless vocals. At age 27, it was her first experience scatting, and the audience, populated largely by young listeners, likely also got its first lesson in jazz.

Who was behind this new twist in the fleeting musical transformation for Knowles? Credit a few of her band members, including alto saxophonist Tia Fuller, trumpeter Crystal J Torres and drummer Kim Thompson, who all boast stellar jazz credentials performing with top-tier jazz artists and have been tending to their own burgeoning careers as leaders. Fuller, who has performed with Jon Faddis, T.S. Monk and Nancy Wilson, says Knowles was looking for a more acoustic version of her hit tune "Déjà Vu," from her second solo CD, *B'Day*. Fuller had recently given Knowles some music to listen to, including one of her own CDs and albums by Sarah Vaughan, Nancy Wilson and Fitzgerald.

"One of the tunes she liked was Ella's 'How High The Moon,' where she scats the melody of Charlie Parker's 'Ornithology,'" says Fuller,

who released *Decisive Steps*, her sophomore CD as a leader for Mack Avenue, in 2010. "We suggested to Beyoncé that we bring jazz to the forefront, but she didn't know anything about scatting. But she is so curious and her work ethic is extremely high. She listened to the Ella tune carefully for a few hours, and by the time we performed it, she had it down pat."

Thompson, who has toured with Stefon Harris, Kenny Barron, Wallace Roney and Mike Stern and has been building her own label called KT Music, says that they developed their arrangement of "Ornithology" to put over the top of "Déjà Vu" to "synchronize the tradition of that timing. Beyoncé had been listening to Sarah and Ella, and she opened up. She took it to the next level."

"When we showed the arrangement to Beyoncé that we had come up with, I scatted the melody," says Torres, who has worked over the years with Clark Terry, Billy Taylor and Roy Hargrove (she will launch her eclectic, jazz-rooted debut trumpet/vocals album *Life Lessons: Vol. 1* in January on Pure Muziq Planet). "I explained the concept and taught her Clark Terry's doodling system of navigating rhythm. In an hour or so she got it. This is one of the few songs [in her songbook] where we got to show Beyoncé our world."

"I believe that song introduced her to the vo-

"Beyoncé has taught me how to build my show to allow it to speak to an audience. So often in jazz, every song sounds alike. You need variety. Sure, the first song can be jazz, but then as the show unfolds, you can develop a groove to capture different styles, from Latin to ballads. But it's also important to expand the jazz market into neo-soul, r&b and hip-hop."

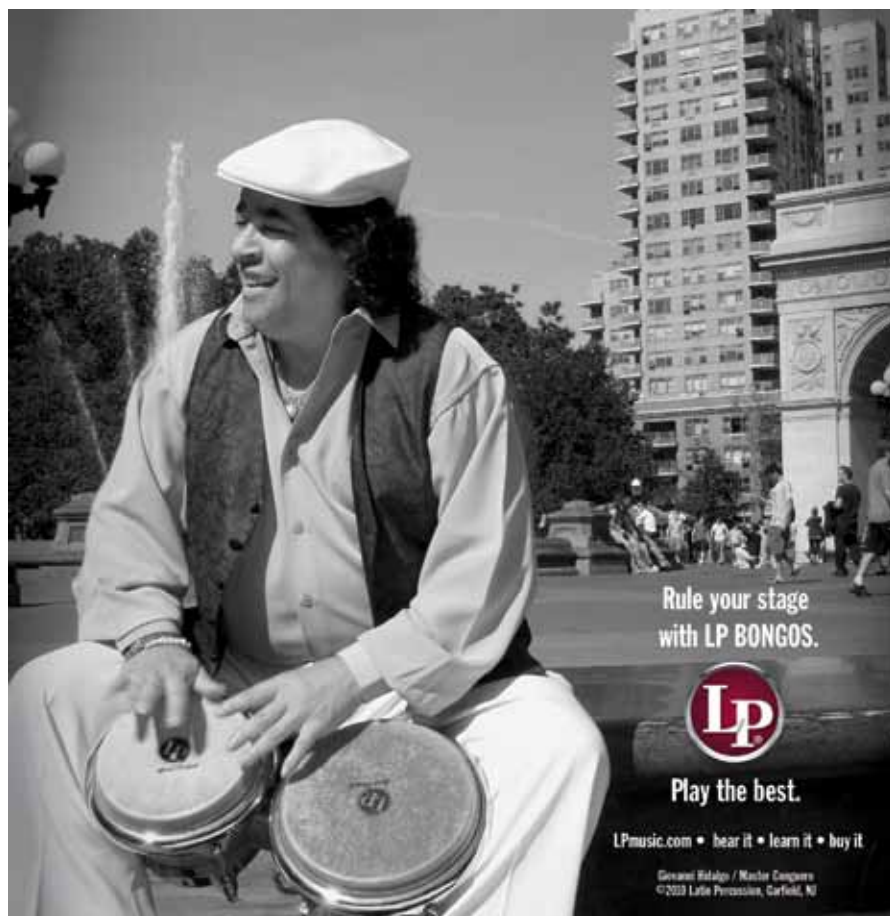
—TIA FULLER

cal side of the legendary [female] jazz singers," says Marcie Chapas, the Suga Mama percussionist who studied drumming with Lewis Nash, Chico Hamilton and Reggie Workman, among others, at New School for Jazz and Contemporary Music in New York City, and who today leads percussion clinics. "I believe she thought, 'I like this. I want more of this.'"

Saxophonist Katty Rodriguez-Harold, head of KeyKat Productions who also sings in the band of her husband, jazz trumpeter Keyon Harold, agrees. "Beyoncé definitely enjoyed this," she says. "It wasn't something she was used to. She was challenged. She was very focused and learned how to do it."

Knowles, who first found fame in the all-female singing group Destiny's Child, commenced her solo career in 2003 with the platinum-selling album *Dangerously In Love* (Destiny's Child officially disbanded two years later). Her touring band comprised men. That changed when she decided to hit the road in support of her 2006 sophomore CD, *B'Day*. "I had an all-guy band for a while," Knowles said, in an interview excerpted at iafrica.com. "[But] I had this idea because a lot of my lyrics are about strength and women. ... I just wanted to do something that would inspire other young females to get involved in music, so I put together an all-woman band." Her assessment? "These girls are amazing, and they make me want to be a better musician."

Once Knowles decided to create her new band, she put the word out for open-call auditions that would take place in such major U.S. cities as Houston, Chicago, Atlanta, Los Angeles and New York, as well as Tel Aviv, Israel. The response was massive; the lines hours long. It's estimated that some 1,000–2,000 women tried out.



Knowles told MTV, “I wanted to get together a group of fierce, talented, hungry women.” She added that the decisive final audition on Saturday, June 17, 2006, where all 30 candidates—at least two women for each instrument—were flown into New York, was “a thing called star quality. It’s a thing you can’t put your finger on, can’t describe. When they were playing, I said, ‘I want to see y’all battle.’ ... That’s how I chose. It was so entertaining, the energy, seeing the girls battle. ... God, it was the best. It was magical.”

Fuller remembers her experience during that week before Father’s Day in June 2006. She was in the midst of recording her first album for Mack Avenue, *Healing Space*, in a band that included Thompson.

“Kim told me the day before the first auditions,” says Fuller. “I was stressed out getting my own date together, but I decided to try out anyway. It was a Monday, and there was a long line at Sony Studios in New York. After an hour or two, I was on. Beyoncé had walked in shortly before I played, so she actually heard my audition, not just her team. I played ‘Work It Out’ [from the soundtrack to *Austin Powers In Goldmember*, the 2002 Mike Myers film in which Beyoncé co-starred]. I played a solo and used it to vent all the stress I was going through with getting my own album recorded.”

Fuller went into the studio the rest of the week and was asked to return to a second audition on Saturday. The crowd was slimmed down to the finalists from around the country. “We had rigorous auditions all day to see how we vibed with each other,” she says. “The next day I got the call. I made the band, and so did Kim.”

Thompson went to the auditions not counting on getting into the group. Besides, she was already “intensely busy,” working with Fuller, touring with Roney and preparing to go back out on the road with Stern’s *Who Let The Cats Out* tour, which she says was one of the hardest decisions to make. “That band was like family to me,” says Thompson, who actually injured one of her fingers so badly playing the hip-hop grooves during the auditions that she ended up competing with one hand. “Beyoncé was going to be working immediately, and it never was my intention to go into this direction because I love the free creativity involved in jazz.”

Torres’ story is different. She had heard about the auditions, but had already signed on with Hargrove to go on tour as a vocalist with RH Factor. “People told me that I should audition because I had this strictly jazz attitude,” she says. “A few months after touring with Roy, I saw the girls on TV with Beyoncé, and I had a gut feeling that I was supposed to be there.”

Soon after, she ran into Fuller at a jam session, and she let her know how she felt. “I told her, if they ever need a trumpeter, I’d love to do an audition,” Torres says. “Six months later, Tia called me up, told me the original trumpeter was quitting because she didn’t want to go on the

world tour that was coming up, and that I should come to an audition. If it’s meant to be, it’s going to be. Otherwise, I was planning to go to Cuba to study.” After the audition, she was told, “You start tomorrow.”

Fuller says, “Crystal came in and had to learn the music under extreme pressure. There was no written music. It was all played by ear. Plus, she had to learn the dance steps because the show was choreographed.”

Given that more than half of the members of Suga Mama come from a jazz background or

are well-versed in playing jazz (others include pianist Rie Tsuji and co-musical director/electric bassist Divinity Roxx), did that schooling have anything to do with how they became the chosen few?

Fuller says that her jazz training was integral to her being able to fit right into Knowles’ vision of “having a band full of strong women who can really play their instruments.” Fuller says, “Jazz is a lifelong art form that allows us to come into any situation and make it work, while also being spontaneous if need be and bring a new twist like

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we did in Vegas.”

Chapas concurs. “Our jazz backgrounds helped a lot with our ability to create ideas, to work on transitions, breaks, chord changes,” she says. “With a jazz background, your ears can go a long way. So I can hear rhythm. The same with Kim. Tia, hands down, is an expert with the melodic voicings, and Katty is great with melodies too.”

In regards to her jazz background being valuable in the band, Torres says, “Extremely. In so many situations, the music will change, and we’ll have to whip up a different arrangement. It’s improvising on our feet.”

The first gig for Suga Mama came quickly after the band came together: a performance at the 2006 BET Awards Ceremony on June 27. In early September, Knowles’ *B'Day* streeted, which meant several one-off promo gigs, including the “Today” show and daytime TV talk shows with Oprah Winfrey and Ellen DeGeneres. Extensive eight-hour rehearsals with the lighting crew and dancers began in January 2007 that led into full 12-hour rehearsals for another couple of months. The *B'Day* world tour took flight in April and went into November.

The band had eight months off in 2008, during which time Fuller recorded *Decisive Steps*,

then geared back up for an even bigger and more rigorous tour, supporting the *I Am ... Yours* CD, that included 109 dates from April 2009 to February 2010 in addition to promo performances for the album as well as a Grammy Awards showcase.

“It was a whirlwind experience,” says Torres. “I’ve always had that dream of being able to travel the world. So there I was living that out and playing music.” However, while touring with Knowles, she rarely had the opportunity to stretch out like she does in a jazz setting. “Pop is confining, which can be a challenge at times,” she says. “As a horn player, I have no leeway.”

On the road, when Suga Mama had down time, the members often sought out jam sessions. “We’d go to cities and take over the sessions,” says Torres with a laugh. “After our show, we looked for those situations. We did that in most of the main cities we played in. We hung out with the local musicians in, for example, London, South Korea, Vienna, Sydney, Philadelphia, and one time we met up with Joe Lovano’s band.”

While it’s been a blessing to see a different part of the music world, Fuller says that it can be a challenge for a jazz musician. “You have to play the same things in the same way for all those shows,” she says. “Often what I did

to counteract that and to gain my sanity was to go over into a corner of a big arena before the show and just practice—there, or in the dressing room or a bathroom. That helped me to stay balanced and not feel like I was selling my soul. I constantly challenged myself, working on my embouchure, seeking out ways to play where I was growing. It’s a way of making your own peace of mind in the midst of the chaos—taking a bus to the show, rushing to get my hair done and do makeup.”

At times during shows, the band members are spotlighted, for example, when Rodriguez-Harrold gets to solo with a nearly two-minute tenor flight in the intro to the tune “Baby Boy.”

“I get a chance to improvise then,” she says, but notes that there isn’t much freedom to stretch out. “Solos can’t be too long. Sometimes you feel like you are on autopilot, but, hey, to play in front of 10,000 people, that’s never frustrating. I’m in awe. Even though Beyoncé does the same basic, structured show every night, she does do things differently, sometimes allowing for a solo or interlude during a change of scenery. But it is definitely not a jazz show.”

Jazz sitting in with pop has gone on for years as jazz artists have augmented their careers by jumping into the pop fray. This has taken the form of being album guests (e.g., Billy Joel hir-



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ing Phil Woods and Freddie Hubbard to record on 1977's *The Stranger* and 1978's *52nd Street*, respectively) or going on tour (e.g., Steve Gadd drumming on a number of road trips with Paul Simon, and most famously Joni Mitchell's all-star band of Pat Metheny, Jaco Pastorius, Michael Brecker, Don Alias and Lyle Mays on her live recording *Shadows And Light*). In many cases, the experience has been a fruitful one—monetarily given the size of venues played, as well as musically. According to Suga Mama band members, they've also taken to the plusses in playing in the superstar pop world.

On the surface, backing up Knowles has given the musicians incredible exposure. Chapa puts it plainly in explaining how her percussion prowess in coloring and flavoring the music has been on display: "I'm grateful for the band because it's helped to get my name out there."

Being in Suga Mama has also engendered on-stage trust, says Torres. "That's been the most valuable education—how important it is to trust the people playing with you, to trust that together we can follow the many paths where the music leads." Rodriguez-Harold adds, "The most important part of performing pop music is to be consistent, which is much harder to do than improvising. If you're consistent, after a while you understand how you make the parts fit the whole."

While her transition to doing less in a show than with a jazz band was difficult at first, Thompson found that the Knowles gig has forced her to come up with a broader perspective on concentrating. "I'm so much about being in the moment and being creative," she says. "But with Beyoncé, you learn more about being sensitive. That's been powerful. It's taught me how to structure versus being free flowing. I can center myself while at the same time be open to the music that is allowing for a [more subtle] feel of creativity. For example, last year when we played the MTV Awards, I added in a drum part that was simple but soulful," Beyoncé told me later she really liked it."

Fuller's takeaway has come on several different planes, ranging from putting a set list together to being savvy on the business tip. "I learned from Beyoncé the importance of having people in your direct circle to share your vision as an artist and having a supportive team to facilitate what you want to get down," she says. "Beyoncé has also taught me how to build my show to allow it to speak to an audience. So often in jazz, every song sounds alike. You need variety. Sure, the first song can be jazz, but then as the show unfolds, you can develop a groove to capture different styles, from Latin to ballads. But it's also important to expand the jazz market into neo-soul, r&b and hip-hop. Hey, they're using our samples already, so let's put that into the mainstream so that people know that's jazz."

So, will Beyoncé, still in her 20s, some day pull a Queen Latifah by momentarily setting aside hip-hop and r&b to bask in the glow of

classic songbook material? "I don't know," says Rodriguez-Harold. "She very well could be the next pop artist to do that. She is open." She cites an example where more jazz—complete with improvisation—played a part in Knowles' world: at the birthday party she threw for her rap-star husband Jay-Z. "The theme of the party was the '50s, so there were a lot of jazz tunes that we played. People in the crowd requested that we play certain tunes. It was right up our alley, and everyone was thrilled with us playing. We sang,

we soloed and they loved it."

While Knowles reportedly is in the process of putting a new album together, it's unlikely that it will be a jazz affair. But, maybe, there could be a slight infusion, especially given the jazz orientation of her touring band. Everyone in Suga Mama agrees that Knowles has big ears. "Beyoncé loves challenges," says Fuller. "She's intrigued by music that she hasn't heard. As jazz musicians, we have definitely planted seeds and expanded her horizons."

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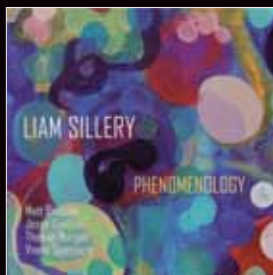
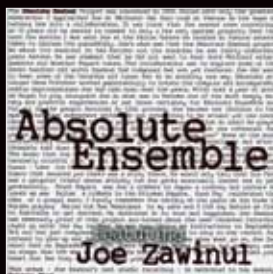
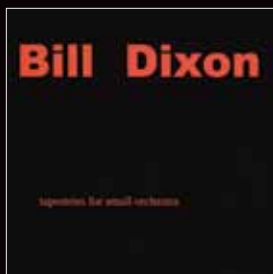


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# BEST CDS OF 2010

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**Bill Dixon**  
*Tapestries For Small Orchestra*  
FIREHOUSE12  
February

*Tapestries For Small Orchestra* is the most persuasive, comprehensive case for Bill Dixon's iconic status since *November 1981* (Soul Note) and perhaps even his 1966 landmark orchestra album, *Intents And Purposes* (RCA). ... This collection is also the best document to date of the impact Dixon has had on subsequent generations of trumpeters. ... With *Intents And Purposes* decades out of print and Dixon's substantial Soul Note catalog hitting a nadir, availability-wise, *Tapestries For Small Orchestra* may well become the definitive Bill Dixon recording for a new wave of listeners.

—Bill Shoemaker

**Miguel Zenón**  
*Esta Plena*  
MARSAIS MUSIC  
March

From the percussive blastoff of "Villa Palmeras" to the last jubilant notes of "Despedida," *Esta Plena* is a triumph. The smooth blending of Puerto Rico's plena music—with its oral tradition of "telling the news"—and contemporary jazz is the next step from Zenón's *Jibara*, introducing lyrics into the saxophonist's standard toolkit. ... What elevates *Esta Plena* is the amount of variety that Zenón introduces into this fairly tightly defined hybrid form.

—James Hale

**Absolute Ensemble**  
*Absolute Zawinul*  
SUNNYSIDE  
June

For fans of the late Joe Zawinul's late-period music, *Absolute Zawinul* will surely satisfy. Over eight tracks, it brims with the same kind of energy that typified the keyboardist/composer's effervescent style as he came to embrace so-called world music idioms more and more. Perhaps the reason why the Absolute Ensemble's *Absolute Zawinul* sounds so much like its inspiration is because he played a major role in this, his last studio recording ... a creation performed not just with [Estonian-born conductor Kristjan Järvi's ensemble] but with members of Zawinul's last Syndicate band. The music is incredibly varied, evoking musical stories from the titles alone but obviously more from the songs' various incarnations.

—John Ephland

**Sam Newsome**  
*Blue Soliloquy*  
(SELF-RELEASE)  
July

Sam Newsome's *Blue Soliloquy* is another admirable addition to the solo canon, surgically investigating the propensities of the soprano saxophone for quarter-tone colorations, mimicking Hindustani and Japanese flutes, Tuvan throat singing, Doppler effects (swaying the horn) and, with pitched slap-tonguing, the African thumb piano.

—Michael Jackson

**Liam Sillery**  
*Phenomenology*  
OA2  
October

Trumpeter Liam Sillery's *Phenomenology* is so natural that only one word can be used to describe it: perfect. Harkening back to the great outside-leaning Blue Note recordings of the mid- and late-'60s, *Phenomenology* gets better with each listen, as details and intricacies continuously come to light that were missed previously. The music's textures, rhythms and sonorities continuously morph, but not in a distracting, overbearing, or contrived way. There's freedom and a relaxed ease in *Phenomenology*'s every facet.

—Chris Robinson

**Michael Formanek**  
*The Rub And Spare Change*  
ECM  
December

What begins as a kind of modal hymn with "Twenty Three Neo"—complete with pianist Craig Taborn's mildly incessant five-note phrase, bassist/leader Michael Formanek's quiet and supportive arco playing shadowed by alto saxophonist Tim Berne's light, lyrical tone and drummer Gerald Cleaver's soft percussive flurries—serves as an understated, dramatic backdrop to all that follows. ... Indeed, *The Rub And Spare Change* works on you incrementally, to the point where you forget where you started and only know of what you're hearing at the moment.

—John Ephland

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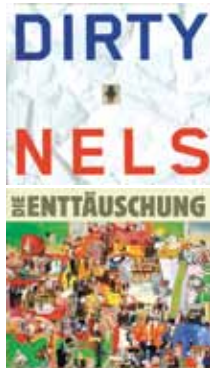
## ★★★★★ Historical



Oliver Nelson

Dolphy, Eric	<i>Out To Lunch (vinyl)</i>	Analogue Productions	MAR
Fitzgerald, Ella	<i>Twelve Nights In Hollywood</i>	Hip-O Select	MAR
Hendrix, Jimi	<i>Are You Experienced (vinyl)</i>	Legacy	SEP
Hendrix, Jimi	<i>Axis: Bold As Love (vinyl)</i>	Legacy	SEP
Hendrix, Jimi	<i>Electric Ladyland (vinyl)</i>	Legacy	SEP
Mingus, Charles	<i>Mingus, Mingus, Mingus, Mingus, Mingus (vinyl)</i>	Analogue Productions	MAR
Nelson, Oliver	<i>The Blues And The Abstract Truth (vinyl)</i>	Analogue Productions	MAR
Pepper, Art	<i>Art Pepper Meets The Rhythm Section</i>	Concord	OCT
Rollins, Sonny	<i>Way Out West</i>	Concord	OCT
Various Artists	<i>Ghana Special: Modern Highlife, Afro-Sounds &amp; Ghanaian Blues 1968-'81</i>	Soundway	JUN

## ★★★★½ New



Beck, Jeff	<i>Emotion &amp; Commotion</i>	Atco	JUL
Britos, Federico	<i>Voyage</i>	Sunnyside	NOV
Clarke, Stanley	<i>The Stanley Clarke Band</i>	Heads Up	OCT
Clarke, Terry	<i>It's About Time</i>	Blue Music Group	MAR
Cline, Nels	<i>Dirty Baby</i>	Cryptogramophone	DEC
Cline, Nels-Singers	<i>Initiate</i>	Cryptogramophone	JUN
Cortner, Jack-Big Band	<i>Sound Check</i>	Jazzedmedia	FEB
Cox, Doug/Salil Bhatt	<i>Slide To Freedom 2</i>	Northern Blues	FEB
Die Enttäuschung	<i>Die Enttäuschung</i>	Intakt	JAN
Douglas, Dave	<i>Constellations</i>	hatology	OCT
Ellis, John-Double-Wide	<i>Puppet Mischief</i>	Oblisound	JUN
Gismonti, Egberto	<i>Saudações</i>	ECM	JAN
Ideal Bread	<i>Transmit</i>	Cuneiform	AUG
Kouyate, Bassekou/Ngoni Ba	<i>I Speak Fula</i>	Next Ambiance/Sub Pop	JUN
Krivda, Ernie	<i>Nowhere Man</i>	CIMP	JUL
Lightcap, Chris-Bigmouth	<i>Deluxe</i>	Clean Feed	SEP
Marguth, Karen	<i>Karen Marguth</i>	(self-release)	DEC
Marsh, Warne/Lee Konitz	<i>Two Not One</i>	Storyville	JUL
Mehldau, Brad	<i>Highway Rider</i>	Nonesuch	JUN
Mostly Other People Do The Killing	<i>Forty Fort</i>	Hot Cup	MAY
New World Jazz Composers Octet	<i>Transitions</i>	Big & Phat Jazz Productions	NOV
Oatts, Dick	<i>Two Hearts</i>	SteepleChase	DEC
Pope, Odean	<i>Odean's List</i>	In + Out	SEP
Rova Saxophone Quartet/Nels Cline Singers	<i>The Celestial Septet</i>	New World	AUG
Stanko, Tomasz	<i>Dark Eyes</i>	ECM	MAY
Sturm, Ike	<i>Jazz Mass</i>	(self-release)	AUG
Various Artists	<i>Generation Django</i>	Dreyfus Jazz	FEB
Various Artists	<i>Fire In My Bones</i>	Tompkins Square	MAR
Vazquez, Roland	<i>The Visitor</i>	RVD	DEC
Wallace, Wayne	<i>!Bien Bien!</i>	Patois	JAN
Wertico, Paul-Mid-East/Mid-West Alliance	<i>Impressions Of A City</i>	Chicago Sessions	MAR

## ★★★★½ Historical



Brooks, Tina	<i>Back To The Tracks (vinyl)</i>	Analogue Productions	MAR
Brown, James	<i>Live At The Garden—Expanded Edition</i>	Hip-O Select	JULY
Coltrane, John	<i>World According To John Coltrane (DVD)</i>	Medici Arts	MAY
Jones, Philly Joe-Dameronia	<i>Look, Stop And Listen</i>	Uptown	APR
Lacy, Steve /Mal Waldron	<i>Let's Call This ... Esteem</i>	Silta	APR
Monk, Thelonious	<i>American Composer (DVD)</i>	Medici Arts	MAY
Pickett, Wilson	<i>Midnight Mover—The Atlantic Studio Recordings</i>	Rhino Handmade	AUG
Sinatra, Francis Albert/ Antonio Carlos Jobim	<i>Complete Reprise Recordings</i>	Concord	OCT
Washington Jr., Grover	<i>Grover Live</i>	G-Man/Lightyear	SEP

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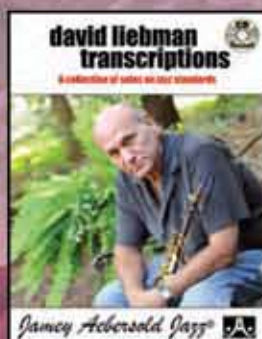
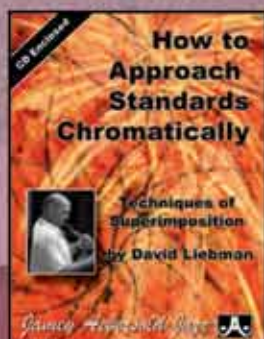
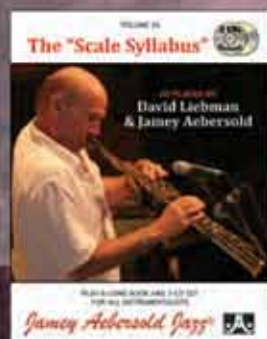
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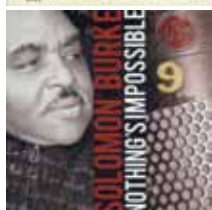
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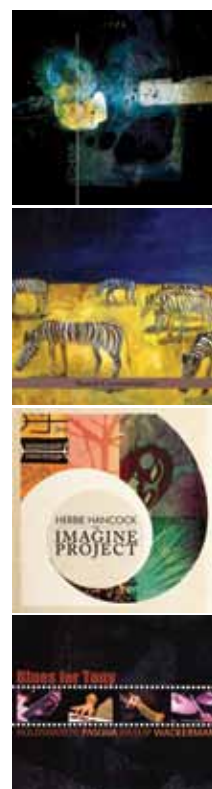
## ★★★★★ New



