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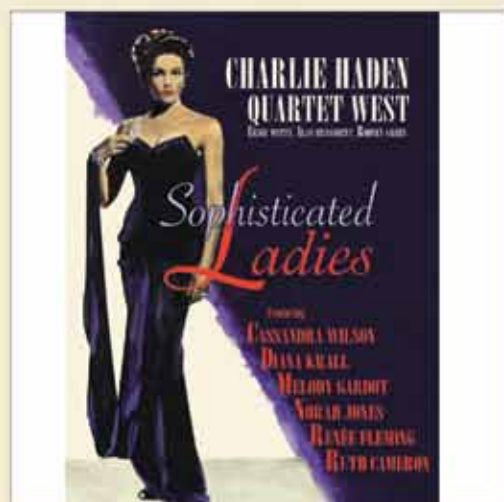
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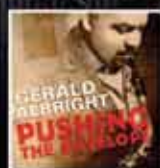
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MAY 2011 Inside ▶

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26 James Carter *The Totality Of James Carter*

BY DAN OUELLETTE

James Carter is an instinctual player who speaks on his array of reed instruments with manifold vocal inflections. He races and skids to a stop. He yells in exuberance, then quietly sobs. He slap-tongues and sings. He's attentive to the world around him; no sound escapes him. He consumes tones and rhythms and reforms them anew. He's a singular voice whose story runs deep.

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First Take | BY ED ENRIGHT

The Call Of The Saxophone

Reed School is upon us with this issue, featuring the woodwind-obsessed saxophonist James Carter—one of my all-time favorites—on the cover.

I once watched Carter wolf down two pounds of crab legs in one sitting. We were at Riva, a trendy restaurant on Chicago's Navy Pier known for its seafood menu. He was in town for a performance that night at Schubert's. As editor of this magazine at the time, summer of 1996, I had insisted on putting Carter on the cover, having heard his U.S. debut *J.C. On The Set* (1994) on my office stereo about a hundred times, and decided to conduct the interview myself. We talked about everything from Coleman Hawkins to "Beavis and Butt-Head" to low-A versus low-B-flat baritone saxes. His ravenousness reminded me of his insatiable appetite for collecting interesting saxes and woodwinds, not to mention his larger-than-life stage presence.

Carter blew my mind at the show that night, practically tearing the floor out from under the crowd that gathered to witness his amazing pyrotechnics. He injected a sense of urgency into everything that came out of his horn. It was exhausting to watch him, but the experience was incredibly rewarding for a lifelong fan of the saxophone like me.

"I identify with the whole attitude behind aggressive playing, especially if it's something urgent to say," said Carter, who was then 27, had four CDs out under his own name and was starting to win various woodwind categories in DownBeat's Critics and Readers polls. "Of course, it's all really urgent to say."

Today, Carter is still topping the polls, but he also continues to challenge himself, taking on daunting projects like the symphonic, painstakingly notated *Concerto For Saxophones*, the centerpiece of his new album *Caribbean Rhapsody* (Emarcy), one of many topics that DownBeat contributor Dan Ouellette discusses in this month's cover feature (beginning on page 26). Always one to offer his listeners something new and genuine, Carter succeeds in uniting jazz, salsa and classical elements on the new release, possibly his most ambitious work to date.

Carter is just one of many saxophonists featured in this Reed School issue, which also includes profiles of saxophonists/multi-instrumentalists Keefe Jackson and Jerome Sabbagh, plus a Master Class by woodwind specialist Ben Kono and a Pro Session on mouthpiece/reed setups with jazz educator Miles Osland. Also included are several product reviews of the latest saxophones and accessories.

On a personal note, this sax-packed issue also marks my last as editor: I am departing DownBeat to once again pursue a career as a professional saxophonist and freelance journalist. And I'd like to take this opportunity to thank everyone who has played a part in helping me produce DownBeat's editorial content every month. It's never easy to leave a gig where you love the people you work with and the artists you write about, but it sure feels good to go out on a favorite like James Carter.



James Carter: insatiable appetite

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CHARLES MINGUS **Changed Man?**

By Mike Hennessey of May 13, 2011

As a "condition of mind" or a "state of being," Charles Mingus, a giant of jazz, seemed to have given a little of the job. He sat in the restaurant in Los Angeles, St. Martin Lane, a singing Buddha, contemplating half a century with a certain musical without

anyone looking and singing—a little more away from Mingus, the artist, the man of the 1950s, the man who was so frequently the center of the



Gratitude For Mingus

Thanks for reprinting the great 1971 Charles Mingus article by Mike Hennessey (March). As a curious 18 year-old in 1977, I discovered Mingus' music through the *Three Or Four Shades Of The Blues* album. I have since purchased 15 other recordings by this masterful musician and enjoy every one of them. It was very interesting to get his 1971 perspective on music from your article. DownBeat continues to be a great asset to my jazz education, while playing a valuable role in helping me to grow my music library. Keep up the good work!

A. STAN DAVIS
ASTANDAVIS@CHARTER.NET

Let Words Flow

In reading both Kevin McIntosh's letter ("Chords," January) and Mike Eben's follow-up letter (February), I am struck by how blatant they are towards the use of censorship and the restriction of self-expression. Jazz in and of itself is the expression of an individual, and when I read interviews with a musicians I want the interviewer to show that individual—as they are—in full expression. I am not condoning cursing by any means; however, I am fully against any and all forms of censorship, and/or the restriction of one's self expression—this includes the writers of the interviews. I am aware that kids may read articles that have powerful language, and it does have an effect, but I feel more compelled to teach students (kids) to think on their own, make their own judgments and to remain respectful of each individual's form of expression. To focus on the music is to focus on expression.

SHANNON MORRISON
FLAGSTAFF, ARIZ.

Shorter Sounded Uncanny

James Hale's review of the new CD from tenor saxophonist Walter Smith III, III ("Reviews," March), opens up some creditability issues. Apparently, Hale has difficulty making a distinction between Wayne Shorter's mid-1960s recordings and the hard bop of the Dexter Gordon/Woody Shaw collaboration documented on the 1976 live recording *Homecoming*. Shorter's compositions and solo saxophone voice are uniquely his own. Using complex harmonic relationships, Shorter's music bares little resemblance to Gordon's. Hale also refers to Sonny Rollins as being "cowboy obsessed," as revealed on his *Way Out West* recording from 1957. But that Riverside date was an isolated project and not a summary of his oeuvre.

BILL BENJAMIN
BILTMORE LAKE, N.C.

Italian Favorites

I always enjoy receiving DownBeat, and I was particularly pleased to see that my favorite Panic jazz club at Marostica has been included in the jazz venues in Italy ("150 Great Jazz Rooms," February). However, I would like to point out that Panic also hosts concerts by top American jazz artists, such as Donny McCaslin and Uri Caine. While Panic does host a gospel/spiritual concert before Christmas, it does not have an ongoing gospel series. Another great Italian venue with excellent programming is Il Torrone in Ferrara.

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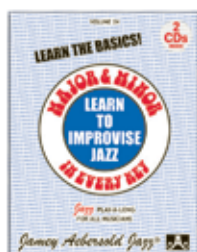


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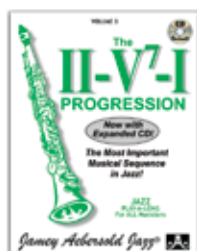
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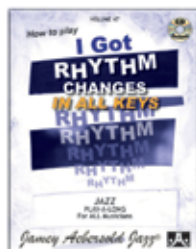
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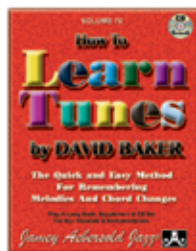
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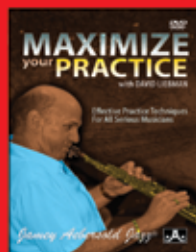
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Farewell To Fellowship

National Endowment for the Arts budget proposes eliminating Jazz Masters program

When President Barack Obama submitted his 2012 budget to Congress on Feb. 14, the news media noted its 13 percent funding cut to the National Endowment for the Arts—but it was the NEA's appropriation request, published the following day, that got the jazz world's attention. It proposed eliminating its suite of arts awards for folk and opera along with the NEA Jazz Masters, a fellowship and honorarium (\$25,000 this year) that the federal agency has given since 1982. The 2012 inductees may be the last.

Instead, 2013 will bring an "American Artists of the Year" award, a more general prize for which artists from all NEA-funded disciplines will be eligible. "The proposal will still honor jazz, folk and traditional arts, and opera," the NEA said in a statement, "and will include them as part of a fuller spectrum of American art forms and artists." In addition to jazz, opera and folk arts, the agency gives endowments for classical music, visual arts, theater, design, dance, multimedia and literature.

"Having separate awards and ceremonies would mean something like 10 events a year," said agency spokesperson Liz Stark. "The NEA doesn't have the resources for that to be feasible. Instead, we decided to celebrate the community of American artists and create an opportunity to showcase the range of creative practices in this country."

Jazz musicians were alarmed at the news, particularly incumbent Jazz Masters.

"That's terrible," said tenor saxophonist Sonny Rollins, who received his NEA fellowship in 1983. "The money they're gonna save is a drop in the bucket compared to what goes into everything else. Why do governments always have to hurt art? Everybody will be at each other's throats trying to get recognition from the government. Jazz is on the bottom of the pyramid anyway. This is just going to push it even further down."

Saxophonist Dave Liebman, one of 2011's honorees, agrees with Rollins.

"Whatever enthusiasm people have for jazz is gonna be sapped, because there'll be no way to pay for it. For musicians it means less playing, more looking at the wall."

While recipients have appreciated the monetary reward that comes with being recognized a Jazz Master, the musicians say the loss of the pro-



gram would also be a blow to morale.

"It's a very uplifting validation to receive that award from your government," said saxophonist Lee Konitz, a 2009 Jazz Master. "When something like this happens, talented people get a shock instead of a lift."

"It was rewarding people who weren't getting much else," added Liebman. "This whole thing is definitely gonna be felt; in three to five years it'll really be felt."

Musicians also say that terminating the NEA Jazz Master's program is a reminder that this uniquely American art form has long gotten most of its recognition from foreign countries. "It's always been like that," Rollins said. "Only in the last 25 years or so have Americans come on board; it was nice that we were recognized in our own country."

Although Konitz appeals for someone to "step in and do something about it," the current political climate, with its emphasis on slashing budgets, casts doubt on any help forthcoming. U.S. Rep. John Conyers, Jr. (D-Mich.), Congress' most passionate advocate for jazz, said he was "disappointed" in the cuts but would not comment as to whether he would offer any amendments to them.

Nonetheless, Rollins maintains a determined optimism about the music. "They can't kill jazz," he said. "They've been trying as long as I've been around. But jazz is a spirit. You can't kill a spirit."

—Michael West



Rollins Awarded: Sonny Rollins received the National Medal of Arts from President Barack Obama at a White House ceremony on March 2 (above). The saxophonist was one of 10 honorees who received the award for outstanding achievements in, and in support of, the arts. **Details:** nea.gov

All-Media Grusin: Dave Grusin is delving into new media on his upcoming disc, *An Evening With Dave Grusin* (Telarc). Along with releasing the music in compact and Blu-ray disc formats, an interactive ROBA iPad App will provide interviews, video clips and other multimedia components.

Details: concordmusicgroup.com

Cruise Debuts: The Jazz Cruise, which sails around the Caribbean Jan. 29–Feb. 5, 2012, has unveiled its complete lineup, including many artists who will be making their first appearances on the ship, such as John Pizzarelli, Carmen Bradford, Kurt Elling and Kirk Whalum. **Details:** jazzcruises-ecp.com

Kelly Wins: Saxophonist Grace Kelly won a 2011 ASCAP Foundation Young Jazz Composer Award on Feb. 10.

Details: gracekellymusic.com

Crescent City Conversations: Thomas W. Jacobsen has published a book of his interviews, *Traditional New Orleans Jazz* (Louisiana State University Press). The collection features his pieces on Irvin Mayfield, Don Vappie and Evan Christopher.

Details: lsu.edu/lisupress

New Duke Revue: Michael Feinstein will begin hosting a series of cabaret performances at New York's Jazz at Lincoln Center. The first event will be "I Got It Bad: A Duke Ellington Revue" at the center's Allen Room on May 3 and 4. **Details:** jalc.org

RIP, Big Jack Johnson: Mississippi blues guitarist Big Jack Johnson died on March 14 at his home in Clarksdale. He was 70 and had been battling cancer.

Kickstarter Becomes Crucial Funding Source For Indie Jazz Projects

A sour economy mixed with a steadily shrinking pot of record-company dollars has convinced musicians to look to the Internet for project funds. Clarinetist James Falzone, bassist Matthew Rybicki and others have trumpeted their recording plans on social media fundraising sites like Kickstarter and RocketHub, asking fans to become de facto executive producers.

Kickstarter is the most visible face of a growing movement in Internet altruism. Unlike charity websites reserved for nonprofit organizations, on Kickstarter, artists, musicians and anyone else with a fully formed project can select a fundraising goal, pick a time limit (30, 60 or 90 days) and let fans donate at a number of pledge levels.

Falzone logged on to Kickstarter to find some supplemental cash for *Other Doors*, his small-group tribute to Benny Goodman, which was released April 26 on Allos Musica. To sweeten the process, Falzone committed to composing a tune for each person who gave \$100 or more; the pieces were to be premiered during the *Other Doors* release party.

"I'm really into these new tunes, and I could see the next record easily being made up of these eight tunes or at least having them be the focus of the new record," Falzone said.

The clarinetist eventually raised \$3,895 from 58 people. These backers were mostly friends, members of his mailing list or people he knew, but he did end up receiving money from about 15 random Internet benefactors.

For Rybicki, money from a complete stranger is what helped offset the costs of his debut recording, *Driven*. With half an hour to go before his fundraising time expired, Rybicki was looking at a deficit of \$1,500. Kickstarter doesn't allow members to donate to themselves and the artist doesn't keep any pledge money if his goal isn't achieved, so Rybicki was in a bind. At the last minute, an anonymous donor saved *Driven*.



Matthew Rybicki

"There can be people who can donate, but don't want to be known," Rybicki said. "They can come in and be little saviors of people's projects and stay out of the limelight."

The site isn't limited to recording projects. SearchAndRestore.com, a nonprofit committed to developing the audience for new jazz in New York, raised \$75,000 in startup costs. More than 280 people supported *Tradition Is A Temple*, a documentary about New Orleans jazz. Even organizers of the Warwick Valley Jazz Festival in New York have turned to Kickstarter, hoping to solicit \$5,000.

Falzone sees Kickstarter as the future of fundraising. He said he won't be surprised if musicians and other artists looking for a bit of cash use the site, in some form or another, for years to come.

"A new generation of people have a different mindset of how to spend their money," he said. "They would love to give \$25 to me or a friend or someone they think is doing good work to get this record rather than sending Amazon their \$17 plus shipping when the record comes out."

—Jon Ross

Joe Morello Made Timekeeping Creative

Influential jazz drummer Joe Morello, who rose to fame as a member of the Dave Brubeck Quartet, died in Elizabeth, N.J., on March 12. He was 82.

Morello's mastery of odd time signatures won him accolades from fans and critics, and his classic 5/4 beat on the quartet's "Take Five" helped make it one of the most famous jazz recordings of all time. He was also voted the top drummer in the DownBeat Readers Poll for three consecutive years, from 1962 to 1964. His discography of more than 120 albums includes work with Gary Burton, Art Pepper, Phil Woods and Marian McPartland, who penned a DownBeat cover story about

Morello in March 1965.

In the article, Morello said, "You know, Marian, you used to say my playing was so precise, but I really think I'm beginning to play more sloppy now. But I'm continually trying to get myself together and play something different, and one thing Dave [Brubeck] has taught me—that's to try to create."

Along with being a bandleader, Morello earned wide acclaim as a jazz educator and instructor at drum clinics around the world. The percussionist, who had impaired vision from birth, wrote instructional books on drumming and starred in instructional videos.

—Bobby Reed

Musicians, Institutions Stand Up for Los Angeles' Jazz Bakery

For its 16-year life, the Jazz Bakery invigorated jazz in Los Angeles, drawing bands to its Culver City site that otherwise wouldn't have had a place to play in Southern California. The venue also provided an experimental forum for local players.

"I've gotten so many opportunities to play at the Bakery, working with lots of singers and soloists like Lee Konitz," said guitarist Larry Koonse. "I probably would have never been able to have the same opportunity elsewhere."

Many other musicians, and institutions, would agree, and they're helping the venue find solid footing and open a new location later this year.

The year 2008 did not begin well for jazz singer and Bakery proprietor Ruth Price. Her neck was broken in a car accident and she was laid up in traction for a couple of months. Things got worse that spring.

"My head was held immovable by this thing called a halo," Price said. "It had just been removed when my landlord came to my house and handed me a notice that nullified my lease. He told me I had to clear out at the Bakery at the end of May. I was numb. It took a good two months for me to fully grasp the reality. But I had to go on because I had contractual obligations to live up to."

She learned the depth of the Bakery's artistic

capital when organizations like the Grammy Museum reached out to her that summer, offering their sites. Price forged ahead by presenting scattered concerts under the Jazz Bakery name—"Moveable Feasts"—with the idea of reopening somewhere. Those concerts included an 80th birthday celebration for Jim Hall on March 26 at the Musicians Institute Concert Hall in Hollywood. Offers to relocate in Pasadena, Chinatown, downtown L.A. and Beverly Hills were flattering, but Culver City wanted the Bakery to stay.

"It's so surreal," Price said. "I'd driven by a space and thought that I'd really like for us to be right there. And that's what the city gave to us."

To add to her good fortune, the Annenberg Foundation—unsolicited—stepped forward and gave the Jazz Bakery \$2 million. Architectural plans are being drawn up and permits cleared, but Price says the next big step is to secure corporate funding.

"I've hired a fundraiser on a six-month trial basis," Price said. The Annenbergs said there's more available to us, but it's still so surreal. When I was handed that two-million-dollar check in an envelope with a 42-cent stamp, I didn't think it was real."

New York singer Tessa Souter played the Bakery each year, and three Moveable Feasts.



Ruth Price

She appreciates the intimacy between artist and audience.

"I love that the Bakery reflects Ruth's taste," Souter said. "She books people whose work she personally likes. So many times club owners book people because they think they're going to draw a lot of people. But when they do that, their place loses an identity. You've got to balance the money with the artistic vision, of course, but the Bakery has a particular flavor that you don't find elsewhere."

—Kirk Silsbee

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Noah Howard *Space Dimension*

AMERICA, 1970

Earlier this year, 74 books that Thomas Jefferson once owned were discovered to belong to the library at Washington University in St. Louis. Collections, we know, are meant to be assembled, categorized, sorted, studied, loved and maybe even, in the case of a library, shared. But they are also places in which things hide. Trolling a collection, perhaps one's own collection, can involve a process of discovery—in some cases one with amazing surprises in the wings.

It's taken me a few weeks snuffling around in my memory banks to recall the circumstances of acquiring Noah Howard's *Space Dimension*, an LP that I'd completely lost in my own archives. It was a particularly fruitful jaunt to Milwaukee, Wis., about 20 years ago, in a junk store that had somehow turned up a selection of unusual fusion and free-jazz records. Strange now to think that at the time the Howard record was 20 years old. Now I've had it buried in my collection for just as long. It's twice as vintage. And, it turns out, exceptionally sought after.

Howard, who died at 67 in 2010, was a fixture in the adventurous mid-1960s Greenwich Village scene. His first two records were made for ESP; he was associated with Sun Ra, Albert Ayler, Archie Shepp, and most extensively, with tenor saxophonist Frank Wright. With Wright, pianist Bobby Few, drummer Muhammad Ali and bassist Alan Silva, he became a regular face in the expatriate American free-jazz scene in Paris in 1969. In this context, he and Wright recorded three closely related records, with basically the same bass-less quartet, two released under Wright's name (*Uhuru Na Umoja*, also on America, and *Church Number Nine*, on Calumet) and the record in question under Howard's.

Where Wright is as voluble and gruff as can be, Howard is the perfect complement, a compact, focused sound. By 1969, he's left the freebop vestiges of his earliest LP for the eruptive, ecstatic world of Ayler, Pharoah Sanders and late-John Coltrane. On the title track, which ladles on an extra helping of echo—putting some space into "Space Dimension"—Howard leaves Earthly orbit by means of a hard, sustained split-tone, aided by Wright on harmonica. Odd-man-out on the session is drummer Art Taylor, hard-bop vet with curiosity about these New Things. You can hear him rooting around pretty effectively for what to do in more open ionospheric material, but on the groovy "Viva Black" (titled "Ole Negro" on Howard's LP *The Black Ark*) he's at home with a little shuffle, and on the bouncy, childlike "Song For Thelma," he finds an appropriate place for some swing.

Pianist Few provides one of the hallmark features of these sessions, his pedal-down mass-of-sound giving it both a lugubrious quality and an unmistakable fingerprint. On "Church Number Nine," the one track that swaps in drummer Ali, the whole machine takes its rightful shape, Wright screaming bloody murder, Howard joining for the ridiculously perfect little r&b/gospel riff, a maniacal laugh and corkscrew multiphonics ending the track on an unhinged note. It's as if the LP was insanely happy to have been rediscovered in my collection.

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.



Trombonist Jeff Albert Launches Experimental Jazz Series in New Orleans

Even in the birthplace of jazz, finding a home for creative music can be tough. But that's changing, thanks in large part to the efforts of trombonist Jeff Albert and his weekly Open Ears series at the Blue Nile in New Orleans. The Tuesday night shows are free and archived on Albert's website, openearsmusic.org. The organization also has events planned during JazzFest, including Albert's Instigation Quartet on April 26 and Will Thompson's WATIV on May 3.

"Lots of things happen musically that don't happen in other venues," says Albert, who started the series in part to give his own quartet a place to play. "I told people if you're having a hard time booking your project at the regular jazz clubs, I want you to play here."

While many promoters shy away from the experimental, the series has grown in size and diversity as far as both the program and the turnout during its three-year run, making Albert's work essential to the development of new music and new audiences in the city.

Astral Project bassist James Singleton, who also plays in crowd-drawing groove-oriented projects like the Illuminasti Trio, performs regularly with combos like Jonathan Freilich's Naked Orchestra. The creative music community in Europe sees Open Ears as New Orleans' premiere jazz series (Ken Vandermark is slated to perform in July). And it's a unique chance to hear players like cellist Helen Gillet, one of the Crescent City's busiest rising-star artists, in an intimate setting.

"Jeff books experimental lineups without questioning their content," Freilich said on his way to catch a project by bassist Tarik Hassan at a recent Open Ears show in January. "An audience has built at Open Ears that now regularly shows up to see whatever is going on. In that way, my audience has been slightly expanded, especially to a younger generation."

—Jennifer Odell

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Portland Jazz Festival Keeps Up Positive Fight in Tough Times

The last few years have been somewhat of a struggle for the Portland Jazz Festival. In spite of consistently sturdy lineups that have touted names like Cecil Taylor and Trygve Seim, the event, now in its seventh year, has faced numerous financial difficulties that have threatened to shutter the whole operation for good. But organizers always manage to pull it back from the brink, sometimes at the last minute.

This year's event, which ran from Feb. 18–27, showed why artistic director Bill Royston and his dedicated crew sweat through the other 11 months of the year. Empty seats abounded in some of the larger venues, and efforts to reach outside of the core audience of music fans (including organizing the 2011 fest around the theme of “Bridges and Boundaries,” a nod to connecting disparate cultures in the jazz community) remain an uphill struggle.

There were notable exceptions. The biggest one being the festival's most talked-about show: an appearance by recent Grammy winner Esperanza Spalding. The singer/bassist staged the show's opening moments like something of a homecoming (she grew up in Portland). Her first appearance before the capacity crowd saw her relaxing stage left in a cozy armchair with a glass of wine. But once the curtain lifted to reveal her band (including three string players, and her local mentor and former teacher Darrell Grant on piano) and her standup bass, she never left center stage. The 27-year-old commanded the Newmark Theatre like the star she has quickly become, scatting, cooing and groaning through a stunning hour-plus performance that culled heavily from her breakthrough album, *Chamber Music Society*.



Esperanza Spalding

The crowds also flocked to see local songwriter Dave Frishberg at the Winningstad Theatre. The celebratory air of the evening was warranted as the septuagenarian received the first-ever Portland Jazz Master award and was read a proclamation from Mayor Sam Adams. He responded to the accolades with a charming, but ultimately lightweight, set of his toothsome compositions and fluid, Erroll Garner-esque piano playing.

Don Byron and his crack band played a buoyant and kooky set of songs from his tribute

to Jewish musical comedian Mickey Katz. But the famed “floating” dance floor of the Crystal Ballroom stayed relatively still for the steaming cha-chas and Willie Bobo tributes of Pancho Sanchez (he also had to contend with sound from the '80s dance night going on one floor below). Even the SFJAZZ Collective faced unoccupied front-row seats for the premier of its tribute to Stevie Wonder: a brilliant mix of post-bop reconstructions of the Motown icon's classics like “Visions” and “Do I Do” alongside the group's lovingly rendered originals. —Robert Ham

Ben Allison Launches Yearlong Residency at New York's Kush

Whoever called New York the city that never sleeps probably wasn't out pub-crawling on a Tuesday night in the winter. It's a certifiable ghost town, and yet bassist Ben Allison seems unfazed by the mere handful of patrons who've braved the sub-zero temperatures to check out his new Experimental Workshop Series at Kush, a downtown lounge whose North African-inspired decor has the feel of a swanky oasis. It may not be the most rousing start to what Allison said will be a yearlong Tuesday-night jam/residency, but as he counts off the tempo to “Fred,” a signature original, and the space fills with the composition's twangy, relaxed funk, it's easy to over-



Ben Allison

JACK WATCOB/FRONTROWPHOTOS

look the series' humble beginnings.

"I'd kinda like the looseness of these nights to point me back to a more organic way of doing things," Allison said, shortly before moving with trumpeter Shane Endsley and guitarist Steve Cardenas to the makeshift bandstand at the room's center. "Just getting together and playing instead of making rehearsals so formal, planning them weeks in advance. I'd like it to be an environment where new ideas can take off."

Admittedly, it's difficult to gauge the

idea's promise from the inaugural performance. Endsley and Cardenas are the core of Allison's regular touring outfit, but he plans to roll out special guests in subsequent weeks (he's particularly excited about gigging with a downtown neighbor, singer Joey Arias, a famed New York drag personality noted for channeling Billie Holiday). The off-the-cuff nature of the set list gives up the only genuine surprises. That "Fred," the opener, is distinguished by a cleverly engaging turnaround as the melody eases into its eighth bar prob-

ably impacted the trio's decision to follow it with a jaunty reading of Ornette Coleman's "Turnaround." That turned into a leitmotif: "Jackie-ing" found Cardenas spinning abstract note sequences out of Thelonious Monk's simplicity, while the solos on John Lennon's "Jealous Guy" alternated between pleading lyricism (Endsley), rustic hipness (Cardenas) and cool resolve (Allison). In a drummerless setting, Allison's bouncy notes built a launchpad for trying just about anything. —K. Leander Williams

Unison Fuels New Jason Moran-Ken Vandermark Quartet

A long pause, some sideways glances between pianist Jason Moran and guitarist Jeff Parker, and a burst of laughter led the former to say, "That's the piece. You didn't hear that?" A few tunes into the opening set of the first performance by the quartet of Moran, Parker, reedist Ken Vandermark and drummer Nasheet Waits on Feb. 4 at Chicago's Green Mill, there was, understandably, still some confusion and awkwardness. Apparently, the band had a mere hour to work out some of the arrangements they'd be playing over the course of two nights. While Moran and Waits are longtime cohorts in the pianist's trio the Bandwagon, and Vandermark has played a couple of times with them in a quartet organized by bassist Eric Revis (who was originally scheduled to be on this gig as well), this was still a fresh endeavor. Yet the band soldiered on gamely from the uncertain start, transforming mistakes and rough spots with creative solutions, and gaining confidence and poise as the evening progressed.

The concert began with a charged but open reading of Paul Motian's swerving "Fiasco," the band delivering the tune's minimal unison theme before leaping into an improvisational maelstrom—in this particular case the band ripped into some screaming energy music, howling away with unfettered glee—and setting the tone for the first two sets, with compositions by each musician functioning primarily as loose schematic blueprints. That choice was probably necessitated by the newness of the combo, and aside from the pregnant pause, there were a few other rocky moments caused by unfamiliarity and divergent methodologies. That the band was able to navigate such challenges testifies both to the imaginations of the players and to the fledgling combo's artistic potential.

When the quartet played Parker's elegant, rigorously zigzagging "Days Fly By (With Ruby)" there was a blockiness to the execution



that sapped the tune of its usual grace—although the string of solos that constituted the bulk of this particular performance easily made up for any clumsiness. Within those open sections the quartet belied its newness with a deeply intuitive power, instantaneously and instinctually crafting paths for each performance to move forward, whether that meant dropping out, engaging in fiery back-and-forth duos, or simply improvising as a single organism. As Parker's nubby original "Cubes" was winding down, Moran dropped a spontaneous, utterly seamless transition into his own "Restin'," shaping, manipulating and teasing out a series of long-tones and scrabbling inside-the-piano scrapes while Parker tapped into his inner-Derek Bailey with jarring volume-pedal surges and acidic spikes.

Individually, all four members of the ensemble have established strong reputations as

rugged individualists—and the fact that both Moran and Vandermark have won prestigious MacArthur Fellowships gave this grouping some extra dazzle on paper—but they still represent different approaches. Vandermark has become an increasingly impressive composer, but his roots belong more to a visceral brand of free jazz that emphasizes rhythm and texture rather than harmonic development, while Moran and Parker are both fluent in improvising over changes. Bridging that divide would seem to be this combo's greatest challenge, since most of the writing by both pianist and guitarist digs deep into harmonic exploration. Although if the band maintains the generally open approach on display at the Green Mill, then that gap will become less of a concern. In any case, here's hoping that this gathering was not a one-off meeting. —Peter Margasak

Adam Cruz ▶ *Feeding The Fire*

As the drummer who propelled the flow on no small number of landmark documents in the evolution of jazz hybridity over the past two decades (these include Edward Simon's *La Bikina*, David Sanchez's *Sketches Of Dreams* and *Melaza*, Chick Corea's *Live At The Blue Note* and Danilo Pérez's *...Till Then* and *Providencia*), Adam Cruz understands what a milestone is. Indeed, his debut leader CD, titled *Milestone* (Sunnyside), contains similar signpost qualities.

In mid-February, a few hours before hit time at the Jazz Standard with Steve Wilson, an associate and employer of long standing, Cruz offered two reasons why he waited until his 40th year to present his vision. "Part of the answer is wrestling with perfectionism," he said. "That's combined with having the complex of a drummer when we venture into harmony and melody. You wonder, 'Do I have a command over this?'"

Cruz pondered the interplay of spontaneous real-time playing and meticulous compositional craft within his sensibility. "With improvising, we don't have a choice," he said. "It represents where I was at that moment. Composing, you have time to edit—you have the chance to make it how you feel. But your limitations direct you."

Elaborating this point, Cruz paraphrased Jorge Luis Borges. "As a reader, you follow what you love, you feel this connection, and soak it all up," he said. "As a writer, you write what you're able to."

The aural evidence on *Milestone* (featuring Chris Potter on tenor saxophone, Miguel Zenón or Wilson on alto or soprano saxophone, Steve Cardenas on guitar, Simon on piano and Ben Street on bass) indicates that Cruz somewhat exaggerates his limitations. His eight originals mine raw materials drawn from many corners of contemporary jazz expression, mixing transdiasporic drum chants, rockish anthems, classically tinged ballads and open-ended forms, and present the soloists with impressionistic harmonies and shifting colors. Cruz feeds the fire with a global array of fresh, immaculately executed rhythms drawn from the Pan-American and straight-eighth lexicons.

"I have a great passion for playing swing, and I'm sorry that it didn't inform this record more explicitly," Cruz said. He referenced his 1990-'93 matriculation at the New School, where he studied with Kenny Washington and became "a mono-maniac about the tradition."

At the time, Cruz, a New Jerseyian who possessed an intuitive clave feel from proximity to his father, a steadily employed *timbalero*, came under the wing of bassist Andy Gonzalez, then "hitting hard" around New York with the Fort



SHELASH MURPHY

Apache Band, whose drummer, Steve Berrios, set an inspirational template with "his raw, funky, soulful jazz way of dealing with Latin rhythms." Cruz was gigging, too (Sanchez, a classmate during a 1988-'90 stay at Rutgers, spread his name), playing salsa with Willie Colon, Pan-American music with Paquito D'Rivera and Latin jazz with, among others, Eddie Palmieri and trumpeter Charlie Sepulveda.

While working with Sepulveda, he met Pérez, who called him for occasional sextet engagements, including a one-off concert in Panama. "Willie had a European tour that conflicted," Cruz recalled. "I wanted to be a jazz musician, so I quit Willie's band."

"Adam's perspective was almost like coming from the north to Latin America," said Pérez, Cruz's primary employer since 2000. "He mastered the bilingual thing of playing *tumbao* and swing, the straight-eighth and the triplet. He opens a lot of windows when he plays in five; it feels like the sea, a roller coaster. Particularly since he started playing piano, I feel his sense of structure with harmonic rhythm, too—he can go back and forth from being a drummer to also developing melodies. Now he speaks all kinds of

things, and because he knows all the languages so well, we can take chances."

Asked about his penchant for solving gnarly metric modulation puzzles, Cruz responds that such ideas arose in response to challenges posed by Sanchez and Simon in the '90s. "I'm not very mathematical," he said. "With tunes in odd meters I'd hear phrases, and certain subdivisions emerged that were then clear to the body, like, 'This is how I'm feeling it.' My process is to gestate and take time with things."

The process of privileging imperatives of discovery over "clave police" precision accelerated over a decade of steady work with Pérez. "During my twenties, I tended towards real diligence, craft, doing a good job in the idiom," Cruz said. "Danilo is incredibly intuitive, and if he senses something in the music isn't letting it fly, he'll signal from the piano to shake things up. A big thing is not being consistent—rehearse something one way, and then completely contradict what we're supposed to do. If I was trying to be too much of a stickler, maybe it wouldn't work. That spirit isn't what's being asked for. What's being asked for is to say, 'OK, we're going to do this now.'" —Ted Panken

Theo Bleckmann ► *Vocal Autonomy*

Vocalist Theo Bleckmann is trying to create the autonomy of his own instrument. And he is succeeding, as a solo performer and as a member of ensembles led by some of the more creative jazz artists on the scene today.

"I think of my voice as my voice," says the 44-year-old Bleckmann, who was raised in Germany, currently lives in New York and frequently performs and records with the likes of guitarist Ben Monder, percussionist John Hollenbeck and keyboardist Gary Versace, among others. "And for the people that I work with, I think that's what they want. They want a voice, not someone who sounds like a horn or replaces a trumpet or trombone. And that's what I do. In jazz singing, that's always been my pet peeve: that it's always a step behind instrumental music in terms of how the singers think about the voice. They think they have to write a vocalese to someone else's solo, so it never has that autonomy that I wish for my own voice. The people I work with are so open and interested in all kinds of music, the last thing they want to hear is somebody scat singing. We're in the same territory, so that's how we find each other."

With the release of the solo disc *I Dwell In Possibility* (Winter & Winter, 2010), Bleckmann has taken another bold step toward realizing his ambition. Inspired by the Arte Povera, an Italian art movement of the 1960s that created installations with the simplest of materials, Bleckmann recorded the entire album live at the remote monastery Beinwil in Switzerland, without any post-production (save for a few vocal overdubs). He was accompanied only by what he calls his collection of "toys," which includes music boxes, megaphones, melodica, autoharp, glasses, water, shruti and various other percussive instruments he regularly employs in his solo act.

"I've always been interested in contemporary art, so it's no coincidence that I came across Arte Povera," Bleckmann said. "What I find fascinating is that vulnerability and humility with which Arte Povera creates any kind of art piece. And I wanted to do the same thing, or use a similar approach, by using very basic instruments that are so cheap and almost ridiculous, but I didn't want it to be a gimmick. I wanted it actually to be beautiful and make music, to really explore and spend time with these instruments and treat them as a source of inspiration and of sound. When I perform solo I do part of the concert a cappella, I use electronic looping and I also play piano on some stuff—a mesh-up of all of these sonic-scapes. In this case all I had was my voice and some of these toys, so it was a little bit more bare and a little bit more frightening."



I Dwell In Possibility reflects the depth of Bleckmann's repertoire, featuring his own compositions along with bare-bones renditions of more recognizable tunes like Supertramp's "Lord It Is Mine," Joni Mitchell's "The Fiddle And The Drum" and Meredith Monk's signature solo piece "Wa-lie-oh," as well as the songbook standards "I Hear A Rhapsody" and "Comes Love." He employs extended vocal techniques he has developed over the course of his career, including ingressive singing and throat singing.

Above all, though, Bleckmann says, he wanted to make an album that was accessible. "When Stefan [Winter] and I set out to do a solo record, the first thought was, 'I don't want this to be some kind of catalog of what is possible with the human voice,'" he says. "I wanted this to be the record that you can put on and listen to. I love songs, and I felt that some of the songs would benefit from a stripped-down arrangement."

Bleckmann's busy spring 2011 schedule saw him performing with keyboardist Uri Caine at the Blue Note in New York, touring with Hollenbeck's Large Ensemble, performing a solo concert at the Bach festival in Leipzig, Germany, and recording his own re-creation of the music of reclusive British pop icon Kate Bush, called *Hello Earth!*, with Hollenbeck, bassist Skuli Sverrisson (bass), Henry Hey (keyboards) and Caleb Burhans (viola, guitar and backup vocals), for a fall release.

Bleckmann's autonomy as a vocalist gives him an almost universal appeal that crosses multiple genres and contributes to his widespread appeal among listeners and fellow musicians alike. "A lot of people who I work with want to step away from the regular jazz path and find new ways of creating sounds and music, so that's why they have me."

—Ed Enright

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Keefe Jackson ▶ *Intent & Purpose*

Multi-reedist Keefe Jackson showed up in Chicago in 2001 via his native Fayetteville, Ark., like a musical drifter. Oft sporting an earth-toned tweed jacket with woolen hat, his unassuming manner belied talent and quiet determination. The welcoming vibe of the improv community in Chicago and the city's economic viabilities enticed him to settle there.

Without undue fanfare Jackson rapidly established himself as an old soul on the scene, possessed of a gorgeous rubbery tenor sound pungent with the musty scent of Paul Gonsalves, Don Byas and Sidney Bechet, married to the strategies of Anthony Braxton, Joseph Jarman and Henry Threadgill.

"My father took me to see Ornette Coleman when I was 10 years old," recalls Jackson, who's also known for his work on bass clarinet and contrabass clarinet. "I'd heard some controversy about Ornette, but thought, 'What's the problem?' His Prime Time band sounded great to me then; [avant-garde New Orleans saxophonist] Kidd Jordan opened the show, and I was impressed with him, too."

After dabblings with the cello and early fascination with drums, when Jackson developed interest in the saxophone his dad tellingly dug out from his record collection three of John Coltrane's late-career LPs: *Ascension*, *Om* and the posthumous *Expression*. Both Jackson's parents, now deceased, were restless autodidacts. His father made a Kafkaesque about-turn from law work to become a librarian at the University of Arkansas, while his mother undertook serious studies in Latin and Greek late in life. Keefe's outlook was also informed by a not-un-Coleman-like career playing a broad swath of music as a teenager, facilitated by legislation Bill Clinton passed in Arkansas, commonly known as the Art Porter Bill, permitting precocious musicians to play in clubs before drinking age.

The young Jackson fell in with some clued-in older jazzers playing the music of Charles Mingus and Coleman at the 1936 Club in Fayetteville and ultimately toured with their unit, the Big World Quintet, sojourning for a while in Portland, Maine, where he took lessons with saxophonist Bill Street (bassist Ben Street's father).

Other grist to the mill had been klezmer, a stint with the Barrio Band, playing salsa for underground dance parties plus colorful experiences with blues band The Confounders, who would occasionally play a rough pool hall in Little Rock from 1 until 5 a.m. on weeknights. Such experience prepped Jackson for unprepossessing Chicago haunts The Hideout, Skylark, Elastic and The Hungry Brain, where his own music has been subsequently smelted on the bandstand. In fact, the vintage qualities in Jackson's conception

led to an invitation to guest with the hard-grooving Saturday-night band at Chicago's Green Mill, where the music of Hank Mobley meets The Grateful Dead.

Jackson's own compositional style is unforced, organic and deftly hued with melody and counterpoint. Inevitably he is heavily influenced by the superbly committed plethora of players in his Chicago orbit, including cornetist Josh Berman, drummer Frank Rosaly, trombonist Jeb Bishop, cellist Fred Lonberg-Holm and bassist Anton Hatwich. All the above feature in the wryly titled cooperative sextet Fast Citizens, which recorded two genuinely fascinating CDs for Delmark, *Ready Everyday* and *Two Cities*, the latter inspired by the remoteness of their sixth member, altoist Aram Shelton, who now resides in the San Francisco Bay Area.

Jackson was recently featured alongside Shelton in a quartet with Hatwich and drummer Marc Riordan on *These Times* (Singlespeed Music), where likeminded conceptions flourish (check Jackson's quicksilver, nook-'n'-cranny interrogations on the title track for evidence of his fluidity and resourcefulness, spiced with tumbling phrases redolent of Sonny Rollins' *The Bridge* period).

When DownBeat met with Jackson in Chicago's Pilsen neighborhood, at a somewhat gothic former cafe populated with gargoyles, sculpture pieces and candelabras whose owner lets him practice there, a moment in the discussion touched on Jackson's premise that idol worship in jazzlore is moribund. Cooperative effort is the new paradigm, and there is little question that he and his key collaborators have, through empathy over grandstanding, carved an intriguing niche. Though Jackson was able to pull off the feat of corralling his horn-heavy 12-piece Project Project under his own name (*Just Like This*, Delmark, 2007), pooling inimitable members of the non-AACM Chicago creative scene, this is music that generally rejects egomania and self-interest. Jackson is just as happy to tour as sidekick to Berman in the cornetist's Old Idea group, play in the Chicago/Luzern Exchange with tuba player Marc Unternährer or perform in Rosaly's chamber-ish clarinet choir Cicada Music, not to neglect duo contexts with Swiss pianist Hans Peter Pfammaetter or Rosaly (the drummer felt inspired to press a limited-edition vinyl 45 of a 2005 encounter between him and Jackson).

One of Jackson's more salient releases last year was the quartet date *Seeing You See* with Bishop, bassist Jason Roebke and Japanese drummer Nori Tanaka from Portugal's hip Clean Feed label. There's a workmanlike sense of the inevitable to the music; its constructions



don't beg calibration of emotional gravity, but there is something indelible about Jackson's themes (the dirge-like opener "Maker" a case in point), and Jackson's simpatico with Bishop matches his frontline click elsewhere with Berman and Shelton.

As with the late Chicago saxist Fred Anderson, who went about business like a freight train rather than an express, sans bell and whistle, Jackson seems solidly grounded and self-directed, traits offset by his skill at fragmentary, parenthetical musical statement.

"It's all about the intent," he emphasizes when we discuss his sporadic deployment of Anderson-like phraseology. "When I do that it is as a conscious tribute to the spirit of Fred, not imitation as such. Musicians train themselves to sidestep comparisons here and there, not to let their influences be too obvious. There are many players who quit playing after music college or become workaday musicians or acknowledged as brilliant jazz artists. The directions you take are all the result of levels of intent."

—Michael Jackson



Jerome Sabbagh ► *The Real Deal*

Jerome Sabbagh is, if nothing else, a musician committed to “real bands.” Now, that may go without saying for any serious player. But when you realize how this saxophonist’s career reflects that musical mantra, you get an idea of how a “real band” is the lifeblood of a shared musical connection.

His current “real” band is actually one of three, but the one most prominent right now is the one found on his latest release, *I Will Follow You* (Bee Jazz). Featuring longtime colleague Ben Monder on guitar and drum legend Daniel Humair, *I Will Follow You* follows its own script, with much free-jazz variety across 13 four-minutes-and-under pieces.

Commenting on *I Will Follow You* and its apparent storyline, Sabbagh states plainly, “I didn’t set out to communicate anything else than what’s in the music. Each listener is free to hear what they want in it. For me, it’s about three musicians improvising together, listening to each other and finding common ground while staying true to their musical personalities. I tried to create an album that would draw the listener in, that had good pacing and that people would want to listen to all the way through.”

That is surely the case when you listen to *I Will Follow You* track to track, the moods going from playful and jumpy as on the title track to more serene and meditative on “Monolith.” Sometimes certain instruments are featured, as with the alternately quietly probing then more rockish “More,” where Humair’s brushwork paints a straight line to colleague Paul Motian. (At press time, Sabbagh was looking ahead to playing with Motian for the first time at New York’s Cornelia Street Café at the end of May.)