Abate, Greg/Alan Barnes	<i>Birds Of A Feather</i>	Woodville	JAN
Abbasi, Rez	<i>Natural Selection</i>	Sunnyside	NOV
Abercrombie, John	<i>Wait Till You See Her</i>	ECM	JUL
Adams, Arthur	<i>Stomp The Floor</i>	Delta Groove	MAR
Adasiewicz, Jason-Rolldown	<i>Varmit</i>	Cuneiform Rune	JAN
Alexander, Eric	<i>Revival Of The Fittest</i>	High Note	JAN
Alessi, Ralph	<i>Cognitive Dissonance</i>	Cam Jazz	DEC
Allen, Geri	<i>Flying Toward The Sound</i>	Motema	OCT
Allen, Geri-Timeline	<i>Live</i>	Motema	OCT
Allison, Mose	<i>The Way Of The World</i>	Anti-	APR
Anderskov, Jacob	<i>Agnostic Revelations</i>	ILK	NOV
Aslan, Pablo	<i>Tango Grill</i>	Zoho	JUL
Barth, Bruce/Steve Wilson	<i>Home: Live in Columbia, Missouri</i>	We Always Swing	OCT
Battaglia, Stefano/Michele Rabbia	<i>Pastorale</i>	ECM	OCT
Bedrock	<i>Plastic Temptation</i>	Winter & Winter	MAY
Bennink, Han	<i>Parken</i>	ILK	APR
Bernstein, Peter	<i>The Peter Bernstein Quartet</i>	Smalls Live	MAY
Blackman, Cindy	<i>Another Lifetime</i>	Four Quarters	JUN
Block, Olivia/Kyle Bruckmann	<i>Teem</i>	Either/OAR	DEC
Bonilla, Luis	<i>I Talking Now!</i>	Planet Arts/Now Jazz Consortium	JAN
Braxton, Anthony/Joelle Léandre	<i>Duo (Heidelberg Loppen) 2007</i>	Leo	AUG
Burke, Solomon	<i>Nothing's Impossible</i>	E1 Entertainment	SEP
Cervini, Ernesto/Joel Frahm	<i>Little Black Bird</i>	Anzic	AUG
Christopher, Evan	<i>The Remembering Song</i>	Arbors	DEC
Cohen, Anat	<i>Clarinetwork-Live At The Village Vanguard</i>	Anzic	FEB
Cole, Freddy	<i>Freddy Cole Sings Mr. B</i>	HighNote	DEC
Coleman, Steve-Five Elements	<i>Harvesting Semblances And Affinities</i>	Pi	NOV
Corpolongo, Rich	<i>Get Happy</i>	Delmark	OCT
Courvoisier, Sylvie/Mark Feldman	<i>To Fly To Steel</i>	Intakt	JUL
Courvoisier, Sylvie/Mark Feldman	<i>Oblivia</i>	Tzadik	OCT
Cru, Tas	<i>Grizzle n' Bone</i>	Crustee Tees	MAY
Crump, Stephan	<i>Reclamation</i>	Sunnyside	AUG
Curtis Brothers Quartet	<i>Blood•Spirit•Land•Water•Freedom</i>	Curtis Brothers Music	APR
Davis, Steve	<i>Steve Davis Quintet Featuring Larry Willis</i>	Smalls Live	MAY
Davis, Steve	<i>Images</i>	Posi-Tone	NOV
Dechter, Graham	<i>Right On Time</i>	Capri	JUL
Dollison, Julia/Kerry Marsh	<i>Vertical Voices: The Music Of Maria Schneider</i>	ArtistShare	AUG
douBt	<i>Never Pet A Burning Dog</i>	MoonJune	JUL
Drake, Hamid-Bindu	<i>Raggaeology</i>	Rogue Art	NOV
Drumm, Kevin	<i>Necro Acoustic</i>	Pica Disk	DEC
Dual Identity	<i>Dual Identity</i>	Clean Feed	JUL
Ehrlich, Marty-Rites Quartet	<i>Things Have Got To Change</i>	Clean Feed	FEB
Eisenstadt, Harris	<i>Canada Day</i>	Clean Feed	FEB
Elephant9	<i>Walk The Nile</i>	Rune Grammofon	MAY
El Frente	<i>En Homenaje A Astor Piazzolla</i>	(self-released)	MAR
ElSaffar, Amir/Hafiz Modirzadeh	<i>Radif Suite</i>	Pi	MAY
Erskine, Peter	<i>The Interlochen Concert</i>	Fuzzy Music	AUG
Escreet, John	<i>Don't Fight The Inevitable</i>	Mythology	DEC
Evans, Orrin	<i>Faith In Action</i>	Posi-Tone	JUL
Ferber, Alan	<i>Music For Nonet And Strings/Chamber Songs</i>	Sunnyside	SEP
Fernández, Agustí/Barry Guy	<i>Some Other Place</i>	Maya	APR
Flying Lotus	<i>Cosmogramma</i>	Warp	NOV
Fonseca, Roberto	<i>Akoka</i>	Justin Time	JUL
Fountain, Clarence/Sam Butler	<i>Stepping Up &amp; Stepping Out</i>	Tyscot	JAN
Frahm, Joel/Bruce Katz	<i>Project A</i>	Anzic	JUN

# ★★★★★ New

Friedlander, Erik	<i>Alchemy</i>	Hromir	SEP
Frisell, Bill	<i>Beautiful Dreamers</i>	Savoy Jazz	OCT
Fujiwara, Tomas	<i>Actionspeak</i>	482 Music	NOV
Fujiwara, Tomas/Taylor Ho Bynum	<i>Stepwise</i>	Not Two	NOV
Fuller, Curtis	<i>I Will Tell Her</i>	Capri	NOV
Garaj Mahal	<i>More Mr. Nice Guy</i>	Owl Studios	JUL
Goldberg, Aaron	<i>Home</i>	Sunnyside	JUL
Goldberg, Ben	<i>Speech Communication</i>	Tzadik	APR
Goldberg, Ben	<i>Go Home</i>	BAG	APR
Gough, Helena	<i>Mikroklimate</i>	Entr'acte	DEC
Halvorson, Mary	<i>Saturn Sings</i>	Firehouse 12	DEC
Hamilton, Jeff	<i>Symbiosis</i>	Capri	JAN
Hammond, John	<i>Rough &amp; Tough</i>	Chesky	FEB
Hancock, Herbie	<i>The Imagine Project</i>	Hancock Records	OCT
Haskins, Taylor	<i>American Dream</i>	Sunnyside	AUG
Hays, Kevin	<i>The Kevin Hays Trio</i>	Smalls Live	MAY
Hiromi-Sonicbloom	<i>Sonicbloom Live In Concert (DVD)</i>	Telarc	AUG
Hobgood, Laurence	<i>When The Heart Dances</i>	Naim Jazz	JAN
Holdsworth, Allan/Alan Pasqua/ Jimmy Haslip/Chad Wackerman	<i>Blues For Tony</i>	Moonjune	FEB
Holland, Dave-Octet	<i>Pathways</i>	Dare2	JUN
Hollenbeck, John-Claudia Quintet with Gary Versace	<i>Royal Toast</i>	Cuneiform	AUG
Holmes, Ben	<i>Ben Holmes Trio</i>	(self-released)	MAR
Howard, Owen	<i>Drum Lore</i>	Brooklyn Jazz Underground	NOV



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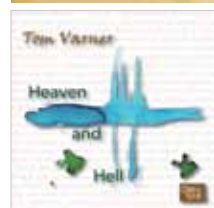
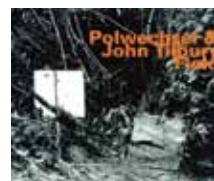
## ★★★★★ New



Hutcherson, Bobby	<i>Wise One</i>	Kind of Blue	APR
Ibrahim, Abdullah/WDR Big Band Cologne	<i>Bombella</i>	Sunnyside	JUL
Iyer, Vijay	<i>Solo</i>	ACT	NOV
Jarrett, Keith	<i>Testament: Paris/London</i>	ECM	FEB
Jarrett, Keith/Charlie Haden	<i>Jasmine</i>	ECM	AUG
Jung, Barb	<i>The Men I Love</i>	Naim	DEC
Kahiba	<i>Global Dialects</i>	Intuition	OCT
Kalb, Danny	<i>I'm Gonna Live The Life I Sing About</i>	Sojourn Records	JAN
Kenton, Stan-Alumni Band	<i>Have Band Will Travel</i>	Summit	NOV
Kihlstedt, Carla/Satoko Fujii	<i>Kuroi Kawa-Black River</i>	Tzadik	MAR
King, B.B.	<i>Live At Montreux 1993 (DVD)</i>	Eagle Eye Media	JAN
Knuffke, Kirk	<i>Amnesia Brown</i>	Clean Feed	JUL
Kole, Hilary	<i>Haunted Heart</i>	Justin Time	OCT
Koppel, Benjamin/Kenny Werner	<i>Walden</i>	Cowbell Music	APR
Lagrène, Biréli	<i>Gipsy Trio</i>	Dreyfus Jazz	FEB
Lawrence, Azar	<i>Mystic Journey</i>	Furthermore	SEP
LeDonne, Mike	<i>The Groover</i>	Savant	JUN
Lee, Ranee	<i>Lives Upstairs</i>	Justin Time	OCT
Levy, Howard	<i>Alone And Together</i>	Balkan Samba Records	MAR
Levy, Howard	<i>Tonight And Tomorrow</i>	Chicago Sessions	MAR
Lossing, Russ	<i>Personal Tonal</i>	Fresh Sound New Talent	DEC
Lucas, Gary/Dean Bowman	<i>Chase The Devil</i>	Knitting Factory	JUN
Lynch, Brian-Afro Cuban Jazz Orchestra	<i>Bolero Nights For Billie Holiday</i>	Venus	MAY
Macchia, Frank	<i>Folk Songs For Jazzers</i>	Cacophony Inc.	JUL
Mahanthappa, Rudresh/Bunky Green	<i>Apex</i>	Pi	NOV
Mainieri, Mike/Marnix Busstra Quartet	<i>Twelve Pieces</i>	NYC Records	JAN
Maker, Willem	<i>New Moon Hand</i>	Big Legal Mess	MAY
Manricks, Jacám	<i>Labyrinth</i>	Manricks Music	MAR
Martin, Rebecca	<i>When I Was Long Ago</i>	Sunnyside	DEC
McBlind, Willie	<i>Bad Thing</i>	Free Note	AUG
McKay, Nellie	<i>Normal As Blueberry Pie: A Tribute To Doris Day</i>	Verve	MAR
McNeil, John/Bill McHenry	<i>Chill Morn He Climb Jenny</i>	Sunnyside	DEC
Melford, Myra-Be Bread	<i>The Whole Tree Gone</i>	Firehouse 12	MAR
Mengis, Manuel-Gruppe 6	<i>Dulcet Crush</i>	hatOLOGY	OCT
Monder, Ben/Bill McHenry	<i>Bloom</i>	Sunnyside	AUG
Moran, Jason-Bandwagon	<i>Ten</i>	Blue Note	JUN
Morris, Joe	<i>Colorfield</i>	ESP	FEB
Motian, Paul-Trio 2000 + Two	<i>On Broadway, Vol. 5</i>	Winter & Winter	APR
Mr. B/Bob Seeley	<i>Back To Back Live (DVD)</i>	Megawave	JAN
Murphy, Paul/Larry Willis	<i>Foundations</i>	Murphy Records	APR
Musillami, Michael	<i>Old Tea</i>	Playscape	JUN
Musslewhite, Charlie	<i>The Well</i>	Alligator	DEC
Nakamura, Toshimaru	<i>Egrets</i>	Samadhisound	DEC
Negrini, Nicola-Schoolptures	<i>Materiale Umano</i>	Leo	AUG
Oh, Linda	<i>Entry</i>	Linda Oh Music	FEB
Owen, Chuck-The Jazz Surge	<i>The Comet's Tail</i>	Mama	JAN
Pereira, Marco	<i>Essence</i>	Kind of Blue	APR
Peterson, Lucky	<i>You Can Always Turn Around</i>	Dreyfus Jazz	DEC
Petrescu, Marian	<i>Thrivin': Live At The Jazz Standard</i>	Resonance	SEP
Pettis, Gail	<i>Here In The Moment</i>	OA2	AUG
Philipp, Flip/Ed Partyka	<i>Hair Of The Dog</i>	Ats Records	NOV
Pinheiro, Chico	<i>There's A Storm Inside</i>	Sunnyside	DEC
Plunge	<i>Dancing On Thin Ice</i>	Immersion Records	APR
Polwechsel/John Tilbury	<i>Field</i>	hatology	JAN
Pritsker, Gene-Sound Liberation	<i>Varieties Of Religious Experience Suite</i>	Innova	NOV

# ★★★★★ New

Radigue, Eliane	<i>Triptych</i>	Important	MAY
Sandke, Randy	<i>Jazz For Juniors</i>	Arbors	MAR
Schmitt, Dorado	<i>Family</i>	Dreyfus Jazz	FEB
Seigfried, Karl E.H.	<i>Portrait Of Jack Johnson</i>	Imaginary Chicago	DEC
Smith, Steve/George Brooks/Prasanna	<i>Raga Bop Trio</i>	Abstract Logix	OCT
Solla, Emilio-Tango Jazz Conspiracy	<i>Bien Sur!</i>	Fresh Sound World Jazz	AUG
Sosa, Omar/NDR Big Band	<i>Ceremony</i>	Ota Records	JUL
Speak Easy	<i>Backchats</i>	Creative Sources	MAY
Spector, Dave	<i>Spectified</i>	Fret 12	DEC
Stangl, Burkhard/Kai Fagaschinski	<i>Musik: Ein Porträt In Sehnsucht</i>	Erstwhile	MAY
Taylor, Otis	<i>Clovis People, Vol. 3</i>	Telarc	JUL
Tepfer, Dan/Lee Konitz	<i>Duos With Lee</i>	Sunnyside	JAN
Tibbetts, Steve	<i>Natural Causes</i>	ECM	NOV
Tinariwen	<i>Imidiwa-Companions</i>	World Village	FEB
Tin Hat	<i>Foreign Legion</i>	BAG	OCT
Tolling, Mads	<i>The Playmaker</i>	Madsman	MAR
Toure, Samba	<i>Songhai Blues: Homage To Ali Farka Toure</i>	Riverboat	FEB
Towner, Ralph/Paolo Fresu	<i>Chiaroscuro</i>	ECM	AUG
Turre, Steve	<i>Delicious And Delightful</i>	High Note	NOV
Vaché, Warren/John Allred	<i>Top Shelf</i>	Arbors	NOV
Vahdat, Mahsa/Mighty Sam McClain	<i>Scent Of Reunion</i>	Kirkelig Kulturveksted	FEB
Various Artists	<i>Coming Together</i>	Inarhyme	FEB
Varner, Tom	<i>Heaven And Hell</i>	Omnitone	FEB



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## ★★★★★ New



Walden, Myron	<i>To Feel</i>	Demi Sound	SEP
Walden, Myron	<i>What We Share</i>	Demi Sound	SEP
Wallumrød, Christian	<i>Fabula Suite Lugano</i>	ECM	APR
Ward, Greg—Fitted Shards	<i>South Side Story</i>	19/8	DEC
Ware, David S.	<i>Saturnian (Solo Saxophones, Volume 1)</i>	AUM Fidelity	JUL
Weiss, David—Point of Departure	<i>Snuck In</i>	Sunnyside	SEP
Weiss, Mort	<i>Raising The Bar</i>	SMS Jazz	JUL
White, Chip	<i>More Dedications</i>	Dark Colors	NOV
Wilson, Reuben	<i>Azure Te</i>	18th & Vine	JUN
Wilson, Tony	<i>The People Look Like Flowers At Last</i>	Drip Audio	MAY
Yanofsky, Nikki	<i>Nikki</i>	Decca	JUN
Yoshida, Mika	<i>Marimba Madness (DVD)</i>	Big Round Records	AUG

## ★★★★★ Historical



Asmussen, Svend	<i>The Extraordinary Life And Times Of A Jazz Legend (DVD)</i>	Shanachie	OCT
Astatke, Mulatu	<i>New York—Addis—London: The Story Of Ehtio Jazz 1965–1975</i>	Strut	JUN
Orchestra Baobab	<i>La Belle Epoque</i>	Syllart	JUN
Basie, Count	<i>Swing The Blues (DVD)</i>	Medici Arts	MAY
Big Star	<i>Keep An Eye On The Sky</i>	Rhino	JAN
Carter, John/Bobby Bradford	<i>The Complete Revelation Sessions</i>	Mosaic	DEC
Cole, Nat	<i>Riffin'</i>	Hip-O Select	SEP

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# ★★★★★ Historical

Coltrane, John	<i>Coltrane</i>	A-21	MAR
Crosby, Bing	<i>The Bing Crosby CBS Radio Recordings (1954-'56)</i>	Mosaic	JUN
Dorham, Kenny	<i>'Round About Midnight At The Café Bohemia</i>	Analogue Productions	MAR
Holiday, Billie	<i>Lady Day: The Many Faces Of Billie Holiday (DVD)</i>	Medici Arts	MAY
Hot Tuna	<i>Live At New Orleans House Berkeley, CA 09/69</i>	Collector's Choice	OCT
Jackson, John	<i>Rappahannock Blues</i>	Smithsonian Folkways	OCT
Jobim, Antonio Carlos	<i>Tom Jobim: Brazil's Ambassador Of Song (DVD)</i>	DRG	OCT
Kenton, Stan	<i>This Is An Orchestra</i>	Tantara	NOV
Makiadi, Franco Luambo	<i>Francophonie Vol. 2</i>	Sterns	JUN
Marsh, Warne/Red Mitchell	<i>Big Two</i>	Storyville	JUL
New York Art Quartet	<i>Old Stuff</i>	Cuneiform	NOV
Orchestre Poly-Rythmo de Cotonou	<i>Echos Hypnotiques</i>	Analog Africa	JUN
Parker, Charlie	<i>Celebrating Bird: The Triumph Of Charlie Parker (DVD)</i>	Medici Arts	MAY
Rankin, Kenny	<i>Silver Morning</i>	Sly Dog	SEP
Simmons, Sonny	<i>Staying On The Watch</i>	ESP	NOV
Sun Ra	<i>College Tour Volume One: The Complete Nothing Is ...</i>	ESP	NOV
Various Artists	<i>Africa Boogaloo: The Latinization Of West Africa</i>	Honest Jon's	JUN
Various Artists	<i>Alan Lomax In Haiti</i>	Harte Recordings	APR
Various Artists	<i>Bluesland (DVD)</i>	Medici Arts	MAY
Various Artists	<i>How Sweet It Was: The Sights And Sounds Of Gospel's Golden Age</i>	Shanachie	NOV
Vaughan, Stevie Ray	<i>Couldn't Stand The Weather</i>	Epic/Legacy	DEC
Webster, Ben	<i>Tenor Sax Legend, Live And Intimate (DVD)</i>	Shanachie	OCT
Young, Neil	<i>Archives Vol. 1 (1963-1972)</i>	Reprise	FEB



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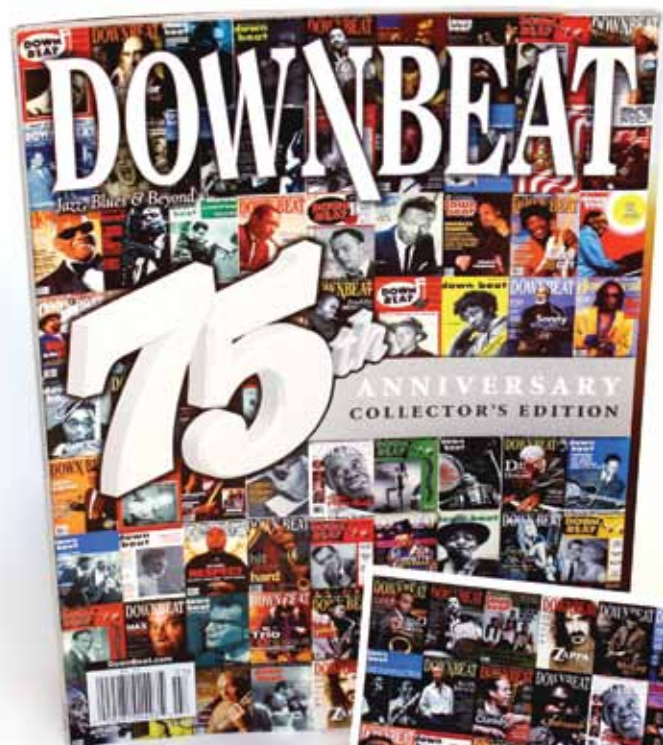




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# JAZZ SCHOOL

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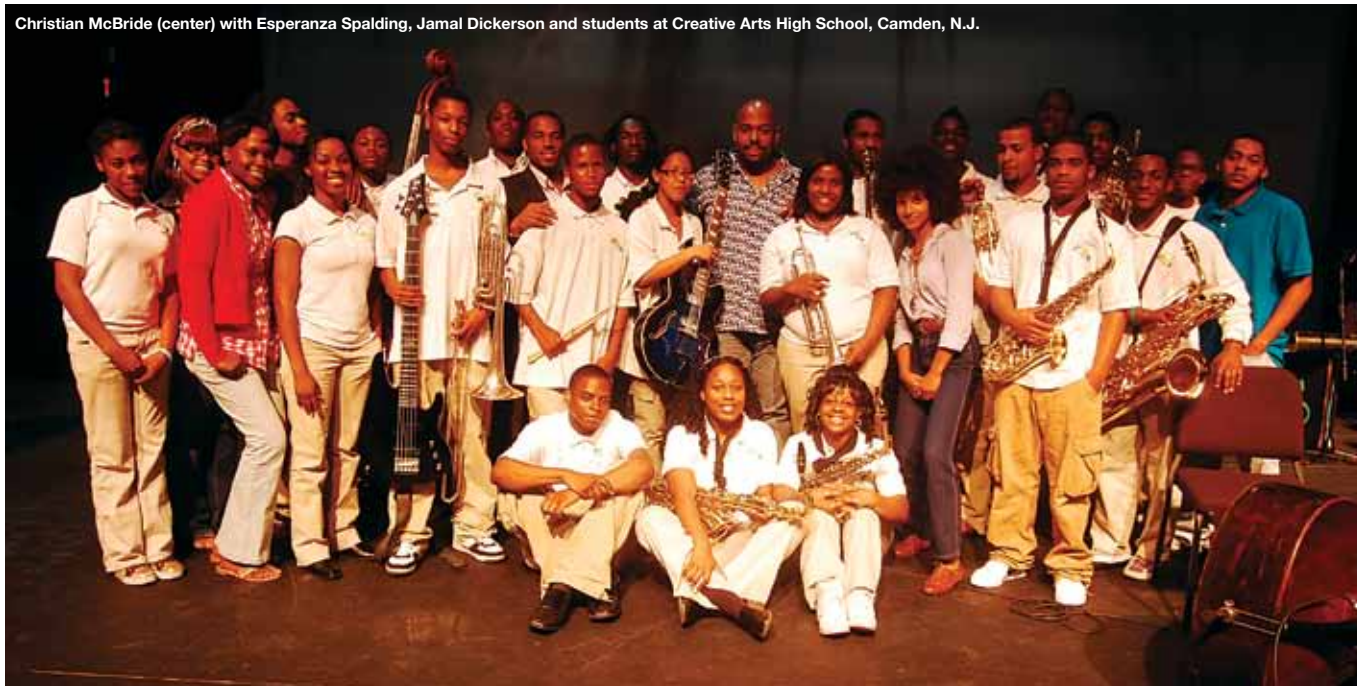
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Christian McBride (center) with Esperanza Spalding, Jamal Dickerson and students at Creative Arts High School, Camden, N.J.



# Obstacles Overcome

## *Urban Challenges Are Key To Jazz Program's Success at Creative Arts High School in Camden, N.J.*

By Shaun Brady

**P**icture a public school teacher at the end of the day, and the image that comes to mind is one of harried exhaustion, chalk-stained fingers grasping for another cigarette in the sanctuary of the teacher's lounge.

But at 3:30 in the afternoon on a chilly early-November Wednesday, Jamal Dickerson rounded the corners of Creative Arts High School in Camden, N.J., at a brisk pace, scatting Charlie Parker's "Ornithology" in the echoing hallways.

Dickerson, or "Mr. D," as everyone here calls him, maintained that energy through a two-hour after-school practice session with a dozen students involved in his extracurricular jazz program. He ping-ponged between the group and his CD player, doling out gentle chiding for those who made mistakes and high fives for those who recognized a problem. Half an hour in, and the group had barely played past the first two notes of Dexter Gordon's "The Jumpin' Blues," as Dickerson stressed the importance of feeling each note equally.

"When the music feels like it's going somewhere," he told them, "it feels alive."

The same could be said for the students in Dickerson's program. Camden is not a place where many young people ever feel like they're going somewhere. The city is consistently ranked among the nation's 10 most dangerous, taking the top spot more than once in the past 10 years. Roughly a third of its population lives below the poverty line, the unemployment rate regularly tops the national average and residents are faced with one of the country's highest crime rates.

But Dickerson, who grew up in Camden, refuses to see the city's considerable negatives as obstacles to his success with his students. "We cry about it sometimes," he admitted, "but the irony of it is that the same thing that we complain about is one of the key factors to our success. These kids are like, 'If you can help me, help me because I need help.' So when you have that kind of kid who's passionate about something, they see the results and say, 'Wow, I'm good at this. I want to be great at it.'"

What Dickerson won't say on his own behalf, but becomes evident upon speaking to his students and his fellow faculty members, is that Mr. D is in large part responsible for instilling that passion in his students.

"He works miracles with these kids," said Patricio Acevedo, who teaches music theory at Creative Arts. "They live in extremely dangerous conditions in this city, with a lot of drugs and guns around, things that we didn't see when we were kids. It affects them daily, and they bring that world into the life of the school. But the jazz program gives them something to look forward to, so those aspects dissipate a little bit."

Lawrence Galloway, a trombonist in his senior year, is one of the program's current success stories. He was named Outstanding Soloist at Berklee College of Music's 2010 High School Jazz Festival and was chosen as part of an All-State Jazz Ensemble to perform at the New Jersey Education Association's annual convention in Atlantic City. Asked about the importance of a program like Dickerson's in a place like Camden, Galloway answered in stark terms.

"The program definitely saves lives," he said. "Many of the students were on the wrong track before entering the program but then quit all that stuff, and the next thing you know they're getting full scholarships to great universities and colleges across the country." He referred to Dickerson as "a great role model. Being in the inner city, a lot of the students don't grow up with their fathers, so he's a father figure for a lot of us."