The Paris-born, 37-year-old Sabbagh came to the States when he was 19, completing a Berklee four-year program in two, subsequently moving to New York in 1995, where he’s been ever since. As for his playing, heard on tenor

and soprano, it reflects a taste for tradition but also free-jazz with stylistic links to inspirations like Joe Lovano, Lee Konitz and Hank Mobley.

As for working with Monder, Sabbagh has an ongoing connection with the guitarist. In addition to the new trio, Monder plays guitar in Sabbagh’s quartet. Bassist Joe Martin and drummer Ted Poor fill out the band, the quartet having recorded two albums, 2005’s *North* (Fresh Sound New Talent) and 2007’s *Pogo* (Sunnyside).

While the trio is important and a current vital expression of Sabbagh’s musical life, along with the quartet, he occasionally regroups with another band of his with bassist Ben Street and drummer Rodney Green, heard on their standards-oriented *One Two Three* album (Bee Jazz, 2008). And, along with two piano quartet albums as a sideman for pianist Laurent Coq—*Like A Tree In The City* (Sunnyside) and *Eight Fragments Of Summer* (88 Trees)—Sabbagh can be heard on other recordings, including the important collective *Flipside* (Naxos Jazz, 1998), with bassist Matt Penman, guitarist Greg Tuohey and drummer Darren Beckett. Speaking of that recording, Sabbagh gets to the heart of what seems to be the driving force behind any band he’s a part of when he says, “That band was very important for me because it was the first real band that I recorded with. We played together a lot. I really believe in playing music with the same people for a long time, and that’s why I try to lead projects that can last and develop. Most of the music I connect to the most in jazz was, and is, made by real bands.

“There is nothing quite like being able to express yourself in the moment, creating something together with other musicians, playing music in which everyone is fully him- or herself,” Sabbagh concludes. “And, if all goes well, the end result is more than the sum of everybody’s individual contributions.” —John Ephland

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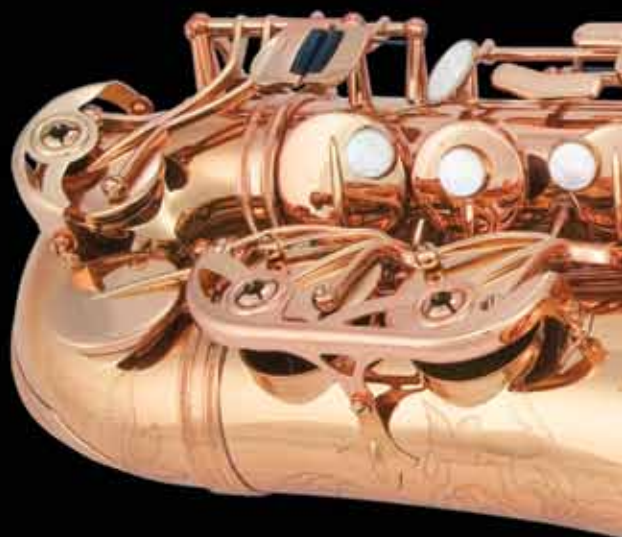
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The Totality Of James Carter

By Dan Ouellette // Photography by Jimmy and Dena Katz

Even though he possesses one of the most singular saxophone voices in the history of jazz, tonight James Carter hasn't quite found his sound yet. Everyone agrees with that estimation at Avatar Studios in New York, where the 42-year-old maestro of all things reeds is negotiating yet another baritone take on the slow-walking blues "Aged Pain," composed by drummer/percussionist Ronald Shannon Jackson and performed with Carter's longtime organ trio mates, Gerald Gibbs on Hammond B3 and Leonard King on drums. In an isolation booth, Carter weeps and exclaims on the bari, utters low growls and high-pitched yelps, issues stutter-stops and slides, and bleeds droplets drenched with the blues.

|||||
JAMES CARTER AT
THE CORNELIA
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"That's a damned good take," says King when the group reassembles behind the board to hear the last run-through, which will undoubtedly make the cut for the tentatively titled album *It's All Good News To Me*, an eclectic collection spanning the spectrum of the blues from gospel to r&b that Emarcy will release late this year or in early 2012.

Carter shakes his head slowly and asks producer Michael Cuscuna and engineer Jim Anderson, "Can I put in another solo?"

A stickler for exacting expression in just the right tone of saxophone articulation, Carter rises to the summoning call just as he's done on all of his recordings, beginning with his 1993 tour-de-force debut, *J.C. On The Set* (DIW), and continuing with this spring's release of *Caribbean Rhapsody*, which documents on record his brilliant collaboration with classical composer Roberto Sierra on his orchestral four-movement *Concerto For Saxophones*. In all cases, Carter is meticulous, almost to a fault. He refuses to give up the pursuit.

Cuscuna (on his third date as Carter's producer) and Anderson (on board way back when for *J.C. On The Set* as well as *Caribbean Rhapsody*) agree with Carter's request, but first the announcement comes that the take-out dinner has arrived. Nothing stops forward motion in the studio as quickly as grub. The session immediately shuts down while the band retreats to Avatar's lounge. Sitting in front of two large servings of salmon and unagi sushi and sashimi, Carter is unusually quiet, answering questions in short phrases, unlike his typical fire-up-and-go style, where he veers off into tangents about former collaborators and stories of his immense saxophone collection (number unknown, he says).

"Coming down the home stretch, huh?"

In between bites, Carter replies, "Not if I don't get a decent solo."

He truncates his dinner break, obviously preoccupied with the mental quest for discovering the elusive right notes, right emotion, right bari sound. He returns to the isolation booth. Carter counts, "One-two-three, two-two-three," and then starts on the solo section. Once. Twice. Several times, each solo completely different from the last—one that tears and snags, another that rips and whistles, still another that is lyrically ecstatic.

Cuscuna asks Carter if he wants to listen back yet. "No," he simply responds and settles into another take, this time his body bobbing into the piece. He finally abandons his remote post, comes into the boardroom, sits and listens. Hand on chin, eyes closed, he's pleased until one of his solos moves to a point where he grimaces and raises his eyebrows in disappointment. With another take, he puts his head into his hands and groans. He shakes his head and says to King, "The search continues." He finally agrees to a couple of solos that will be doctored (read: one take stitched into another) a few weeks later when he, Cuscuna and Anderson will reconvene



during the mixing stage.

"There are still things to fix on this album," he says. "When you're in the studio, you listen for the take's sake. But when you listen to the whole album, you start seeing some inconsistencies. That's when the wheels begin to click. In the grand scope, I want to get all the pieces lined up, see what they have to offer, then put a ribbon on the package to tidy it all up."

But is Carter being too particular, or perhaps too fussy, which is how King jokingly describes it? Carter waves that notion off, returning to the track "Aged Pain." He explains: "I'm just looking for a clean, clear cut. I recorded this song on Ronald [Shannon Jackson]'s album (*What Spirit Say*, DIW, 1995), but I played tenor. I listen to that now, and I was doing a lot of [Ben] Webster-ish playing. But back then I couldn't hear things that I wanted to do. I couldn't get home. So I'm doing this now, years away from the first time, and I never do anything on autopilot, which is why I played the baritone this time."

A couple days after the session, Carter admits that "my zoom lens was somewhere else" that evening. In other words, he was in music mode, not conversation mode. But now his focus is squarely on the saxophone concerto, a remarkable classical-meets-jazz project that is largely the antithesis to the Third Stream-like experiments of the past, where the two genres met and flirted but never achieved swinging consummation. *Concerto For Saxophones* dances and romances with Carter's saxophones (tenor and soprano) taking the spotlight as he plays the role of both the flamboyant virtuoso and the eloquent balladeer. The material is rooted in the classical tradition but buoys with jazz, Latin and blues sensibilities. What's particularly remarkable about the piece is how indistinguishable the noted parts are from the improvisation. Highlights include the tender beauty of the second movement and the boogie-woogie romp of the third.

A challenge? "Oh, my God, it still is," says Carter, who sounds almost in awe of the complex yet exhilarating piece Sierra composed for him. "I started out having to deal with the metrics, and then later on finding the balance between what's written and what's improvised. Then, as working with the composition progressed, I began to see how the different saxophones had a gender tendency—the tenor, male; the soprano, female. I started thinking of the horns as people, which helped the piece to grow."

Concerto For Saxophones debuted with three performances in October 2002 with the Detroit Symphony Orchestra conducted by music director Neeme Järvi at Orchestra Hall in Detroit. It was roundly welcomed by the crowd, which, rare for orchestral events, demanded an encore. The show was reprised a year later in Detroit and has since been performed in Hartford, Conn.; at Cornell University in Ithaca, N.Y.; Indianapolis; Columbus, Ohio; Buffalo, N.Y.; Omaha, Neb.; Overland Park, Kan.; and Eugene, Ore.

It was finally recorded for posterity in December 2009 in Warsaw, Poland, at the Witold Lutoslawski Concert Studio of Polish Radio with the Sinfonia Varsovia conducted by Costa Rican-born Giancarlo Guerrero, who is the music director of the Nashville Symphony. The 20-minute live-in-the-studio performance, produced by Cuscuna and engineered by Anderson, forms the first half of *Caribbean Rhapsody*, which also features the 13-plus-minute title composition for strings and saxophone (also by Sierra), a solo tenor sax interlude and a soprano sax finale.

Sierra wasn't the first classical composer who wanted to collaborate with Carter. In 2000, the saxophonist was approached by a Dutch orchestral writer who had a similar jazz/classical proposal, but the timing was off because of Carter's schedule. "That's when I was preoccupied with working on the two albums I released that year, *Layin' In The Cut* and *Chasin'*



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The Gypsy,” Carter says. “But what made all the difference was that the piece wasn’t specifically written for me.” Fast-forward to 2001 when Carter performed a show with classical soprano Kathleen Battle in North Carolina. In the audience were Sierra and Cynthia Herbst, who manages both men.

“Roberto came up to me backstage, said he’d been checking me out and wanted to write a concerto for me,” says Carter. “My initial reaction was, ‘Oh, Lord, oh, no.’ But I reluctantly agreed to it, but by then I had started thinking about the *Live At Baker’s Keyboard Lounge* album.”

Yet the following month, Carter met up with Sierra at the Carroll Rehearsal Studio in New York. “Roberto went over some ideas and sketches, which I dug,” Carter says. “He played one snippet of a piece that eventually became part of the second movement that I particularly liked. After that meeting I gave him the go-ahead, and a month and some change later I received a big manila envelope in the mail. I opened it up and ink came flying out at me—notes in seven, eight, nine groupings. I called him up and told him, ‘You’ve got me going all over the place,’ but Roberto calmed me down. He said, ‘Look at

the tempo,’ which made me realize that I had to make metric sense out of it to start.”

Carter and Sierra began to collaborate on what worked and what didn’t in an orchestral setting. Together they crafted the piece, whether it was Carter suggesting an improvised cadenza or recommending that a sharp in the piece be flat-tered or eliminating the grace notes to get straight to the point. “There was so much harmonic information in the music Roberto sent to me,” says Carter. “Every other month until the October debut I would receive another manila envelope. It was like when I was in school and an envelope with school letterhead would arrive at my house to my parents that would have something about a bad report card or some disciplinary action. So every time Roberto’s envelope came, it was like, ‘Here we go again.’ But Roberto always reminded me to pay attention to the tempo markings.”

Sierra had his work cut out for him. His challenge was to make his composition sync up with Carter’s saxophone voice and style. “When writing the work, I had to really plan how best to integrate the improvised parts within the written score,” says the Puerto Rico-born Sierra, who is a music professor at Cornell. “Also I had to manage an orchestral accompaniment that would allow the improvised sections to fit in.”

In other words, *Concerto For Saxophones* is a musical confluence, not a cheap cross-genre stunt.

Cuscuna marvels at the meld Carter and Sierra accomplished. “When I first heard the concerto live, I thought James was blowing his saxophone over the entire piece,” he says. “But then I looked at the score, and I saw how Roberto had written in James’ style of phrasing. It was organic how they sucked the blood out of both kinds of music—classical and jazz. It wasn’t forced.”

While *Concerto For Saxophones* serves as the marquee work on Carter’s new album, the title track takes strong second billing. “Caribbean Rhapsody” is a joyful chamber piece with pockets of pastoral reflection and fiesta spirit. Written by Sierra for the saxophonist and his cousin, violinist Regina Carter (a musical reunion of the pair, given her co-starring role on *Chasin’ The Gypsy* more than decade ago), the work also features cellist Akua Dixon’s string quintet (with violinists Patrisa Tomassini and Chala Yancy, viola player Ron Lawrence and bassist Kenny Davis). It was written after the saxophone concerto.

“Roberto knows a lot about me and Regina, and he knows what we can do,” Carter says. “It’s a beautiful situation for us to hook up, kind of like how Duke [Ellington] and [Billy] Strayhorn worked together, finishing each other’s thoughts. Roberto challenged us; he stretched us. And he encouraged us. We’d say, ‘Hey, you’ve got us playing triplets over four.’ But he replied, ‘Oh, babies, I know you can do it.’” Carter laughs and says, “And Roberto was right.”

Sierra hopes that the music on the album will bring listeners “something really new and genuine.” He reflects on how he believes the mu-

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sis avoids the rise and fall of the Third Stream: "Some of the past efforts that attempt to mix classical and jazz end up being hybrids which precisely lack in those aspects what this work tries to unite. When I listen to my saxophone concerto and 'Caribbean Rhapsody,' I realize that they are unified works where one cannot separate any of their components; they're works where the salsa and jazz elements inform the classical modern tradition and vice versa."

Caribbean Rhapsody also features Carter in solo mode, using his tenor and soprano improvisations to round out the album. The robust, squealing, soulful tenor piece serves as an interlude, while the high-spirited, rapturous soprano number makes for a fitting epilogue. While Carter has played extended solo spots as introductions to tunes on record and in concert, this is his first bona fide outing going it alone. His reference point? Sonny Rollins' 1985 release *The Solo Album*.

"I was pulling out some of my old albums when I was in Detroit one day," Carter says. "And I came across an old cassette of that Sonny album. That's a hallmark of solo saxophone playing. It's the template for any saxophonist. It's hard to do that on a single-line instrument, but there was Sonny shading notes, playing split tones—no gimmickry or tricks or tomfoolery. It's so honest. It's so full of wit and wisdom."

That whimsy and sagacity as well as the respect he holds for jazz statesmen (case in point, Carter's 1996 disc *Conversin' With The Elders*, starring Lester Bowie and Harry "Sweets" Edison) pretty much sum up the Carter mystique.

Born in Detroit and today splitting his time between there and the Upper West Side of Manhattan, Carter is an instinctual player. He speaks on his array of reeds instruments, with manifold vocal inflections. He races and skids to a stop. He yells in exuberance, then quietly sobs. He slap-tongues and sings. He's attentive to the world around him, emulating the gritty roar of a midday truck clanging down a city avenue or capturing the pitch-perfect phrase of a songbird on a placid country afternoon. No sound escapes him. He consumes tones and rhythms and reforms them anew. He's a singular voice whose story runs deep.

One of the early tales presaging Carter's sonic future occurred in elementary school when he emulated an outside birdcall within his classroom, which irritated the teacher enough that the whole class got in trouble. After getting caught trying out a saxophone owned by a boarder in his house when he was 11, he got his own instrument, bought by his mother. He practiced by playing along to her Ellington, Count Basie and Billie Holiday albums, bought a couple of recordings of his own (his first two were Eddie Harris' *Playing With Myself* and *Basie Jam No. 3*), discovered Bird from the "*Bird*" Symbols LP and eventually came under the tutelage of saxophonist Donald Washington, who became his mentor in all things jazz—history, technique,

savvy, style.

Carter's older brother Kevin was party to getting him linked up with Washington. A guitarist who on occasion worked with Leonard King, who was close to Washington, Kevin inquired about finding his younger brother a teacher. So the young sax player was invited to an audition. "My mouth dropped," says King. "He was just 14, but I knew he was an old soul from way back. A year later in December 1984 when he was still 15, James was in my band. I've worked with a lot of musicians who were special over the years, but James is indescribable. I was 21 at

the time and he was just a teen, but he always felt comfortable talking to me about music. No sounds are foreign to him. I remember playing once in 1988 at a club that had an ice machine that would make these sounds, especially during quiet moments in the set. He incorporated that into his solo, which knocked people out."

Meanwhile, Carter had begun feeling attracted to New York, where two of his uncles lived. In December 1982, one of his uncles took him to see the Broadway musical *Sophisticated Ladies*, based on Ellington's music and starring Gregory Hines, Phyllis Hyman and Mercer

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Ellington, among others. "I was blown away by that show," Carter remembers. "I'd always heard cats talk about how everything is popping in New York. After the show was over, while we were hailing a cab, Phyllis Hyman came out of the theater to get in her limo. I was awestruck. She was so tall and statuesque. She got in the car and winked at me. That lit a fire under me."

In 1985, the music life was starting to take off for Carter. In addition to performing with King, he toured Europe for two-and-a-half weeks as a member of the Blue Lake Fine Arts Camp's International Jazz Band, and he met Wynton Marsalis, who was in Detroit performing with the symphony orchestra. During a Q&A session that Marsalis had done at his school (Northwestern High), Carter impressed him with his knowledge of the music and his playing. They exchanged contact information, which led to an opportunity for Carter to fill in on tenor in Wynton's band after brother Branford had left to perform in Sting's touring group. "I played my first hit with Wynton at Blues Alley," Carter recalls. "And then I did a handful of hits on weekends. I was in high school, but I'd leave home for a few days, catch a plane, play with Wynton, then fly home to get back to school. I never did record with him, though."

In May 1988, Lester Bowie came to Detroit and enlisted Carter at the last minute to perform with him at a Detroit Institute of Arts concert. "I showed up wearing a red sharkskin suit," Carter says. "When Lester introduced everyone in the band, he paused when he got to me and told the crowd, 'And on tenor and bass saxophones, here's Santa Claus.' The whole audience broke up."

But, Bowie, impressed by Carter's playing, kept in touch and called him to be in a new band he was forming. That prompted Carter to make the move to New York in 1990, playing some gigs with Bowie and then becoming one of the charter members of Bowie's New York Organ Ensemble, which recorded its debut, *The*

Organizer, in 1991 for the Japanese label DIW. Meanwhile Carter was fronting his own trio of fellow Detroit players, drummer Tani Tabbal and bassist Jaribu Shahid, which soon expanded to a quartet with pianist Craig Taborn. It was at this time that DIW A&R man Kazunori Sugiyama offered Carter the opportunity to record his debut, *J.C. On The Set*, which was released in Japan in 1993 and issued in the U.S. in 1994.

Anderson, who had worked on David Murray's DIW releases, engineered the disc. He was impressed by Carter immediately. "Halfway through the first tune, I realized that James had a whole other vocabulary on the sax," he says. "At times I was dumbstruck, awestruck. It was truly one of those moments when you see a young player whose talent is fully formed. And there he was moving from one instrument to another with ease. When he came up, James was new and different with his concept of sound and his articulation. He's only grown so much more since then."

Having seen him in the studio setting, Anderson says he wasn't aware of the critiques at the time of Carter's onstage persona, which some deemed a bit over the top. Indeed, the reeds man was putting on a show for all to see, coming off as cocky and playful, surly and flashy. His saxophone glossolalia got him dubbed the "Motor City Madman," and he commanded the stage with a frothy swagger and roaring pyrotechnics.

Carter told me in 1996 that he knew full well that his wild saxophone ways were instrumental in drawing a younger audience. "I've seen quite a few younger individuals at my concerts that you'd guess would normally listen to r&b or rock radio," he said. "Case in point: There were some hippy-dressed people in attendance at the Village Vanguard one night. They came up to me after the show and talked about how I reminded them of Jimi Hendrix. They mentioned things like the feedback and the way my notes seemed to be coming from nowhere. They said, 'Oooh,

man, we just wanted to mosh.' And I told them, 'Glad to be of help.'"

Even though he seemed to bask in the light of the image he was exhibiting, Carter insisted that beneath it all was a spiritual depth of commitment to the music. "It's not just entertainment," he said, while conceding that his horn blowing could be viewed through that lens. "But that's what a whole lot of people get tripped up on. It turns the whole process into minstrelsy, something to just pass the time. But if you're serious about the music, you play so that it not only opens ears but also opens a therapeutic membrane. It's like Albert Ayler saying that music is the healing force of the universe. You need to tap into the spiritual even if it's a rehashed version of 'Take The "A" Train' [which Carter rendered on his second DIW album, *Jurassic Classics*], because that's the most viable element. If the passion and spirit aren't there, what's the use? If you're not playing for a loved, labored cause, it doesn't make any sense."

At heart, Carter exudes that love for the music. He's matured, and his range of musical mastery has expanded. He has even become a member of the legendary World Saxophone Quartet—a boyhood dream-come-true—appearing on its last two CDs, including *Yes We Can*, recorded live during the 2009 exhibition Discover US! in Berlin and released earlier this year on the Jazzwerkstatt label.

When asked in 2003 if his life as a soloist and bandleader had changed in his thirties, Carter replied, "I still feel the same way, but I'm able to use all the different shapes and forms in my playing better." He explained it with a mélange of metaphors: "I can ping-pong with someone just as well as throw the shot put. There are more than just a couple of events in a decathlon. I want to play a piece different every time. That's a hell of a tightrope walk. But when you have different attacks in your arsenal, it's a much easier balancing act."

In 2008, when Cuscuna first came on board as Carter's producer, he said that he wanted to showcase "the totality of who he is," which he felt had yet to be revealed. "In going through James' entire output prior to recording *Present Tense*, it struck me that many of his albums were ingenious concepts. As successful as each was, none of them captured the breadth of his mastery of this music. When you see him live, he can reach for any decade in this music's history as easily as he can reach for any [woodwind] on the bandstand. We wanted to bring that to the fore."

Cuscuna recalls that he first heard Carter years ago in Los Angeles with Michael and Randy Brecker. "Even though James was only in his twenties, it was shocking to hear the total control he had with his music," he says. "But he was also so young that he didn't know how to edit and when to stop. He was exhausted at the end of each set, and I remember being physically exhausted myself after his show. I was brought into the picture to help him become more concise."

For the new organ trio album—which features guest appearances by guitarists Bruce Edwards and Brandon Ross, trombonist Vincent Chandler, trumpeter Keyon Harrold, vocalist Millicent (Miche) Braden and Eli Fountain on tambourine—Carter feels like he's in a comfort zone. For the first time in a long stretch, he has a solid band. He describes how both King and Gibbs came to the session fully prepared. "I was sending them PDFs, and they were sending me PDFs of the music," Carter says. "We all dig this group and respect each other to help pull the collective game up. In jazz, it's rare to find true ca-

maraderie. It's very elusive."

Even with the saxophone concerto finally getting its true recognition on disc, and with the imminent completion of his new organ trio album, Carter stops to think back to his first band with Taborn, Shahid and Tabbal. "I thought we were in it for the long run," he says. "But longevity has its place. And cats have to move on." He pauses to reflect that far back in his career with a note of sadness. But then he beams. Always on patrol for his next musical adventure, Carter says, "Do you know what would be really cool? For us to have a reunion."

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MARCUS MILLER

NO MORE APOLOGIES

By Josef Woodard

More than most jazz polymaths, Marcus Miller is a complex character to pin down, categorize and otherwise attach a tidy label to. Even so, one word expresses, with minimalist gusto, a pinnacle of his life in music: *Tutu*. That was the 1986 Miles Davis album, considered the masterpiece of Davis' last phase, which Miller produced, played bass on and mostly wrote. Twenty-five-plus years later, the *Tutu* saga continues.

On a recent afternoon at Miller's compact but well-equipped studio and laboratory in a creatively charged part of Santa Monica, Calif.—near the Bergamot Station art gallery compound—he was on the phone for a newspaper interview. The subject: Miles Davis, and, yes, *Tutu*, in advance of a gig in Florida with a project he has done for two years now, playing the entire *Tutu* album live.

This “Tutu Revisited” project began at the behest of the Frenchman Vincent Bessières, organizer of an ambitious Miles Davis exhibition in Paris, which visited Montreal last year. Initially resisting the idea, Miller came around. “I started to think about it and said, ‘You know what? What if I got some young kids, who maybe weren’t even born when *Tutu* came out, and have them playing this music?’ Miles used to do that. He used to say, ‘Who’s the bad cat out there?’ That’s how he found me. He asked, ‘Who’s the bad, funky bass player in New York?’ Bill Evans, the sax player, said, ‘Marcus.’ He was always doing that. Tony Williams. So I was like, ‘Let me find some young cats, some fire-breathing cats to play this music and see what we can extract from this music and make contemporary.’”

“It was supposed to be just one gig, but it was cool, and we’ve ended up doing it for almost two years now. Everybody wanted to check it out. It was nice to go back and play some music that I hadn’t really played live. I did it in the studio, and wasn’t in Miles’ band at the time. I played ‘Tutu’ live, because it was a popular song, and maybe one or two of the other ones, but most of them I hadn’t dealt with in a live way. It was interesting to strip it of all the techno and drum machine stuff, and just deal with the compositions.”

Miller's storied link to Davis is part of the musical agenda and narrative on *A Night In Monte-Carlo*, Miller's latest—and possibly best—album in a dozen-strong discography.

An elaborate set of music, recorded live and bolstered by orchestrations for L'Orchestre Philharmonique de Monte-Carlo and special guests Roy Hargrove and Raul Midón, Miller's new album includes a soulful-grooved version of “So What” and “Amandla.”

The album sports a well-considered mixture of genres, from funk to standards, and added studio tracks featuring Miller on his “other” instrument, bass clarinet. “Your Amazing Grace” and “Strange Fruit” feature Herbie Hancock on piano, recorded back home in Los Angeles. Also equipped with plenty of Miller's characteristically diverse and spot-on bass chops, the new album sums up the vastness of Miller's musical life so far. It's a complicated story.

In a career stretching back 30-plus years, through his life as a producer, New York session player, L.A. scene-maker, electric bassist of no small chops or influence, bandleader with an evolving musical mission and facilitator of Miles Davis in his final chapter, Miller seems to be an archetypal wearer of multiple hats. Moving fluidly from one persona or task to another seems to come naturally to him.

On that subject of his nimble role-switching, he takes the story back to the top. “I went to the High School of Music & Art, and my senior year, I had orchestration, then I'd have jazz band, then I'd have the classical orchestra, then I'd have small group combo, then a private clarinet lesson. I went to Queens College in New York and it was the same kind of schedule.

“When I went into the music world in New York City, I just kept doing the same thing,” he laughs. “Every couple of hours, I'd switch into some other mode. I was doing jingles in the morning, and then was a studio guy doing record dates in the middle of the day. I'd do a gig at a club at night. And when I got a chance, I'd try to write an r&b tune.”

A New Yorker born in Brooklyn in 1959,

Miller explains that he has essentially been living in Los Angeles for 18 years, but “wouldn't admit it for a long time.” He headed west to work on Luther Vandross albums, and soon realized that the bicoastal residency conflicted with his family life.

As he remembers of that time in the '90s, “The scene was changing in New York. When I was there, it was Seventh Avenue South, Sweet Basil. Then there was a transition period, when it was just the Blue Note and the [Village] Vanguard. Now, it has revived. But for a while, it was like, ‘You know what? I'm going to see what this L.A. thing is.’”

Meanwhile, out west, next in Miller's expanding work world came movie-scoring gigs, for such films as *House Party*. He continued with more pop and jazz production (including Wayne Shorter's masterful and still underrated *High Life*), and the slow process of developing his own voice as a solo artist.

Currently, he savors the opportunity to play live, a process he came to fairly late in life. As he says, “In that respect, [my career] has been upside down. Most guys start their careers on the road, and then they settle into being a producer, using all the experiences from the road to inform their production. But for me, I was producing starting at age 23, and was in the studios. I didn't start doing heavy gigging until I was 35 or something like that. So it's backwards.

“It was really nice to get out there and not have headphones on, and to really just let it rip and not worry about the details so much. When you're a recording musician, it's all about the details. I used to focus on the point when I stopped the note, not just when I started it. I wanted to stop it on the ‘and’ of three, or the last 16th of four. It was that level of detail.

“To be on the road, I loved being able to let go of that. No, I loved the *idea* of being able to let go of that. I never actually let go. People see me playing one note and say, ‘Man, you're play-

ing such a simple part.' I say, 'Dude, if you knew all the calculations going on in my head to play this simple note—tone, attack, cutoff, placement—this note is hard,'" he laughs. "That's the way I'm approaching it."

Along the way, Miller has also been unusually adept at moving between worlds normally disparate from one another. He has effectively worked "across aisles," between "real" jazz, post-fusion (including seminal work with David Sanborn in the early '80s) and the slick realm of smooth-jazz, and also between pop and jazz quarters. As such, he's in a position to see the differences of attitude and bias firsthand.

In jazz, he says, "A lot of guys don't understand pop music. They don't understand the value of it. They can't figure out why it's good, and what makes it good. They'll listen to a Stevie Wonder or a Prince record and go, 'Oh man, it's all one chord.' OK, so you don't speak that language. If you don't speak the language, you can't judge it. But for me, if you put on a good Prince record or a good Mos Def record, I understand why it's good. I feel it. So if you've got that in you, then you have the potential to move around in between the different worlds."

From the other end of the spectrum, he comments, "In the pop world, jazz sounds foreign. They say, 'What are you doing?' I say, 'Let me explain it to you.' Then they say, 'Well, how can I enjoy something if you have to explain it to me?' They don't understand that it's just a language. You don't understand Russian, but if you take a couple of lessons or learn how to speak Russian, you'll see the beauty in it."

"It's the same thing on both sides. Pop musicians think that jazz is math, musicians who play so much music that they're bored with what everyone else enjoys. So they need to go beyond and, in going beyond, they're losing what the actual essence of music is. That's what pop musicians feel. Jazz musicians feel like pop musicians are simple and are just appealing to the lowest common denominator."

"And they're both wrong. I'm sitting in a position where I can tell you that you just don't get it. Now, there are bad versions of both. You've got to compare the best with the best. But if you take John Coltrane and take Aretha Franklin, then you'll see. OK, you may not understand Aretha, but she's putting it down, no question. You may not get Coltrane. You may think he's from outer space, but he's putting it down. Both sides just have a little more opening up to do."

While he has found plenty of work in American film, pop, jazz and other entertainment culture, Europe has been very good to Miller, as jazz artist and bandleader, and this new album is another example of that patronage. He was invited by Jean-René Palacio, the head of culture in Monaco, to put together a program for the Monaco Jazz Festival, with the Monte-Carlo Philharmonic at his disposal.

Surveying his varied discography so far, Miller recalls that "the first album I made was

in the '80s. In terms of self-discovery, I had no idea who I was. I was a really popular session bass player. I was playing with Luther, with Aretha, with Miles, all sorts of people. What made me good in those situations was that I could become a different cat. It was still the same mentality, but I knew the different languages. But when it came to making my own records, as an artist, I didn't really have a solid voice or know who I was. So I've been spending the last 25, 30 years just finding that voice."

"On the last few albums, particularly on this one, I'm not apologizing anymore. This is what you would hear walking down the street in New York. You don't hear one sound. If you come from Minneapolis or New Orleans or some other small cities, there is a sound that is associated with those regions. In New York, you can play anything. You just have to play it aggressively," he laughs.

"When I had people tell me that something I did affected them on some profound level, helped them get through a difficult period in their life and gave them strength, it changes why you make music. You can't help but be affected by that."

"At a certain point, I had to say to myself, 'OK, I can't narrow stuff down. I've gotta go with what I feel like is honest. The danger in that is that your record can sound like the radio, like you're just flipping from one guy to the next guy. But it's starting to feel like my musical personality is strong enough that there is a through line, even though I'm going to be hitting you with songs from different areas of the musical world. You'll hear my personality coming through, being the glue that holds the whole thing together. Then, also, with this album, because I'm using the orchestra and have that really distinctive sound, I figured that glues the thing together, as well.'"

Miller is one of the few bassist-leaders on today's scene, but it wasn't always thus. When he started out in the late '70s, his role models included Jaco Pastorius, Stanley Clarke, Bootsy Collins, Alphonso Johnson and even, from the pop end, Sting. Today, he's one of the last bassist-leader holdouts.

"The thing is, it can be done," Miller says. "Look at the history of the bass-led band. The bass player is also the composer, the arranger, the musical mind behind this group. Lots of times, Charlie Mingus didn't even play a solo.

It was still Mingus' group, no question, because his presence was so strong. It was the same with Stanley Clarke and Jaco Pastorius. These guys were able to lead a band with their whole musical personality."

Bass occupies a unique place in the lineage of jazz instruments, as a foundational voice that has evolved into a soloing voice in its own right, especially in the electric bass domain. But questions of range, tone and personality have dogged the culture of bass.

"For a lot of guys," Miller says, "their solution is to go up high. For me, if I'm playing a tune that's funk-oriented, it's hard for me to go up and play lines. I'm playing the funkier instrument in the band, and I'm going to go up high and doodle around up there when I could be extra-funky in the solo? So I started working on ways to solo and not leave the bass area."

As significant as his commanding and focused electric bass work is to his musical identity and also his reputation, Miller heeds a more expansive picture of his artistic purpose. Closing his new album with a tune featuring Hancock brings the story full circle, in the sense that, like Miller, Hancock has been moving intuitively between jazz, pop and "accessible" realms for decades, and especially in Hancock's current phase. Miller will also join Hancock and Wayne Shorter for a "Tribute to Miles" project on the summer European jazz festival circuit.

As Miller says, "I think you go through different levels, in terms of why you make music. The first level is that it's interesting to you. Maybe the second level is because it's getting you some kind of attention and you realize you're good at it, and you love that. And then you might make music to make a living. And then later, you realize how powerful music is. For me, when I had people tell me that something I did affected them on some profound level in their life, helped them get through a difficult period in their life and gave them strength, it changes why you make music. You can't help but be affected by that."

"When I did 'Tutu,' I was concerned about the South African thing, but it was personal. I didn't expect anybody to be affected by it on a profound level. But I've talked to South Africans who said, 'Do you know how important that song was to us when we were fighting against apartheid?' When you hear that, you say, 'Whoa.' You start to change. You think a little more deeply about what you're doing."

"I'm sure Herbie is aware how profoundly he can affect people, and that's why he's doing what he's doing. It's not like he had anything to prove. He's actually now just free to do what he really feels needs to be done. It is like it's a moral imperative, that he is going to reach people and make a better world."

"And I think I'm trying to head myself in that direction—not that I would ever put myself on his level. But I want to try to do as much good as [I] can with [my] notes."

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Monty Alexander

One

World

Of Music

By Ted Panken

The adage “absence makes the heart grow fonder,” coined to convey the kindling effect of separation upon romantic ardor, applies with equal measure to pianist Monty Alexander’s ongoing obsession with the music of Jamaica, his homeland, from

whence he migrated to Miami in 1961, at age 17.

As a Kingston youngster, Alexander recalled, “I soaked up everything—the calypso band playing at the swimming pool in the country, local guys at jam sessions who wished they were Dizzy [Gillespie] and Miles [Davis], a dance band playing Jamaican melodies, songs that [Harry] Belafonte would have sung. I was fully aware of the rhythm-and-blues, my heroes on piano were Eddie Heywood and Erroll Garner, and, above all, Louis Armstrong was my king. I had one foot in the jazz camp and the other in the old-time folk music—no one more valuable than the other.”

Once in the States, though, Alexander compartmentalized, sublimating roots towards establishing a jazz identity. By 1970, he was a distinguished voice, with a CV citing long-haul trio gigs with various New York A-listers, as well as consequential sideman work in Los Angeles with Milt Jackson and Ray Brown. By the late

’70s, when he closed the books on his 300-days-a-year-on-the-road trio with John Clayton and Jeff Hamilton, he was an upper-echelon stylist, referred to by Oscar Peterson, himself descended from St. Kitts and St. Croix, as “my little West Indian counterpart.”

“You come to America, you try to blend in and do what they do,” Alexander explained. “At first, I was even trying to speak like American people”—he demonstrated several voices—“so they wouldn’t keep asking, ‘Where do you come from?’ But as the years went by, I started expressing myself by claiming my heritage more. I said, ‘Wait a minute, home is as good as it gets.’”

In Orvieto, Italy, for a five-concert engagement at Umbria Jazz Winter 2010, Alexander spoke in the high-ceilinged sitting room of his hotel, which evoked a ducal mansion. With him for the week was a band comprising an acoustic trio with bassist Hassan Shakur and drummer

George Fludas and a plugged-in Jamaican contingent—Wendel Ferraro on guitar (filling both soloistic and comping roles), Glen Browne on bass and Karl Wright on drums.

This configuration, documented on the 2011 release *Harlem-Kingston Express* (Motéma) with Herlin Riley on drums, is the most recent iteration of a series of Alexander-conceptualized efforts over the past few decades to coalesce “things that reflect my heritage as an English-speaking Caribbean person” with the principles of hardcore swinging jazz. “I was bummed out after it ended with John and Jeff because I’d gotten used to that precision, that projection,” he said. “Although other people were fine and good, no one came close to that, and I’m not one to go scouting.” To recharge, he began spending quality time in Jamaica. “I’d go to the studio with Sly and Robbie, who know me from way back. It’s simple music, two chords—but life is in those two chords.”

Later in the ’80s, Alexander—whose first Jamaica-centric dates were the still-sampled mid-’70s MPS groove albums *Rass!* and *Jamento*—started to present units with which he could incorporate Caribbean flavors, including an “Ivory and Steel” ensemble with steel drummer Othello Molineaux and hand drummer Bobby Thomas. After signing with Telarc in the mid-’90s, he embarked on a succession of recordings on which he reunited with musicians he’d known since his teens, among them several

dates with guitarist Ernest Ranglin, and one with Sly Dunbar and Robbie Shakespeare. Four other recordings—*Stir It Up* and *Concrete Jungle* reveal Alexander's take on Bob Marley's music, while *Goin' Yard* and *Yard Movement* address a broader Jamaican spectrum—hearken to *mento*, Jamaica's indigenous calypso, descended from the French quadrille music to which English colonists danced in the 19th century. *Mento* evolved into, as Alexander puts it, "a deep country Jamaican thing" that spread throughout the island, and, as the 20th century progressed, cross-pollinated with r&b and jazz, evolving into ska.

As Alexander delved ever deeper into these rediscovered interests, he found it increasingly difficult to convene a single ensemble in which he could satisfactorily convey them. "I would have a trio of jazz masters, and when I'd want to play something that reflected Jamaica, whether calypso or Bob Marley, I couldn't get that thing because that's not what they do," Alexander said. "Conversely, the Jamaican guys didn't relate to the jazz experience. I wanted to give myself an opportunity to share my two loves, which is one love, to coin Bob's phrase."

This feeling had permeated the previous evening's concert. Alexander came to the piano, positioned stage center to the left of Shakur and Fludas. He opened with Ellingtonian chords, and launched a chugging train blues, transitioned to the changes of "Blue And Boogie," then re-

turned to an Ellington medley that resolved into "Caravan." After brief remarks, a brisk stomp through "Sweet Georgia Brown" and some nachtmusik chords, Browne and Wright entered stage right and laid down reggae riddims. Playing percussively, Alexander soon segued into Ernest Gold's "Exodus," blew a melodica, quoted "let my people go" within his solo, returned to the piano bench and ended with a flourish. With the trio, he played a shuffle blues, then a hard-swinging blues—midway through the latter, he stood, pointed to the Jamaicans and orchestrated a metric modulation, quoting "Manteca" in his solo, before seguing into Marley's "No Woman, No Cry." The back-and-forth proceeded for another half-hour, before Alexander concluded with a romping "Come Fly With Me" and a melody-milking rendition of "All The Way."

"Recently I've been doing this with more commitment than before," Alexander remarked of the real-time genre-switching. "I'm fulfilled, because it's my own life experience. It's like Barack Obama music. We are all cut from the same cloth."

Perhaps 20 years ago, Alexander got angry at someone, intended to hit them, thought better of it, punched the wall instead and broke his hand. "Ever since that day, I don't play as fast as I used to," he said. "But instead of playing 20 notes that may not mean that much, I started playing

six or seven that are soulful or meaningful."

The chops are abundant on *Uplift* (JLP), a deeply swinging navigation of the American Songbook with bassist Hassan Shakur and drummer Herlin Riley that follows the 2008 trio date *The Good Life: Monty Alexander Plays The Songs Of Tony Bennett* and 2009's *Calypso Blues: The Songs Of Nat King Cole* (Chesky) as companion pieces to his excellent 1997 Sinatra tribute *Echoes Of Jilly's* (Concord). Rather than abstract the tunes, Alexander hews to the iconic arrangements, illuminating the music from within, deploying effervescent grooves, lovely rubatos, a killing left hand, an innate feel for stating melody, well-calibrated touch, harmonic acumen and an ability to reference a broad timeline of piano vocabulary stretching to pre-bop. Each interpretation embodies a point of view. Like his "eternal inspiration," Erroll Garner, Alexander gives the hardcore-jazz-obsessed much to dig into, while also communicating the message to the squarest "civilian."

"In our home, Nat Cole was the voice of America," said Alexander, who experienced a transformational moment in 1956 when he saw Cole play on a package concert in Kingston with Louis Armstrong. "My awareness of his piano playing came later; it was just that smooth voice. At first I confused him with Gene Autry. I was always connecting one thing with another—'Wait a minute, that sounded like that.'

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That's why for me, even now, it's one world of music. I try to remove all the lines."

By 1956, Alexander had already spent half his life entertaining people with music. "I'd emulate people my folks knew who played old-time stride," he said. "I was playing boogie-woogie from the get-go, rockin' the joint. I just had fun at the piano." Later, he would extrapolate a conceptual framework from Ahmad Jamal's 1958 classic "Poinciana." "It was a merging of two worlds," he said. "Sophistication on the piano, harmonic wonderment and the nastiest jungle rhythm going on in the background. That's Jamaica. It's about dancin', it's about groovin'—it's all one thing."

Such formative experiences gave Alexander a certain ignorance-of-youth confidence when he started playing in "tough guy clubs" in Miami Beach. Within a year he was working at Le Bistro, a two-room joint where he shared the bill with a Sinatra impersonator named Duke Hazlitt. One night after a concert at the Fontainebleau, Sinatra came through with an entourage, including Sinatra's consigliere, Jilly Rizzo, and Rizzo's wife, Honey.

"I'm playing, minding my own business, trying to behave and not to be too noisy," Alexander recalled. "But I must have been kicking up a storm, because apparently Honey came in and told Jilly to come hear this kid play. In those days, I'd come in with all guns blazing. She told me, 'We've got this club in New York, Jilly's, and it would be nice to have you play in there, kid.'"

About a year later, midway through 1963, Rizzo finally brought Alexander to his eponymous West 54th Street tough guy bar, which doubled as Sinatra's late-night office. Just 19 and residing a few blocks away in the Hotel Edison, Alexander joined Local 802, situated directly across the street from the club, and assumed his place among New York's jazz elite. Within a few years, he was also working uptown at Minton's Playhouse and at the Playboy Club.

"I remember sitting at Jilly's piano bar, a few feet away from Miles Davis and Frank in deep conversation," Alexander reminisced. "My crowning point was when Miles came to me and said, 'Where did you learn to play that shit?' Next thing, he writes his phone number on a little matchbook, and we're hanging out at his house or going to the fights. Miles told me, 'You got the right complexion.'" Alexander noted that his bloodline is an admixture of Lebanese, Spanish and African strains, and that the ambiguity as to his racial identity had a great deal to do with his ability to comfortably navigate various circles in Jim Crow-era Miami as well as New York City. "At Minton's they'd say, 'What's this Puerto Rican guy doing who can play jazz like that?' When I first saw Ray Brown's picture on an Oscar Peterson record cover, I saw the smile and the teeth and said, 'Damn, Uncle Jim!'"

More than the familial resemblance, Alexander was drawn to Brown's consistency, tone and the truck-coming-down-the-road surge

of his beat, so he tried to be around him whenever he could. "I got to know Ray better," he recalled. "I went to see him in L.A. at the Gaslight. When I got there, nobody's listening, nobody cares, it's the last set, and they had to play one obligatory tune. Frankie Capp walks to the drums, Mundell Lowe picks up the guitar, but the piano player is boozed-out at the bar. I asked Ray, 'Can I play a tune?' Within two choruses, he's screaming, he's groovin' and I'm groovin', and we're as happy as kids in the candy jar. He said, 'Where are you going to be this summer? I want you to play with me and Milt Jackson.'"

"When you're in company with people who are at a certain level, it upgrades your musicianship. I'd been smitten with the MJQ since I saw a record with these four dignified black men on the cover—they looked like funeral directors. I learned about the connections—John Lewis and Ray with Dizzy's big band, Hank Jones telling Dizzy about Ray. I took that personal thing on the bandstand. I felt like I belonged to that crowd."

In spontaneously orchestrating the Harlem-Kingston Express band in live performance, Alexander seemed to be paralleling the bandstand procedures by which both Ahmad Jamal and Duke Ellington deployed their units to convey their intentions in real time. The pianist concurred.

"It's a kind of joyful, loving dictatorship," he said. "That's why I use musicians who are willing and easygoing, who give me their trust and confidence and won't question what I'm doing."