Dickerson, 34, was introduced to the trumpet through the Camden public schools and studied music education at Morgan State University in Baltimore, Md., before returning to his hometown in 2000 to teach at the elementary school level. Brought on at Creative Arts two years later as instrumental music teacher and director of bands, he found unmotivated students engaged in little beyond class work. He instituted the extracurricular jazz program, which consists of three small groups for students at different skill levels, and a big band that combines them all.

"When I first got here, the kids didn't really have any interest," Dickerson recalled. "I grew up in the same neighborhoods that they did, and I knew how jazz used to put me to sleep. So I set in place a structure that supported the music that they listen to, because jazz is related in a lot of ways to that music. When they listen to hip-hop and r&b it's just a cultural thing, but when they start listening to jazz, it's a little more sophisticated. At that point, they're jumping across boundaries; once we get them to appreciate jazz, then they can appreciate classical or any type of music."

Some 150–160 students attend Creative Arts each year, with roughly 35–40 in the music program. The music faculty consists of three teachers: Dickerson, Acevedo and vocal instructor Suzette Ortiz. But when Dickerson moved to the high school level, he left behind his best friend and fellow trumpet player, Hassan Sabree, who continued to teach in the elementary and middle schools, and was later joined by Dickerson's younger brother, saxophonist Nasir. Those two now work almost as a feeder system for Dickerson's program, coordinating with him and encouraging their most dedicated students to attend Creative Arts.

"We call it vertical alignment," Dickerson explained. "They start in the elementary and middle schools, taking the kids' r&b and hip-hop songs and doing what musicians used to do, which is take a popular song, put chords to it, play the melody and improv to it. Then we slowly wean them into hardcore jazz. So the three of us talk a lot about what it is that we're looking for, what we need to do, and what we think the kids at this age should be able to do."

Dickerson continues to arrange hip-hop and r&b tunes for the school's marching band—he flinched at the suggestive lyrics of Rihanna's "Rude Boy," a recent project—while guiding them through dissections of Charlie Parker, Art Blakey, or Lee Morgan tunes during jazz band rehearsals.

"Any teacher, professor, coach who's working with youth," he advised, "has to find a way to make whatever information we're disseminating relevant to their everyday life. Today, kids are dealing with the information highway, Facebook, Twitter—they're moving so fast, if what you've got to say is not relevant, they're done with you. It's easy for me to just say, 'This guy played this song, this is how he did it, now you try to do it.' But you really need to take time to figure out where these kids are coming from and make it mean something to them."


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His success is demonstrated by the trophy case full of awards that greets visitors to the school. Dickerson himself was awarded the Milken Family Foundation National Educator Award in 2007. His students have gone on to study at Berklee and Oberlin Conservatory and tour with Stevie Wonder and De La Soul, while the Creative Arts Jazz Band has shared the stage with luminaries like Christian McBride and Esperanza Spalding.

Dickerson's students invariably reciprocated his dedication to them. Senior Amrra Mitchell, a piano student who was unfamiliar with any jazz other than the smooth variety before her freshman year, said, "He makes us feel like we're blessed regardless of the obstacles we have to overcome."

More than one student recalled Mr. D paying for private lessons out of his own pocket when their parents couldn't afford them. While the school's relatively meager budget is exemplified by that rehearsal room, a dozen students fighting for space with instruments, music stands, and equipment in a space that would feel tight for a math class, Dickerson says that his major hurdle isn't money so much as his students' home lives.

"A large number of their parents aren't educated past high school," he sighed. "Some of them haven't traveled outside the boundaries of Camden—they consider Philadelphia or Atlantic City really going somewhere. I get used to operating without much of a budget, but one of the

Jamal Dickerson (right) and the Creative Arts Jazz Band



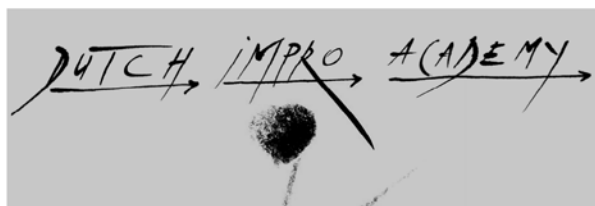
things I bump into is getting parents to take music seriously. To them, it's just an extracurricular; it's not important. I try to impress upon them the fact that the children in this community need something that they can grab onto. If they're not grabbing onto academics, the answer is not to take music from them. A lot of times our parents don't understand that it's not punishment their children need, but reinforcement."

Back in the classroom, Dickerson is adept at lending that reinforcement, projecting an infectious enthusiasm that enralls his students. At the end of the two-hour rehearsal, he finally reached the end of the five-and-a-half-minute "Jumpin' Blues," leaping from his seat as Gordon completed his solo.

"If I was an English teacher, I'd make you listen to this!" he yelled, calling the solo a "perfect essay" at the end of which Gordon restated his thesis. The track, he explained, was a summation of the lessons he'd been teaching.

Ultimately, Dickerson insisted, the program is less about music than it is about instilling values that will allow these students to overcome their situations. "The overall goal is for me to bring out the inner champion in each one of them," he said, gesturing toward a chain-link fence behind the school. "Sometimes kids feel like they're fenced in and there's no way to get across it. So we just try to pull the fence down and help them get over it. Bottom line, we're trying to teach them about life and how to be a better person."

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## Juilliard's Performance-Based Jazz Studies Program Turns 10

On a recent day October, the sloping lawn outside the office of Juilliard Jazz Studies Artistic Director Carl Allen was speckled with students sunning themselves. But with less than a week to go before their season's opening concert with John Clayton, the program's big band was soldiering through a three-hour rehearsal.

"What's 'Evidence' look like, trumpets?" Assistant Conductor and Juilliard Jazz alum Brandon Lee asked.

"Better than 'Eternal Triangle,'" mumbled a trumpet player from the back row. Lee offered some "nit picky" notes, and a student suggested a change to the way the horns shift from unison to harmony. Six days later, the same students, now in suits and under Clayton's direction, closed a near-perfect concert with the same tune that had given them so much trouble days before.

As the school's Institute For Jazz Studies enters its 10th anniversary, it's found a rhythm for its focus on performance. Students like these are churning out memorable, professional-quality concerts each month, thanks to Juilliard's formula for teaching students to become not only great artists, but employable players.



"Our students are performing all of the time," said the program's executive director, Laurie Carter, adding that the program strives "to replicate the tradition of younger musicians learning from older musicians" on the bandstand.

"When I was in school, a lot of the greats that I grew up reading about and listening to were still alive," Allen said. "It's incumbent on me and other players of my generation to be the conduit for those guys." As such, the program boasts a litany of marquee names on its faculty and as guest artists or conductors, including Allen and Ron Carter. Students in all three degree programs—undergrad,

artist's diploma and master's—tour internationally, all while maintaining full course loads.

After completing the artist's diploma and the master's program at Juilliard Jazz, trombonist James Burton started his own jazz program at Snow College, where he teaches a wide variety of courses and conducts two big bands. "There is no college music program quite like Juilliard," he says. "It's not college. Although you're college age, it is truly a pre-professional program."

In some ways the program is still finding its footing. Funding remains a major challenge, especially given that all of the jazz students receive scholarship assistance. The implementation of the curriculum has also been somewhat in flux since the beginning.

Looking ahead, Allen believes that once people understand his team's goals, they'll see it was worth the wait.

"I'm glad to see that finally there's some jazz in places [like Juilliard], because jazz deserves to be represented on a high level," said Juilliard faculty member Kenny Washington. "At the end of the day, we all care about getting players out here to keep this music going." —Jennifer Odell

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# Making Composition Central To Your Career

**T**rumpeter Dave Douglas gave a clinic for students at Elmhurst (Ill.) College last October, addressing everything from ensemble interaction to some of the career choices he's had to make in order to succeed as a performer and composer. After playing a few tunes with a local rhythm section, Douglas spoke to his young audience, answered several of their questions and encouraged everyone to strive for consistency as jazz artists.

Douglas came across as sincere, honest and eager to share the wisdom he's gained over the course of his career as a sideman, bandleader and composer. Here's what he said that day, with a little prompting from his audience of about 50 curious students and faculty:

**I**t wasn't easy for me to make a career, to be able to do what I do. I've had a lot of opportunities, but I've also worked very hard from a young age to be able to go out and be a creative artist, and make a living and have a family and be on the road. I've had a record label [Greenleaf Music] running on six years.

I do a lot of composing, and when it comes to deciding how much to put on the page versus how much to simply leave to the musicians to decide, I try to do it a little bit differently with every composition. The famous story of the record *Kind Of Blue* is that there were a couple of little scratches on a cocktail napkin and they came in and made this masterpiece. I wasn't there, so I don't really know what happened. I think that is a great way to do it, but I've also seen people do that and have it sort of fall flat. I think it's up to each composer/bandleader to decide how much they want to put on the page.

I will say that growing up I listened to straight-ahead jazz. I wanted to be a Jazz Messenger. That

was my thing. I was into Woody Shaw, Miles Davis (all the different periods) and Freddie Hubbard. And I listened to a lot of tenor players: I was really into Wayne Shorter, Dexter Gordon and John Coltrane. That influenced my playing to a great degree, transcribing those guys. I as a composer began by writing AABA song forms, some blues, "Rhythm" changes, all the basics that come out of that language of jazz. I never got to play with Art Blakey and the Jazz Messengers, but I did get to play with Horace Silver for a good long while in the '80s.

So I went through that sideman process, and after that was over I got back to New York and sort of had no work. It was the point I realized if I'm going to have a career I'm going to have to sort of create it myself. I'm gonna have sideman gigs but I also have to figure out how to be an effective composer to create music that my friends would want to play with me if I had a gig somewhere. I got a gig somewhere, and luckily I had done a little bit of work, so I had some tunes to play on the gig with my friends. However, I ran into this wall about composition, and the wall was, Do I want to just get up and play the melody and have a long series of solos and then play the melody again at the end, which is the classic great jam session form in which we learn jazz? I didn't want to throw that away, but I felt like as a composer I was looking for something more. I was looking for ways to change up, to flip the script, to get up and play something that was more exciting for me and my friends, that we could dig into but wasn't tune after tune in the same form. So I started to look at all of these elements of music as a discreet basis from which to be a better composer.

So instead of seeing the bassline, the melody, the rhythm, the timbre, the density as separate things, I just started writing and then examined how I was dealing with form. Am I creating something with some variety in an interesting way, or am I looking for a form that's more recognizable for this particular piece? How am I dealing with melody, how am I dealing with phrasing, how am I dealing with harmony? Instead of writing F7, I can try to write with three melodies and spell F7, so I can have that as an option, too, harmonically. Density: how much is going on at one time, and how much space is there? Thinking about leaving vamps and leaving open space, interludes. The big idea of form: where does the piece start and where does it end? Within the piece, when you've got a standard there's usually a 32-bar sequence that gets repeated over and over again, and all the events in the piece happen at the beginning or ending of those 32-bar cycles

by common consensus.

So I was thinking, how could I take this idea of form and transform it, find a new way to work with that? What if the people in the band didn't always overlap on those 32 bars? What if two people were playing at a time? What if the piece began in one key and ended in another key? What if the tempo didn't have to stay the same the whole way through? What if people were soloing on different bits of the material? And things like, What if I wrote a melody with some changes, but I had the person solo on it before the listener had heard the melody? In other words, the piece opens and someone is soloing, and only much later in the piece—say 8 minutes later—do you actually hear the melody with the changes. As a listener, I would want to hear it again, and say, Well, how did they put that together? When I hear great composers like Bill Evans or Charles Mingus or Duke Ellington or Wayne Shorter or Thelonious Monk, my mind is always going, How did they get to that? And a lot of the questions are, How much was on paper that day? As a composer, considering all of those variables is the way I decide how much I'm going to put on paper. Sometimes nothing, sometimes everything. And it depends on who you're writing for. I think that because we're all composing for improvisers, sometimes there's an overlooked element of the music, which is the communities—both the community of players and the community of the audience. Who am I playing this music for, and how much do I want to hand it to them on a silver platter? And, realistically, how much am I willing to tolerate in terms of not being accepted because they don't get it?

**I** feel like as a composer that it has been really important to take everything that's going on around me and consider that as part of what I want to write. I write a certain way this week because there's a big election next week. I'm not writing a piece saying, "This is dedicated to the Tea Party." But I feel like as a composer, you should get into a daily practice of writing just like you practice your instrument every day. It's the same thing, it's a muscle, and you just continue to work on it. The more you do that day after day, the more it becomes part of your life. And I don't think you can separate it. I would not say that I think about the music business in the sense of, let me write something a lot like Kenny G's "Songbird" so I can make a lot of money. But I am saying I'm a working musician, I don't exist in a vacuum, I play for audiences all around the world and I sell records to people who like music. And I feel like, if I please myself and I please the





musicians who I play with, then there's a good chance that I'm also going to reach out to something universal that someone would want.

If I have a musical idea that I'm finding is really obscure, hard for me to hear, I make it twice as hard for myself to write that. I need to be really convinced if it's going to be something really obscure, so I work extra hard to make sure that's really what I mean. I've had situations where I write something unusual or odd, and somebody in the band will say, "You know, if it was just a 4/4 bar it would feel so much better." And then

I feel like at that point resistance is futile. Because if it feels better, that's probably what you meant. And I think that I got into a philosophical trip where I was trying to do this thing that was a little weird, and I think philosophy has no place in a piece of music; it has to feel good. Philosophy is great going in, but when the rubber meets the road, I think then you have to say, you know what, it was just an idea, let it go.

I feel lucky because in my junior year of high school I spent a year in Barcelona, Spain, and

ran into these young guys my age who were playing jazz. They were really into Weather Report, the Jazz Messengers and what was happening on the scene at the time. And because I was American, they assumed that I knew everything there was to know about jazz. So I learned a lot from them. And that was when I played my first gig—it was *Real Book* tunes, Jobim tunes, anything in the *Real Book* we would play, and we would try to go alphabetically: "A Call For All Demons" by Sun Ra, then the next one. And, in a way, because I was overseas I learned more about my own culture than I was learning at my high school. I came back having been a professional on the bandstand.

I graduated high school and went on straight to Berklee. I practiced all the time, and I wasn't very good. I had a lot of creative ideas, but my chops as a trumpet player were bad. It didn't come naturally to me. I had already been playing for years at that point, but the high range. ... I had this teacher at Berklee, at the end of the year he said to me, "Maybe you should quit trumpet and consider something else." It made me so angry. So summer of '82 I dropped out of Berklee, and I spent the whole summer breaking into the music building and practicing all day. It was the worst summer of my life. I worked at Wendy's to make money. It was this horrible time. And there were days when I wanted to throw the trumpet against the wall, nothing was happening, and it was really frustrating for me. And I transferred to New England Conservatory, just up the road from Boston. John McNeil was teaching there, and he introduced me to Carmine Caruso, this legendary brass guru. And within two or three months of studying with Carmine, my chops started coming together and I started becoming a trumpet player. I moved to New York in '84 to study with Carmine, went to NYU to finish an undergrad liberal arts degree, and played in the street with bands, five days a week, playing a two-hour lunch set and a two-hour rush-hour set, to make money. It was usually quintets or sextets. Vincent Herring was the guy I played with the most in the street, and there were lots of other great players. We had a gas-powered generator. There was electricity, so guitar and bass were actually playing through amps, with drums and cymbals, out on the street. If that's not going to get your chops together, nothing will. I recommend it: Go play outside for a while. It's another level of projection. We did that for a couple of years, even in the winter, with overcoats and gloves.

I got out of NYU and was playing around town with some straightahead jazz groups but also some more experimental groups, the so-called downtown scene. I would go to the jam session at the Blue Note, and it was only "Cherokee," straight up and down the line. And then I would go to a session at Roullette, and it was only noise and sound—you couldn't play a melody or harmony or a rhythm; it was frowned upon. And I enjoyed both. I loved experimen-

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tal music, and I loved straightahead jazz, and I liked playing with rock groups. So I think that was the point where, to me, the whole thing became how do I find a synthesis between all these things I liked. And I gravitated toward a bunch of players and started forming some eclectic groups to play each other's original music. That was sort of the genesis of my career as a composer and recording artist. I was a sideman with Don Byron, Horace Silver, Tim Berne. Vincent Herring had a quintet I was in for a few years. But I was also writing and playing in these collaborative groups.

It's very important to find people that you want to play with who want to play with you who are writing music. Get together at least once a week to read each other's music and hold workshop sessions of original music. I was in a few different bands who were doing that, so I was writing all the time, and writing for specific players and getting together and reading their work and playing my own work. This started in 1987 or '88 up until I made my first record as a leader in 1993.

I was offered record dates to go and play with someone else's rhythm section and just record some standards, and I turned that down because it wasn't interesting to me. I felt like that's not who I am. If I was going to make my first record, I wanted it to be really representative of what I am.

**H**ow did I get my first record deal? I sent tapes all over the world to all kinds of people, and I got turned down more times than I can remember. The thing to remember is, don't take rejection as a sign that you should quit. Take it as a sign that you should work harder. It's not going to all come at once. When you get your first record deal, that's when you have to start working even harder to get yourself out, book yourself.

My first tour of Europe I booked myself from my apartment in Brooklyn. I got up at 5 every morning to call promoters in Europe. This was before e-mail—fax was the big technology. I had a trio of trumpet, guitar and drums called Tiny Bell Trio. And I decided I wanted to get us on the road, so I called every promoter I knew. And since I had been touring as a sideman, I had met a lot of promoters and had been to a lot of venues. I just worked and worked and worked and I eventually came up with 12 gigs in Europe. We went over for two-and-a-half weeks and did these gigs, and at the last gig a guy came up to me and said, "Where did you guys come from? What are you doing here?" I told him I booked the entire trip from New York. "You did that by yourself?" He gave me his card, and it turned out he was a booking agent. And so that's how relationships start, you never know where it's going to lead.

I would also say that all those years of rejection, I just kept writing, so when I finally got the opportunity to record, I had probably six records worth of material with four different bands. So never stop, always continue writing, building it

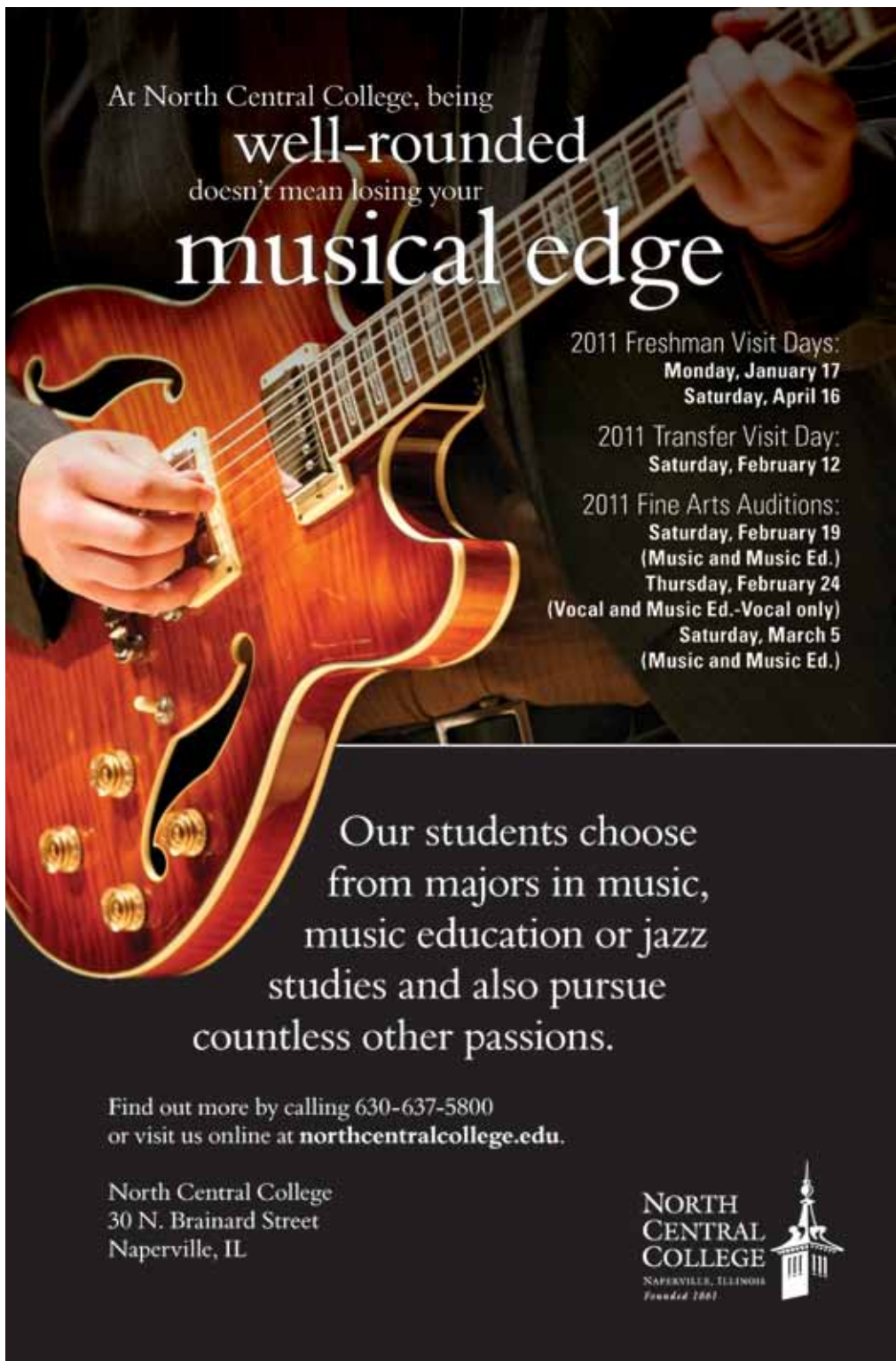
up. If a thing is good enough you'll come back to it and do it again, and if it's not, then maybe it's better off just sitting on the desk. Always continue to write, and follow what you think is important about music. Even today when I have to make a decision and it's a hard decision, I step back and say, how is this serving the music? What is this adding to my relationship with the work? And usually an answer comes.

I was with RCA for about six years. When they got bought by Sony, my options were either to buy Sony or start my own label. I felt at that

time, and this was before the Internet was so big in music, that the way things were going, artists need to be in charge of their own output, their own recordings. I feel like I'm more in touch with people all around the world who listen to my music now than I ever was when I was with RCA. Check me out online and say hello—the e-mails go straight to me.

**DB**

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Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.



# Source Uncovered for Martin Luther King Jr. Jazz Quote

By Bruce Jackson and David Demsey

It is surprising that there is only one known instance when Dr. Martin Luther King, perhaps the most galvanizing figure in African American culture, publicly addressed the subject of jazz. But, in that one quote, as only King could accomplish, his statement manages to describe the origins and development, the beauty and majesty of jazz—and put to rest the seemingly endless debate about its “ownership”—all in only 333 words. Indeed, the quote itself can be thought of as the music itself: King’s perfect one-chorus solo on the changes of “What Is Jazz?”

Martin Luther King

schrieb den  
Berliner Jazztagen 1964  
das folgende Geleitwort

God had wrought many things out of oppression. He has endowed his creatures with the capacity to create, and from this capacity have flowed the sweet songs of sorrow and of joy that have allowed man to cope with his environment in many situations. Jazz speaks of life. The blues tell the stories of life's difficulties, and if you will think for a moment, you will realize that they take the harshest realities of life and put them into music only to come out with some new hope or sense of triumph. This is triumphant music. Modern Jazz has continued in this tradition, singing the songs of more complicated urban existence. When life itself offers no order and meaning, the musician

creates an order and meaning from the sounds of earth which flow through his instrument. It is no wonder that so much of the search for identity among American Negroes was championed by jazz musicians. Long before the modern essayists and scholars wrote of 'racial identity' as a problem for a multi-racial world, musicians were returning to their roots to affirm that which was stirring within their souls. Much of the power of our Freedom Movement in the United States has come from this music. It has strengthened us with its powerful rhythms when courage began to fail. It has calmed us with its rich harmonies when spirits began to lag.

This has been true from the early days of the simple Negro Spiritual. And now, Jazz is exported to the world. For in the particular struggle of the Negro in America there is something akin to the universal struggle of modern man. Everybody has the blues. Everybody longs for meaning. Everybody needs to love and be loved. Everybody needs to clap hands and be happy. Everybody longs for Faith. In music, especially that broad category called Jazz, there is a stepping stone toward all of these.

*Martin Luther King Jr.*

But, there has always been a problem: the quote's origin. The passage is cited in countless print, broadcast media and online sources as being from King's "opening speech at the 1964 Berlin Jazz Festival." If this were true, though, why is there no audio record of this speech? How could one of history's great orators have not been recorded at this auspicious occasion? After all, this was the inaugural production of what would become a world-renowned festival. That first year was themed "The Negro in the Modern World" and featured an incredible array of names including Miles Davis' quintet, George Russell, Coleman Hawkins, Roland Kirk, Dave Brubeck, Joe Turner and Sister Rosetta Tharpe. With many of these performances immortalized on recordings, it makes no sense that nobody bothered to record King. Indeed, the current Berlin JazzFest staff verifies King's published chronologies: Although he was actually in Europe that month and in Berlin earlier that September to meet with German statesman Willy Brandt, and he would return to Europe in December to accept the 1964 Nobel Peace Prize that was announced in October, he never actually attended any part of that inaugural festival Sept. 24-27, 1964, and there was no "opening speech."

After a number of years of research and inquiries, the quote's source resurfaced by chance a little over a year ago, when the web site OpenPR.com included a notice that Atlanta auction house Gallery 63 was offering a small group of King papers for sale. Those papers included a letter sent to King from a representative of the Berlin Jazz Festival dated July 29, 1964. The web site quotes the letter to King, asking if he could "find a few minutes in your busy day to write a few paragraphs which could serve as a foreword in the program book." The letter also includes King's handwritten note to himself across the top of the page: "write foreword." In this piece, he would be addressing the worldwide audience that would attend this star-studded inaugural festival.

Although the King family's attorneys stopped the sale and this letter has not surfaced since, an original image of that 1964 Berlin Jazz Festival program book was obtained through the courtesy of Ihno von Hasselt, production manager of JazzFest Berlin, with the assistance of saxophonist and William Paterson jazz alumnus Dr. Brian Levy.

The quote is reproduced here, with Berlin JazzFest's permission, exactly as it appeared on Page 3 of the 38-page booklet. That page includes King's quote in its entirety. May his words be posted on countless walls and bulletin boards; King has truly made us proud to be part of the worldwide jazz community. **DB**

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DAVID DEMSEY IS A SAXOPHONIST AND AUTHOR, COORDINATOR OF JAZZ STUDIES AND CURATOR OF THE LIVING JAZZ ARCHIVE AT WILLIAM PATERSON UNIVERSITY.