More so than instant composition a la Jamal and Ellington as an m.o. for following the dictates of the moment, Alexander focuses on serious play. "I don't read music, and I play by ear," he said. "You can chalk it up to a certain amount of laziness, because if I really wanted to read, there's no reason I can't. But when I see paper in front of me, man, I start sweating. That part of my brain doesn't function well. I don't know how to play music that's not coming from my instant, make-it-up stuff."

"I get bored with a planned format. I can't repeat the same thing twice. I'm always reaching for now, live in the now, present tense, and I look for inspiration from wherever."

This blank-slate attitude inflects the aforementioned trio projects. "I just went in the studio," Alexander said, referencing the 2009 Nat Cole tribute. "'Haji Baba' is from a movie with Nat, and I used to sing it walking down the street when I was nine—I listened to the bridge on that and on 'Again' to make sure I had it right. But for the most part, when I play music, I smell it and see colors. Every song has its own personality, its own soul, and if I can't feel it, I can't play it with feeling."

"I don't understand what it is that makes me different, but I feel I have very little in common with anybody else. I seem to be my own strange character. If I'm right in my motivations and attitude, amazing things happen."

DB


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ERIC HARLAND

By John Ephland

FOR THE LOVE OF ALL

When you talk to Eric Harland, you find early on that the conversation has the potential to go in a number of different directions, and not all of them musical. Then again, Harland might beg to differ, because the prism through which he seems to see his life—and life itself—can't help but be a musical one. Call it a re-definition of the word “musical.”

His website, iharland.com, opens with these words on a single line against a dramatic, dark backdrop:

“Welcome, Bienvenue, Willkommen, Tervetuloa, Bienvenidos, Irashaimasu.”

And then there's this dandy quote (the first of three): “If I were not a physicist, I would probably be a musician. I often think in music. I live my daydreams in music. I see my life in terms of music.” That's Mr. Relativity himself talkin', the daydreamin' doctor, Albert Einstein.

To the wider public, Harland's best known for his standout work as a drummer, having played with, among many others, Betty Carter, Dave Holland, Greg Osby and Terence Blanchard. His work with Charles Lloyd, which remains ongoing, has cemented his place in the world of music, and his various other current projects only serve to heighten his profile: the SFJAZZ Collective; the Overtone Quartet with Jason Moran, Chris Potter and Dave Holland; and James Farm, his band with Joshua Redman, Aaron Parks and Matt Penman. Two

recent releases showcase Harland's work with Lloyd and James Farm: Lloyd's eloquent, lovely *Mirror* (also with Moran and Reuben Rogers, on ECM) and the eclectic, lyrical and energetic jazz offered with James Farm's self-titled debut (Nonesuch).

But it's also his experience as a leader that now brings him attention as well. 2010's *Voyager live by night* (SpaceTime) found the Eric Harland Quintet touring his first album to much acclaim, his crack band of pianist Taylor Eigsti, guitarist Julian Lage, bassist Harish Raghavan and tenor saxophonist Walter Smith III supporting and egging him on every step of the way. And it's this nice, ever-present blend of leader/sideman work that suggests that Harland, 34, is having the time of his life.

If you ask him which role he prefers, not surprisingly Harland defers to the music. Alternately sounding philosophical and practical about it all, he notes, “I feel like being a leader is really the same to me musically as being a sideman. [This is] mainly because I always



try to express myself in the realm of what's happening on stage, in the music. There are slight advantages and disadvantages to being a leader. Some of the major benefits are that I get to choose the set list, do the stage-talking, give my personal definition and take on my musical purpose and so on."

And here's the kicker: "But there's also the slight sacrifice of financial gain, which I still, in my heart, don't agree has to be that way."

The "slight sacrifice."

How does that feed into his ideas on being a musician? A clue might come from his recent background, which included spending some time as an ordained Baptist minister. "Studying theology and becoming an ordained minister has had a great impact on my musical progression," he humbly states. "The freedom I've learned through spirituality has completely influenced my creative process or what I aim to achieve through my music. For example, man's connection with *all*, a.k.a. the universe, God and so on. That connection is very open and full of love and embracement, not biased with a sense of right or wrong. *Only love* and support.

"So," he adds, matter of factly, "why should it be any different in music?"

An interesting twist here is that Eric Harland's story is not about evangelizing in the usual sense. After spending three years during the late '90s doing church work back in Texas, where he grew up, Harland realized his time spent in New York City prior to that as a music student at Manhattan School of Music and as a gigging player had planted some seeds, both in him as well as in others *from* him. He also realized that his viewpoints about the world and life were in transition.

And then the call of the wild came via a phone call from Greg Osby, and, later, Betty Carter, both of whom wanted him back in New York, with Carter even offering him a separate residence in her brownstone. But, by 2001, Harland was experiencing hard times, scuffling as a freelancer in New York, playing late-night jam sessions at the Blue Note for money.

That's until he crossed paths with Charles Lloyd, who was looking for a new drummer, and knew Harland was somebody to pay attention to.

But we're getting ahead of the story.

For Eric Harland, as with everyone, there's a backstory that goes back even further. "My interest in jazz goes back to when I was a child watching my uncle—who's a great trumpet player and singer—listen to his old jazz record collection," the Houston native recalls.

"But playing drums goes back even further: There's a story of my grandmother actually noticing me beating on the pots and pans in my mother's kitchen at the age of 2," says Harland, referring to a family filled with piano players. "My grandmother encouraged my mom and dad to get me into drum lessons 'cause she saw the 'gift,' as they like to put it; meaning something that actually defined me

as a musician. She and my mother are both musicians and singers, who have taught and led some of the best in gospel music."

He leaves it at that. Those auspicious beginnings, the simple clarion call of family, supporting a loved one to pursue his talents and dreams.

And so, from the age of 5, Eric Harland was "playing the drums," eventually getting lessons from Craig Green, an instructor Harland still sees as one of the best teachers he's ever had. His professional life as a drummer began in 1993,

"The freedom I've learned through spirituality has completely influenced my creative process or what I aim to achieve through my music. For example, man's connection with *all*, a.k.a. the universe, God and so on. That connection is very open and full of love and embracement, not biased with a sense of right or wrong. *Only love* and support."

with Harland playing locally as he finished going to the notable High School for the Performing and Visual Arts, the incubator for other wide-ranging talents such as Beyoncé Knowles, Jason Moran and Robert Glasper.

Around this time Harland won first chair with the Regional and All State Jazz Band, received a special citation for Outstanding Musicianship from the International Association of Jazz Educators and happened to meet Wynton Marsalis during a workshop. Marsalis encouraged the young high-schooler to study in New York City, where he received a full scholarship to attend Manhattan School of Music. His formal studies (thus far) were capped off at Houston Baptist University, where he studied theology and became an ordained minister. More recently, DownBeat readers may know him as the drummer who's won the Rising Star award in the magazine's Critics Poll the past three years.

Taking a break from rehearsals with the SFJAZZ Collective recently, the busy Harland gives you the sense that the conversation you are having with him is all there is. So much of our talk centers around the idea of leading and playing with others, especially with members of

his quintet. "I love their energy," he says, referring to Eigsti, Lage, Raghavan and Smith, "as people, as human beings, as well as their talent; they're phenomenal players. But I look for more than just someone who can play an instrument well. I'm looking for very insightful people, that they have a good heart. That's what they're gonna bring to the music. So, I want to be around people who hold life to a higher degree, the respect of every individual soul and the love of all. Those are the kind of people I like playing with, because when you play with people like that, there's not a lot of judgment that goes on on stage; everything is very open. That's totally what I'm lookin' for: real people playing real music."

The topic returns to personal history. "I didn't like music school, I was bored," says Harland, referring to his incomplete studies at Manhattan School of Music. After all, his is a journey of self-discovery, which led him to Houston Baptist University. "So I figured I might as well go to school for something that I really want to know something about." Harland did go on to be a Christian minister and preach about Christ for roughly three years, talking repentance and salvation. "But then I kept growing," he recalls, "and the universe kept speaking to me, and I started to see that maybe that wasn't the be-all or end-all, that maybe we were not born sinners, that maybe we were actually born OK, and that the universe has always been taking care of us from day one, that there was no need to convert to this or to that.

"You know," he continues, "it's just all divine love. I feel like the spirit is not within the body; I feel the body is within the spirit. So I feel like our spirits are always connecting to each other, and I feel like the body is a representation of being able to experience the physical aspects of life, whereas the spirit is omnipresent, you know, you're everywhere, your memory can go back as far as you want it to be, your imagination can go as far forward as you want it to be. So no one is bound or limited by anything. I love that; just the thought of that is magnificent and wonderful."

As stated, that trip back to New York in the late '90s was a mixed blessing. After working for a few years, Harland confesses, "I was at a low point *and* a high point in my life: I was supposed to be going out on the road with Terence. My son had just been born, and my wife and I moved out to Pennsylvania to buy our first home. But it was all on the whim that all these gigs were supposed to come in. And then none of them came in. I was spending my savings, and we were thinking as long as we can make the mortgage, we'll be all right. Then my car got repossessed that year." That year was 2001.

At one of those late-night Blue Note jams Harland attended, Charles Lloyd happened to stop by. About a year later, in the fall of 2002, Harland got the word that Lloyd wanted to play with him and was asked to join Geri Allen and Robert Hurst in his band.

And the rest, as they say, is history.

The conversation naturally heads toward the

subject of mentors. Lloyd, for one, seems obvious. "He definitely is," says Harland, but he pauses and then adds, "I've always been a loner. I pull my influences from everybody. Part of what makes me me is that I don't really give over to people that well. I embrace people but I don't change who I am because of another person. Sometimes people, no matter what's going on, they try to fit into what's going on, they try to change their center to fit into what's happening. I've never been that kind of person. I always like to have my feet on the ground and float at the same time."

"I consider those characteristics of a person that I really relate to, that I feel I want to be more like," he goes on. "In that way, like Charles, Betty Carter, even Terence Blanchard. With Charles it's his centeredness, being a spiritual person and being free at the same time. He's created a life for himself, where there's complete surrender to the universe but at the same time he can function as a normal person in everyday life. He's like a nice hybrid. I like that."

Another influence is tabla master Zakir Hussain, a bandmate from another of Lloyd's groups. "Zakir represents the infinite possibilities of rhythms," says Harland. "The first time I played with him was on that live recording called *Sangam* [ECM]. We started playing the sound-check, started playing some grooves. It was magical from beat one. Even though he has such a knowledge of rhythm, he doesn't use it to dictate

where everything should go. He uses it as a sense of being able to understand where you are via the vehicle of music."

"You don't learn rhythms to just show them off," Harland continues, speaking of his experience with Hussain. "You learn rhythms so you can communicate with everyone no matter where they are, musically. You know instinctively, because you have an understanding of where they are. And that comes through experience. That's something that he and Charles both have."

"Betty," he recalls, "she taught me a lot about being in a band, going with the dynamics of the band. When you're playing with a singer, the singer doesn't have to be something that's different from the instrumentation of the band. The voice is the first original instrument that we ever had. The way she interpreted her voice within the band, she inspired us so that we couldn't just overplay her, we had to swing together, we had to flow together, we had to get the dynamics together at the same time. She taught me all about shapes, how to shape the music, the highs and lows, how it moves from one place to another, how to be effective, and truly listen to each other."

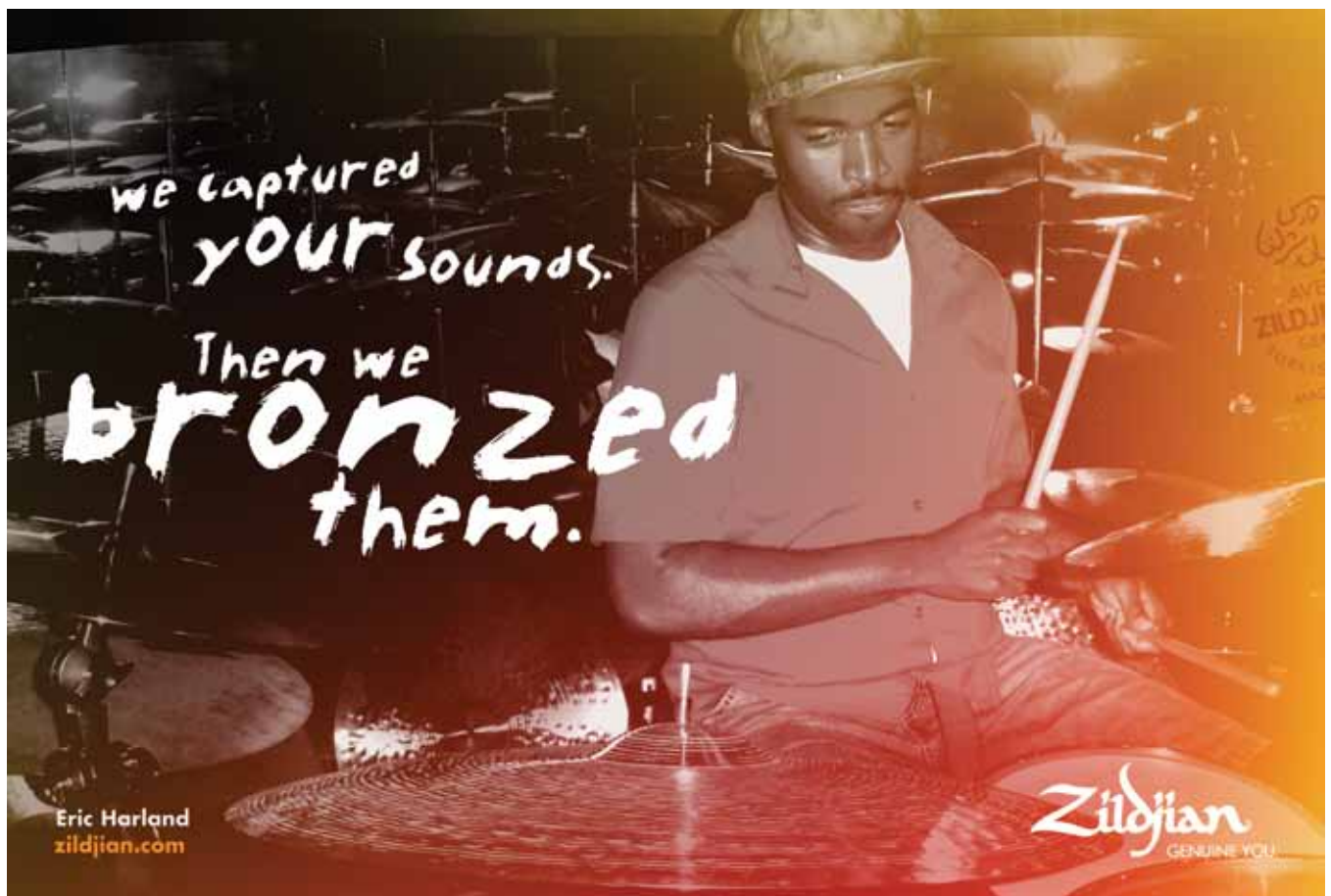
Shifting gears, Harland is on a roll as he runs down the list: "Greg Osby taught me that everything doesn't have to fit into one structure. He likes to take chances, play over the bar lines, come up with these weird rhythmic ideas, the way he writes the kind of tonalities that he deals

with. Dave Holland, he's like a metronome, a time machine. And the way that he orchestrates and writes his music is different from the way I'm used to. Dave is really taking chances, musically—the shapes and the odd meters, and those transitions. As a player, with Dave, because you're not used to it, it starts to shape your playing in different ways because you start to listen differently, you realize different opportunities, different rhythmic approaches to the music. And another thing: He's such a grounded player, he's so rooted in his sound and his rhythmic concepts. That makes it easy to play with him."

Harland's appeared on more than 80 recordings. Of those, 18 are with Terence Blanchard doing motion picture scores. "Terence is such a soulful guy," says the composer/drummer. "He has such a big heart and big spirit. His thing is also about shaping the music, also about invoking the emotions of the listener and taking them on an experience within the music." Another great talent and influence has been McCoy Tyner. "He took me back to the motherland," Harland beams. "It's with his sound and articulation, but at the same time the cross-references of his rhythms and the counterpoint within his playing. He has a whole symphony within his fingers. And when you hear that as a drummer, it changes the way you play, because you start to realize, 'Wow, why shouldn't I be doing that with my instrument?'"

Maybe he is.

DB



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Eric Reed *The Dancing Monk*

SAVANT 2108
★★★★½

In this modest but rewarding trio set, Eric Reed gives us an engaging Thelonious Monk—smooth, soft, often urbane, sometime punchy. It's Monk the composer, not the soloist, that's his main concern. So there's little of the tentative amble of a Monk performance in which notes often spawn an awkward tension in each other's presence.

Reed, who is one of the many talented players to spin off from Wynton Marsalis and the Lincoln Center circle, poses a curious thought in his notations. "Monk's playing and writing are essentially the same," he writes. That seems clear enough. But his suggestion is

that you can't get at Monk's music except through his own roadmap of intensions as implied in the tunes. Alas, it's a straw argument, as he immediately concedes. Monk's objectives are beside the point here. These are "interpretations," answerable to Reed's intentions, not the composer's.

In revisiting Monk for the first time since his *Blue Monk* CD five years ago, Reed offers nine Monk tunes (including reprises of "Blue Monk" and "Light Blue"), plus one swinging 12-bar homage of his own, "The Dancing Monk."

Not all Monk tunes conform to his trademarked quirk factor, and most were conceived in the standard song form. "Ask Me Now," which he recorded in the early '50s, is as straightforward as a Broadway show tune. Reed's touch is nu-

anced and buoyant, suggesting reserves of virtuosity worthy of Oscar Peterson. One senses he could take the music to many places, but mostly chooses not to, preferring proportion to surplus. Toward the end he plunges into the bass clef, but finds no exit strategy so opts to merely fade out. "Eronel" is another simple but bright bebop line from the Blue Note period that Reed slides on and off the beat with skill.

"Light Blue" is interesting for McClellent Hunter's skillful brush work against a slow tempo, the truest test of a drummer's time instincts. Reed effectively doubles the tempo and marks his course plunking out quarter notes and sometimes filling in with connecting arpeggios, sometimes not. The effect is an absorbing interplay of conflicting intension, simultaneously lean-

ing backward and forward.

He ends with two of Monk's most famous pieces. "Round Midnight" is the only Monk tune to graduate from jazz standard to the American Songbook. Reed, who recorded it in 2002 on Savant, strokes it with soft, carefully strung swirls of single-note meditations that never crowd or overinflate. "Blue Monk," a blues theme that was actually written by Charlie Shavers with variations in the last eight bars, is perhaps the most Monkish, played in terse spurts that acquire much of the uplift and a few of the voicings of gospel music.

—John McDonough

The Dancing Monk: Ask Me Now; Eronel; Reflections; Light Blue; Ruby, My Dear; Pannonica; Ugly Beauty; The Dancing Monk; 'Round Midnight; Blue Monk. (49:31)
Personnel: Eric Reed, piano; Ben Wolfe, bass; McClellent Hunter, drums.
Ordering info: jazzdepot.com

Donny McCaslin *Perpetual Motion*

GREENLEAF MUSIC

★★★★½

Donny McCaslin is an excitable tenor. He expresses his excitement not by means of volatility or force, rarely in screaming-peaking arcs, but as an irrepressible outpouring of ideas, sometimes flowing with such force that they seem to back up, tripping on each other, then gushing forth giddily. Situate that activity in the middle of a burbling jazz-funk fusion ensemble with more than enough adrenaline of its own, and you've got *Perpetual Motion*.

McCaslin's ninth outing under his own name succeeds at providing a context both propulsive and polished. The compositions are slick and sophisticated, saxophone and electric piano converging for an urbane cocktail. Sometimes the charts seem at odds with the energy of everything else, Uri Caine's deeply nasty Rhodes riff, like the one on "L.Z.C.M.," giving way to a line that's weighted differently—lighter, that is—than Tim Lefebvre's burping, slurping bass. But the whole thing holds together remarkably, not only providing McCaslin an energetic palette for his spectacular playing, but also prompting impressive interplay with the

powder-keg group.

On the first half of the record, drummer Antonio Sanchez adds his nimble, attentive touch, giving things a billowy, rolling feel. On the title track and "Five Hands Down," McCaslin builds his solos brilliantly, likewise "Claire," its Monkish little figure emerging out of the skittering improvising, an abstract field that suddenly yields an image. A tempo shift, "Firefly," introduces an atmospheric ballad with humming electric backdrop, tender tenor and Adam Benjamin's acid-etched Rhodes. The program changes in a marked way with a switch of drummer, as Mark Guiliana brings the hard funk with explosive backbeat. On "Memphis Redux," the change registers in Lefebvre's Bootsy Collins-esque bass, which stops for a tart taste of wah, and the tandem plugged/unplugged piano, deftly juggled. Alto saxophonist David Binney, who produced the record as he has other McCaslin outings, joins

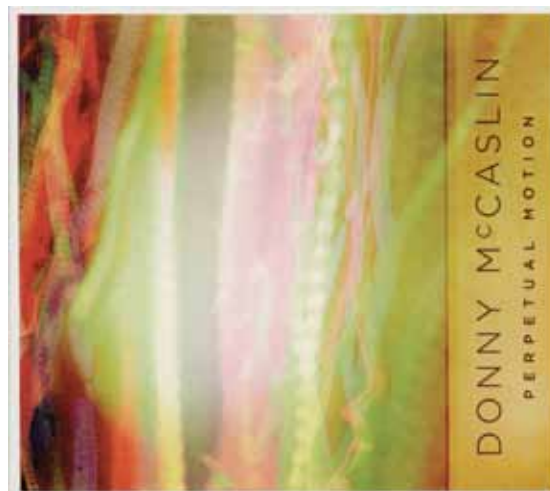
on "Impossible Machine"—no solo, just filling out the melody (and co-penning the tune). The program ends with an acoustic surprise, Uri Caine alone playing his "For Someone," a caressing coda and smart way to bring all the disc's motion to a rest.

—John Corbett

Perpetual Motion: Five Hands Down; Perpetual Motion; Claire; Firefly; Energy Generation; Memphis Redux; L.Z.C.M.; East Bay Grit; Impossible Machine; For Someone. (69:47)

Personnel: Donny McCaslin, tenor saxophone; David Binney, alto saxophone (9); Adam Benjamin (1–7, 9), Uri Caine (4, 8, 10), Rhodes, piano; Tim Lefebvre, electric bass; Antonio Sanchez (1–5), Mark Guiliana (6–9), drums.