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# Paraphrasing The Greats

I believe that paraphrasing is one of the most valuable techniques a musician can use to develop a unique playing style, and yet many developing players have never done any paraphrasing at all.

To practice paraphrasing as I'm going to describe it, we'll learn small parts (one phrase or motif at a time) from your favorite players' recorded solos and then play those phrases over and over, slowly changing one or two things on each repetition. The goal is to take the phrases that you love and make them your own so that these phrases act as inspiration for new ideas.

The two phrases we'll be working with are from Charlie Parker's classic solo on "Billie's Bounce," which can be heard on the album *Charlie "Bird" Parker, The Complete Savoy And Dial Master Takes*.

## Example 1

Listen to the simple two-bar phrase that comes at the end of Parker's solo.

It sounds so good because of Bird's phrasing, time, articulation and sound; in other words, it's not just what he played but how he played it. Try and sound as close to the original line as possible. For help transcribing onto paper, you might want to use a software program that allows you to slow the music down without changing pitch. I use one called Transcribe from seventhstring.com.

I'd like you to do two things before we start the actual paraphrasing:

- 1) Practice the original line over and over until you sound as close as you can to Charlie Parker.
- 2) Identify all the components that make this line interesting to you, e.g., rhythm, embellishments, placement of chord tones, etc.

Grace notes and bending are two embellishments that add a lot of character to this simple line.

Once you can play the original line, you can play through my variations, which show the slow paraphrasing process. With each repetition you should change as little as possible, and any time you don't feel good about a line you can keep playing it until you have it down or you decide to discard it. I believe when possible that it's a good idea to play your paraphrasing ideas with a play-along accompaniment.

Once you have a handle on the paraphrasing process I encourage you to write down your own variations of the original idea. Change things very slowly, but don't be afraid to come up with fantastic, brilliant ideas. I advocate studying the history of jazz, not to mimic it but to let the past inspire you to do something new. Create, don't imitate.

Example 1

Example 1 shows a musical score in 4/4 time. The first staff is the original line: F7, F7, F7, F7. The second staff is the first paraphrased line, starting with a grace note and a bend. The third staff is the second paraphrased line, starting with a grace note and a bend. The fourth staff is the third paraphrased line, starting with a grace note and a bend. The fifth staff is the fourth paraphrased line, starting with a grace note and a bend. The sixth staff is the fifth paraphrased line, starting with a grace note and a bend. The seventh staff is the sixth paraphrased line, starting with a grace note and a bend. The eighth staff is the seventh paraphrased line, starting with a grace note and a bend. The ninth staff is the eighth paraphrased line, starting with a grace note and a bend. The tenth staff is the ninth paraphrased line, starting with a grace note and a bend. The eleventh staff is the tenth paraphrased line, starting with a grace note and a bend. 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Example 2

Example 2 shows a musical score in 4/4 time. The first staff is the original line: F7, F7, F7, F7. The second staff is the first paraphrased line, starting with a grace note and a bend. The third staff is the second paraphrased line, starting with a grace note and a bend. The fourth staff is the third paraphrased line, starting with a grace note and a bend. The fifth staff is the fourth paraphrased line, starting with a grace note and a bend. The sixth staff is the fifth paraphrased line, starting with a grace note and a bend. The seventh staff is the sixth paraphrased line, starting with a grace note and a bend. The eighth staff is the seventh paraphrased line, starting with a grace note and a bend. The ninth staff is the eighth paraphrased line, starting with a grace note and a bend. The tenth staff is the ninth paraphrased line, starting with a grace note and a bend. The eleventh staff is the tenth paraphrased line, starting with a grace note and a bend. 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## Example 2

Now we'll listen to the three-bar phrase that begins Bird's solo. Transcribe it onto paper and practice it over and over before you begin to play through my variations.

Here's my short list of items of interest from this phrase:

- 1) The line starts on the *and* of four, before the actual chorus begins. This is important because many inexperienced improvisers



GABRIEL STORIZ

start on the down beat of one too often.

- 2) The first two notes are the 5th degree up to the root of the chord. Can you think of any other songs that start this way? "Here Comes The Bride" and "Auld Lang Syne" are a couple.
- 3) There is a half step leading tone on the *and* of two and the *and* of four in the first measure, and those leading tones take you right to a chord tone.
- 4) Notice the rhythms in each measure. We can focus on rhythm only when paraphrasing and come up with some very different harmonic/melodic choices that still have some grounding in the original line.
- 5) If you isolate beat one and three of each measure, this line is a simple triad, and if you consider all the notes, it's almost a simple scale from the root up to the 5th and back down with small embellishments. It doesn't get more simple or logical than this, and yet the line sounds so good.
- 6) Play through all of my paraphrased variations, then start creating your own. Take a look at the last line of variations—this might be a resulting line after 100 or so

times going through the process.

The "jazz greats" are called that because they are the best at what they do, they inspire us and they have original voices. The greats all studied the greats before them and they became great, so you can, too. If you become a "great" or even

a "pretty good," and this article helped you, I'd love to hear about it. **DB**

SAXOPHONIST, JAZZ EDUCATOR AND ENTREPRENEUR JODY ESPINA IS PRESIDENT OF JODYJAZZ SAXOPHONE & CLARINET MOUTHPIECES AND IS AN ACTIVE PERFORMER AND CLINICIAN TRAVELING THROUGHOUT THE WORLD. VISIT HIM ONLINE AT JODYJAZZ.COM.



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**WIU jazz faculty artists (l to r):**

Kevin Nichols - drums  
 John Cooper - trumpet  
 Michael Stryker - piano  
 Jack Helsely - bass  
 not pictured:  
 John Mindeman - trombone  
 John Vana - saxophone  
 Matt Warnock - guitar





# Thief!

## *The Illegal Piracy of Fake Books and Educational Jazz Publications Reaches Epidemic Proportions*

By Ed Enright

**S**TOP, THIEF! Illegal downloads of copyrighted jazz fake books and educational materials have become a pervasive and corrosive problem—one that's causing serious harm to artists and print music publishers in this Internet age. Attempts to police widespread online piracy and rampant file-sharing frequently prove futile, as publishers struggle to keep up with thousands of corrupt business operators and clueless consumers who flagrantly ignore the laws that make it a crime to rip off someone else's intellectual property.

Yanking copyrighted materials such as fake books, sheet music, artist folios, play-alongs and instructional videos from the net amounts to theft, plain and simple. Everyone in the music industry knows this all too well, thanks to widespread media coverage of the rise and demise of Napster and other notorious file-sharing sites that have plagued the recording industry in recent years. Yet the problem persists, spelling real trouble for copyright owners and legitimate publishers who find themselves unprepared to change with the times.

"It's automatic for so many people now to think of stealing first," said one publisher who wished to remain anonymous, noting a nose-dive in the company's unit sales in recent years. "I think we've reached the tipping point now where more of our stuff is probably acquired illegally than legally."

Chuck Sher, owner of Sher Music Co., made a shocking discovery while attempting to shut down

this kind of activity regarding his company's print music publications. "There was one web site that happened to show the number of downloads in the last year," Sher said. "And there were about 1,000 people downloading one of our publications, Mark Levine's book, off of one of about 50 different sites. It has made it very difficult to stay in business. Basically, we're out of the fake book business now because people just copy it, and you can't compete with people just giving your stuff away. It's something I can't afford to produce because I won't get my money back."

Publishers spend a lot of time chasing down the culprits, sending out cease and desist orders and sometimes requesting financial compensation if any money is being made by a site. Under the Digital Millennium Copyright Act, web sites are required to take down postings of material that infringes on somebody's intellectual property rights when the owner requests them to do so. Once they remove it, the Notice and Takedown provisions of the DMCA provide them with a safe harbor from being sued for copyright infringement. But even when web sites cooperate, there's nothing to stop them from filing an appeal with their Internet service provider and posting the material again almost immediately. One of the few other legal options is to file a civil lawsuit, but that requires that the offender can be brought into the jurisdiction of the U.S. courts. "If it's someone on a little island in the middle of the Pacific, you might not get them into a court in America," said Corey

Field, a copyright and entertainment lawyer who currently serves as president of the Copyright Society of the USA. "You might have to go to that island and sue them."

Web sites widely believed to be run by the

Russian mafia are among the hardest to deal with, according to industry insiders, as they operate entirely outside the law and beyond the jurisdiction of our court system. "Law firms here will not take them on because they don't want to end up dead the next morning," one source said. "As publishers, we're in a predicament here where we're forced to enforce criminal laws in the civil courts. I can't go out and get a cop and say, 'Hey, this

URL is selling our stuff illegally, bust him.' If a guy is stealing my cheap stereo, they'll bust him in a minute. When it comes to illegal activity running rampant, something has to be done about it. There has to be law enforcement agencies, not just civil attorneys that I have to pay. They need some cops that I can call as a publisher and say, 'These 500 web sites are selling my stuff illegally, put my tax dollars to work and shut them down.' It shouldn't be on me to enforce criminal laws in civil courts."

Fortunately, most violators comply with takedown requests, usually within 48 hours of notification. The problem is that it's impossible for publishers to even come close to tracking them all down. "I would have to employ 12 full-time people doing nothing but scouring the net to catch it all," said Bryan Bradley, chief operating



"Now our legal *Real Book* is selling huge numbers, and we've virtually exterminated the illegal version."

—LARRY MORTON,  
HAL LEONARD PUBLISHING



“Basically, we’re out of the fake book business now because people just copy it, and you can’t compete with people just giving your stuff away.”

—CHUCK SHER,  
SHER MUSIC CO.

officer of Alfred Publishing. “It’s just not viable.”

“I could spend all day every day doing that, and wouldn’t make a dent in it,” Sher said. “What needs to happen is the law should be rewritten so that upon request, web sites are obligated to block all future postings of a copyrighted work. It’s a simple solution that would make a big difference, but lots of luck doing that.”

Savvy publishers have realized that they have to adjust their business models in order to remain profitable. One approach is to work out a licensing deal where the publisher receives a portion of ad revenue driven by sites that carry their work. Another is to make publications available to consumers in a variety of formats, not just good old-fashioned hard copies.

One such example from the pop world is ultimateguitar.com, where users commonly post guitar tablature for hit songs. Alfred reached an agreement with the site whereby the publisher gets paid a small amount every time a user clicks on items Alfred owns the print rights to, and Alfred in turn pays some of that to the artists as royalties. The company has even gone so far as to strategically place their own ads and links on ultimateguitar.com in an attempt to make a legitimate version of the product readily available to users at a reasonable price.

“I think there’s a way for consumers to get the content in whatever format they like to get their content, and for us to produce that content in a manner that’s profitable for everybody,” Bradley said, noting the skyrocketing popularity of digital downloads within the recorded audio realm. “Yes, it’s easily sharable and we have to do what we can to protect the artists’ rights. But at the same time, it’s a little cheaper for us if we don’t have to physically print it. As long as we understand what the mechanisms are pulling the commerce levers there and can be nimble and smart enough to adjust, I think we’ll end up being OK.”

Another example, this one from the jazz community, is the fairly recent legitimization by Hal Leonard Publishing of *The Real Book*, which sprang up in the 1970s as an underground fake

book and quickly became the standard, albeit illegal, reference for learning and playing jazz standards.

“We launched a legal version of that into the headwinds of everyone saying there was no way it could knock out the original,” said Larry Morton, president of Hal Leonard. “We used the same logo, we wrote a computer program to recreate the handwritten fonts, we fixed all the chord problems and mistakes, and the most amazing thing happened: The jazz community started jumping all over each other saying, ‘You know what? We really should support this legal book, there’s no reason not to. It’s the legit thing, and composers ought to be paid.’ And out of this came this self-policing. So now our legal *Real Book* is selling huge numbers, and we’ve virtually exterminated the illegal version.

“I think there is a camaraderie among jazzers to keep the faith alive and to support the artists. As far as what’s going on with play-alongs, part of the problem is that the industry as a whole hasn’t really addressed legal alternatives, and into that vacuum a lot of illegal stuff is floating around on these file-sharing and torrent sites. We at the company believe that we have an opportunity to do the same thing there that we did with the *Real Book*. If we get into the jazz community and say, look, you’ve got to support the artists and the people who wrote these songs, here’s the legal [digital] alternative, let’s make it cheap and reasonable, 99 cents a download or whatever, that would turn the whole thing around. That’s our model: Put out the physical version and offer digital versions, and then the market will sort it out.”

Until the market sorts itself out, we in the jazz community need to police ourselves as Morton describes and consider the rights of all copyright owners before downloading valuable merchandise for free (or at a price that’s too good to be true). It’s not only immoral and illegal, but it seriously hinders the industry’s best publishers, hurts artists and ruins their motivation to produce the high-quality jazz education books and materials that we take for granted. Stop, thief!

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University of Missouri School of Music Concert Jazz Band

**Missouri Meets Mainieri:** The University of Missouri School of Music and its jazz studies program have released the debut recording of the MU Concert Jazz Band, *Vertigo: The Music of Mike Mainieri*. The vibraphonist visited the school as an artist-in-residence in November. "The plan all along was to record the top MU jazz group, and release it commercially, but I had no idea what approach to take," said director of jazz studies Arthur White. "It became abundantly clear when Mike visited our campus that he, and his music, was the perfect choice to help debut this wonderful student ensemble to a national audience."

Details: [music.missouri.edu](http://music.missouri.edu)

**White House Gig:** Elijah Easton, a saxophone student at the University of Manitoba, has already played at the White House on two occasions. Wynton Marsalis invited him to join him as part of Michelle Obama's White House Music Series in June 2009. He performed at the home of the First Family last August. "To know that I was in that space was a real honor," Easton said. "The experience will affect me forever and after that I will always want to give back."

Details: [umanitoba.ca/music](http://umanitoba.ca/music)

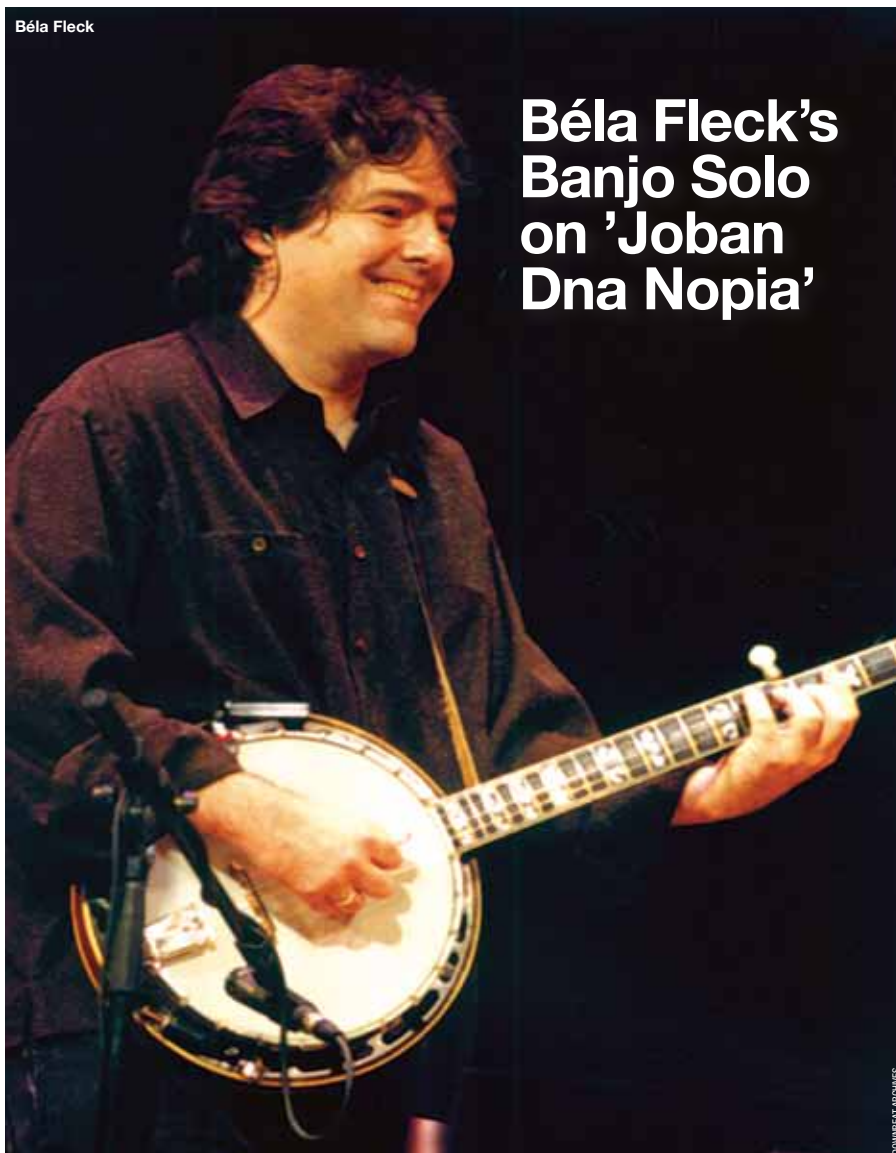
**Minnesota Freeze:** Harry Chalmiers, president of McNally Smith College of Music in St. Paul, Minn., has announced that he is freezing tuition at the school. "An economic downturn, however drastic, is temporary," Chalmiers said. "Choosing a life in music provides challenge, opportunity, and deep satisfaction based on doing what you love to do."

Details: [mcnallysmith.edu](http://mcnallysmith.edu)

**New UNT:** The University of North Texas One O'Clock Lab Band has released its Lab 2010 recording. The disc features student charts, including a new arrangement of Dave Holland's "Prime Directive, Slide Hampton's "Newport" and Steely Dan's "Pretzel Logic." Former director Neil Slater contributed his recent composition, "Not Yet."

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

Béla Fleck



## Béla Fleck's Banjo Solo on 'Joban Dna Nopia'

The five-string banjo is commonly associated with bluegrass music, but banjoist Béla Fleck has presented the instrument against a myriad of backdrops, including many jazz outings. One fairly recent example was 2007's *The Enchantment* (Concord), an album of duets with pianist Chick Corea. On the third track, the Coreapenned "Joban Dna Nopia," Fleck takes two solos, one after the initial melody and another before the out melody. The second, starting at 3:40, is presented here.

Fleck's rhythmic construction of this improvisation is quite fascinating. He opens with lines consisting of eighth-note values and larger, and incorporates a lot of space, giving a relaxed feeling. At measure 9 he creates more intensity by introducing triplets, and this subdivision becomes his main one for the next nine measures. Then he

takes it up another notch to 16ths at measure 19, and greatly reduces his use of space. This culminates in the steady stream of 16ths beginning at measure 26, which he rides out to the end of his solo. He plays mostly three-note arpeggios here against the 16th-note subdivisions, producing a polyrhythmic effect and heightening the rhythmic intensity.

The note-choices Fleck employs for this section are also intriguing, especially in the way they are done in conjunction with his rhythmic choices. The harmony during this solo is just four chords that are all diatonic to C Aeolian (natural minor). For the earlier two-thirds of his solo, Fleck has stayed mainly within this scale, and the related minor pentatonic scale, using chromatics sparingly and generally as passing tones. The note he adds is almost always the  $b_5$ ,

DOWNBEAT ARCHIVES

[illegible]

the “blue note” added to the minor pentatonic to create the sound of the blues scale (the exceptions being the chromatically descending minor thirds in measure 9, which connect the 5th and 7th on the Cm7 to the root and 3rd on the Fm in the next measure, and the D $\flat$  in measure 11, which is just a decoration of the scale tone C). But at measure 26 Fleck starts leaning on an A natural, implying C Dorian and brightening the color while intensifying the rhythm. This A note is part of a D minor arpeggio Fleck is imposing against the Cm7 chord, creating a polychordal effect along with the polyrhythmic one.

He continues to milk this idea, playing an Eb triad against the Fm7, and Fsus2 against the Gm7. There's also the Esus2 passing chord at the end of measure 27, connecting the chords in measures 27 and 28. This becomes the motif

for the remainder: polychord/passing chord, next polychord, with a lot of suspensions. We find F#sus2 leading to the Gsus2 on the A♭maj7, to what could be thought of as B♭7(b5) leading to F on the Cm7, then B♭ on the Fm7 to B to C minor on the Gm7, where he immediately starts climbing to C#m and Dm, ending with E♭sus2 on the A♭maj7 and E♭sus2 (also B♭sus4) on the last B♭7 chord.

An important thing to pay attention to is how Corea supports and interacts with Fleck. At measure 18 he slips into an implied “3” feel for two measures before going back to the original groove, and Fleck is not thrown by this at all.

DB

JIMI DURSO IS A GUITARIST AND BASSIST IN THE NEW YORK AREA. HE CAN BE REACHED AT [JIMIDURSO.COM](http://JIMIDURSO.COM).



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## Superscope PSD450 *Cool Tool for School*

Superscope Technologies has been designing and building portable audio devices for nearly 40 years. The company's cassette recorders were considered to be state of the art in the 1970s, and they continued to lead the industry into the digital age with a line of Marantz professional CD recorders in the 1980s. The new PSD450 is Superscope's latest product offering, and this all-in-one box combines a robust digital recorder with an impressive array of onboard features targeted at the music education community.

It is no surprise that Superscope has become a leader in the CD recorder market. In 1980, they sold the overseas rights to their Marantz division to Philips, which had extensive knowledge in digital audio and along with Sony actually co-developed the CD media. This inside track helped Marantz and Superscope gain significant ground in the rapidly emerging digital audio world. In fact, Marantz was one of the first companies to introduce a truly portable CD recorder.

Superscope/Marantz products have enjoyed success in both the professional and consumer markets over the years, developing a loyal following among long-time users. These days the company has decided to focus primarily on the music education world, providing solutions that meet the demands of teachers and students. According to Tim Smyth, Market Development Manager for Superscope Technologies, "Music educators like one-stop shopping, and they want technology that fills their needs without a struggle." The PSD450 builds on the success of Superscope's line of portable CD recorders, adding many capabilities requested by customers such as a built-in hard drive, SD slot, tempo and key adjustment, looping, overdubbing, digital editing, and even a tuner and metronome. "Within the education market there is still a demand for these types of standalone hardware devices," Smyth said.

The PSD 450's functionality can be divided into four main areas: recording, editing, practicing, and CD ripping and burning. Upon powering up, the unit scans the entire contents of the 40GB internal hard drive and creates a database. And this process can be lengthy with a large library of files. Audio files are displayed on the unit's color LCD screen and can be placed in user-designated folders. Navigation through the PSD450's various windows is accomplished via a large array of knobs and buttons along with a multi-function jog wheel. I found the interface to be a little difficult to use, and navigation is a bit laborious but becomes easier with practice.

As a CD player/recorder, the PSD450 is fairly straightforward. The contents of an inserted disc are displayed on the screen where tracks can be selected and played using the user-friendly backlight transport controls. Audio tracks can also be ripped directly to the internal hard disk or an SD memory card in uncompressed WAV or MP3 formats. For file management, the 450 provides the ability to rename a track and also assign genre, album and artist info. Editing the info by using the jog wheel to slowly enter one character at a time is somewhat frustrating. I found it



much easier to connect the unit to my laptop via its USB cable and use the keyboard to type. Although the PSD 450 offers both analog and digital lines out, it can also playback audio through a built-in speaker, which actually sounds fairly decent.

As a practice tool, the PSD 450 packs some nice options. Playback of a track can be altered in both speed and pitch independently in real time, and vocal reduction can also be applied. With a wide variety of inputs, the unit can record audio via internal or external stereo microphones, with an auxiliary line in or even by plugging an instrument directly into the unit. One of my favorite features is the overdub, which allows you to play or sing over an existing audio track and even record the resulting mix to a new file. Basic reverb, delay and EQ effects are also available. The looping window provides the ability to set start and end points for focusing in on a particular section of music. In addition, there is a built-in tuner and metronome complete with a tap button.

For editing, the PSD 450 has the ability to easily trim the start and end points of any track as well as divide a single track into two or even combine multiple tracks into one. It is worth mentioning that all track edits and customized settings such as tempo/key, effects and looping points are all stored with the track for quick and easy recall.

Overall, the Superscope PSD450 functions very well as a stand-alone solution. Given its target market, it is a worthy product. The audio quality is quite good and it packs a lot of punch into a single plug-and-play device.

Superscope will be upgrading to a standard 160 GB drive model in early 2011, which will greatly enhance the unit's capacity. The company also plans to introduce the PSD430, a less expensive model that will have no internal hard drive.

—Keith Baumann

Ordering info: [superscope-marantzpro.com](http://superscope-marantzpro.com)

## Korg Wavedrum Black

### *Real-Feel Sensitivity*

The Korg Wavedrum has been around since 1994, and it is a truly unique and playable electronic percussion instrument. Now Korg is releasing a limited-edition black color, with a matching black metallic rim and an exclusive Remo Black Suede head—giving the venerable unit a slick new look.

The Wavedrum is a percussion synthesizer that uses a real drumhead as the main striking surface, and a wide rim as a secondary triggering area. The drum feels very natural, and can be played effectively with hands, sticks, mallets, or just about any other striking tool you can think of. The real head makes it possible to use traditional hand percussion techniques, including mutes, slaps and bends. This makes it incredibly expressive for an electronic drum, and equally at home as a solo instrument, or as part of a kit. Perhaps most importantly, this thing is a ton of fun to play.

The Wavedrum employs both PCM waveforms and DSP synthesis algorithms to generate tones, so it can create much more depth than standard triggered PCM systems. There are 200 included waveforms, 100 for the head and 100 for the rim. The rim is interesting—I found it to be very sensitive, and there are two different raised bump patterns on the left and right sides that make it easy to create shaker and guiro type patterns.

The traditional sounds are widely varied, including the familiar Latin percussion and tabla you would expect and more exotic drums like taikos



and udos. There is a pretty decent array of pitched percussion, too—the steel drum is a blast. Add to that some stringed textures like sitar and berimbau, and you have a well-rounded base to build on. Once you take these tones and add the DSP flavors to them along with a variety of playability options, you have a deep and unique instrument—and no two players will play it the same way. So whether you opt for the traditional silver finish, or the new black, the Korg Wavedrum is a winner.

—Chris Neville

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

## Vandoren V16

### Baritone Sax Mouthpiece

### *Authoritative Power*

Vandoren has introduced the long-anticipated V16 mouthpieces for baritone sax to the U.S. market.

The latest addition to the much-heralded series of soprano, alto and tenor mouthpieces, the new V16 baritone sax mouthpieces are available in three models: the B5, B7 and B9. While each model has its own unique playing characteristics, all three pack quite a punch, offering tonal flexibility and sheer power while being extraordinarily easy to play.

I tried all three models on a recent big band gig that included a sax section made up of especially strong players. I frequently play on a metal bari mouthpiece that streamlines my sound, so I figured the hard-rubber V16 models would surely present some initial challenges and require some serious adjustments in such an intense ensemble setting. But I was wrong—the V16s, while darker in tone than my somewhat-edgy Brillhardt Level-Air, responded with a big, full, vintage-type sound that anchored the sax section with authority. They blew with ease and did a great job of helping me establish my sonic space within the section and the band as a whole.

Like the V16s for tenor, alto and soprano, these pieces were extremely responsive and played remarkably in tune, most notably in the upper regis-



ter of the horn. “With the runaway success we’ve had with the V16 series in soprano, alto and tenor, it only made sense that the bari sax was next,” said Jim Metz, marketing manager for DANSR, which distributes Vandoren products in the States. “The first thing that struck me about these pieces is how much power you can get out of them while still being very easy to control. And then there is the sound—colorful, and dense with harmonics.”

I liked the B7 model (an open-blowing 275 with a medium-long facing) the best, as it allowed me to find the perfect balance between tone and power. It responded especially well with Vandoren’s Optimum Gold-Gilded ligature, which comes with three different interchangeable pressure plates where it comes in contact with the reed. The B5, a medium-open (275) model with a medium-long facing, was notable for its tonal flexibility, which makes it great for classical or jazz applications. The B9, a very open (310) model with a long facing, gave me a turbo-charged sound suitable for rock or jazz gigs where volume is an issue.

—Ed Enright

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

Vandoren B7 V16 baritone saxophone mouthpiece



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### {1} CUT TO THE TONE

Vandoren has followed up on the success of its V12 reeds for E-flat clarinet with the new V12 bass clarinet reeds. The reeds are cut like other Vandoren V12s for clarinet to produce a deeper, richer sound with more body to the attack and color to the tone.

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

### {2} GRAB A CAB

Audix's new CabGrabber-XL is an extended version of the CabGrabber created to accommodate larger amps and cabinets. It lets users place a microphone on a guitar amplifier or cabinet without the use of a mic stand. Constructed of aluminum tubing, the lightweight CabGrabber-XL is capable of holding microphones securely and firmly in place. More info: [audixusa.com](http://audixusa.com)



### {3} ENCORE, ENCORE

As the latest addition to Blue Microphones' live series, the en-Core 300 condenser model has an open architecture design and reinforced build. The design maximizes air volume in the capsule chamber, resulting in uninterrupted sound regardless of how the microphone is gripped. The en-Core 300 also features LED backlighting to indicate active phantom power in the pre-amp circuit.

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

### {4} ROBUST SOPRANO

Theo Wanne has combined vintage and modern mouthpiece design in developing the GAIA for soprano saxophone. The mouthpiece tends toward a traditional jazz taste but is quite versatile, featuring a slight roll-over baffle, precision-sculpted inner sidewalls and Theo Wanne's True Large Chamber. The GAIA for soprano has modern projection and a fat, robust sound.

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

### {5} '60s FLASHBACK

Aguilar Amplification's new AG 5J-60 pickups for five-string bass are modeled after a mid-1960s Jazz Bass pickup. The AG 5J-60 uses all the period-correct parts, including heavy Formvar wire and Alnico V magnets. Single neck and bridge pickups are also available.

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



{6}



{5}

### {6} SAFE KEEPING

Gator has redesigned its G-Mix series to better fit today's popular mixer models. Made of a polyethylene plastic, the cases sport a sleek black uninterrupted aluminum valance. With a 1-inch-thick foam-lined interior and specialized interior wedges, everything is held firmly in place during transport. The case also includes heavy-duty TSA locking latches.

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



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# Reviews ▶



Gary Wang (left), Anat Fort and Roland Schneider

ROBB VALENTINE

## Anat Fort *And If*

ECM 2109

★★★

There should be ellipses applied to the title of Anat Fort's second disc for ECM. The pianist does her best to give these dreamy tunes an impressionistic feel—sketchy, in flux and open to interpretation. It's a cagey tack, setting the stage for a program that can be pensive one moment, wistful the next. As punctuation, those three dots imply that a number of particulars remain undefined; in musical terms, they just might parallel Fort's rather fetching esthetic.

"Some," an intricate piece that seems almost episodic, is a good example of the fluid motifs Fort puts into play. A solo piano passage starts things off; it boasts an autumnal vibe and a rhapsodic feel. Then the rhythm section arrives to bolster the intro while bending the action towards open territory. Everything floats for a minute. Then the morphing continues, and a lithe aggression takes over. At the conclusion, bassist Gary Wang disappears, and drummer Roland Schneider scrapes his cymbal for a squeaky farewell while the leader applies a luminous coda that drifts away rather than providing a definitive conclusion.

Informing such a kaleidoscopic strategy is the work of Paul Motian. Fort made *And If* with her working group of Wang and Schneider. But her previous disc, *A Long Story*, featured Motian's poetic percussion maneuvers—an approach that generally allows for all kinds of time-chopping and dynamic switcheroos. The pianist has named *And If*'s hushed opening and closing tracks after the drummer, surely a reminder of the impact he's had on her work.

Piano-wise, previous references included Bill Evans and Paul Bley (Fort has a way blending sentimental flavors with compelling bits of abstraction). This time out her allu-

sions stretch from Vince Guaraldi to Keith Jarrett. At first some tunes seem a tad too fey, but just below the gossamer gestures and feathery fragments is the kind of depth that bolsters the music's resonance. The secret to this mercurial program is that even when a particular passage acts precious—and those moments do bubble up—the trio finds a way to spotlight a provocative turn. Fort may keep the gravitas behind the curtain for a bit longer than she should, but you always feel it guiding the interplay. —Jim Macnie

**And If:** Paul Motian (1); Cloud Moving; En If; Some; Something 'Bout Camels; If; Laneboro; Minnesota; Nu; Paul Motian (2). (52:23)

**Personnel:** Anat Fort, piano; Gary Wang, bass; Roland Schneider, drums.

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



## Bobby Watson and the UMKC Concert Jazz Orchestra

### *The Gates BBQ Suite*

LAFIYA MUSIC

★★½

Bobby Watson's doing absolutely the right thing here as a teacher, taking a back seat to his University of Missouri-Kansas City Conservatory students as they roar through his playful, soul-sauced, seven-part suite dedicated to K.C. barbecue. There's something winning, too, about the fact that he dedicated the piece to Gates' BBQ, his family's favorite when he was growing up. (Watson returned to K.C. from New York 10 years ago to teach.) But in spite of these noble gestures, this is still a student band, so in spite of its excellence, there isn't a lot of extraordinary soloing and certainly not the frisson one would feel from its inspirations—New Testament Basie or Thad and Mel. Hearing a little more from Watson would have been a treat.

That said, as anyone who knows Watson's playing can guess, there's not an unswinging bone on the plate here, no matter the tempo, and, tune-wise, there are a couple of keepers, namely the finger-popping "Heavy On The Sauce!" and "Blues For Ollie," which features a clever fugue



intro and a terrific solo by trumpeter John Merlitz. Pianist Will Crain pulls off an attractively disjunctive bit of dissonance on "Blues For Ollie," too. The band plays exceptionally well—with solid attacks, great phrasing, clean articulation, good dynamics and a relaxed sense of swing. The sax section bristles with energy on a doubletime counterline on "Beef On Bun" and a sizzling soli on "Blues For Ollie." The bones get their say on "The President's Tray" and the trumpets assay a beautiful brass choir sound on "One Minute Too Late" and handle the stratosphere with aplomb.

Watson's writing isn't always particularly vivid. Oddly, considering he is an alto man, the

ensemble sections lean heavily toward the middle and low registers, with lots of trombone and bari sax, which sometimes sounds a bit sludgy. (This could be the recording, a trifle muddy.) Watson occasionally overwrites behind his soloists, which, considering the ho-hum quality of most of them, makes for double trouble. Not many of the pieces develop beyond a theme and variation, with the exception of the polymetric, African-percussion-inspired "The President's Tray." There are quite a few clichés: the drum roll fanfare that kicks off the first section of the suite and a tacked-on female "server" saying "May I Help You?" at the end of it; the dramatic tom-tom parenthesis before the final fermata of "Ollie"; and the four-note clock-tower theme of "One Minute Too Late."

When he does solo, Watson sparkles, getting an almost flute sound on "One Minute Too Late" and soaring on the Blood Sweat and Tears-style funk/jazz of the closer, "Wilkes' BBQ," dedicated to his grandparents. So, good for Watson, that he's passing on the traditions. I'm sure we'll be hearing from some his students in the future.

—Paul de Barros

**The Gates BBQ Suite:** May I Help You; Beef On Bun; Heavy On The Sauce!; Blues For Ollie; The President's Tray; One Minute Too Late; Wilkes' BBQ. (42:51)

**Personnel:** Bobby Watson, Michael Shults, Mario Bennett, alto saxophone; William Sanders, Steven Lambert, tenor saxophone; Justin Bayne, baritone saxophone; Karen Zawacki, Ben Saylor, Eric Chapman, Sarah Braun, trombone; Ryan Sharp, Herman Mehari, Aaron Linscheid, John Merlitz, trumpet; Nick Grinlinton, guitar; Will Crain, piano; Ben Leifer, bass; Ryan Lee, drums; Pablo Sanheza, Pat Conway, Andres Rameriz, percussion (5).

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

## Eddie Henderson

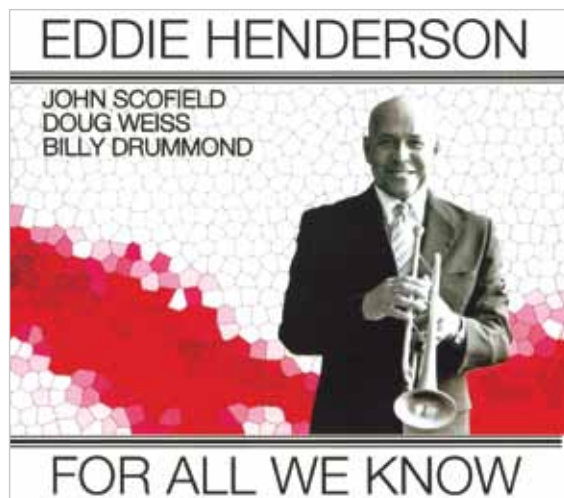
### *For All We Know*

FURTHERMORE 005

★★★★½

Eddie Henderson came into view in the 1970s and spent the next decade or two dividing his crowded schedule between life as a practicing physician and a touring musician playing the kind of plugged-in, funky jazz rock that many jazz critics felt entitled, if not obliged, to despise. But in the '90s he began turning out a series of club-sized straight jazz CDs that shed new light on his talents. Few were without some acknowledgement to Miles Davis, and this is no exception. It comes through implicitly in much of his use of the straight mute. More specifically "Missing Miles" is a tribute piece, and Henderson's own "Popo" is derived from a piece on Davis' 1983 album *Star People*.

Playing in the Davis band that produced that album then was John Scofield, who is Henderson's partner here, performing the dual role of soloist and accompanist (in lieu of an absent piano), with quiet poise and invention. If you're among those who feel that the '80s was not a memorable period for Davis, you'll be pleased to know that



the music here is miles away from the bombast of those later fusion years.

Henderson and Scofield, whose only previous meeting was 15 years ago on a Kenny Barron CD for Verve, make a relaxed and laid-back pair in the supporting hands of Doug Weiss and Billy Drummond. Henderson comes in quietly with a soft and lyrical open flugelhorn playing the verse to "Jitterbug Waltz," a Fats Waller tune included in memory of his mom who appeared in a 1941 film with Waller. He then switches to straight mute for the descending flutter of Waller's charming melody

with Scofield shadowing him. The performance strikes a keynote that more or less outlines the intimate boundaries of the music to come—few burning tempos, no gratuitous shows of power. The musical intensity peaks in the brisk and boppish "Sand Storm," which Henderson recorded seven years ago in Paris for a CD called *Echos*.

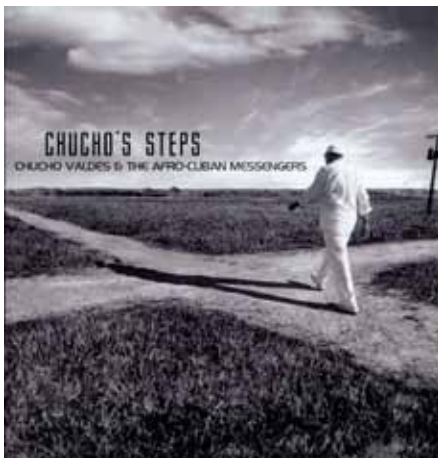
Within the otherwise low-key spirit, however, there is abundance and surprise. The Arthur Schwartz standard "By Myself" has the kind of mysterious, minor key feel of a tune like "Caravan." "Cantaloupe Island" is a bow to Henderson's early years with Herbie Hancock and offers some biting open horn from Henderson. While "Popo" is said to be adapted from Davis' "U 'n' I," I hear another earlier inspiration: Benny Carter's 1939 standard "When Light Are Low."

As for Scofield, there is probably not a more varied or flexible guitarist on the scene. In this chamber environment, he draws us in close, as he's done with his trios, and relies on more restrained musical strategies: crisp, fluent single-note lines broken by unexpected chord sequences that never go overboard, even when Drummond pushes and shoves a bit ("By Myself"). For Henderson and Scofield, this is smart, small-scale testament to their fine rapport. —John McDonough

**For All We Know:** Jitterbug Waltz; Be Cool; For All We Know; Sand Storm; By Myself; Cantaloupe Island; Missing Miles; Popo. (52:40)

**Personnel:** Eddie Henderson, trumpet, flugelhorn; John Scofield, guitar; Doug Weiss, bass; Billy Drummond, drums.

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



## Chucho Valdés & The Afro-Cuban Messengers *Chucho's Steps*

4Q 1823

★★★★

Steeped in so many decades of Latin music, be it traditional or hybrid, Chucho Valdés, now approaching 70, sounds utterly comfortable doing his thing. That's even true when he's making the most abrupt of mash-ups, throwing the jazz-to-Latin switch, then just as suddenly switching back.

There are plenty of these moments on *Chucho's Steps*, a fine sextet record that draws on Valdés' many previous lives. "Both Sides" starts as a jazz tune with a backbeat and a hair-pin theme, some congas the only direct nod at Latinization; Valdés takes an inventive and energetic solo, one of many on this CD, and presto, at five minutes in the whole ambiance shifts, and it's suddenly a slinky Afro-Latin percussion party. The least successful collision comes on "Zawinul's Mambo," with Weather Report snippets sneaked into a melange of Afro-Cuban messages.

The merger is perfectly navigated on "Yansa," the record's best track—tart voicings for Carlos Miyares Hernandez's tenor saxophone and Reynaldo Melian Alvarez's trumpet, a persistent cowbell and the leader's brilliant, urgent piano lead to yet another jump-cut, this time into Bata drums and call-and-response chorus. The quick shifts don't feel arbitrary, motivated as they are by a desire to explore shared components and sensibilities. Although its dedication to the Marsalis family seems gratuitous at this point, "New Orleans" has lots of wonderful r&b juice in its several quick changes, most notably the one that surely begets the homage, as the piece turns into a nearly parodic version of early jazz towards the end.

—John Corbett

**Chucho's Steps:** Zawinul's Mambo; Danzon; Both Sides; Begin To Be Good; New Orleans; Yansa; Julian; Chucho's Steps. (66:01)

**Personnel:** Chucho Valdés, piano; Carlos Miyares Hernandez, tenor saxophone; Reynaldo Melian Alvarez, trumpet; Lazaro Rivero Alarcon, bass; voice (6); Juan Carlos Rojas Castro, drums; Yaroldy Abreu Robles, percussion, voice (6); Dreiser Durruthy Bombale, voice leader and Bata drums (6); Baria Fermina Ramirez, Yemi Menocal, voices (6).

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

# The Hot Box

	John McDonough	John Corbett	Jim Macnie	Paul de Barros
<b>Anat Fort</b> <i>And If</i>	★★½	★★★★	★★★	★★★
<b>Bobby Watson</b> <i>The Gates BBQ Suite</i>	★★★★	★★★★½	★★★	★★½
<b>Eddie Henderson</b> <i>For All We Know</i>	★★★★½	★★★★½	★★★	★★★★
<b>Chucho Valdés &amp; The Afro-Cuban Messengers</b> <i>Chucho's Steps</i>	★★★	★★★★	★★★	★★★

## Critics' Comments ▶

### Anat Fort, *And If*

The beauty of Fort's piano musings is welcoming at first, but soon grows atmospheric, tranquilizing and (except for "Nu") unceasingly passive. Stranded between classical rigor and jazz freedom without an animating active ingredient. Comparable to Keith Jarrett stripped of his swing or intensity. —John McDonough

Fort relies on folksy simplicity in the melodies, more Nordic than Middle-Eastern, but there's a molten plasticity to her playing, with small unexpected harmonic passages played definitely, but with great sensitivity, that keeps it from being cloyed down. —John Corbett

Delicate, slow stuff, and pretty darn Keith Jarrett-y—especially the childlike, folksy quality—but there's something warm and luxuriant in Fort's minimalist approach. "Minnesota" feels like watching the sky open to a dawn vista, each moment registered with wonder; her second take on "Paul Motian" caught the soft-petal poetry of that journeying drummer well. —Paul de Barros

### Bobby Watson, *The Gates BBQ Suite*

I hate barbeque, but this plate of seven meaty little pieces is as good as any contemporary big band recipe I've sampled lately. Aside from Watson's fondness for pompous a cappella brass fanfares, the charts are bright, simple, swinging and well balanced between brass and reeds. Student band is tops. —John McDonough

It's hard to resist such a personal, lively object of attention, particularly given this level of detailed consideration. Mutual enthusiasm shows in a joyous performance by the UMKC band (any vegetarians in the midst?); Watson's ambitions as a composer and arranger get full attention—listen to the stately intro to "Blues For Ollie"—but the funky final track reminds that BBQ is finger food. —John Corbett

Always nice to hear the Watsonesque swagger in play, and this hat-tip to the saxophonist's fave K.C. rib house has a enviable informality. But it's not his most provocative composing, and the student ensemble is lacking in a memorable personality. —Jim Macnie

### Eddie Henderson, *For All We Know*

Casual, understated session, focused on the interplay between Henderson and Scofield, which is playful but never cut-loose. Henderson's sound is gentle, burnished, un-brash, even without the mute. Sly version of "Cantaloupe Island" turns it into a 007 soundtrack. —John Corbett

First off, there's the tone—the trumpeter's sound is forever attractive. Then there's the date's loose-limbed feel. Gliding through a pocketful of standards while standing shoulder to shoulder with three deeply articulate mates remains a viable strategy if the muse is in the room, and it seems to be for this date. —Jim Macnie

From the first pearly notes, a hunch that the music will be first-rate—and it is. Five masters, at the top of their game (especially nice to hear John Scofield on a jazz date—no sarcasm intended). Henderson's a Miles Davis disciple in that he phrases as if he were simply speaking truth, without a wasted note ("Be Cool") and also in that he can just flat-out play like Miles (Harmon-mute homage "Missing Miles," Henderson's own tune "Popo"). —Paul de Barros

### Chucho Valdés & The Afro-Cuban Messengers, *Chucho's Steps*

The leader's spinning, often dizzying piano flings are the main stimulant here, even when he falls into a deep rut on "Chucho's Steps." But overall, it all comes at you with unceasing energy, bravado and push. Valdés takes composer credit on "Zawinul's Mambo," which is obviously "Birdland." So who gets the mechanicals? —John McDonough

Hot playing as usual, tight ensemble work, too. But there's something overly formal about the music itself and the way the players interact. Seems like arrangements have more dictatorial power than need be, which in turn makes the program—or at least the action inside the songs—somewhat predictable. —Jim Macnie

I don't like the clanky sound Valdés pounds out of the piano and I particularly dislike his showboating, but this album brilliantly blends Cuban and North American traditions in a creative, imaginative and compelling way. —Paul de Barros



## Adam Lane's Full Throttle Orchestra *Ashcan Rantings*

CLEAN FEED 203

★★★★

The first point that Adam Lane makes in the packed, tiny liner notes of *Ashcan Rantings* is that this music is supposed to be fun. When a man has sojourns with Anthony Braxton and Earle Brown on his CV and puts a picture of a person projectile-vomiting the contents of a flower pot on the cover, it's fair to wonder how much of his sense of fun you might share. So let's get it right out front: this record is genuine, accessible fun. Because even though it is assembled from cellular structures managed by a rigorous collective conduction process that places enormous demands upon its players, this music is deeply in touch with the essential pleasures of earwig-worothy tunes, fat bluesy grooves and the sheer tonal beauty of a well-blown horn.

Quantitatively, the Full Throttle Orchestra reflects our diminished times. Besides Lane, there are just eight players, seven of whom wield horns. But between Lane's original orchestration and the ensemble members' creative embellish-



ments, the music never sounds small. On "Lucia," the way the trumpets loft gorgeous high tones over two overlaid melodies and an assertively stately bass line results in an expanse of sound as broad and multi-hued as a painted desert sunset. The players' contributions also stand tall. I've never heard Avram Fefer sound more imposing or compel-

ling than he does winding his way through that same tune's intricate steps. The way that trombonist Reut Regev first foots it with the rhythm section, then swoops into an extended raspberry, and finally ushers the whole ensemble back in for "Marshall's" stirring theme makes me want to wave a flag. And Lane's playing—whether he's using his bow to extract low ghost tones from his bass's innards, plucking out a sculpted melody or keeping throbbing time—is up front and delightful throughout.

—Bill Meyer

**Ashcan Rantings:** Disc 1: Imaginary Portrait; Marshall; Nine Man Morris; Desperate Incantations; House Of Elegant. (48:12) Disc 2: Ashcan Rantings; Lucia; Sienna's Slip Jig; Mahler; Bright Star Calypso. (46:12)

**Personnel:** Nate Wooley, Taylor Ho Bynum trumpet; David Bindman tenor, soprano saxophone; Avram Fefer alto saxophone, clarinet; Matt Bauder tenor, baritone saxophone; Reut Regev, Tim Vaughn, trombone; Adam Lane, bass; Igal Foni drums.

**Ordering info:** [cleanfeed-records.com](http://cleanfeed-records.com)



## Jason Adasiewicz *Sun Rooms*

DELMARK 593

★★★½

In the past few years, Jason Adasiewicz has become a pillar of the most creative section of the Chicago jazz scene with an unlikely instrument, the vibraphone, to the point where his presence has almost become expected on any given night. *Sun Rooms* displays his most musical side, which indicates that Adasiewicz is not that easy to pigeonhole and that his knowledge of the past and present informs his art. The trio format also means that his instrument takes centerstage and that, in the process, his cohorts barely get a chance to solo. Adasiewicz has, however, found in bassist Nate McBride and drummer Mike Reed two most sympathetic players. They are both melodic, McBride in particular, and they are fully attuned to the leader anticipating his every move. So, if one can argue that it would have been worthwhile to hear both of them stretch a bit, one should hand it to Adasiewicz for making the tough, but right, decision. It allows the performance to remain uncluttered and the leader to fully realize his ideas, in particular a quite unconventional way to improvise around each tune's theme.

Adasiewicz is a physical player equally at ease with material that requires a more gentle touch. His bell-like and resonant sound does not warrant any potent comparisons in the jazz world. In fact, it gives the proceedings a dreamy glow that at times recalls the universe of Italian composer Nino Rota. His own compositions can be wry, purposeful and lovely, and they certainly do not pale compared to the three covers that close the program. The trio concludes with poised versions of obscure pianist Hasaan Ibn Ali's "Off My Back Jack," an early Sun Ra nugget aptly titled "Overtones Of China" and Duke Ellington's charming "Warm Valley." A selection that should not give way to any complaints.

—Alain Drouot

**Sun Rooms:** Get In There; Life; Stake; Rose Garden; You Can't; Off My Back Jack; Overtones Of China; Warm Valley. (45:40)

**Personnel:** Jason Adasiewicz, vibraphone; Nate McBride, bass; Mike Reed, drums.  
**Ordering info:** [delmark.com](http://delmark.com)

## Mary Stallings *Dream*

HIGHNOTE 7212

★★★½

Stallings is a canny veteran singer with a lifetime of vocal experience at her disposal. Her firm contralto is a bit narrow of range, but she has a strong upper register that constitutes a near open sky. If she's not a terribly individual stylist, Stallings sings with authority and conviction. In these days of so many young singers trying to find their ways, that's worth more than a little.

Stallings can ride a tad behind the beat on a mid-tempo tune like "Dream Dancing," only to stretch her phrase endings into little sky trails of held notes. She imparts blues feeling (like on Artie Shaw's "Moon Ray") without singing an outright blues. And she turns Noel Coward's queenly lament "Mad About The Boy" into a soulful dirge of contained autumnal regret.

Pianist Eric Reed produced the album, stocked with good songs and clever arrangements. "Old Black Magic"—traditionally a romp—is taken out-of-tempo to otherworldly effect. Jimmy Rowles' underappreciated "The Peacocks" (titled here as "A Timeless Place")



is a ballad loaded with harmonic implication. Stallings betrays some Carmen McRae in her articulation and phrasing—never a bad thing—and fulfills the potential of the song. Turning over the last chorus of "Never Knew" to the tonally similar Adriana Evans is a beau geste on Stallings' part that finishes the number with a strong falsetto.

Reed is a model accompanist, who underplays and implies a lot in his playing; he lets Stallings make her own choices. He underlines Stallings on the verse of "Close Enough For Love" and then lays down a forceful ostinato to set the rhythmic course. He plays a quasi-stride solo accompaniment to "Weaver Of Dreams," and bassist Hamilton Price plays a sure-handed pizzicato behind Stallings' sunny vocals to Kenny Dorham's "Before You Know It." At 1:12, it's short but quietly effective. This album has much to offer over many hearings.

—Kirk Silsbee

**Dream:** Close Enough For Love; That Old Black Magic; Moon Ray; Never Knew; A Weaver Of Dreams; Mad About The Boy; Dream Dancing; Hey Now; Watching You Watching Me; Before You Know It; Timeless Peace. (45:77)

**Personnel:** Mary Stallings, vocals; Eric Reed, piano; Hamilton Price, double bass; Ralph Penland, drums; Adriana Evans, vocals (4).  
**Ordering info:** [jazzdepot.com](http://jazzdepot.com)

## Spanish Harlem Orchestra *Viva La Tradicion*

CONCORD PICANTE 32263

★★½

## Chicago Afro-Latin Jazz Ensemble *Blueprints*

CHICAGO SESSIONS 0013

★★★★½



The Spanish Harlem Orchestra and Chicago Afro-Latin Jazz Ensemble are like siblings with almost nothing in common. The former adheres to brassy arrangements that embellish vocal parts performed by a handful of singers. The latter explores mostly instrumental fare with lots of improvisation. Both bands, however, wear their Afro-Cuban roots proudly.