Ordering info: greenleafmusic.com



Paolo Fresu/A Filetta Corsican Voices/ Daniele di Bonaventura *Mistico Mediterraneo*

ECM 2203

★★★★

By now everyone should know that Paolo Fresu is an exceptional trumpeter. A 2007 disc with Carla Bley's *Lost Chords* spotlighted the Italian improviser's signature poise as much as it did the American composer's sublime pen. And last year Fresu's splendor was displayed in an even more revealing duet with Ralph Towner, a date that illustrated just how deep a dreamy ECM program could be. It's good that Fresu's horn had so much elbow room in those situations, because its plush tone and sage lines aren't the main focus of this new collaboration—more like icing on the cake.

The meat of the program comes from Jean-Claude Acquaviva's A Filetta ensemble, a septet of Corsican singers who have made a name for themselves by tipping the hat to tradition while sticking their feet in the door of modernism. A fetching chorale that lines its bottom for plenty of sensual girth, the group's whispers and wails are what your ear follows as this somewhat eerie, rather exquisite program drifts along. With Italian squeezebox maestro Daniele di Bonaventura in cahoots, the group creates a blend of bandoneon, brass and polyphony that makes for both enchanting

atmospherics and engaging art.

Occasionally, the music takes on an aura of prayer. The flow between "Figliolu D'Ella" and "Gradualis" feels like a hymn, set to assuage any pain the listener has ever absorbed. Other moments pulse with proclamation. Sung in Latin, the opening "Rex Tremendae" floats on an azure cloud, but allows the singers to percolate. "Da Tè A Mè" is a cascade of vocal harmony that conjures both a liturgical vibe and the rich voicings of doo-wop harmonies.

Fresu and di Bonaventura judiciously weave their lines through the voices, the trumpeter with Chet Baker poignancy and his mate with cosmopolitan elan. Both musicians are bent on milking every drop of lyricism from the disc's themes. "Corale" finds them alone together, muted and hushed, respectively. Between the chanting ("Le Lac") and the droning ("U Sipolcru"), the music's seductive temperament is key. Some ECM artists are skilled at such matters—there are parallels between this record and Jan Garbarek's work

with the Hilliard Ensemble—but *Mistico Mediterraneo's* singularity is unmistakable. That, however, doesn't mean I didn't jot "Nusrat Fateh Ali Kahn blended with *Music For Airports* and a Ben Neill fantasia" into my notebook while basking in its radiance. Here's to inspired confluence.

—Jim Macniece

Mistico Mediterraneo: Rex Tremendae; Liberata; Da Tè A Mè; Le Lac; Dies Irae; Gloria; Corale; La Folie Due Cardinal' U Sipolcru; Scherzi Verantili; Figliolu D'Ella; Gradualis; Sanctus. (56:31)

Personnel: Paolo Fresu, trumpet, flugelhorn; Jean-Claude Acquaviva, Paul Giansily, Jean-Luc Geronimi, José Filippi, Jean Sicurani, Maxime Vuillamier, Cecce Acquaviva, vocals; Daniele di Bonaventura, bandoneon.

Ordering info: ecmrecords.com





World Saxophone Quartet *Yes We Can*

JAZZWERKSTATT 098

★★★★

After all the guest artists and special projects, *Yes We Can* is, refreshingly, the straight brew—bristling, old-school four-sax groove, the way this band first came on, so many years ago. OK, so it's really only half the original quartet—Bluiett and Murray—but what better place for James Carter? His raw sound and raucous nerve seem made for this quartet, so much so it's a wonder he hasn't joined before. Kidd Jordan thought the whole project up in the first place, so he's emeritus. From Bluiett's first, popping, telegraphed vamp of "Hattie Wall" to the reprise of same, this album is a joyous, saxophone bath. I wish, given its celebratory nod to President Barack Obama, that it could have come out in the flush of exhilaration that followed the election. But let's take it as a reminder of that moment, and an alert that we need to hold on to what we've got.

As for musical moments: How about the spitting duo on Jordan's "River Niger," Carter's virtuosic soprano on the pretty title tune, Murray's tour de force of raw, wide vibrato on "The God Of Pain," Bluiett's choppy B-flat clarinet, with a pad-popping interlude on the eventually spiritual-sounding "The Guessing Game," and the crazy, chirping sing-song of Murray's "Long March to Freedom," with its cool ending chords? The only track that lost me was Murray's diffuse "Angel Of Pain," though the coda's cute. But Bluiett's the hero here, with his infectious vamps and clarinet majesty.

Eighties nostalgia has overtaken pop music, so it's difficult not to be swept up with the same kinds of feelings here, remembering how thrilling a beacon—esthetically and politically—this band was when it first came to life. But if the caterwauling interludes and quick-switches from intensity to romance aren't new anymore, they're still really, really good.

—Paul de Barros

Yes We Can: Hattie Wall; The River Niger; Yes We Can; The God Of Pain; The Angel Of Pain; The Guessing Game; Long March To Freedom; Hattie Wall (reprise). (68:28)

Personnel: Hammet Bluiett, baritone saxophone, clarinet; Kidd Jordan, alto saxophone; David Murray, tenor saxophone, bass clarinet; James Carter, tenor saxophone, soprano saxophone.

Ordering info: records-cd.com

The Hot Box

	John McDonough	John Corbett	Jim Macnie	Paul de Barros
Eric Reed <i>The Dancing Monk</i>	★★★½	★★★½	★★★½	★★★½
Donny McCaslin <i>Perpetual Motion</i>	★★	★★★½	★★★	★★★
Paolo Fresu/A Filetta Corsican Voices/Daniele di Bonaventura <i>Mistico Mediterraneo</i>	★★	★★★½	★★★	★★★
World Saxophone Quartet <i>Yes We Can</i>	★★★	★★★★	★★★½	★★★★

Critics' Comments ▶

Eric Reed, *The Dancing Monk*

Resolutely un-Monk-like, with buffed edges and more brilliant curves than corners, Reed's light-hearted program is peppered with sweet imaginative intrigues, surprising little adjustments and shifts of weight.

—John Corbett

Sometimes I think Monk should be delivered with all the prickly parts intact, but this trio makes a case for having a jeweler's eye when it comes to beveling. They turn the corners of "Ask Me Now" and "Ugly Beauty" with an élan that brings a personal perspective to the table. And on "Light Blue" they're able to split the dif—the best of both worlds.

—Jim Macnie

Reed has always struck me as self-conscious, but on this quite smart take on Monk the romantic, Reed seems to have put ego aside. "Light Blue," "Ruby My Dear," "The Dancing Monk" (very strong solo) and "Round Midnight" stand out, and so does drummer McClenty Hunter.

—Paul de Barros

Donny McCaslin, *Perpetual Motion*

Loaded with heat, but leaves me a bit in the dark. McCaslin, clearly skilled, seems persuaded that raw staccato shouts equal rooted emotion and therefore content. But if you look for emotion as an outcome of content, this one may leave you wondering what all the shouting is about. "For Someone" is a placid non-sequitur.

—John McDonough

I find myself following his horn lines rather than absorbing the band as a whole. Don't know if that means he's red hot, the guys are only mildly connecting, or—most likely—the tunes are on the so-so side. Whichever, there are thrills in store if you find yourself focusing on the boss's ax.

—Jim Macnie

When McCaslin chews ferociously into his solo with drums-only accompaniment on "Claire," he sounds like the man to take up where Sonny Rollins left off. His steel-trap mind never loses the thread. But this album is all over the place. I wish he'd gone all-out with the out-electronic vibe. Some terrific keyboard solos from Uri Caine and Adam Benjamin.

—Paul de Barros

Paolo Fresu/A Filetta Corsican Voices/Daniele di Bonaventura, *Mistico Mediterraneo*

I hear a choral mix of "new age" exotica, medieval mysticism and world music, warmed with di Bonaventura's touches of Parisian romance. As a showcase for Fresu, though, it confines him to a dreamy, emotionally cloistered stoicism—one so unceasingly soothing and contemplative, the listener is lulled into a Hearts-of-Space stupor.

—John McDonough

Clearly aiming at the same zone as Jan Garbarek's lucrative collaborations with the Hilliard Ensemble, this project is more successful, less precious, pitting Fresu's sumptuous horn against sun-bleached Corsican polyphony, girded by Bonaventura's tart squeeze box. Reverb and electronics are an occasional distraction.

—John Corbett

Blissful vibe. The moving parts of the vocal polyphony are sometimes breathtaking, but a lot of this is a bit bland, rhythmically, and Fresu himself plays very little of interest.

—Paul de Barros

World Saxophone Quartet, *Yes We Can*

A freer, harsher, more astringent and squawky WSQ. The Carter effect perhaps. And a point of pride for Jordan, who in the notes pointedly rips music people actually pay money to listen to. Not to worry here. As the joke says, that's why it's free-jazz. Yet, a fierce intent behind its swirling, collective virtuosity. Less grace, more grit this time.

—John McDonough

Strongest lineup since the original. Kidd Jordan gives WSQ a waft of old-style tonk, harder and grittier than before, but there's still the theatrical panache that made their first decade such a delight. Carter's a blatant show-off, but he sure does bring the goods.

—John Corbett

Their heyday may be in the rear-view mirror, but the exclamation of their squawk still imparts a kind of joy that isn't often heard in jazz these days. And the gnarled grace of their freedom swing still has a rather singular momentum. Hats off to Kidd and Carter for integrating so seamlessly.

—Jim Macnie

**Peter Schärli
Trio featuring
Ithamara Koorax
*O Grande Amor***

TCB 03172

★★★★½

So often, singers function as featured entities, supported by but separate from the instrumental ensemble. This pairing of Brazilian singer Ithamara Koorax and the trio of Swiss trumpeter Peter Schärli is a rare instance of a voice working as another instrument. Koorax is singing songs here, to be sure, but her work is always within the instrumental context. As a result, this a quiet, unassuming gem of a recording.

Koorax and Schärli share simplicity of expression. That's not to say what they do is naive or rudimentary in any way. Her ethereal voice—singing in Portuguese throughout—packs much emotional implication in it. Likewise, his open trumpet—sounding fat enough to be taken for a cornet—always finds the shortest route to musical and emotional communication. With a voice scarcely larger (though an octave lower) than Blossom Dearie, Koorax authoritatively conjures compact majesty on the melodically beguiling “Setembro” and sings the rhythmic romp “Zum Zum” with no discernible fuss. Then she floats the title ballad with lighter-than-air musical pillow talk. This woman has manifold ability.

Schärli has a medium-dynamic attack and



palpable body to his tone. He might not be as rhythmically ornamental as Koorax, but the contrast of his minimalism is a nice counter-voice to hers.

Pianist Hans-Peter Pfammatter is another minimal dynamo. Hammering one- and two-finger percussiveness on “Sandalia Dela” deftly hints at the Bahia carnival without having to replicate it. He never overplays and instinctively leaves holes for Schärli to fill. This ensemble, and its collection of songs, is an inviting combination.

—Kirk Silsbee

O Grande Amor: Fotografia; Sandalia Dela; Setembro; Wedileto; O Grande Amor; Deixa; Para Machucar Meu Coração; Zum Zum. (46:00)

Personnel: Peter Schärli, trumpet; Hans-Peter Pfammatter, piano; Thomas Dürst, bass; Ithamara Koorax, vocals.

Ordering info: tcbrecords.com

**The O'Farrill Brothers
*Giant Peach***

ZOHO 201101

★★★

Courting the dynamic feel of a much larger, much more experienced lineup, the O'Farrill Brothers' music echoes their father Arturo's tendency to swing hard while keeping the vibe light, airy and warm. That said, this is hardly a case of coattail riding. Adam O'Farrill, 16, and his 19-year-old brother, Zack, imbue their debut album together with a mix of highly structured, catchy originals (most of which are penned by Adam), plus a lukewarm arrangement of Benny Golson's “Stablemates” that opts for a fade-out rather than the reverberating wind-down on the original recording.

A Latin rhythm sneaks into the etude “The Composing Process” as the piano—and occasionally, the trumpet—sounds out the struggle of creating new work. Zack's drum chops and the clever interplay between horns and the rhythm section take centerstage on bassist Michael Sacks' “Side Street,” which transitions from snappy to funky to sultry with ease.

But the title track displays the most creative flexibility. After drummer Zack sets the tone with a tense, brush-heavy pattern, the somewhat macabre Roald Dahl story is referenced by an appropriately sinister piano ostinato, which is



joined by unison horns before the melody opens up and then out into a confident trumpet solo. Eventually, a string-bending bass accents the oddball, shuffling rhythm.

The high level of playing and composing displayed here would be commendable for artists of any age; that the leaders are still in their teens suggests something truly great lies ahead.

—Jennifer Odell

Giant Peach: Stablemates; Face It!; Giant Peach; Side Street; The Composing Process; Happy Hours; Crazy Chicken; Afterwalk. (55:42)

Personnel: Adam O'Farrill, trumpet; Zack O'Farrill, drums; Livio Almeida, tenor saxophone; Zaccari Curtis, piano; Michael Sacks, bass.

Ordering info: zohomusic.com



**Chris Dahlgren
*Mystic Maze & Lexicon***

JAZZWERKSTATT 088

★★★★½

Chris Dahlgren's *Mystic Maze & Lexicon* can be heard as a throwback to the times when jazz and poetry had their biggest splash. That 1950s and early '60s era has stood the test of time. In Dahlgren's case, it may not have anything to do with recreating an era. Instead, the vibe or attitude seems more contemporarily dissonant even as it carries with it a certain, occasional swing. “A Mystic Maze,” which starts the program, finds the leader reading about Bela Bartok, his back-in-the-mix voice surrounded by an equally laid-back, medium tempo amidst a somewhat busy arrangement.

Easing into the program, Dahlgren (who doubles on bass) and group veer leftward for “Repetition Unit 1” and “Painless Dentistry No. 1.” The angular lines, the loose, jumbled rhythms and squished juxtaposition of notes provide a curious mix of spontaneity and avant-garde classicism. The forms are mostly sections, also suggesting a pretext for organization, but the soloists can get weird and wooly, as reedist Gebhard Ullmann and drummer Eric Schaeffer do throughout the (first) “Dentistry.”

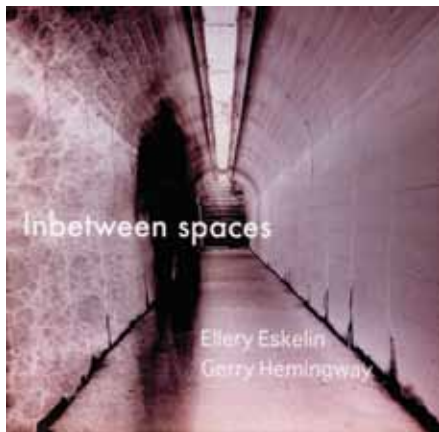
To recall poetry and jazz here is to minimize Dahlgren's overall approach, which seems to be more about group ensemble and passion. “Great Desires Of The Modernists” rivets specifically because it takes the technology involved in using voices and almost turns the material into a forced march. On “Reminiscences On The Fourth Quartet Of Bela Bartok,” the famed composer is referred to literally, with Dahlgren's eerie voice and the spare, probing musical accompaniment suddenly miles away from anything jazz-related, the music more about ideas and conceptions and less about the body.

—John Ephland

Mystic Maze: A Mystic Maze; Repetition Unit 1; “Painless Dentistry” No. 1; Great Desires Of The Modernists; Reminiscences On The Fourth Quartet Of Bela Bartok; It Was As If Two People Were Improvising Against Each Other; Mesto; “Painless Dentistry” No. 2; The Composer Promenading The Keyboard In His Boots; Bitter Champagne; Repetition Unit 2; “Painless Dentistry” No. 3. (55:13)

Personnel: Antonis Anissegos, piano; Wurflitzer, sampler, voice; Chris Dahlgren, bass, voice narration; Eric Schaeffer, drums, percussion, voice, glockenspiel sampler; Gebhard Ullmann, tenor and soprano saxophones, bass clarinet; Christian Weidner, alto saxophone.

Ordering info: records-cd.com



**Ellery Eskelin &
Gerry Hemingway**
Inbetween Spaces

AURICLE RECORDS 11

★★★★

Jin Hi Kim & Gerry Hemingway
Pulses

AURICLE RECORDS 10

★★★ ½

**Terrence McManus &
Gerry Hemingway**
Below The Surface Of

AURICLE RECORDS 9

★★★½

The three latest releases from Auricle, drummer Gerry Hemingway's label, make it clear that he's at the height of his musical powers, playing with immense imagination, precision and grit on each of these duets. For decades Hemingway has kept up affiliations with ensembles on both sides of the Atlantic, playing chamber improv with Georg Grawe and Ernst Reijssiger, electronics with Thomas Lehn and swinging jazz with Ray Anderson and Mark Helias. Now he's left to his own resources, not only releasing but recording and mastering his own music. Living in Switzerland doesn't make it any easier. His solution is to subcontract with a company that burns the music onto CDRs and packages it according to his specifications as the orders come in. And Hemingway is one hell of an engineer. Each record captures not only the sounds, but a palpable sense of the space between each musician.

Hemingway and Ellery Eskelin have worked together for years, and it shows. Each man plays with enormous trust in the other's ability to make sense of whatever he does, and that trust is well placed. Even at its most inward-looking, this music never feels precarious or private. Hemingway's accompaniment runs the gamut from sprightly, dancing brushwork to glinting, elongated electronic tones; Eskelin ranges from marvelously antique-sounding figures to pure-sound ruminations, often played at low volume. The partnership with McManus grew out of their joint association with Kermit Driscoll.

McManus matches Hemingway's flexibility, shifting from looming formations of rocky noise to a bracing, pointilistic spray, and the drummer seems to be keeping several sound-streams in action at once. They may be a duo, but their music never sounds empty. The record with Kim, who is active in multimedia art and Korean classical music as well as improvisation, recalls the pioneering cross-cultural recordings that American oud player Sandy Bull and jazz drummer Billy Higgins made in the '60s. Hemingway focuses more on groove and momentum here, propelling Kim's tart acoustic runs and startlingly bluesy

turns on her self-devised electric instrument.

—Bill Meyer

Inbetween Spaces: Motion And Thought; Stillness And Flow; Sustain And Footwork; Deft And Bounce; Shaken And Spill Stars And Treetops. (67:03)

Personnel: Ellery Eskelin, tenor saxophone; Gerry Hemingway, drums, percussion, voice.

Pulses: Double Portraits; Windtails Rain Dance; Pail Blue Dot; Delmos & Phobos; Saturn's Ring; Quick Step; Return; Pulses. (62:41)

Personnel: Jin Hi Kim, komungo, electric komungo; Gerry Hemingway, drums, percussion, voice.

Below The Surface Of: The Night Ocean; The Constants; The Glass Lake; The Rush To Get There; The Dry Land; The Disturbance; The Amber Field. (60:08)

Personnel: Gerry Hemingway, drums, percussion, voice; Terrence McManus, electric guitar, nylon string stereo guitar.

Ordering info: gerryhemingway.com

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ECM

Pierre Favre Ensemble *Le Voyage*

INTAKT 186

★★★★ ½

Versatile and precise, Pierre Favre's drumming makes as much sense in a hushed chamber setting with accordionist Dino Saluzzi as it does in a volcanic duet with pianist Irène Schweizer or an international percussion ensemble.

But the Swiss septuagenarian's instrument on this date is the band, and he often plays it well. The music is carefully charted and immaculately performed, so that the luminous harmonies at the beginning of "As Far As That Goes ..." radiate like the first rays of the sun rising from behind a mountain, and "Anapana"'s intricate contrapuntal reed figures flow effortlessly over Favre's sprightly brushwork. He knows how to use his resources sparingly, letting most of the horns drop out during "Akimbo" so that Philipp Schaufelberger's tart guitar can exchange succinct phrases with Samuel Blaser's dopplering trombone.

This points up one asset that Favre uses perhaps too stingily on this recording—the soloists in his band. Schaufelberger shines throughout, perhaps in part because of the tonal and affective differences between his dark sound and the bright voicings of the horns. And the leader not only gets some solo time, which he uses well, but maintains a running commentary upon



the music that often sounds quite like that of a Hindustani tablas player without ever sounding exotic for exoticism's sake. But the reeds don't get as much solo time as they deserve. Favre's melodies, while fluently performed, sometimes feel overly ornate. This is a strong and enjoyable album, but it still leaves the listener wanting more.

—Bill Meyer

Le Voyage: Les Vilains; Vreneli Ab Em Guggisberg; One For Makaya; Akimbo; As Far As That Goes...; Anapana; Attila est-tu là?; Wrong Name. (46:40)

Personnel: Claudio Puntin, clarinet, bass clarinet; Samuel Blaser, trombone; Philipp Schaufelberger, guitar; Beat Hofstetter, soprano saxophone; Sascha Armbruster, alto saxophone; Andrea Formenti, tenor saxophone; Beat Kappeler, baritone saxophone; Wolfgang Zwiawer, bass guitar; Banz Oester, bass; Pierre Favre, drums, percussion.

Ordering info: intaktrec.ch

Sandra Booker & Friends *When Love Happens: The Loving Day Concert*

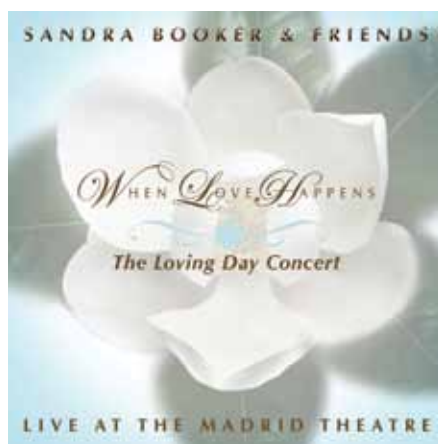
THE BOOKER GROUP 1101-4

★★★★

One of the ongoing mysteries of the Southern California jazz market is the absence of a representative recording commensurate with the true measure of vocalist Sandra Booker's talent. She has a full, sure alto voice, fine phrasing and a confident delivery. Her forte passages (delivered sparingly, for the most part) are a reminder that she could easily have been a musical theater diva. But Booker enjoys riding a rhythmic groove and sidesteps melodrama. Easy swing and taste in performance have always informed her singing.

She staged this recorded concert to commemorate the 1967 Supreme Court decision to allow inter-ethnic marriage. Booker couldn't have chosen a better musical director than pianist/arranger Tamir Hendelman. His playing is exquisite and though uncredited, he probably wrote the gorgeously understated string charts.