The main difference is the Spanish Harlem Orchestra devotes itself entirely to the salsa music popularized during the 1960s in New York City. In this respect the 13-piece band, which won a Grammy in 2005, shares the same mission as a hip thrift store, whose racks expose vintage fashion to new generations.

While the title of the Spanish Harlem Orchestra's fourth album, *Viva La Tradicion*, trumpets this agenda, the results are disappointing. In striving for authenticity, the album sacrifices variety. Produced by bandleader Oscar Hernández, the

majority of the tracks come tightly wound. Allowing the band some space to stretch out might have enlivened this repertoire-driven project. "Como Baila Mi Mulata" boasts the album's most compelling vocal harmonies. "La Fiesta Empezo" conveys a surprising sense of pathos, while the ballad "Nuestra Cancion" offers a brief respite from the album's uniformly brisk tempos.

With far less regard for tradition, the Chicago Afro-Latin Jazz Ensemble looks to write a new chapter and its elastic approach succeeds. Founded in 2006 by trumpeter Victor Garcia and pianist Darwin Noguera, the band's lineup features roughly 15 musicians. The eight original compositions are marked by a range of styles—sometimes occurring during the same track—in addition to vamps and multiple sections.

*Blueprints*, then, is no more a Latin release than "Giant Steps" is a bop tune. Timbales and congas add a strong Latin flavor, but the set list

extends from modal fare ("Send Eggs") and reggae ("Vuelvo A Vivir") to the straightahead swing of a modern big band ("Milesmiles," "Captain Spok," "Bossa Pegajosa").

The solos of trombonist Steve Turre, guitarist Neal Alger and alto player Greg Ward also figure prominently. This is hardly the case with *Viva La Tradicion*, whose first (and only) proper horn solo doesn't occur until the next-to-last track ("Rumba Urbana," the lone instrumental). That's a long wait, even for the most patient listener, and likely will limit the album's crossover appeal among jazz audiences.

—Eric Fine

**Viva La Tradicion:** La Salsa Dura; Mi Herencia Latina; Son De Corazon; Como Baila Mi Mulata; Si Me Quieres Te Quiero; Baila Latina; La Fiesta Empezo; Nuestra Cancion; Linda; Regalo De Dios; Rumba Urbana; El Negro Tiene Tumbao. (68:26)

**Personnel:** Oscar Hernandez, piano, bandleader, producer; Hector Colon, John Walsh, trumpet; Jimmy Bosch, Daniel Reagan, Steve Turre, trombone; Mitch Frohman, baritone saxophone, flute; Luisito Quintero, timbales, percussion; George Delgado, congas, percussion; Jorge Gonzalez, bongos, percussion; Gerardo Madera, bass; Ray De La Paz; Marco Bermudez, Carlos Cascante, Willie Torres, vocals; Maximo Rodriguez, bass (2); Raul Agraz, trumpet (4, 7); Issac Delgado lead vocals (12).

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

**Blueprints:** Send Eggs; Milesmiles; Captain Spok; Vuelvo A Vivir; Blueprints; Bossa Pegajosa; Tierra; Timeless. (57:42)

**Personnel:** Victor Garcia, Tito Camillo, Roger Ingram, Freddie Rodriguez, trumpet; Darwin Noguera, piano; Steve Turre, John Mose, Craig Sunkin, trombone; Greg Ward, alto saxophone; Steve Eisen, baritone saxophone; Rocky Year, tenor, baritone saxes, flute; Joshua Ramos, electric bass; Ernie Adams (1, 3, 4, 6, 8), Juan Daniel Pastor (2, 5), drums; Victor Gonzalez Jr., congas; Juan Picoirelli, timbales; Juan Turros, tenor saxophone; Rich Moore, alto saxophone, clarinet (7); Nythia Martinez, Ricky Luis, vocals; Neal Alger, guitar; Paoli Mejias, congas.

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



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## Joshua Abrams *Natural Information*

EREMITE 53

★★★★

As a cofounder of bands such as Town & Country and Sticks & Stones and as a longtime member of one of flautist Nicole Mitchell's dearest projects, bass player Joshua Abrams is a well-known figure on the Chicago scene. On one of his rare outings as a leader, Abrams takes some serious distances with the world of jazz and improvised music. And he does not even give the bass first billing, focusing for the most part on various other instruments, especially the guimbri (a lute from North Africa), which is the driving force of the epic "Abide In Sunset."

The overall result is an earthy blend of world music and psychedelia with even a nod to jam bands courtesy of Emmett Kelly's gritty guitar work. Each piece has its own atmosphere, as a different instrumentation and a different cast of musicians are used each time. Abrams relies on the guimbri or the bass to create grooves that imperceptibly change over the course of a



piece whereas he employs the dulcimer or the harmonium with a drone-producing design. The folk and Eastern overtones of "In Ex Or Able" and "A Lucky Stone," respectively, or the stark "Cabin" make the more lasting impressions. Whether the tunes are hypnotic, rambling, or reflective, they all have a rather low intensity. However, instead of

forming a disparate aggregate, Abrams' compositions come together due to a groove-centered commonality and, strangely enough, seem logically sequenced.

Pressed on vinyl only in a limited edition of 550, this album's short supply might not help raise Abrams' profile. It is unfortunate because it has the potential to reach an audience well beyond the jazz realm.

—Alain Drouot

**Natural Information:** Mysterious Delirious Fluke Of The Beyond; Abide In Sunset; Dolphin Cave Dazzling; Cabin; In Ex or Able; A Lucky Stone. (41:12)

**Personnel:** Joshua Abrams, guimbri, mpc1000, percussion, harmonium (2,6), bass, bells (3,5), dulcimer (1), donso ngoni, bells, ms20 (4); Jason Adasiewicz, vibraphone (3,5); Emmett Kelly, guitar (2,6); Frank Rosaly, drums (2,6); Noritaka Tanaka (3,5).

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

## Houston Person *Moment To Moment*

HIGH NOTE 7217

★★★★

The massive, warm-as-pot-belly-stove tone of Houston Person's tenor sax has graced fine duo contexts latterly, alongside Ron Carter and Bill Charlap. With this release he expands to a sextet to make room for trumpeter Terrell Stafford. The music is suitably unpretentious but surprisingly varied with several tunes (e.g. "E Nada Mais" and "Nina Never Knew") that I've heard from no one else.

An unremarkable original kicks off the set, dedicated to New York's Bleecker Street, and Stafford is granted first solo honors. The trumpeter's claxon blast relishes clichés and in-your-face melodic simplicity, which suits Person to a tee, although his pertness contrasts wildly with the beveled edges of the tenor. Ray Drummond's bass has buoyed countless such sessions and he and Willie Jones III keep the coffee perking. An abrupt change of mood announces one of Billie Holiday's torch songs, "I Cover The Waterfront," complete with protracted intro. Drummond's sustained low notes sound like the lapping of the harbor waves, and Person's bulbous tone and bare-bones pro-



nouncement remind of Coleman Hawkins plus Person's long association with soulful singer Etta Jones. The reverb is over-tweaked on "Don't Take Your Love..." making the tenor a little too creamy, and a couple tracks don't excite: Ray Brown's "Freight Dance" is overfreighted with stodge. Things come alive for Stafford's

Satchmo cameo on "Back In New Orleans" complete with vibrato shakes and some grease in the gravy, and it's easy to see why the laid-back Di Martino suits Person's disposition. Stafford consistently cracks up a notch with growls, half-valves, glissandos and strong decisions.

Houston lets the trumpeter grab the limelight during trades on the swaggering "All My Life" and offers Johnston a tumbling taste on the closer, as well as on a perky "Just The Way You Are," where at last the leader lets his bluesy bobcat out the bag.

—Michael Jackson

**Moment To Moment:** Bleecker Street; I Cover The Waterfront; Moment To Moment; Freight Dance; Don't Take Your Love From Me; E Nada Mais; Just The Way You Are; Back In New Orleans; All My Life; Love Won't Let Me Wait; Nina Never Knew. (52:34)

**Personnel:** Houston Person, tenor saxophone; Terrell Stafford, trumpet; John Di Martino, piano; Randy Johnston, guitar; Ray Drummond, bass; Willie Jones III, drums.

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



## Lizz Wright *Fellowship*

VERVE FORECAST 14673

★★★★½

On her fourth studio album, Lizz Wright trains her rich, pitch-perfect alto on a variety of tunes that center on the journey to inner solace, defining the constituents of her "fellowship" not by their gospel roots so much as by their spiritual potential.

Starting with the first lyric of its title track, *Fellowship* dispels any assumptions that its message might be secular, as Wright warns listeners of the inherent danger in believing "that your God is better than another man's." Steady and smooth, her voice blends with guest bassist (and the song's composer) Me'Shell N'Degeocello's deep and multi-layered space-rock contribution.

Wright has been rightfully lauded as an agile interpreter, and that skill set shines here, as a slowed-down take on Gladys Knight's self-aware "I've Got To Use My Imagination" expands the boundaries of gospel, with Wright slowing the tempo and thereby shifting the focus from the r&b hit's original, rhythmic pop to Wright's proud, luxe delivery. Later, "In From The Storm" gets a blues treatment, with the earthier sounds of a handjive loop and slide guitar filling in for Hendrix's more tense, electric zeal.

Given her background as a vocalist in her father's church, though, it's no surprise that the album's most memorable moments are also the most traditionally gospel-driven. Stitching together five classic African-American spirituals, Wright's "Gospel Medley" balances an Odetta-caliber range of emotion with the kind of joyful, melodic belting that put Sister Rosetta Tharpe on the map. Though clearly a student of these looming figures, Wright's chart-topping new release exudes a controlled, yet wistful grace that is hers alone.

—Jennifer Odell

**Fellowship:** Fellowship; I've Got To Use My Imagination; I Remember, I Believe; God Specializes; Gospel Medley; Sweeping Through The City; All The Seeds; Presence Of The Lord; In From The Storm; Feed The Light; Oya; Amazing Grace. (47:32)

**Personnel:** Lizz Wright, vocals, handjive loop; Glen Patscha, keyboards, Fender Rhodes, Hammond B3, Wurliizers, piano, pump organ; Me'Shell N'Degeocello; Rocky Bryant, drums; Oren Bloedow, guitar; Joan Wasser, violin, background vocals; Nic D'Amato, bass; Alfredo "Catfish" Alias, drums; Robin Macatangay, guitar; Fred Walcott, percussion, shaker; Todd Sickafosse, acoustic bass; Bernice Johnson Reagan, background vocals, arranger; Mimi Jones, acoustic bass; Angelique Kidjo, vocals; Nacho Newsam-Marchak, background vocals.

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

## Stringed Revival

The origins of jazz violin are explored in an anthology of sorts with **Violinjazz: The Music Of Eddie South** (Dorian 92110; 59:46; ★★½). This tribute by the group Violinjazz features violinist Jeremy Cohen with able assistance from pianist Larry Dunlap, guitarist Dix Bruce and bassist Jim Kerwin. The best playing comes from the mix of "fiddle" and guitar, presaging the Gypsy jazz of later years on "Black Gypsy" and "Tzigane In Rhythm." Stylistically vast, early jazz becomes bebop and more modern standard fare.

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

The coupling of former Kronos Quartet member Joan Jeanrenaud on acoustic and electric cello with PC Munoz on electronic/acoustic drums and percussion works, in part, because each track is different, but also because both members entertain the available effects technologies with writing and playing that's sketchy but interesting. **Pop-Pop** (Deconet 610074243854; 37:31; ★★½) is playful with its jazz aesthetic, but also a tad classical. "331/3" bounces next to "Noise," which also bounces but is filled with passages that linger, accenting the cellist's touch. This cello-and-percussion team moves through 10 tracks that are alternately tantalizing, mesmerizing, even somber at times.

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

**Commitment: The Complete Recordings 1981/1983** (No Business 14-15; 75:33/48:38; ★★½) The New York Loft era Commitment put one album out over its five-year existence, with this collection showcasing mostly new material to enthusiastic audiences. This band featured a young group with fiery, driving Jason Hwang on violin, viola and bird calls; William Parker on bass; drummer Zen Matsura; and Will Connell Jr. on flutes, alto and bass clarinet. Intensity drives everything, but there's also a magnetic tendency towards space and openness. Hwang's quiescent then rolling "Ocean" lends an air of mystery furthered by "The Pathway" on disc one in contrast to their free-jazz hoe-downs elsewhere. Disc two offers more nuance with moments of serenity and frenetic swing on Parker's "Continuous," more creeping serenity and open sky with Hwang's "Grassy Hills, The Sun" only to return to howling crescendos on Parker's roughhewn swinger "Whole Grain."

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

**The Jazz Passengers: Reunited** (Justin Time 8565; 48:46; ★★★★★) Violinist Sam Bardfeld's in good, familiar company, his sweet violin at home, adding extra spice and flair. With trombonist Curtis Fowlkes, reedist Roy Nathanson, vibist Bill Ware and E.J. Rodriguez on drums, Reunited's loaded up with guests Elvis

Joan Jeanrenaud and PC Munoz: Technological sketches



Costello, Deborah Harry and Sus Hylgaard on vocals and guitarist Marc Ribot on six of the nine tracks. The sextet Passengers work their lounge-jazz magic through intricate arrangements, offering show-biz flair with "Wind Walked By," dixieland-ish rock on "Seven," more rockin' fun with the funky "Button Up," a swinging, bluesy "Spanish Harlem" and theatrical vocal antics with the reinvented title track.

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

Violinist Christian Howes' **Out Of The Blue** (Resonance 1016; 61:02; ★★½) is solid, violin-based jazz-blues with funky overtones. Featuring guitarist Robben Ford, the innovative Howes also gets great support from alternating organ- and piano-based rhythm sections manned by Bobby Floyd and Tamir Hendelman (keyboards), Kevin Axt and Ric Fierabracci (bass) and Joel Rosenblatt (drums). This mix of originals and jazz standards includes rare covers of Chick Corea's "Fingerprints," Carla Bley's "Sing Me Softly Of The Blues" and Ornette Coleman's "When Will The Blues Leave."


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

David Bixler & Arturo O'Farrill's **The Auction Project** (Zoho 201009; 60:03; ★★★★★) and Lucian Ban & John Hebert's **Enesco Re-Imagined** (Sunnyside 1259; 71:21; ★★★★★) are two ambitious projects, filled with heady arrangements. **The Auction Project** features jazz with Latin overtones, Enesco clearly mining more classical terrain. Heather Martin Bixler's violin on **Auction Project** helps create a contrasting sonic weave across a swath of traditional, folksy material arranged by David, e.g., "Heather's Waltz Part 1" and "Part 2," the sextet dishing up a great mix of Afro-Celtic "sympathies" more urban grooves. The live Enesco features trumpeter Ralph Alessi, saxist Tony Malaby, with pianist Ban and bassist Hebert creating novel re-orchestrations of seven pieces by the late Romanian classical composer George Enesco. Mat Maneri's viola and Albrecht Maurer's violin provide the determinative voices.

DB

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

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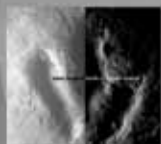
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## Blues | BY FRANK-JOHN HADLEY

### Messin' With The Eminent Kids

**Junior Wells & The Aces: *Live In Boston 1966* (Delmark 809; 65:42 ★★★★★)** Wells reunited with guitarist Louis Myers, bassist Dave Meyers and drummer Fred Below—as a teenager, his first cohorts on the Chicago blues scene, circa 1950—for an out-of-town performance that's now preserved on this release. The four regulate the ebb and flow of their blues for marvelous results. The bandleader's sensuous, distinctive vocals and dazzling turns of harmonica phraseology are deep, personal statements. Always a showman, almost grown into his mid-1960s James Brown shtick, he has fun horsing around with the audience. The Aces live up to their name; of special interest is the guitar solo on "Junior's Whoop." The program's light on material from Wells' then-new

Hoodoo Man Blues album, scoring with tried-and-true crowd-pleasers like "That's All Right" and "Got My Mojo Working."

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

**Mark Robinson: *Quit Your Job—Play Guitar* (Blind Chihuahua 001; 48:07 ★★★)** Once of service to Lonnie Brooks and other eminences in Chicago, Robinson fills his first feature outing with rock and soul variations on his grounding in Chicago, Delta and Mississippi hill country blues. Revealing a strong musical intelligence, the Nashville musician stays front and center as a capable singer and a focused, expressive guitarist on original tunes enriched with attractive melodies, thoughtful lyrics and sustained moods. One highlight is Robinson's "Try One More Time," his love plea underlined by backup singers Tracy Nelson and Vickie Carrico. Another comes with his reconditioning of Santos & Johnny's instrumental "Sleepwalk."

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

**Ronnie Earl & The Broadcasters: *Spread The Love* (Stony Plain 1347; 75:14 ★★★★★)** More than two decades into his solo career, Earl continues to offer his altruistic musical messages, this time without any vocals at all. He's again technically accomplished on his guitar and, per usual, sincerity is packed into each and every note. Objects of Earl's affection in song this time: Albert Collins, Kenny Burrell, Duke Pearson, Duane Allman, Otis Spann, his wife, Donna, his friend Tommy Hazeltine and ballplayer Jackie Robinson. The redemptive pain and

Ronnie Earl:  
Guitar healing



despair so integral to his blues' effectiveness is present all right—his guitar sheds tears on "Spann's Groove"—but not as plentifully as on previous records. So, be happy for the progress of his self-healing, and have some selfish regret over how the light that replaces darkness in his playing makes for less fascinating listening.

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

**Peaches Staten: *Live At Legends* (Swississippi 5803; 59:01 ★★)** A veteran singer of considerable punch, Staten knows how to keep an audience happy by shooting from the hip with local-grown Chicago blues and secondhand bayou r&b. She needs to cast off the ghost of Koko Taylor to assert her own identity. The band is professional with little character and loads of clichés.

Ordering info: [swississippi-records.com](http://swississippi-records.com)

**Mia Vermillion: *Alone Together With The Blues* (Wildland 121; 33:50 ★★★)** In point of fact, Vermillion sings better than many of her more widely known contemporaries. Despite a tendency to get shrill and chilly at the top of her voice, she comports herself well throughout her first feature record, supported by the trustworthy Orville Johnson on dobro, guitar and mandolin and a hushed rhythm section. She's particularly good at dishing out the sloshed sensuality of Big Bill Broonzy's "I've Been Drinkin'." Give this Seattle resident points, too, for acknowledging her foremothers Lil Green ("In The Dark") and Mary Lou Williams ("Walkin'").

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

DB

## Brad Goode *Tight Like This*

DELMARK DE 594

★★★★★

This new record from trumpeter Brad Goode epitomizes his aesthetic, conception and execution as his career reaches the mid-way point.

*Tight Like This*, Goode's 12th album as a leader, is a highly effective set that mixes Goode originals with older tunes that give nods to past trumpet greats. He reinvents Louis Armstrong's Hot 5 recording on the title track, which opens the album, and adds polychords to Walter Donaldson's "Changes," a late-'20s feature for Bix Beiderbecke, giving it a harmonically far-out sound à la Dave Douglas. Goode also pays homage to his mentors with originals: The waltz "Summary" is for Eddie Harris, while the hard bopper "Bob's Bounce" is dedicated to Delmark's founder Bob Koester. Goode's trumpet sound is round, mellow and songful, and he's more than capable of letting it rip with verve and swagger. Throughout *Tight Like This*, Goode juxtaposes the lyrical with the angular, fireworks with introspection and virtuosity with understatement. The rhythm section is super flexible and handles everything with aplomb: swing, backbeat, 5/4, or broken time. Drummer Anthony Lee is just as adept at laying down a groove as he is moving out of the time-keeper's role. And wherever he goes, bassist Kelly Sill, whose sound is enormous, is right there, especially when the backbeat of Freddie Webster's "Reverse The Changes" briefly goes into a half-time 12/8 feel. Pianist Adrean Farrugia is in superb form, whether soloing or comping.

—Chris Robinson

**Tight Like This:** Tight Like This; Changes; Nightingale; Reaching For The Moon; Reverse The Changes; Summary; Midwestern Autumn; Climbing Out; The River; Bob's Bounce; Softly, As In A Morning Sunrise, (58:10)  
**Personnel:** Brad Goode, trumpet; Adrean Farrugia, piano; Kelly Sill, bass; Anthony Lee, drums.  
**Ordering info:** [delmark.com](http://delmark.com)



## Dave Holland/ Pepe Habichuela *Hands*

DARE2 006

★★★★½

Dave Holland's work with others never fails to surprise.

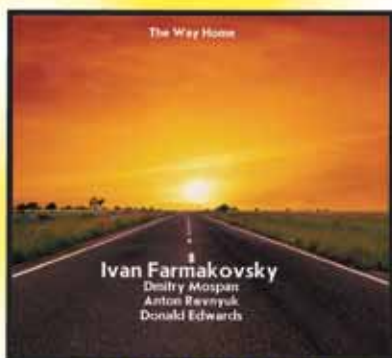
Recalling his interests in country music with Vassar Clements, Norman Blake and John Hartford, *Hands* takes Holland in a completely different direction. The bassist becomes immersed in the company of three amazing flamenco guitarists and two percussionists doubling on the cajon. *Hands* suggests Holland is right at home, his bass playing recognizable despite the different cadences, arrangements and alternative feel of a music more classical and yet still jazzy. Just listen to him solo with guitar accompaniment to the rumba of "El Ritmo Me Lleva," or to the mesmerizing lilt of the title track, the spirited bounce of each song a perfect vehicle for Holland's driving, articulate bass playing. Throughout, the listener is encased by a production that puts the bassist not so much at the head of the music as in the lap of the other players.

Holland's main collaborator is guitarist Pepe Habichuela, native of Granada from a Gypsy family. Once their paths crossed, they began to jam informally, Holland embedded within a rich flamenco environment. One thing led to another, and the tale is told once again of how jazz and, in this case, flamenco music have all this room to maneuver with each other, from the spirited rhythms, the forums for virtuosity and soloing to the love of tradition, melody and improvisation.

—John Ephland



**Hands:** Hands; Subi La Cuesta; Camaron; The Whirling Dervish; Yesqueros; El Ritmo Me Lleva; Bailaor; Joyride; Puente Quebrado; My Friend Dave. (56:43)  
**Personnel:** Dave Holland, bass; Pepe Habichuela, Josemi Carmona, Carlos Carmona, guitar; Israel Porriña, Juan Carmona, cajon and percussion.  
**Ordering info:** [daveholland.com](http://daveholland.com)



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## Antonio Sanchez *Live In New York*

CAMJAZZ 5035

★★★

Mucho machismo is the phrase that ripples through this live double-CD of drummer Antonio Sanchez's sax-heavy quartet. Recorded at New York's Jazz Standard in 2008, the two sets feature four long pieces each (only one clocks in at under 12 minutes) and the tempo is almost unrelentingly up. Heavily influenced by fusion as a teenager in Mexico, the drummer keeps an intense fire burning under the feet of alto saxophonist Miguel Zenón and tenor saxophonist David Sanchez, who both respond in kind.

Neither Zenón nor Sanchez are shy about flashing their considerable chops, so they make ideal companions for long, flowing compositions like the leader's "Greedy Silence" or "Challenge Within." Zenón, in particular, is prone to taking every solo into dramatic territory. On the opening "Greedy Silence," which builds from a bass pedal to a mighty roar, he pours so much passion into his solo that it's difficult to guess that the set is just beginning. An hour later, the two reed players are trading slashing statements as the rhythm section bounces the tempo around. It's all a little overwrought.

The quartet is less exhausting and more interesting when the horns intertwine, as on the leader's heartfelt "Ballade," or when they play off one another creatively on Pat Metheny's "H And H."

As the only non-Latin musician, bassist Scott Colley is the odd man out here, and he plays a vital role in nailing down the beat when the gas jets are wide open. His intensity on "Ballade" and "The Forgotten Ones" adds a strong, extra dimension to a band that can grow a bit tiresome over time.

—James Hale

**Live In New York:** Disc 1: Greedy Silence; H And H; Ballade; Revelation. (65:08); Disc 2: It Will Be Better; Did You Get It; The Forgotten Ones; Challenge Within. (59:05)

**Personnel:** Miguel Zenón, alto saxophone; David Sanchez, tenor saxophone; Scott Colley, bass; Antonio Sanchez, drums.

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



## Henry Threadgill Zooid *This Brings Us To Volume II*

PI RECORDINGS 36

★★★½

A zooid is a cell capable of independent movement within an organism; for example, a spermatozoon. While Henry Threadgill's choice to give his band this name reflects his musical intentions, it also works as a metaphor for Threadgill's role within jazz. Ever since he formed the trio Air nearly 40 years ago, he's charted an autonomous course, and nearly every one of his records is a fertile source of ideas about how the music might keep moving.

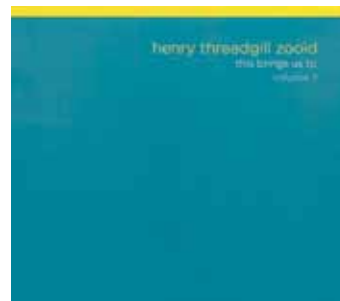
Zooid's concept is designed to short-circuit by-the-numbers playing. Rather than mandate chords or modes, Threadgill's compositions prescribe a set of intervals that each musician can play within at will, with the expectation that they use their freedom to contribute to the music's melodic, harmonic and rhythmic structure. It's a peculiar blend of openness and organization that yields highly specific music. Despite a conceptual debt to the collectivism of Ornette Coleman's harmolodics, you won't mistake this music for anyone's other than Threadgill's, even though he keeps a tight rein on his own playing. The sound is busy, and yet full of space; the players' exchanges convoluted and conversational, yet absolutely purposeful. Threadgill is pretty stingy with his alto, using it for sharp, sometimes exaggeratedly emphatic phrases. He's more loquacious and exceptionally nimble on flute. But the weave that he and the two string players (both playing acoustic instruments) accomplish is so airy that one sometimes wishes that Jose Davila would step up and give the music more ballast. Drummer Elliot Humberto Kavee deserves special credit for not only holding the music together but doing so at considerable speed.

—Bill Meyer

**This Brings Us To Volume II:** Lying Eyes; This Brings Us To; Extremely Sweet William; Polymorph; It Never Moved. (43:30)

**Personnel:** Henry Threadgill flute, alto saxophone; Liberty Ellman, guitar; Jose Davila, trombone and tuba; Stomu Takeishi, bass guitar; Elliot Humberto Kavee, drums.

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



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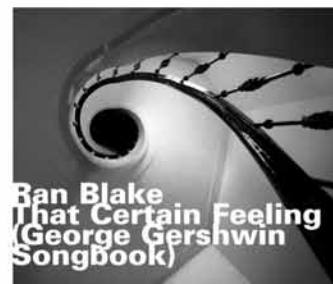
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## Rocking In Rice Paddies

Dengue Fever, a band based in Los Angeles, performs one of the most entertaining if unusual strains of modern rock. They update Cambodian pop from the late '60s and early '70s, relying on a fusion of Khmer folk strains with American psychedelic rock and Bollywood and Spaghetti Western film music. The soundtrack-and-video *Sleepwalking Through The Mekong* (M80 102; CD 56:10/DVD 66:00; ★★★★★) celebrates a trip to the native country of their beautifully voiced singer, Chhom Nimol. With lyrics in the Khmer language, she addresses songs with a compassion that is persuasive while the Holtzman brothers and the other band members join local guests in showing mastery of the sometimes complicated musical phrasing. Equally first-rate is director John Pirozzi's accompanying film.

As curators of the compilation *Dengue Fever Presents Electric Cambodia* (Minky 1; 45:17; ★★★★★), the band rummaged through dozens of unlabeled cassette tapes that have been peddled in Phnom Penh and Cambodian emigrant communities for years. Fourteen singles offer listeners access to the euphoric sounds that Khmer teenagers danced to in the halcyon time before the despot Pol Pot turned the country into killing fields in 1975.

Thank The Beatles for the fun music that shined in that country in the years before the horror. The four mop tops conquered America in 1964 and it wasn't long before the likes of "I Want To Hold Your Hand" radiated around the world. American soldiers in Viet Nam introduced other styles of rock to Southeast Asia. But even before Western music took root, Ros Sereysothea was a national treasure for her singing of romantic ballads. After converting to Western-influenced pop, she used her cloud-nine-high voice to attractively glide and swoop over a competent rock rhythm section on "Cold Sky" and four more tunes here.

Almost as popular at the time was Pan Ron. Her vaguely seductive chirping was often matched to aggressive rock accompanists on arrangements that called for far-out guitar solos and changing textures. "Snaeha" clones Cher's 1966 hit 45 "Bang Bang," and "Unknown Title" has fuzztone guitar that pours down on listeners like a monsoon rain of liquid LSD. Sadly and perversely, for all the giddy life in this collection's tracks, the singers and musicians were murdered by Khmer



Dengue Fever:  
Khmer stylists

KEVIN STRADA

Rouge thugs.

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

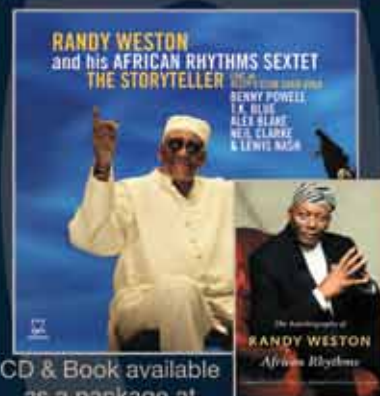
Pop music rendered with an intoxicating vivacity and technical skill was also found in a neighboring country. *Shadow Music Of Thailand* (Sublime Frequencies 042; 44:56; ★★★★★) collects 17 tunes issued in the mid-1960s that epitomize the garage guitar-and-organ instrumental music shared by bands known as Pocket Music (P. M.), The Son of P. M., P. M. 7/Jupiter and Johnny Guitar. In thrall to tremolo guitar-whiz Hank Marvin and The Shadows (a British band beloved globally except in America), the Thai musicians latch onto engaging folk melodies and keep rhythms buoyant for the requisite two or three minutes. Xylophones surface here and there, so do deeply intoned vocals. The high entertainment level only dips when Johnny Guitar's "Bangkok By Night" and Son's "Lum Jow Praya" come off as lame and labored.

With 15 tunes from the 1960s to the '80s, *Siamese Soul* (Sublime Frequencies 050; 55:08; ★★) makes greater demands on our indulgence for Thai pop. Several singers purvey a single flat, extended emotion, and there isn't much to savor in the marriage of Thai folk to tiresome Western funk vamps. High times: The Bangkok reefer madness of "Bong Ja Bong."

DB

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

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The highly anticipated second release from jazz, Broadway and big band vocal veteran Amy London, *Let's Fly* is a swinging and sensual affair replete with jazz and Brazilian standards, tasty re-imaginings of Joni Mitchell and Laura Nyro songs, rare gems by bop legends Charles Mingus and Elmo Hope, and a cheery new version of the title track, penned by vocal legend Annie Ross, with a new vocalese verse written by London, and recorded here for the first time since Johnny Mercer recorded it in the 1940s.

*Let's Fly* is a true love letter of a release, on which London leads an A-list ensemble of New York players who breathe and groove as one with her as she graciously leads them through her impeccable arrangements.

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## David S. Ware *Onecept*

AUM FIDELITY 64

★★★★

In the summer of 2008, free-jazz titan David S. Ware was making plans to celebrate his 50th year playing saxophone by making a special recording when health issues interrupted; after nine years, kidney dialysis was losing its effectiveness and he needed a transplanted organ. Amazingly, he recorded this jaw-dropping trio session just a year later, following successful surgery in May of 2009, showing no signs of wear or weakness. Joined by his long-time cohort William Parker on bass and Warren Smith on percussion, Ware gives his stritch and saxello as much action as his trademark tenor, but as he says in the liner notes, the type of horn doesn't matter, claiming that the direction on all nine tracks is the same, but that their streams of consciousness are all unique.

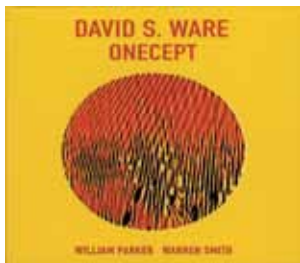
In contrast with most of his band work, the music on *Onecept* was all improvised in the studio, but even without pre-composed themes Ware still exercises his mastery of motific improvisation, forging a bounty of terse, fast-moving phrases and dissecting and reshaping them with determined thoroughness and invention. Parker remains a simpatico partner, unleashing feverish arco meditations and tightly coiled plucked passages that consistently provide a perfect inverse to what Ware is laying down, while Smith casts an even broader net, sketching shimmering melodic shapes. Ware still sounds very much like himself, but the instrumentation and a heightened spirituality reveal a man who's never blown his horn with greater purpose.

—Peter Margasak

**Onecept:** Book Of Kirtika; Wheel Of Life; Celestial; Desire Worlds; Astral Earth; Savaka; Bardo; Anagami; Vata. (65:38)

**Personnel:** David S. Ware, tenor saxophone, stritch, saxello; William Parker, bass; Warren Smith, drums, tympani, percussion.

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



## Claudette King *We're Onto Something*

BLUES EXPRESS 10009

★★★

Vocalist Claudette King knows how to win you over with subtlety. She's probably worked her share of blues clubs for audiences who wanted high-energy shows, yet at no time does she resort to a one-dimensional holler to get your attention, like several female blues singers do in the post-Koko Taylor age. Her debut, *We're Onto Something*, is a nice, varied showcase for her talents.

Not content to settle into a non-stop program of shuffles, King smartly switches up the groove from time to time. "This Ain't How I Planned It" proves she can put over a ballad with authority. "A Dog Like You" sounds like a slicker version of Sharon Jones & the Dap-Kings; but "Isn't Peace The Least We Can Do" reflects a jazz influence. Through it all, she is backed by a band that seems to anticipate her every mood, including organist Tim Brockett and guitarist Bobby Murray. At a time when the typical new blues release tries to overwhelm you, King and company deal in subtle persuasion. Only when you're halfway through it do you realize you've been sweetly hit over the head. Although the 40-ish King has been at it for decades now, this is her first album, and the experience has served her well. And, as it turns out, her blues credentials are hereditary: Her father is a relatively well-known guitarist/singer professionally known as B.B. King.

—James Porter

**We're Onto Something:** Can I Walk You To Your Car; Whole Lotta Nothing; Too Little Too Late; We're Onto Something; Playing With My Friends; This Ain't How I Planned It; A Dog Like You; Boogie Some; Rock My Soul; Isn't Peace The Least We Can Do; Easier Alone. (43:54)

**Personnel:** Claudette King, vocals; Sametto James, bass; Donito James, drums; Tim Brockett, organ, piano; Bobby Murray, guitar; George Brooks, tenor sax; Marvin McFadden, trumpet; Mic Gillette, horns.

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



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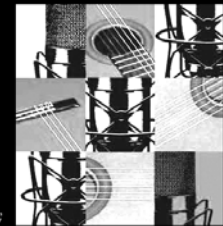
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— from the liner notes by Ira Gitler

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## Exploding Star Orchestra *Stars Have Shapes*

DELMARK 595

★★★★½

Cornetist/composer Rob Mazurek, the man behind the Exploding Star Orchestra, has in recent years developed a truly unique musical vision that finds again its expression in this new opus.

Two epic pieces dominate. The opener "Ascension Ghost Impression #2" features a roaring atmospheric swirl over which Mazurek and flutist Nicole Mitchell make the more striking reflective statements. At midpoint, the band breaks into a pretty and swinging melody that provides a short reprieve before diving head-first into a new frenzy and concluding with a more traditional collective improvisation. On the other hand, "Three Blocks of Light" is somewhat less compelling. The sparser ruminations over a drone-like backdrop become a bit wearisome after some time.

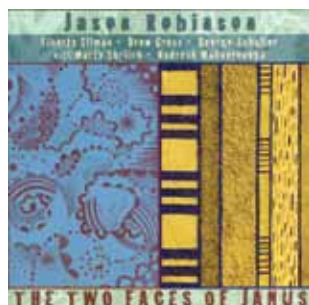
The two shorter pieces are different animals altogether. "ChromoRock-er" is beat-driven by a rock impulsion and evolves into a compelling musical patchwork, while the closer is more relaxed and, again, makes a potent use of the wide tonal palette his 14-piece orchestra has to offer.

—Alain Drouot

**Stars Have Shapes:** Ascension Ghost Impression #2; ChromoRock-er; Three Blocks Of Light; Impression #1. (50:19)

**Personnel:** Rob Mazurek, cornet, electro-acoustic constructions; Nicole Mitchell, flutes, voice; Matt Bauder, clarinet, tenor saxophone; Jeb Bishop, trombone; Jason Stein, bass clarinet; Greg Ward, alto saxophone; Jason Adasiewicz, vibraphone; Matthew Lux, bass guitar; Josh Abrams, bass; John Herndon, drums; Mike Reed, drums; Damon Locks, word rocker; Carrie Biolo, gongs, temple blocks, vibes, percussion; Jeff Kowalkowski, piano.

Ordering Info: [delmark.com](http://delmark.com)



## Jason Robinson *The Two Faces Of Janus*

CUNEIFORM 311

★★★★

Saxophonist Jason Robinson's Cuneiform leader debut posits a sound that looks simultaneously forward and backward through the music's history.

The ensemble that Robinson assembled for the session is composed

of several of modern jazz's most individualistic players, who he combines and subdivides to suit the requirements of each piece.

Robinson's compositions manage to draw a straight line through bop, Duke Ellington, Ornette Coleman and Eric Dolphy straight into the modern day with acute-angle swing, blues bluster and memorable themes that seem to scratch at the back of the mind with familiarity without resorting to quotation or imitation. It might be tempting to try and draw a line between the forward- and backward-staring faces, locating the latter in those evident influences and the former in guitarist Liberty Ellman's razor-edged fretwork or bassist Drew Gress' supernatural ability to reshape time, but Robinson's pieces straddle the timeline in a way that sets each musician off on his own exploratory path.

The full front line is massed only twice, both to powerful effect. The title track uses each voice as an individual thread, weaving them into rich tapestries until letting them unravel and entangle each other. Reedist Rudresh Mahanthappa is the first to break free, into a typically breathless flurry of inspiration, before a sudden hush leaves room for saxophonist Marty Ehrlich's pensive bass clarinet. The second instance is the hypnotic "Tides Of Consciousness Fading," which evokes a hazy dream state through lush voicings, unexpected horn stabs and sinuous rhythms.

—Shaun Brady

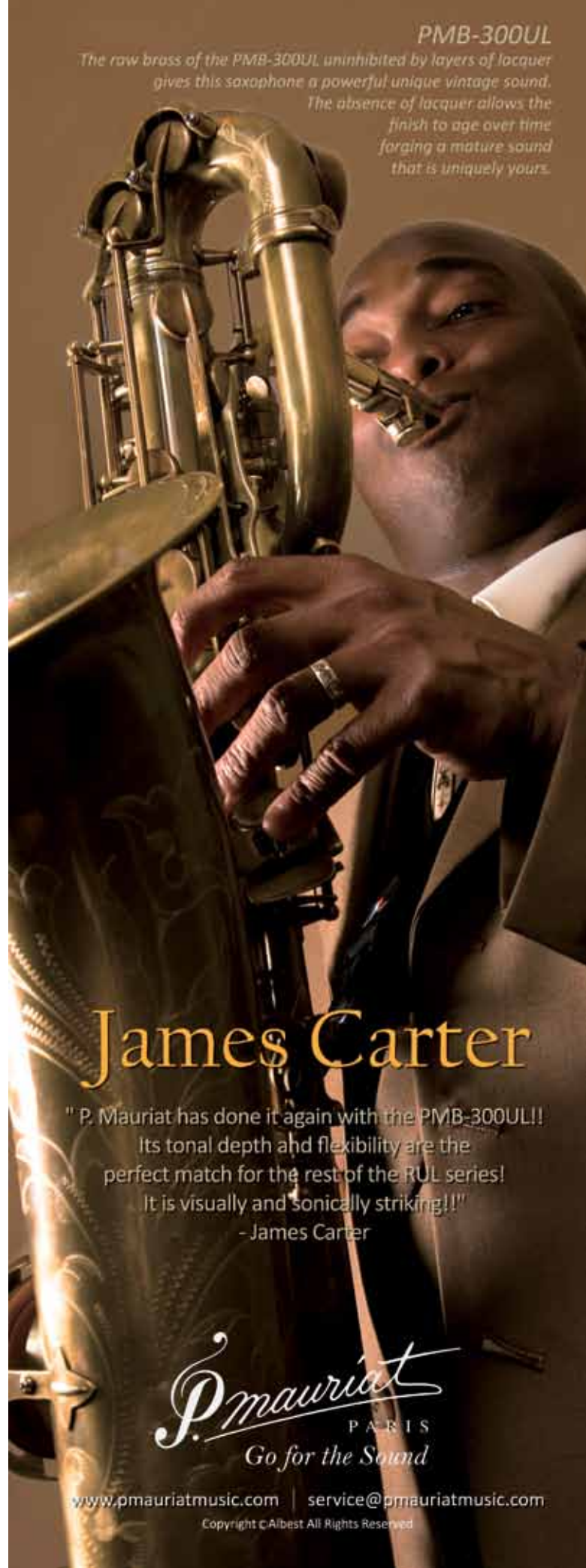
**The Two Faces Of Janus:** Return To Pacamayay; The Two Faces Of Janus; The Elders; Huaca De La Luna; Tides Of Consciousness Fading; Cerebus Reigning; Persephone's Scream; Paper Tiger; Huaca Del Sol; The Twelfth Labor. (76:03)

**Personnel:** Jason Robinson, tenor, soprano saxophone, alto flute; Liberty Ellman, guitar; Drew Gress, bass; George Schuller, drums, percussion; Marty Ehrlich, alto saxophone, bass clarinet; Rudresh Mahanthappa, alto saxophone (2, 5, 7).

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

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## Ahmad Jamal Moved With Fey Charm, Welcoming Appeal

Ahmad Jamal has profited from two blessings. One is a long and prolific career in which he has amended, evolved and grown his style, ultimately to enjoy the honors that come with survival—not the least of which is *The Complete Ahmad Jamal Trio Argo Sessions 1956–62* (Mosaic MD9-246, 62:36/69:08/70:25/73:00/62:07/57:41/65:49/51:43/56:16 ★★★★★), the kind of defining career monument that arrives posthumously for many.

The other was the early embrace of Miles Davis, who called him a “genius” and said in the late 1950s that “all my inspiration today comes from Ahmad Jamal.” The inspiration was fairly palpable in the Davis quintets of the Prestige and early Columbia years. Jamal’s choice of tunes seemed to influence Davis’ occasionally, and one can’t listen to Red Garland or Wynton Kelly without feeling Jamal’s minimalist gentility. As the Davis legend grew, Jamal basked in collateral glory as male muse to the most transforming musician of his generation. At the very least, it guaranteed that history would never ignore Jamal, even if only as a piece of the Davis puzzle.

Against this, though, was an early critical push-back. In this magazine, for instance, Martin Williams dismissed *At The Pershing/But Not For Me* as “cocktail piano.” Williams notwithstanding, it became Jamal’s breakthrough record, taking a lease on the Billboard jazz chart for two years.

From the first of these nine CDs, the Jamal trio functions like a modern version of what a Count Basie trio might have sounded like. Like Basie, Jamal has no fear of atomizing into an almost negligible invisibility. Fearless of silence, he flows easily between patience and urgency, faintness and density, though his overall tranquility attenuates Basie’s sense of tension and percussiveness. It is a balance of mass and space—“discipline” Jamal calls it, meaning a reluctance to “show off”—that gives the rhythm section as much prominence and identity as the old Basie team enjoyed. The Jamal trio was an extension of the leader’s modesty and a model of equal partnership, opening up room for a smart rapport between Jamal and remarkable bassist Israel Crosby.

It snaps into particularly sharp focus on the Pershing sessions on disc two. The lean trot of “Surrey With The Fringe On Top” is pared down to a spare Basieish riff punctuated by Vernel Fournier’s bass drum. As for “Poinciana,” its accessibility makes it easy to understand why it found a large audience. The rhythmic patterns are simple and seductive, and Jamal’s reshaping of the material moves with a relaxed and cyclical logic. He brings much of

Ahmad Jamal:  
Audience favorite



the same fey charm and welcoming appeal to “Pavanne” two years later in an arrangement that recalls the Art Tatum trios of the ’40s. One can see why Williams, if he looked in only certain places, might have damned the Pershing LP as “cocktail piano.” The lightness and sophisticated simplicity of the playing make it easy to take for granted, and Jamal’s harmonic ingenuity is elegant without calling special attention to itself—though the fine precision of Fournier’s brush work on “Cherokee” is hard to mistake for anything but jazz.

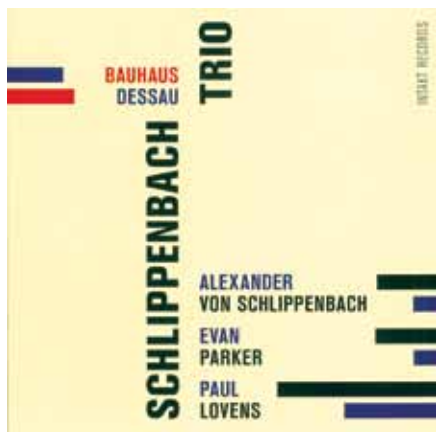
Disc five collects Jamal’s two projects with violinist Joe Kennedy. The trio is augmented by 15 strings arranged and conducted by Kennedy, who is restrained and often clever in his mix of pizzicato pointillism and harmonic cushioning, while the ballads are mostly romantic mist. Jamal seems more stimulated on the 10 quintets with Kennedy and Ray Crawford added on guitar. The three men produce a couple of remarkably silky ensembles.

The 1961 Alhambra sessions find the trio increasingly comfortable and willing to spread out into long 10- and 11-minute explorations, something that didn’t happen three years earlier. By and large Jamal makes thoughtful and quietly surprising use of the additional time. Also, his taste in material is excellent, not just in his choice of older standards, which is easy, but in picking some of the less tested contemporary songs as well, like “The Second Time Around” and “I’ll Never Stop Loving You.” By the time of the final Blackhawk sessions, however, one begins to understand the “cocktail pianist” rap some critics hung on him.

These six studio and four live session groups include, by my count, 24 unissued trio sides, though standard discographies list a few more strays not included here, especially from the Spotlight sessions. Mosaic also appears to have given Jamal the chance to approve previously unissued items.

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

DB



## Schlippenbach Trio *Bauhaus Dessau*

INTAKT 183

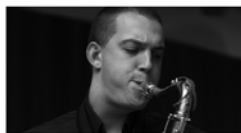
★★★★

Now into its fourth astonishing decade, pianist Alexander von Schlippenbach's trio with reedist Evan Parker and drummer Paul Lovens stands unchallenged as a paragon of European free improvisation, a unit that has consistently defied the notion that familiarity douses creativity. This latest salvo, recorded live in November of 2009 at the second home of the Bauhaus school in Dessau, Germany, illustrates that these musicians developed their new language partly through a deep understanding and appreciation of the American jazz that they happened to fully dismantle. Parker, who plays tenor sax exclusively here, reveals flashes of a post-Coltrane soulfulness in certain isolated passages, Lovens floats swing rhythms in the midst of time-smashing clatter, and Schlippenbach unleashes dense thickets of Bill Evans-worthy harmony. The music thrives with an inexorable forward motion created instantaneously and organically, with widely drawn ideas.

The 41-minute opening piece is a marvel and natural ebb-and-flow interaction, with new energies, spaces and moods evolving regularly, as each musician finds some fresh musical idea from one of his compatriots lingering in the air, and either picks it up with further elaboration, or allows it unfold on its own. Oliver Schwerdt's liner notes take pains to connect the group's musical ideals with the concepts of the Bauhaus school—and the historically contiguous serialism of Schoenberg—but this powerhouse trio belongs only to its own school, where many artistic movements and ideas are all in simultaneous play and flux. For listeners who've heard previous work by the trio there's no new conceptual wrinkle on *Bauhaus Dessau*, but that's hardly the point when musicians of such technical brilliance continue to find inspiration and excitement in one another's playing.

—Peter Margasak

**Bauhaus Dessau:** Bauhaus 1; Bauhaus 2; Bauhaus 3, (62:57)  
**Personnel:** Alexander von Schlippenbach, piano; Evan Parker, tenor saxophone; Paul Lovens, drums.  
**Ordering info:** [intaktrec.ch](http://intaktrec.ch)



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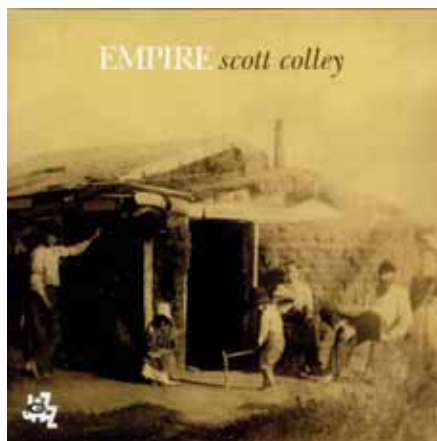
## Scott Colley

### *Empire*

CAMJAZZ 5036

★★★★½

This is a concept album for bassist Scott Colley, although the liner notes only enigmatically refer to the eponymous vanished Kansas town. The music is similarly elusive. There is a wonderfully chilling fade at the end of “The Gettin Place,” when an uncredited voice asks, “Did you not hear me?” Is it one of Colley’s ancestors demanding attention from the ashes of Empire? The combination of Ralph Alessi’s tight trumpet squeal over decaying electronic swath creates a haunting sendoff to a track that began as a hovering fusion of Colley’s pendulous bass and up-beat musings from Bill Frisell, dampened with percussive compression effects and triggered sounds. “For Sophia,” dedicated to Colley’s wife and announced by daughter Nika, recalls a soundtrack to some Jim Jarmusch movie, with Frisell’s twangy tremolo heralding an unpretentious theme over brushes and snare purrs. Each musician in this quintet is a cut above, with an innate sense of idiosyncratic narrative content, hence the music is landscape-like, rather than a confection of tunes. Brian Blade sounds reserved, nor is Colley interested in fatuous display. Craig Taborn holds down a vamp before releasing a limpid solo on “5:30 am” and comping behind the soaring, investigative Alessi; then Blade digs



a big space for the music to cook in before a benign reprise. Whatever Colley has in mind with “Speculation,” the mood is brooding. Mercurial deliberation in Taborn’s playing reminds of Brad Mehldau or Keith Jarrett’s solo work. The theme to “Now What?” is suitably non-committal and prosaic. Alessi’s breathy wind up to “Gut” (lovely high and low notes) brings to mind Tomasz Stanko, but it is the inimitable Frisell who permeates this pastoral and eerily reverberant suite meditating on matters of collective human transience.

—Michael Jackson

**Empire:** January; The Gettin Place; For Sophia; 5:30 am; Speculation; Tomorrowland; Now what?; Gut; Five-two; Five-two.2. (54:49)  
**Personnel:** Scott Colley, bass; Ralph Alessi, trumpet; Brian Blade, drums; Bill Frisell, electric guitar; Craig Taborn, piano.  
**Ordering info:** [camjazz.com](http://camjazz.com)

## Alexander McCabe

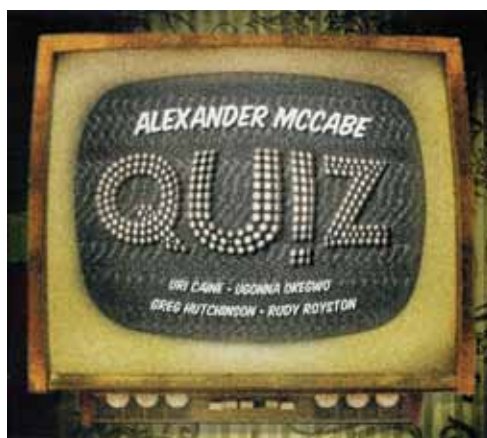
### *Quiz*

CONSOLIDATED ARTISTS  
 PRODUCTIONS 1023

★★★★

For a time, it was impossible to hear contemporary saxophonists and not encounter the ghost of John Coltrane in their tone and approach. Lately, Coltrane’s long shadow has faded a little, but then, Alexander McCabe hasn’t been on the scene for a while. A 47-year-old Boston native whose background includes stints with Ray Charles and film work, McCabe—although he plays alto rather than tenor—has more than a little Trane in his sound and the ability to turn a tune inside out.

Nowhere is this more in evidence than on “Good Morning Heartache,” at 12 minutes the cornerstone of McCabe’s followup to his 2005 recording *The Round*. Touching lightly on the theme and abstracting it over free-time churning by bassist Ugonna Okegwo, pianist Uri Caine and drummer Rudy Royston, McCabe introduces what becomes a showcase for his rhapsodic, elastic playing. There’s not a second of coasting on *Quiz*. Everyone is active, moving the music forward, constantly shifting their phrasing, introducing surprises. Emboldened by this high level of support, McCabe sounds assured

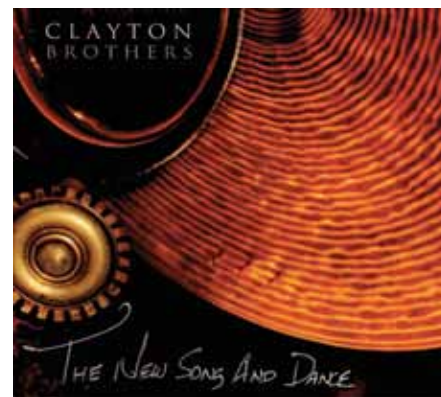


and aggressive, taking “Weezy’s Waltz” outside without losing the thread of its core dance movement, never failing to swing on “Kalido” and looping the complex melody of the title composition.