Booker penned most of the songs here, like "When Love Happens," a bit of a centerpiece to the program. Like the disc's other compositions, it points out pitfalls that untrained writers usually encounter: Her lines are excessively wordy, syllables suited to head tones are pitched low (and vice versa) and the melodies just kind



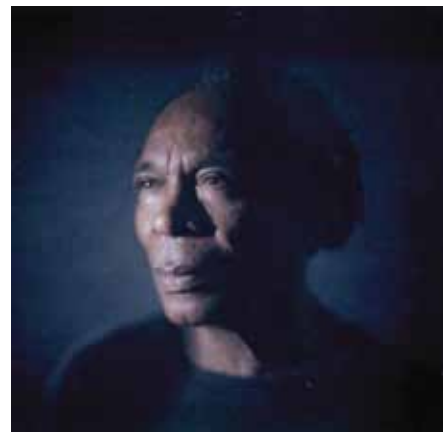
of aimlessly bob around. She begins strong (with "On A Clear Day") and calls the meeting to order midway with a bracing "Amazing Grace," yet her own songs are eclipsed. Let's hope that Hendelman midwives Booker's next album, the one California audiences in particular are still waiting for.

—Kirk Silsbee

When Love Happens: The Loving Day Concert: On A Clear Day (You Can See Forever); People Alone; Over And Over Again; Melody Is Your What Made God?; Amazing Grace; Somehow; Spring Song; Café Du Monde; Laissez Les Bon Temps Rouler. (46:87)

Personnel: Sandra Booker, vocals; Brian Swartz, trumpet; Dale Fielder, tenor saxophone; Tamir Hendelman, piano, Larry Koonse, guitar; John Leftwich, bass; Robert Perkins, drums (2-4); Estaire Godínez, percussion, vocals (4, 8-10); Paul Cartwright, 1st violin; Reiko Nakano, 2nd violin; Miguel Atwood-Ferguson, viola; Ryan Cross, cello.

Ordering info: whenlovehappens.com



Jacques Coursil *Trails Of Tears*

SUNNYSIDE 3085

★★ ½

Jacques Coursil anchors *Trails Of Tears* with a weighty theme: the expulsion and genocide of Native Americans and Africans that taints American history. For the most part, he's effective at evoking feelings of despair and physical violence.

Trails Of Tears proceeds with the opening "Nunna Daul Sunyi" setting the somber mood as Coursil blows out a pithy melody on the trumpet, distinguished by his arid tone and fluttering embellishments, against Jeff Ballard's drab keyboard chords. Sunny Murray and/or José Zébina punctuate the mood with sudden tom rolls and cymbal crashes while Al Silva and/or Alex Bernard add nice counterpart voices on acoustic bass to Coursil's sorrowful melody.

"Nunna Daul Sunyi" offers an enticing set-up, but *Trails Of Tears* gets too fascinated with exposition and pays little attention to discernible narrative arc. The following song, "Tagaloo, Georgia," bears so close of a resemblance to "Nunna Daul Sunyi" in mood and execution that it goes by nearly unnoticed. The ambiance continues on "Tahlequah, Oklahoma" as Coursil's epigrammatic melody pierces through a fog of oppressive keyboard chords.

Things start to shake up on "The Removal" as the ensemble engages in heady dialogue with Perry Robinson and Mark Whitecage joining in the fray with their textual mastery on the clarinet and alto saxophone. All of the musicians become more concerned with textural and sonic exploration rather than conventional melody. Yet it conveys the theme wonderfully, especially Bobby Few's piano jabs and glissandos. While Coursil expresses the theme's emotional intent, *Trails Of Tears* seems more of an exercise in building suspense than moving into tension-and-release territory that invites repeated listening. A more expansive followup is in order.

—John Murph

Trails Of Tears: Nunna Daul Sunyi; Tagaloo, Georgia; Tahlequah, Oklahoma; The Removal, Act I; The Removal, Act II; Gorée; The Middle Passage. (39:57)

Personnel: Jacques Coursil, trumpet; Michael Whitecage, alto saxophone; Perry Robinson, clarinet; Jeff Ballard, keyboards and Fender Rhodes; Bobby Few, piano; Alex Bernard, double bass; Alan Silva, double bass; José Zébina, drums; Sunny Murray, drums.

Ordering info: sunnysiderecords.com

**Ricardo Gallo's
Tierra de Nadie**
The Great Fine Line

CLEAN FEED 209

★★★½

Ricardo Gallo Cuarteto
Resistencias

LA DISTRITOFONICA 024

★★★

On the debut album by his New York quintet Tierra de Nadie, Colombian pianist Ricardo Gallo took his title from novelist Julian Cortazar as a metaphor for the dissolving boundaries between disparate musical traditions. The music bears it out not because of the leader's nationality, but because he renders it irrelevant; Gallo feels no compulsion to drop in glib cumbia references. Over the last four years Gallo has become increasingly visible in New York—most recently working in a quartet led by wunderkind trumpeter Peter Evans and heard on the album *Live In Lisbon*, also on Clean Feed—but he's got no shortage of his own ideas.

This project draws firepower from its veteran lineup, especially the muscular yet lithe bassist Mark Helias and the re-emergent trombone genius Ray Anderson. While everyone is accorded solo space, this is genuine ensemble music, with the arrangements for Gallo's



original compositions emphasizing alert interplay, multi-linear improvisation and rapid shifts in density and tone. The tunes eschew facile structures, and nearly every piece unfolds as a episodic narrative with each subsequent passage or solo materializing naturally from what preceded it. Gallo's got a wide romantic streak, injecting his compositions and solos with a dark turbulence and a brooding lyricism, but the music achieves an indelible liftoff from his nonchalant polyrhythms, giving the music an elusive springiness without ever drawing attention to its rhythmic fierceness. The album concludes ebulliently with a blast of post-New Orleans polyphony on the

wildly rollicking "La Pina Blanca."

Gallo is in a more extroverted mode across the board on *Resistencias*, the latest album from his long-running Bogota-based quartet, showing off his rhythmic electricity from the start with the crackerjack bounce of "Bailemesta." Even with a kit drummer and a percussionist, it's Gallo who steals the show with his blazing, buoyant attack. Pieces like "Inseguridad Democratica" show a meditative side, but the bulk of the album taps into Latin and South American rhythms, although the band never plays any of them straight, instead twisting the grooves to fit the furious intensity of Gallo's writing. Even a piece like "Kitchen Kuartet Kumbia," with the leader switching to melodica and Juan Manuel Toro playing snaking electric bass hardly seems concerned with setting the dance floor on fire even though the performance is plenty burning.

—Peter Margasak

The Great Fine Line: Intruders; Stomp At No Man's Land; Conspiracy; Three Versions Of A Lie; Hermetismo; The Intervention; South American Idyll; Improbability; La Pina Blanca. (61:56)

Personnel: Ricardo Gallo, piano; Mark Helias, bass; Ray Anderson, trombone; Dan Blake, soprano and tenor saxophones; Satoshi Takeishi, drums (1, 2, 4, 9), percussion (3, 5, 7, 8); Pheeroan akLaff, drums (5, 6, 7, 8).

Ordering info: cleanfeed-records.com

Resistencias: Bailemesta; Inseguridad Democratica; Carola y Pascual; Aurora Parcial; AIS; Kitchen Kuartet Kumbia; Iky; Viejo Presagio. (53:57)

Personnel: Ricardo Gallo, piano, melodica; Jorge Sepulveda, drums; Juan Manuel Toro, double bass, electric bass; Juan David Castaño, percussion.

Ordering info: ladistrifonica.com



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T.K. Blue *Latin Bird*

MOTEMA 57
 ★★★★★ 1/2

Interpreting Charlie Parker is a big business. Musicians from all over the jazz spectrum have issued a slew of tribute recordings, so it's no surprise that alto saxophonist T.K. Blue, who rose to prominence playing with Randy Weston, has taken his shot at one of his major influences.

Parker's music is still so omnipresent that a lot of critics await releases like these simply to dress down every strange interpretation of this sacred music—and some recordings rightfully deserve it. What's refreshing about *Latin Bird*, however, is that the tunes stand by themselves; Blue brings something new to old music and is not simply a Bird clone. These are Parker's melodies, but Blue has deconstructed the tunes and pasted them back together in a format all his own.

The songs span Bird's career and are easily tailored to a Latin flavor. Lewis Nash, Willie Martinez and Roland Guerro lock into a steady, unchanging percussion groove, giving Blue and trombonist Steve Turre ample room to explore the material.

"Moods Of Parker," a Blue composition based on "Parker's Mood," is wholly original, with Blue's melody veering off the original script in a chromatic riff of the main theme before he mixes in additional Parker motifs. Blue completely changes the architecture of "Chi Chi,"



placing the melody in a very deliberate, nearly straight, introduction before launching into double-time for solos. The tune ends with a deceleration back to the original tempo.

Blue plays without a net on "He Flew Away Too Soon," his introspective tribute to Parker. Though Blue's soloistic style differs vastly from Parker's, they both have a wide-open tone and a soaring range. Blue spends a lot of time in his altissimo register, but the playing is never forced. The playful "Buzzy," with which *Latin Bird* regains its churning, danceable momentum, is a fitting coda to a recording that establishes a new generation of Bird songs.

—Jon Ross

Latin Bird: Chi Chi; Si Si; Visa; Bluebird; 'Round Midnight; Barbados; Steeplechase; Moods Of Parker; Donna Lee; He Flew Away Too Soon; Buzzy. (52:22)

Personnel: T.K. Blue, alto saxophone, flute; Steve Turre, shells, trombone; Lewis Nash, Willie Martinez, drums; Roland Guerrero, percussion; Theo Hill, piano; Essiet Okon Essiet, bass.

Ordering info: motema.com

Alon Nechushtan *Words Beyond*

BUCKYBALL RECORDS 024
 ★★★★★

Israeli pianist Alon Nechushtan has recorded on John Zorn's Tzadik label with a klezmer project featuring his originals, nine more of which appear here. The company Nechushtan keeps with Dan Weiss and Francois Moutin, two highly sought-after sidemen, gives advance notice of his standing. "Muppet Shock" searches playfully for a television theme hook with driving energy and acute punctuations. Weiss injects teeter-tot rhythms, and the three dice the beat with tenterhooks.

Nechushtan scatters gemstones behind Moutin on "A Different Kind Of Morning," the ride is thrilling, everyone is in step and bristling with virtuosity and enthusiasm, the recording hot and loud, Bad Plus-style. The leader's left hand gets funky on "Spinning The Clouds" before a benign middle section, then he stomps out the riff from Sade's "Smooth Operator" before some nice a cappella counterpoint. "Dr Master Plan" contains a Thelonious Monk-like percussive quality (as does "The Traveler"), a hint of "Straight No Chaser" in the chromatic line, before it spills into cantering swing and snatches of the riff from "Take The 'A' Train."



Like another expansive pianist, Michiel Braam, Nechushtan revels in boundless eclecticism. "Secret Short/Short Secret" is layered and forceful; "Entranced" is ecstatic rather than bewitched; "Heartbreakthrough" is resolved and confident, and doesn't lack flashes of poignancy despite not playing for sympathy.

Though, to my knowledge, this trio are not well journeyed together, they share tremendous simpatico. Nechushtan is a talent to watch, with a surfeit of ideas, an unbridled spirit and bold, two-fisted sense of architecture.

—Michael Jackson

Words Beyond: Muppet Shock; Different Kind Of Morning; Spinning The Clouds; Dr Master Plan; Spring Soul Song; Secret Short/Short Secret; Entranced; Heartbreakthrough; The Traveler. (54:15)

Personnel: Alon Nechushtan, piano; Francois Moutin, bass; Dan Weiss, drums.

Ordering info: buckyballmusic.com

FMP Closes Out With Glorious Flourish

It's hard to think of another label that's done more to document, support and nurture European free jazz and improvised music than Berlin's Free Music Production. The label has experienced a spurt of activity over the last few years with label co-founder Jost Gebers back at the helm following a disastrous attempt to hand the company down to someone else back in 1999. Alas, the recent flourish looks like a glorious death rattle. With the release of the astonishing 12-CD box set **FMP Im Rückblick—In Retrospect 1969–2010** (FMP 137-148; 77:41/70:37/57:03/56:54/49:22/54:48/75:36/58:06/62:48/65:33/49:24/59:48 ★★★★★) the company is shutting down operations, but what a way to go out.

Packaged with a lavish 12-inch by 12-inch 216-page booklet featuring illuminating essays, detailed discographical information and a thorough listing of concert productions that formed the other key part of the company's activity, this set vibrantly tries to sum up more than four decades of history. Such an undertaking is daunting and impossible to accomplish, but the attempt is remarkable in its generosity, range and energy. Seven of the discs are culled primarily from the label's out-of-print catalog, appearing on CD for the first time, and it should come as little surprise that the selections are dominated by the powerhouse names that first made their marks with releases on the label.

Baden-Baden '75 features knockout performances by Alexander von Schlippenbach's Globe Unity Orchestra from November of that year; the Peter Kowald composition "Jahrmarkt" turned up on a record issued on Po-Torch, but the other four fiery tracks are previously unissued. The lineup is heavy-duty, with Kenny Wheeler, Evan Parker, Paul Lovens, Enrico Rava, Peter Brötzmann and Anthony Braxton jubilantly attacking a program of compositionally rooted improvisations, at least in contrast with the band's all-improvised approach these days. Many of those players are leaders on other discs in the set: Brötzmann's 1976 solo recital *Volke In Hosen* lays out his durable template for the format, his absorption of post-bop flurries exploding into pure ear-cleaning sound, while the unissued live 1994 session captured on *Close Up* finds him with his furiously energetic Die Like A Dog band, with William Parker, Hamid Drake and Toshinori Kondo. Schlippenbach's bracing quartet



Peter Brötzmann

with Parker, Kowald and Lovens is at the peak of its power on *At Quartier Latin* (which pairs a side each from two early FMP albums), while the searing Kowald solo *Was Da Ist (Live)* is a previously unissued 2000 live take on ideas from his 1995 studio album of the same name.

Part of FMP's importance was reflecting the strong network of musicians all over Europe, usually in shifting constellations among themselves, but sometimes with lineups revealing a transcontinental cast. *Messer Und ...* features the dynamic trio of Swiss pianists Irene Schweizer, German reedist Rüdiger Carl and the great South African expat drummer Louis Moholo, collecting the four dynamic tracks from their 1975 album *Messer*, and the title track from *Tuned Boots*, recorded a couple of years later. Soprano saxophone genius Steve Lacy was one of a handful of American greats well-represented by the FMP catalog; *In Berlin* contains the entirety of his crucial 1975 solo album appended by two quintet tracks from *Fol-lies* (1977), with Steve Potts, Irene Aebi, Kent Carter and Oliver Johnson. While the work on *Manuela +* is unadulterated improvised music, the titular trio of Carl, guitarist Hans Reichel and the Portuguese violinist Carlos Zingaro are joined on this previously unissued 1999 date by the daring Korean komungo player Jin Hi Kim: The label anticipated the real flowering of intersecting, global traditions.

All 12 CDs are also available individually, but this monumental set exceeds the kind of detail and splendor that FMP delivered through its history.

Ordering info: fmp-label.de

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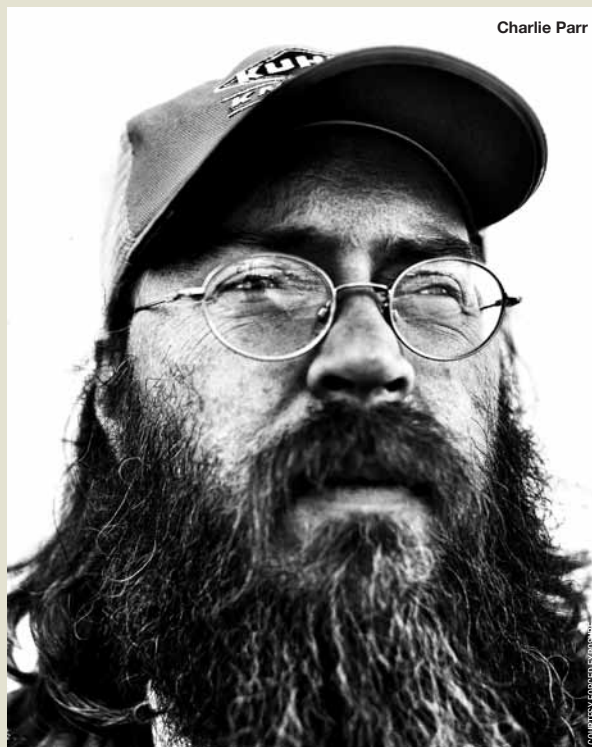
Charlie Parr: *When The Devil Goes Blind* (Nero's Neptune 16; 38:57 ★★★★★) Parr, a Minnesota-based solo performer who tours the world, is fiercely his own man, only beholden to the humanity of the old rural American characters populating his original songs and specially chosen traditional material. Moral strength and inspiration drive his trenchant singing, whether it's about a city boy drawn to country life ("Up Country Blues") or someone shedding his mortal cord (a fantastic version of "Ain't No Grave Gonna Hold My Body Down") or a song protagonist visiting Wounded Knee creek soon after the bloodletting ("1890"). Parr's deft playing of guitars has the quality of genuine backcountry, untouched by affectation or artificiality.

Ordering info: charlieparr.com

Chris Antonik: *Chris Antonik* (Silverbirch 083110; 43:50 ★★★★★) On his studio debut, Antonik's guitar cranks energy in a conscientious, unrushed and emotionally convincing manner that contributes volumes to the immediacy of his tunes (a generally good lot) and to his makeovers of Freddie King's "She's A Burglar" and Otis Rush's "Double Trouble." Acclaimed in Canada, this 35-year-old Torontonian even has a lyrical side (hear "The King of Infidelity"). Not secure with being identified as a vocalist, Antonik nevertheless gives it a try on the Rush blues and gets a passing grade. Main singer Josh Williams, a member of North Country jam-band Fat Cats, scrapes by too, at least when not emulating Gregg Allman.

Ordering info: myspace.com/chrisantonik

Roomful Of Blues: *Hook, Line & Sinker* (Alligator 4941; 41:32 ★★★★★) Not wavering from decades of commitment to jump-blues, Roomful welcomes yet another new singer into the band here. Phil Pemberton sounds like he's chugged cod liver oil a few times, but, so be it, he fits right in with the patented horn section, with the swinging rhythm section and with bandleader Chris Vachon, always a pillar of consistency on stinging Chicago guitar. Roomful is a curator's cover band, and the guys trawled the r&b and blues waters to find a treasure-trove of songs belonging to historical figures like Don & Dewey, Gatemouth Brown and Big Maybelle.



Charlie Parr

Ordering info: alligator.com

Lara Price: *Everything* (Price Productions 2011; 45:41 ★★★★★) One of the Bay Area's leading blues singer, Price diversifies to some degree on her fifth album with lightly attractive arrangements of dog-eared material from John Prine, Leonard Cohen, Lennon & McCartney and Otis Blackwell. Her vocal abilities are showcased even better on Mighty Mike Schermer's two slow-burning soul-blues, "One More Day" and "You Won't Miss Me," and on the relatively torrid Price-Schermer corker "I Didn't Miss A Beat." Schermer, a member of the Marcia Ball Band, not only writes fine songs but also plays excellent guitar, doing so on the aforementioned and on Price's burning-down-the-house stomp "Everything," which points to pyromaniac Etta James.

Ordering info: laraprice.com

Big Joe & The Dynafloes: *You Can't Keep A Big Man Down* (Severn 0051; 40:08 ★★½) Big Joe Maher has been a mainstay on the Washington D.C.-Maryland blues scene for many years, and the drummer's latest album finds him down in Nashville jumping and shuffling with three members of Delbert McClinton's crack band. But he stays down for the count because his barely serviceable singing doesn't do justice to good McClinton, Jay McShann and Jimmy McCracklin tunes, or even to the undistinguished ones he penned himself. The glaring exception is his "Nothin' But Trouble," where Maher's dramatic declamation between talking and singing is as impressive as Rob McNelley's guitar solo.

Ordering info: severnrecords.com

Doug Webb *Renovations*

POSI-TONE 8075

★★ ½

From the opening track—a jump-and-jive version of “Satin Doll”—it’s easy to hear what *Renovations* is all about: slick saxophone in a tightly arranged package. Webb has played with everyone, released a large collection of records and has even taken the reins of the theme songs for “Law And Order” and “The Simpsons,” so he knows his way around a studio.

The studio feel permeates his latest record, placing his music firmly in artificial surroundings. This production unfortunately constrains a solid set of tunes; the most glaring instance of detachment is the static dynamics of the rhythm section, which essentially drains all emotional heft out of Webb’s slowly building solos. Webb and his sidemen—especially bassist Stanley Clarke and pianist Larry Goldings—shine through the tunes, but are never allowed to break free of their studio constraints.

Webb has an equal ability on ballads and uptempo numbers. He may be most compelling, though, on “They Can’t Take That Away From Me,” on which he plays alto accompanied only by Joe Bagg’s piano. He also turns to the alto saxophone on “Then I’ll Be Tired of You,” and these are the best tracks on the album due to Webb’s open sound and agile playing.

—Jon Ross

Renovations: Satin Doll; Then I’ll Be Tired Of You; I Can’t Get Started; I’ve Never Been In Love Before; You’ve Changed; They Can’t Take That Away From Me; Blusette; Slow Hot Wind. (52:04)

Personnel: Doug Webb, tenor, alto and soprano saxophones; Larry Goldings, Joe Bagg, Mahesh Balasooriya, piano; Stanley Clarke, bass; Gerry Gibbs, drums.

Ordering info: posi-tone.com



Nick Mazzarella Trio *Aviary*

THOUGHT TO SOUND RECORDS

★★★ ½

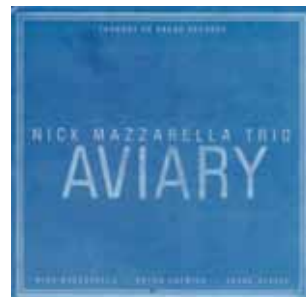
Aviary introduces Nick Mazzarella, a face new to anyone outside of Chicago, and the trio that he’s led for the past couple years. First albums shouldn’t be this good. The writing is direct, engaging and succinct with melodies so indelible that you might find yourself humming them during the better parts of your day. Mazzarella’s tone on alto sax, which is not his only horn but is the only one he plays on this recording, has just enough butter in it to slide effortlessly over his tunes, but he balances that smoothness with nimble, sharp-toothed elaborations and a distinct, if familiar, cry. The record’s one flaw, and it’s a debatable one, is how close Mazzarella sometimes sounds to Atlantic Records-vintage Ornette Coleman; he may not sound like his own man, but his music evinces the same joyousness that enabled Coleman to win over a broader audience who cared less about his innovations than about how good it felt to hear his tunes. The other members of the trio hold up their end. Drummer Frank Rosaly holds back on the force he sometimes summons in other ensembles, playing elaborately but with restraint. His frolicking Latin accents on “Pescador” are a special treat. Bassist Anton Hatwich supplies the real propulsion with economical lines that zero in on a destination and pull the music inexorably along. If anything, the trio could afford to take a few more side trips; one suspects it’s in the digressive details rather than the bold statements that Mazzarella will find the voice that is most uniquely his.