Following “Good Morning Heartache,” the slighter thematic development on “St. Pat” and the loping, Sonny Rollins-like treatment of “How Little We Know” sound less adventurous, but no less well-played.

—James Hale

**Quiz:** Weezy’s Waltz; Lonnegan; Kalido; Quiz; Good Morning Heartache; St. Pat; How Little We Know. (47:11)  
**Personnel:** Alexander McCabe, alto saxophone; Uri Caine, piano; Ugonna Okegwo, bass; Greg Hutchinson, drums (2, 3); Rudy Royston, drums (1, 4–7).  
**Ordering info:** [amccabemusic.com](http://amccabemusic.com)



## Clayton Brothers

### *The New Song And Dance*

ARTISTSHARE 0107

★★★★

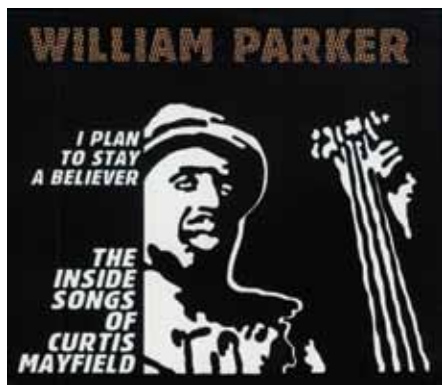
A survey of various dance styles from tango to hip-hop and elsewhere provides the cover for these eight originals by assorted Clayton Brothers and one Stevie Wonder tune played with an almost reverent solemnity.

This quintet moves through a thicket of tempos, most with intent to incite bodily movement. None stirs things up with quite the same plainspoken directness as the title track, “The New Song And Dance,” a rugged riff piece that swings from the first beat very much in the old-fashioned way of a small group jam. Its utter simplicity greases the solo track nicely for Jeff Clayton, Terrell Stafford and the second-generation Clayton, Gerald (John’s son), who is up well to the mark. The other unashamed swinger is “Street Dance,” which achieves the intended New Orleans feel and is full of contrapuntal wham-doodle from drummer Obed Calvaire, whose rim shots dance and crackle like popcorn with a terrific Gene Krupaesque resonance and ring. And Jeff Clayton’s alto sings with wonderful openness at moderate tempo on “Chicago Bop Steppin’.”

“Cha Cha Charleston” comes on quietly, swells quickly, but is more cha cha than Charleston. “Soul Tango” compresses some bluesy licks with an Argentinean shuffle, but the tango feel melts into a kind of quasi funkiness once the solos take over. The younger Clayton, Gerald, composed “Battle Circle,” which draws on his brushes with break dancing and the like. Calvaire’s drums sound substantially more compressed here, and Clayton’s alto jabs and hammers more than it swings with its usual sugar. “Terrell’s Song” and “They Won’t Go When I Go” seem to set aside dance in favor of song. The former is a quiet platform for Stafford’s mellow flugelhorn; the latter, an opportunity for the three Claytons to turn the Wonder tune into a kind of hymn—first John on bowed bass, then Jeff on flute with Gerald floating tempoless in between.

—John McDonough

**The New Song And Dance:** Cha Cha Charleston; Saul Tango; Battle Circle; Terrell’s Song; Smarty Pants Dants; The New Song And Dance; They Won’t Go When I Go; Chicago Bop Steppin’; Street Dance. (68:45)  
**Personnel:** Terrell Stafford, trumpet; Jeff Clayton, alto saxophone, flute; Gerald Clayton, piano; John Clayton, bass; Obed Calvaire, drums.  
**Ordering info:** [artistshare.com](http://artistshare.com)



**William Parker**  
***I Plan To Stay A Believer: The Inside Songs Of Curtis Mayfield***

AUM FIDELITY 062/63

★★★★

**William Parker Organ Quartet**  
***Uncle Joe's Spirit House***

CENTERING RECORDS 1004

★★½

I witnessed William Parker's ambitious Curtis Mayfield tribute at the 2009 Chicago Jazz Festival and it was an energized, tumultuous affair, full of uncompromising spirit. This live double-disc captures the same tentet augmented on a couple tracks by the New Life Tabernacle choir, on dates in France, Italy, Massachusetts and New York.

The title track fades in with raucous blowing from assorted horns, but despite the ensemble's flailing tentacles, all is bolted to the floor by Hamid Drake's fatback drums, which steer and stoke 10 of the 11 tracks. Leena Conquest's voice is superbly forthright and soulful and handles lyrics flawlessly. Some of Mayfield's rhymes are curtailed, especially on "If There's A Hell Below," but Amiri Baraka's lines about "profanity/inanity/insanity" and other riffs make a direct hit.

Baraka has to pick his moments to cut through the instrumental ferment, and George Bush and Barack Obama namechecks will date as fast as his call-outs to Clifford Brown and Hank Mobley. But as most evident on "Ya He Yey Ya" with its chattering choir of ancestral voices, this is a project that stretches all the way back through the African diaspora. Fans of "out" blowing will not be disappointed, especially when Parker dissolves the classic Mayfield bassline on "Hell Below" and descends into a swinging melting pot that pushes the horns to triumphs of expression, notably Darryl Foster with an exultant high squeak on soprano and a pugnacious workout with Drake, followed by hyperbole from Sabir Mateen, who always has the gas on full but still listens and creates contours. Pianist Lafayette Gilchrist, present on a couple of tracks (sitting in for Dave Burrell), channels Cecil Taylor before settling back into soul/gospel accompanist role as Parker reprises the groove. There is an immensely powerful and convinced assault to much of the music here, and both CDs

warrant repeat listening.

*Uncle Joe's Spirit House* is a less sweeping affair but also a tribute, in this case to Parker's nonagenarian aunt and uncle, Carrie Lee Edwards and Joe. Parker's quartet boasts the debut on disc for Cooper-Moore's organ. Cooper-Moore is better known for his intriguing performances on percussion and stringed instruments of his own creation and will not frighten the ghost of Jimmy Smith in the grooving B3-with-pedals department. However, Moore's dabblings swirl with ceaseless curiosity, making things less tractable for Darryl Foster, who sounds less at home here than in the full-bore

context of the Mayfield disc. —Michael Jackson

***I Plan To Stay A Believer:*** Disc One: I Plan To Stay A Believer; If There's A Hell Below; We The People Who Are Darker Than Blue; I'm So Proud/Ya He Yey Ya; This Is My Country. (73:07) Disc Two: People Get Ready/The Inside Song; This Is My Country; It's Alright; Move On Up; Freddie's Dead; New World Order. (66:47)  
**Personnel:** William Parker, bass, doson'ngoni, balafon; Hamid Drake, drums; Dave Burrell, piano; Lewis Barnes, trumpet; Darryl Foster, tenor, soprano saxophone; Sabir Mateen, alto, tenor saxophone, flute; Leena Conquest, vocals; Amiri Baraka, vocals; Lafayette Gilchrist, piano (1, 2); Guillermo E. Brown, drums (4); New Life Tabernacle Generation of Praise Choir of Brooklyn (6, 7).

***Uncle Joe's Spirit House:*** Uncle Joe's Spirit House; Jacques' Groove; Ennio's Tag; Document for LJ; Let's Go Down To The River; Buddha's Joy; The Struggle; Theme For The Tasters; Oasis. (64:34)

**Personnel:** William Parker, bass; Darryl Foster, tenor sax; Cooper-Moore, organ; Gerald Cleaver, drums.  
**Ordering info:** [aumfidelity.com](http://aumfidelity.com)

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## Jazz Voodoo Roots Explored

Jazz has roots in lots of things: in African drum rhythms and blues music and New Orleans second-line culture. And voodoo. In ***Jazz Religion, the Second Line, and Black New Orleans*** (Indiana University Press), Richard Brent Turner contends voodoo exists not just on the periphery of jazz history, but at its foundation; its influence extends from Louis Armstrong, Sidney Bechet and Jelly Roll Morton to more recent New Orleans acts such as the Neville Brothers, the Meters, Los Hombres Calientes, the Dirty Dozen Brass Band, and even Wynton Marsalis.

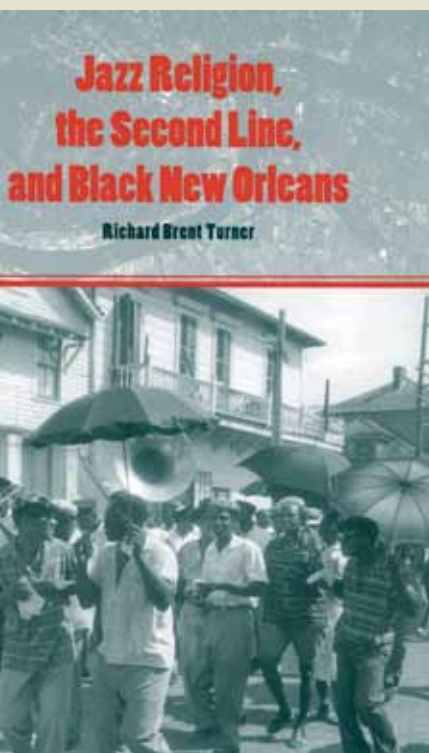
Voodoo is an African-derived religion with tenets that include a belief in sorcery and also in the power of magic; it is practiced in the West Indies and in parts of Africa. In the United States, the book explains, voodoo was manifested in the sacred music, dance and sequin costumes of African and Haitian immigrants arriving in the 18th and 19th centuries. The religion inspired the second-line and Mardi Gras performances that took place throughout New Orleans until the 1860s.

City officials subsequently restricted such performances to Congo Square, once a focal point for slaves. The city later banned the practice of voodoo through Jim Crow laws. The federal government became part of this opposition after a U.S. Supreme Court decision in 1896 (*Plessy v. Ferguson*) legalized racial segregation. But segregation, Turner writes, served as a catalyst for the creation of jazz:

"Suddenly the downtown Francophone Catholic Creoles of Color and uptown Protestant African Americans were grouped together, classified as Negroes, and segregated from whites. And at this momentous time one could say jazz emerged through the musical interaction between Afro-Creole, classically trained musicians who were thrown together with the uptown African Americans who played the blues and spiritual rhythms of black Baptist and Methodist churches by ear."

Turner's cast of characters includes Marie Laveau, the so-called voodoo queen of New Orleans who was active from the 1820s to the 1870s; novelist and folklorist Zora Neale Hurston, whose book *Tell My Horse* (1938) recounts her experiences as a voodoo initiate in Haiti and Jamaica; and celebrated musicians like Louis Armstrong and Mahalia Jackson.

Voodoo not only carries spiritual significance but also political weight, a means to preserve cultural autonomy, fight racism and



reinforce the importance of the family. Mardi Gras performances later camouflaged rituals originating in voodoo. "The Black [Mardi Gras] Indians used their secret societies to resist the city government's attempts to de-Africanize the spirituality and culture of New Orleans and to mask their political activities," Turner writes, "which included violent confrontations with white mobs on Carnival days in the early twentieth century."

Turner devotes much of the book's final section to the jazz funeral, a phenomenon unique to New Orleans. These elaborate performances owe a debt to the city's Sanctified and Spiritual churches, whose ecstatic music and dance share common ground with second-line culture. "New Orleans jazz funerals," Turner writes, "synthesize spiritual and musical elements from Vodou, Christianity, and African American and Congo Square music to recreate, strengthen and mend the relationship between the community of the living, the ancestors, and the dead."

Turner completed much of his research in New Orleans during his tenure at Xavier University. He digresses from the conventions of academia by including a personal essay (or "interlude") chronicling his life in New Orleans in the wake of his mother's death. This all-too-brief chapter provides a welcome respite. While the information presented in the book is compelling, the sometimes dry and colorless tone fails to look beyond the author's contemporaries. **DB**

Ordering info: [iupress.indiana.edu](http://iupress.indiana.edu)



## The Rosenberg Trio *Djangologists*

ENJA 9558 2

★★★★

The Dutch Rosenberg Trio is a longtime group of Django Reinhardt acolytes. Lead guitarist Stochelo Rosenberg, in particular, is a crisp player, whether letting a grace note ring or double-picking 32nd notes. It's a well synchronized unit, and while the spirit of Reinhardt shines through, the Rosenbergs are not bent on slavish recreations, as Stochelo throws in some decidedly post-Django Wes Montgomery octaves. They get points for mining Reinhardt's lesser-known material as well. The addition of Gypsy guitar virtuoso Biréli Lagrène—whom many consider the true Reinhardt heir—accounts for some guitar crossfires that are what left- and right-channel headphones were made for.

The Stochelo-Biréli exchanges are the main source of musical fireworks in this set. Just when you think one player cannot be topped, the other answers with a creative variation of his own. Their near-mind-boggling collaborations are the higher mathematics of guitar playing.

Nous Rosenberg's ubiquitous 4/4 rhythm guitar and Nonnie Rosenberg's straight-four bass is the price of the ticket on this album. Stochelo plays interesting and complex leads throughout, but they're often heaped onto the elementary, metronomic rhythm. Maybe that's forgivable; an entire album of the double lead pyrotechnics on fast numbers would be difficult to absorb for even dedicated guitar students. And there's nothing wrong with a frolicking "Coquette" or some Gypsy soul on "In A Sentimental Mood" to allow the listener to relax before the next barrage.

An accompanying black-and-white DVD of the three-day recording session is poorly lit and tough slogging, despite the music. It contains a few brief interviews with the participants in halting English and is only for the most diehard Djangologists. —Kirk Silsbee

**Djangologists:** Vendredi 13; Dream Of You; Pêche A La Mouche; Clair De Lune; Choti; Double Jeu; What Kind Of Friend; For Sentimental Reasons; Gipsy Groovin'; Coquette; In A Sentimental Mood; I'll Never Smile Again; Sweet Chorus; Webster; Indifference; Moon-glow; Yours and Mine; Tears. (62:11)

**Personnel:** Stochelo Rosenberg, guitar; Nous'Cche Rosenberg, guitar; Nonnie Rosenberg, double bass; Biréli Lagrène, guitar (3, 6, 14, 18), electric bass (9).

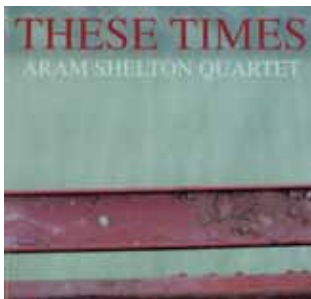
Ordering info: [therosenbergtrio.com](http://therosenbergtrio.com)

**Aram Shelton Quartet**  
*These Times*

SINGLESPEED 007

★★★★

Aram Shelton isn't one to put out a mere blowing date. Anytime that the Oakland, Calif., resident goes into the studio, he brings some tunes designed to get the best from the band at hand.



This one is all about the synchronous sound that he and tenor saxophonist Keefe Jackson get when they play together. Since Jackson and the rhythm section are all members of Fast Citizens, an ensemble that first played together seven years ago when Shelton lived in Chicago, why not just convene that band? The answer can be found in the tunes that Shelton and his comrades have written. They have a simplicity that goes beyond simply cutting comet and cello

out of the front line. There are moments on this disc when Shelton and Jackson sound like they're sparring, and others when they fly in close formation, but they always sound complete. This music is all about giving the horn players room to develop their ideas. Shelton's tunes instigate a rare degree of extroversion from Jackson, and Jackson's briskly paced "Rings" prompts Shelton to shed his John Tchicai-like reserve. —Bill Meyer

**These Times:** These Times; Rings; Dusk; An Interrupted Stroll; Relief; Rise And Set. (37:12)  
**Personnel:** Aram Shelton, alto saxophone and clarinet; Keefe Jackson, tenor saxophone; Anton Hatwich bass, Marc Riordan, drums.  
**Ordering info:** [singlespeedmusic.org](http://singlespeedmusic.org)



**Anders Svanoe and Jon Irabagon**  
*Duets*

SELF RELEASE

★★★★½

One the charms of this saxophone duet CD is the way each player moves in and out of each other's way. This can be true whether the music is fast and furious, as with the opener, "Chase," or when the two are playing it light and relatively fancy-free, as heard on "Jump Up." Both pieces are by saxophonist Anders Svanoe in this all-original program, saxophonist Jon Irabagon contributing one of his own, the two collaborating on three more.

Their "Cry" is a not-surprisingly mournful episode that finds the players either cajoling or quietly wailing. Like with everything else here, *Duets'* songs sound like a series of conversations. It's free but it isn't. Dedicated to Roscoe Mitchell, *Duets* seems to take its cues from a variety of "out" saxophone traditions, less on the "fire" side but not all aleatoric, either. "Cry" lets the listener in, each player opting out on virtuosity in favor of more expressivity. That's until the end, where their "cries" sound more like the stage where one needs to blow their nose now that the tears have formed. "Fuzzy-Wuzzy" and "Mourn" echo this plaintive, more intimate theme.

—John Ephland

**Duets:** Chase; Cry; Jump Up; Repeat It!; Fuzzy-Wuzzy; Mourn; The Statesman's Song. (37:16)  
**Personnel:** Anders Svanoe, alto, tenor and baritone saxophones; Jon Irabagon, tenor saxophone.  
**Ordering info:** [anders.svanoe.com](http://anders.svanoe.com)



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## Jane Monheit *Home*

EMARCY B14700

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Jane Monheit doesn't suffer from a deficit of gifts. She's got a luxurious alto/soprano voice, a sensual delivery, fine intonation and the ability to swing. The question has always been whether she's a jazz singer, or just a cabaret/musical theater vocalist with jazz instincts. This album does nothing to clear up any misgivings.

Monheit nods to several eras while barely acknowledging the present. "There's A Small Hotel," "Look For The Silver Lining," "Everything I've Got Belongs To You" and "Isn't It A Lovely Day" reinforce her theater/Great American Songbook base. Alec Wilder's "While We're Young" and the Larry Goldings/Cliff Goldmacher gem "It's Only Smoke" are lovely art songs. Earl Coleman is recalled via "This Is Always," but her two-chorus duet of "Tonight You Belong To Me" with John Pizzarelli is nothing but coy filler.

Monheit shows consummate ease and rhythmic agility on "Shine" and "Everything I've Got Belongs To You," with a delicious Mark O'Connor swing fiddle. Her ballads pack high caloric ornamentation but "I'll Be Around" has a quiet and unmistakable drama. As for that elusive blues quotient, she can muster a nice little backbeat thrust for Harold Arlen's "The Eagle And Me."

—Kirk Silsbee

**Home:** A Shine On Your Shoes; There's A Small Hotel; This Is Always; Tonight You Belong To Me; Look For The Silver Lining; I'll Be Around; Everything I've Got Belongs To You; It's Only Smoke; The Eagle And Me; I Didn't Know About You/All Too Soon; Isn't It A Lovely Day; While We're Young. (48:17)

**Personnel:** Jane Monheit, vocals; Mark O'Connor, violin (7, 10); Joe Magnarelli, trumpet (2, 9); Frank Vignola, guitar; John Pizzarelli, guitar, vocal (4); Michael Kanan, piano; Larry Goldings, piano (8); Neal Miner, bass; Rick Montalbano, drums; Peter Eldridge, vocal (8).

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



## Issac Delgado *L-O-V-E*

SONY CLASSICAL 8897961442

★★★★

No other recent tribute illustrates Nat "King" Cole's global eminence as artfully as Issac Delgado's *L-O-V-E*. Delgado channels Cole's debonair swagger, while subtly updating the material and giving ample reason why the songs and Cole had such worldwide appeal.

Pianist John di Martino's sumptuous arrangements insulate Delgado's singing magnificently as top-tier talents such as trumpeter Brian Lynch, trombonist Conrad Herwig and drummer Dafnis Prieto enliven the material with rhythmic veracity and improvisational guile without overwhelming the star.

Indeed, Delgado takes center stage throughout much of the material as he interprets "Green Eyes/Aquellos Ojos Verdes" and "Perfidia" with curatorial care. Sometimes, though, instrumentalists do get their chances to shine as Ken Peplowski's sparkling clarinet solo shows on "Quizás, quizás, quizás/Perhaps, perhaps, perhaps," and Romero Lubambo's lovely guitar counterpoints on "Tiernamente." Freddy Cole makes a conspicuous appearance on "Quizás, quizás, quizás/Perhaps, perhaps, perhaps" and "Green Eyes/Aquellos Ojos Verdes" lending perhaps marketable familial endorsement.

—John Murphy

**L-O-V-E:** Perfidia; Quizás, quizás, quizás/Perhaps, perhaps, perhaps; Tiernamente; Ay Cosita Linda; Suas Mãos; A Su Mirar Me Acostumbré; Piel Canela; Green Eyes/Aquellos Ojos Verdes; L-O-V-E; Yo Vendo Unos Ojos Negros; Hojas Muertas; No Tengo Lágrimas. (45:25)

**Personnel:** Issac Delgado, vocals; Freddy Cole, vocals (2, 8); John di Martino, piano; Charles Flores, acoustic and electric bass; Dafnis Prieto, drums; Pedro Martinez, congas, percussion, chorus; Brian Lynch, trumpet and flugelhorn (1, 4, 7, 9, 11, 12); Ken Peplowski, clarinet and tenor saxophone (2, 4, 7, 8, 10, 12); Conrad Herwig, trombone (4, 5, 12); Romero Lubambo, acoustic and electric guitar, cavaquinho (3, 5, 10, 12); Xiomara Laugart, chorus (4, 7, 10, 12); Isaac Delgado, Jr., chorus (4, 7, 10, 12).

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



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# Dee Dee Bridgewater

For her second DownBeat Blindfold Test, and her first before a live audience, Dee Dee Bridgewater took to the NRC Jazz Café stage at the 2010 North Sea Jazz Festival shortly after her performance celebrating the music of Billie Holiday.

## Dianne Reeves

"Afro Blue" (from *The Best Of Dianne Reeves*, Blue Note, 2002) Reeves, vocals; Otmaro Ruiz, piano, keyboards; Romero Lubambo, guitar; George Duke, keyboards; Reginald Veal, bass; Rocky Bryant, drums; Munyungo Jackson, percussion; Wayne Holmes, background vocals.

I truly enjoyed that. That's Dianne Reeves. She has a distinctive quality to her voice. I think of her as a musician, the way she uses her voice to create different sounds depending on whatever song she sings. I love this poly-rhythmic, percussive arrangement that has a lot of freedom in it. It's a good road map that she can work with. You can hear on this song what a wonderful rhythmic foundation she has. Before the piano and drums come in, Dianne has the rhythm down. I also enjoyed how Dianne uses her voice as another instrument in this piece. I love her version of "Afro Blue."

## Kendra Shank

"Incantation/Throw It Away" (from *A Spirit Free: Abbey Lincoln Songbook*, Challenge, 2005) Shank, vocals, kalimba; Billy Drewes, saxophones, reeds; Frank Kimbrough, piano; Dean Johnson, bass; Tony Moreno, drums.

This is the singer that Abbey worked with. This is definitely one of Abbey's songs. Oh, it's Kendra Shank. I like the sparse arrangement. All of the different instruments are playing like punctuations on the basic rhythms. There was time when Abbey and I talked about mentoring younger singers together. That never came to fruition. But she did work out a good situation with Kendra, who, I believe, played on a couple of Abbey's albums. To hear Kendra do Abbey's music is very refreshing. She has her own take on it that's very percussive. I also like how the piano player uses the instrument as a percussion instrument as he lays down light chords. It's only something that you can do with a singer who's approaching the music with her voice as an instrument.

## Jimmy Scott

"Heaven" (from *Heaven*, Warner Bros., 1996) Scott, vocals; Jacky Terrasson, piano; Hilliard Greene, bass.

I could listen to Jimmy Scott all night long. There's something in his voice. You can hear all the emotion. He's a male counterpart to Billie Holiday. He's been able to use the changes his voice has gone through to his benefit. He knows how to cut off the notes, to give the pathos necessary for the words and phrases. He uses his vibrato in a deliberate matter that works. He's a graceful, wise singer. Jimmy always makes me cry. Who is the pianist? It's Jacky? This is the Jacky I know—the sensitive accompanist. I helped him start his career in Paris, but he needed to move to the U.S. to find his music. But I can't go with the discord that's in his music. But here he provided the bottom for Jimmy and gave him space and kept the melody moving in a floating way so Jimmy could play around with the time.

## Marion Williams

"Dead Cat On The Line" (from *My Soul Looks Back: The Genius Of Marion Williams 1962-1992*, Shanachie, 1994) Williams, vocals; Carmine D'Amico, guitar; Brother Roy, drums.

It sounds like someone who loves folk blues. I like the spaciness of the instruments, and it's got a nice groove. She's the kind of singer who effectively tells a story despite the limitations of her voice. She evokes emotion from the listener as a result. I don't usually listen to singers. Thad Jones



used to tell me that I had big ears, and as a result I'm liable to imitate. So I stopped listening to women singers. But I would buy this CD because I wouldn't worry about it influencing me. But it would give me some new ideas of how I approach music. Marion Williams? Who's that? I don't know gospel. I like this, how the lyric can go secular or spiritual. This sounds like a good old blues.

## Esperanza Spalding

"Little Fly" (from *Chamber Music Society*, Heads Up, 2010) Spalding, vocals, bass; Leo Genovese, piano; Entcho Todorov, violin; Lois Martin, viola; David Eggar, cello; Terri Lyne Carrington, drums; Quintino Cinalli, percussion.

I like this. I love the voice, the arrangements. This tune sounds like a small chamber orchestra. I think this is an original song. Her voice is totally unpretentious, and you can hear humility in her voice. Who is this? She's also playing the bass? That's my baby, Esperanza. I haven't bought any of her CDs and I feel bad about that. I love Esperanza. She's probably one of the best things that's happened to music in general. She crosses so many barriers. I love her spirit and her inventiveness. Already at such a young age, she's decided not to be pigeonholed. I told her she doesn't need to change anything. She enunciates well, which is so important so that people can understand what you're singing.

## Cassandra Wilson

"Lover Come Back" (from *Loverly*, Blue Note, 2008) Wilson, vocals; Jason Moran, piano; Marvin Sewell, guitar; Lonnie Plaxico, bass; Herlin Riley, drums; Lekan Babalola, percussion.

It's Cassandra Wilson. My girlfriend. She's an explorer. She's a few years younger than me, but we have so many parallels in our lives. She's a total artist who needs to push herself. She's very concerned with tradition and with her roots. She's committed to keep both alive. But she also loves to turn the music around to appeal to a larger audience. Cassandra has the form, but she plays with it in a very sensitive way. Betty Carter was one of her influences. She was also one of mine, but we looked at Betty [from] different points of view. For me, it was Betty's ability as bandleader who loved to play around with melody and time. For Cassandra, it was Betty's voice. In fact, one time Betty got really mad at Cassandra and told her to go get her own style. And she did.

DB

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

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