—Bill Meyer

Aviary: Quarantine; Pistachio (For My Bird); Eternal Return; Pescador; Free Dance; Aviary. (30:06)

Personnel: Nick Mazzarella, alto saxophone; Anton Hatwich, bass; Frank Rosaly, drums.

Ordering info: nickmazzarella.com



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Dan Tepfer Trio *Five Pedals Deep*

SUNNYSIDE 1265

★★★★

Dan Tepfer's originality makes him the locus throughout *Five Pedals Deep*. His approach centers on steady eighth-note pulses, which function as chords normally do. Other pianists might spell out the harmonic movement in "All I Heard Was Nothing," the opening track, but Tepfer suggests it with a steady two-note oscillation in his left hand; this allows more room for extemporization by implying rather than articulating the chords while also assuming much of the responsibility for driving the rhythm, which in turn gives drummer Ted Poor more room to play around the beat. It also allows Tepfer to heighten tension by building his solos beyond the four-bar delineations of the tune; one phrase might run for five beats, the next for seven, all of which rubs against the regularity of the steady tremolo. The same method applies to "Peal, Repeal," though the tremolo doubles to 16th-notes and morphs constantly to outline more complex changes. To keep his balance, Tepfer plays an uncluttered solo, in effect letting its left-hand foundation speak more prominently.

This formula becomes more abstract on "Back Attya" and "Diverge." In place of a bed-rock ostinato, Tepfer scatters notes outside any apparent metrical construction, like sparkles



tossed against a dark sky. But the effect is the same as on "All I Heard Was Nothing": He suggests or implies the chords, with individual notes indicating a pivot point on a change, for example, while at the same time gradually outlining the rhythmic momentum. Through careful dynamics and variations in density, these tracks heat up

like popcorn on a stove, starting slowly and intensifying toward a tasty resolution.

Special attention should be paid to the four "Interludes," each one a short solo piano study based respectively on unisons, fifths, sevenths and sixths. These are the gems of the album, gently dissonant, fragile and beautiful. But Tepfer's aesthetic is clearest on the closer, a solo reworking of "Body And Soul," reborn in Tepfer's remarkable, harmonically illuminating treatment. He takes the tune down a shadowy, introspective path, which leads to a roadblock just before the end. Here, he repeats the line in the second-to-last bar ("I'm all for you, body and ..."), seems to try to get away from it in vain, slips out at last into an unexpected minor mode before ending on a major interval that nonetheless feels less like a triumph of romance than an acceptance of unresolved mysteries.

—Robert L. Doerschuk

Five Pedals Deep: All I Heard Was Nothing; Le Plat Pays; Interlude 1 (Unisons); Peal, Repeal; Back Attya; Interlude 2 (Fifths); The Distance; Diverge; Interlude 3 (Sevenths); I Was Wonderin'; Interlude 4 (Sixths); Body And Soul. (58:17)

Personnel: Dan Tepfer, piano; Thomas Morgan, bass; Ted Poor, drums.

Ordering info: sunnysiderecords.com

Vijay Iyer– Prasanna– Nitin Mitta *Tirtha*

ACT 9503

★★★★

In the late 1990s, Vijay Iyer joined alto saxophonist Rudresh Mahanthappa and tabla player Trichy Sankaran to put together the Manodharma Trio. It was the first time the pianist had striven to connect with his Indian heritage and investigate how he could incorporate it within jazz. Since the project folded, Iyer has had some time to reflect on the concept and tweak it. His thought process has led to the creation of another trio—this time with different personnel. Judging by *Tirtha*'s successful outcome, it looks like time has indeed been beneficial, for the brand new band has a renewed focus and purpose.

Guitarist Prasanna's occasional sitar-like sounds and Mitta's tabla are obvious references to a shared cultural heritage ("Entropy And Time" also finds its inspiration in a raga written by T.R. Subramanyam), but the trio's actual



goal is not to blend jazz and Indian music as much as to use unique accents to underpin a resolutely modern musical approach. Despite Iyer's reputation for outward leanings, one of the session's greatest accomplishments is the trio's immediate appeal. Part of the reason must lie with the lack of ostentation displayed by the three virtuosos, who prefer to harness

their enormous technical abilities to build various layers of emotional expression, which ensures that the initial impact never wears off.

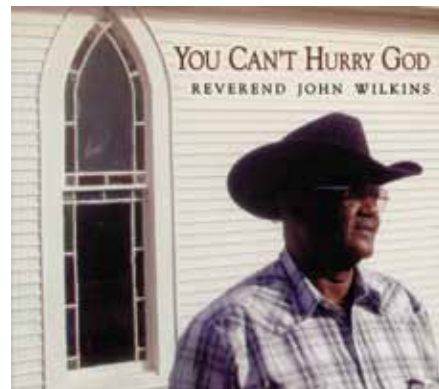
The fast execution and direct delivery also contribute to a dense fabric and an irresistible momentum. But there is also time for introspection, which is brought forth with a rare clarity. And "Abundance" is as beautiful a piece as Iyer has ever written. Since compositional duties are divided between the pianist and the guitarist, the musical vision they have in common greatly helps the project.

—Alain Drouot

Tirtha: Duality; Tribal Wisdom; Tirtha; Abundance; Falsehood; Gauntlet; Polytheism; Remembrance; Entropy And Time. (60:36)

Personnel: Vijay Iyer, piano; Prasanna, guitar, voice; Nitin Mitta, tabla.

Ordering info: actmusic.com



Reverend John Wilkins *You Can't Hurry God*

BIG LEGAL MESS 0259

★★★★

John Wilkins is at the vanguard of a special merger of sacred and profane sounds in the Mississippi hill country. He grew up learning guitar at the knee of his father, Robert Wilkins, a celebrated bluesman during the Depression who renounced the devil's music in 1935 to become a minister. Still, the elder Wilkins never stopped playing blues licks. Well-taught John eventually moved beyond blues riffing and chording and mastered tone, melody, dynamics and subtle delineations of mood. John's mix of Sunday morning spirituality and backsliding blues in the studio has resulted in a small miracle of an album.

Wilkins' focused, easy urgency affirms his trust in his Lord in a heavenly group of original songs and blues classics. The reverend's blues guitar is never at a loss for authority. He totters on the brink of spiritual ecstasy in "Jesus Will Fix It." Here his intensity is matched to a ragged-saw, trancelike groove summoned by bassist Eric Deacon and other northern Mississippi blues musicians in thrall of fallen North Mississippi blues heavies Junior Kimbrough and R. L. Burnside. Wilkins and friends virtually stomp to kingdom come playing Mississippi Fred McDowell's opus "You Got To Move" (they shove aside the Rolling Stones' version). Wilkins' daughters help him avow the rightness of their Redeemer. Without affectation, Wilkins makes clear the extent of his understanding of blues style in a gospel context when, singing and playing guitar without accompaniment, he sizes up his father's adaptation of a New Testament parable, "Prodigal Son" (originally titled "That's No Way To Get Along," long before Mick Jagger and Keith Richards swiped it). Another outstanding solo performance streaked blue, "Thank You Sir," sustains an ambiance of humble awe over God's grace for flawed humankind.

—Frank-John Hadley

You Can't Hurry God: You Can't Hurry God; Jesus Will Fix It; Sinner's Prayer; Let The Redeemed Say So; Prodigal Son; You Got To Move; I Want You To Help Me; Thank You Sir; On The Battlefield. (45:18)

Personnel: Reverend John Wilkins, vocal, guitar; Jake Fussell, guitar; Eric Deaton, bass; Wallace Lester, drums; Adam Woodard, organ; Tangelia Longstreet, Joyce Jones, background vocals.

Ordering info: biglegalmessrecords.com

Made In Americana

Various Artists: *Black Sabbath* (Idelsohn Society 018; 54:34 ★★★½)

The Idelsohn Society for Musical Preservation turns the spotlight on 14 African American pop or jazz worthies who recorded Jewish and Jewish-themed songs between 1939 and 1982. The Red Sea almost splits again when Alberta Hunter pours her heart into "Ich Hob Dich Tzufil Lieba," and Jimmy Scott emotes like a singing angel on "Exodus." Recorded at the home of clarinetist Tony Scott, Billie Holiday pushes her voice's expressive capabilities to the grueling limit interpreting "My Yiddishe Momme." A serious and somber Cannonball Adderley Sextet offers "Sabbath Prayer," off its 1964 *Fiddler On The Roof* album. Those providing modest entertainment include Slim "Kosher Deli Man" Gaillard and Cab Calloway.

Ordering info: idelsohnsociety.com

Aaron Neville: *I Know I've Been Changed* (EMI Gospel 509996; 42:43 ★★★½)

Neville uses his distinct vibrato-laden voice to present the sanctified words of "I Am A Pilgrim" and 11 more pew-and-pulpit favorites in praise of his Maker. The equally eminent Allan Toussaint plays piano with suppliant pleasure. Producer Joe Henry frames the vocal drama with rock-and-sway choral singers and marginally graceful dobro, bass and drums.

Ordering info: emigospel.com

Rockin' Jason D. Williams: *Killer Instincts* (Rockabilly 001; 41:51 ★★) Memphis-based Williams is a lunatic boogie-woogie pianist in the mutant mold of his idol Jerry Lee Lewis. In the recording studio, he comes off as a one-trick pony, not so good as a singer, a songwriter or a humorist. He's the full package in live performance.

Ordering info: rockinjasondwilliams.com

Mark Erelli & Jeffrey Foucault: *Seven Curses* (Blueblade 0001; 47:40 ★★★½) Erelli, on vocals, guitar, mandolin and harmonica, teams with singer-guitarist Foucault to bring emotional heft to historic and modern murder ballads they've gathered from several roots purveyors of morbidity: Woody Guthrie, Steve Earle, Neil Young, Bruce Springsteen, honky-tonker Blackie Farrell and bluegrass' Norman Blake. Moderating fiery passion by intellect, the two almost make listeners believe they know the scoundrels in the songs personally.

Ordering info: markerelli.com

Various Artists: *Bloody War: Songs 1924-1939* (Tompkins Square 2479; 45:26 ★★★½) Nothing, it may be argued, is more American than war, and this old-time music collection takes listeners near the front lines



Aaron Neville

SARAH FREDMAN

with folk, country, blues and pop 78s waxed in commemoration or burlesque of the Civil War, the Spanish-American War and the First World War. Fiddlin' John Carter is the most familiar name, having made one of the first country recordings. A dozen others, like guitarist-harmonica player Frank Hutchinson and string band Earl Johnson & His Clodhoppers, are just as compelling to hear.

Ordering info: tompkinssquare.com

Les Sampou: *Lonesomeville* (Monando Music 010; 35:27 ★★★½) Back on the roots scene after a long break, Sampou never wavers from a steady tone of genuineness as she sings sharply observant songs that she wrote about disarray and failed communication in relationships. She has the ability to dramatize the sense of hurt at the heart of the characters without floundering in self-pity or weak sentiment. Guitarists Kevin Barry and Mike Dinallo prove important to the flow of her honky-tonk music.

Ordering info: lessampou.com

Various Artists: *The Mississippi Sheiks Tribute Concert* (Black Hen DVD 0066; 85:00 ★★) This unimaginatively filmed concert in Vancouver last spring in honor of a leading Memphis string band of the early 1930s seldom rises above the unexceptional with the likes of guitarist Bob Brozman (showy, unconvincing) and singer Robin Holcomb (arty, pretentious). On a more positive note, Alvin Youngblood Hart, Geoff Muldaur and the Sojourners vocal group stimulate, and don't spoon-feed, the audience.

Ordering info: blackhenmusic.com

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Drummer/composer Adam Cruz has been a prominent member of the jazz world for some time through his association with the leading exponents of the music, including Chick Corea, Tom Harrell, and Patricia Barber. On *Milestone*, his debut recording as leader, Cruz provides listeners with a strong and diverse program of original compositions that prove his range as a writer and performer. He has also gathered an ensemble of some of the most influential jazz musicians in support, including saxophonists Chris Potter, Steve Wilson, Miguel Zenon, guitarist Steve Cardenas, pianist Edward Simon, and bassist Ben Street.

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Odean Pope Universal Sounds

PORTER 4053

★★★½

The intensity that permeates "The Binder," a piece brimming with outward-bound free-jazz energy, finds many different expressions on *Universal Sounds*, and not all of them sounding like hell with the lid off. Tenor saxophonist Odean Pope's approach seems more nuanced to the point of veering off a comfortable cliff.

The program feels weighted toward improvised music akin to Sun Ra experimentalism, the presence of alto saxophonist Marshall Allen no doubt a factor. "Custody Of The American Spirit" and "Custody Of The American (Bullshit Version)" combine the double-sax ferocity of "The Binder" but with arrangements that keep you guessing, the mood suddenly changing, with space and silence guided by bassist Lee Smith's softly churning motifs. And the biggie here that keeps it all a little wild is the three-drum choir of Craig McIver, Jim Hamilton and Warren Smith. Along with trapset playing all around, there's requisite percussion for a little added spice.

The recording has a you-are-there sound to it, suggesting this was a live date, the mix giving each instrument its due without being too discrete. There's a blend to the "universal sounds" here, with no one predominant but everyone on board. Tunes like the bass-driven, marching-drum vibe of "Mwalimu" and swinging "Blues" are more arranged and possess a clear, definite pulse, while the wherewithal of "The Track" echoes Sun Ra's otherworldly voodoo with Allen going for broke on his EWI (electronic wind instrument). And the lovely "She Smiled Again" provides a rhapsodic pause and showcase for Pope's more lyrical side to shine. All original material, Pope contributes four tracks (five with a co-credit) with one each from Smith and Allen.

Over the years a stalwart colleague of Max Roach, and a member of the collaborative Catalyst, with *Universal Sounds*, Pope sounds bright and interesting as ever. —John Ephland

Universal Sounds: Custody Of The American Spirit; Mwalimu; The Binder; She Smiled Again; Go Figure; The Track; Blues; Custody Of The American (Bullshit Version). (55:12)

Personnel: Odean Pope, tenor saxophone; Marshall Allen, alto saxophone; EWI; Warren Smith, drums, percussion, timpani, vocals (1, 8); Craig McIver, Jim Hamilton, drums; Lee Smith, bass.

Ordering info: porterrecords.com



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Miss Dinah Misbehaved Divinely

One of the best-known music industry flame-outs of the immediate postwar era—a star at 23, dead of an overdose at 39—singer Dinah Washington had a singular voice that was instantly recognizable. No matter how banal or bombastic the setting, her voice slashes through the 107 performances on *The Fabulous Miss D!: The Keynote, Decca & Mercury Singles, 1943–1953* (Hip-O Select B0014668; 76:44/73:27/76:06/77:06 ★★★★★) like a beacon through fog. When the material, the arrangement, the musicians and that voice coalesce, the result is magic.

Washington was 19, and had only recently shed her identity as Ruth Lee Jones, former child gospel singer, when she recorded her first four sides at the behest of journalist Leonard Feather. Backed by members of Lionel Hampton's band—including Hamp himself on piano and drums—Washington struts her persona as teenage temptress, an “evil gal” who “knows how to do it.” It's hard not to think of the similarity between Feather's manipulation and the manufacture of latter-day sex bombs like Britney Spears and Christina Aguilera. Image making was a theme throughout Washington's first decade—and she wasn't shy about name-checking herself in the third person—but while she seemed constantly to be trying on different roles, her perfect diction and tone were constants.

Although the four tracks with Hampton's crew are arranged as a band with a featured singer, Washington's voice rivets the attention, cutting Joe Morris' trumpet as it enters on “Evil Gal Blues.” Juxtaposed against Arnett Cobb's grainy sax and Morris' pinched, muted horn on “Salty Papa Blues” she sounds sharp and confident, despite a rather noisy transfer source. Meanwhile, her brassy tone and her boasts of being “high last night” establish her as a wild girl who won't be tamed.

The same persona is maintained on the 1945 recording “Blow Top Blues,” which was issued under Hampton's name. Playing the good-time girl again, she dominates the song with a single drawn-out “yes” in her second line.

It's quite a step to her first Mercury single, “I Can't Get Started With You,” with its lyrics about “selling short in 1929” and the melodramatic introduction by trombonist Gus Chappell's orchestra. Her early solo singles—recorded at three sessions in 1946—veer between saccharine arrangements and novelty pieces like “Oo Wee Walkie Talkie,” which features a great band under Gerald Wilson's leadership. Her voice remains powerful and distinctive, particularly when fronting a small combo in a session from fall 1947.

Finally, in February 1948, she had a hit with



Dinah Washington

UNIVERSAL MUSIC

a trio version of “Ain't Misbehavin'” backed by her own “No More Lonely Gal Blues.” She repeated the formula with “West Side Baby” three months later and then, in August 1948, hit the top of the charts with “Am I Asking Too Much,” backed by Dave Young's orchestra. Throughout, there is also something tremendously appealing about Washington's extremely open vibrato and the consistent timbre of her voice. With subtle choral backing from Mitch Miller's orchestra she varied her delivery, striking a balance between subdued choruses and tremendous power. She toyed with straight pop music, backed by a male chorus on “Journey's End,” found a steady anchor in bassist Ray Brown on several sessions and even fronted a band featuring a young John Coltrane for three numbers.

As a singles artist, Washington's final major change came when she took up with drummer Jimmy Cobb, who recruited players like Ben Webster, Wardell Gray and Wynton Kelly to accompany his paramour. While the best of these singles feature some honking r&b, there are also nuanced performances like a beautiful take of Noel Coward's “Mad About The Boy,” where her sense of timing and ability to inhabit a lyric really stand out. Yet she remained open to the raucous double entendre, epitomized by “TV Is The Thing (This Year),” which hit the charts by mining the combination of pop culture and sex.

And, just as today's pop coquettes can suddenly take a serious turn, Washington's penultimate single was a double-sided Christmas feature, returning her to her gospel roots—if only for a moment.

DB

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www.sunnysiderecords.com

George Colligan *Isolation*

STEEPLECHASE 31692

★★★

George Colligan and Mad Science *Pride And Joy*

PILOO 005

★★★



fact, it would be easy to mistake them as projects by two completely different keyboard players. But Colligan is nothing if not schooled in modern tradition, if that's not too oxymoronic. And with these two releases he proves himself to be as up on Return To Forever and Weather Report as he is on McCoy Tyner and his acoustic brethren.

The solo piano excursion *Isolation* and the electro-extravaganza *Pride And Joy* would seem to represent two sides to George Colligan. In

Every track on *Isolation* has its share of augmented chords, clusters and dense textures—so much so that after a while each los-

es its distinct identity. Instead, we have a long exhibition of what sound like real-time inventions based on ideas drawn from one harmonic resource or another depending on the moment. At times the elements of the work become clear, as on "Lonely Wind," on which a left-hand figure moves the performance along, starting on the first beat of the bar or syncopated just before it. But more often, the music moves at a pace whose stateliness is emphasized by Colligan's tendency to play mainly in the middle range of the keyboard. He stops occasionally for a free-tempo interlude, as in the heavily pedaled whole-tone runs and tremolos that briefly interrupt the progression of "Dead Of Winter" or the thunderous interweaving of octaves, again with the sus pedal fully down, during a break in "The Secret Of Andreas' Beard." On "Simple Pleasures" the density of his voicings weighs down what seems like an attempt to convey something playful.

The sameness of the impressions created throughout *Isolation* comes mainly from Colligan's reluctance to resolve his ideas or even outline any progress his music might be making. While careful listening usually reveals the architecture of the composition, most of the time it seems as though his aim is to spotlight moments of his performance, whether it be what he chooses to do during a fermata or how he moves a series of diminished sixths around, as opposed to letting the track proceed with clear intent.

Isolation seems to pull from within, while *Pride And Joy* explodes across a DayGlo horizon. In its broad sweep and finer details, this trio date might have been pulled from a time capsule buried in the early '70s. Colligan goes entirely electric here, concentrating mainly on what sounds like a Hammond L100 organ. That's enough of a throwback, but with the old-school analog synth solos and splashy textures you're transported back to the glory days of fusion.

In his liner notes, Colligan argues that there's a difference between "jazz-rock" and "fusion," using the former term to characterize his group. That may be, but there's no mistaking the inspirations. Tom Guarna's guitar lines possess that singing, edgy feel that Al Di Meola pioneered on electric, though Guarna plays with fewer fireworks, and can be lyrical, like Pat Metheny. Drummer Kenny Grohowski is all about summoning the spirit of Lenny White. His powerful playing runs the gamut from busy to way busier. From the first notes on "Tightrope" he stirs up a furious momentum, to the point that when the drum solo arrives he hardly has to alter anything he's been playing with the group.

—Robert L. Doerschuk

Isolation: Song For Sinne; Lonely Wind; Dead Of Winter; Flint Michigan; The Wrong Stuff; Isolation; The Secret of Andreas' Beard; Simple Pleasures; The Old Danish Castle; The Road Back; Regret (61:34)

Personnel: George Colligan, piano.
Ordering info: steeplechase.dk

Pride And Joy: Pride And Joy; Keeping Pace; Song for Obama; Birth; Interiors; The Shadow Knows; Utsukushi; Tightrope; Soul-pain; The Promised Land; Anthem. (61:45)

Personnel: George Colligan, organ, keyboards; Tom Guarna, guitars; Kenny Grohowski, drums.
Ordering info: piloorecords.com



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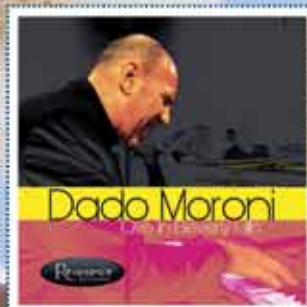


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Yaron Herman Trio *Follow The White Rabbit*

ACT 9499

★★★½

The dilemma posed throughout *Follow The White Rabbit* is where exactly this rabbit is leading. Clearly Herman's trio can play, but it's difficult to discern whatever substance there might be beneath the glisten of their sound.

The title track, for example, opens the album with a tinkling, upper-register piano motif in 5/4. Its dreamy ringing suggests a fairy tale or perhaps an arrangement of "Carol Of The Bells." But after Herman's solo, structured in phrases that slip in and out of synchronicity with the beat, the tune suddenly evaporates, with no recapitulation or sense of a statement having been completed. From start to this quizzical finish, there's an expectation that something is about to happen and a finish where nothing quite does.

Aside from four covers, Herman wrote or co-wrote all of this material. His compositions, like his playing, show polish and assurance but fail to deliver either a sense of completion or even progression toward completion. On "Aladin's Psychedelic Lamp" he attempts to reflect the exotic theme suggested by the title, with modalisms that feel vaguely Middle Eastern. These occur in free tempo between melodramatic accents from Chris Tordini and Tommy Crane, which make the piece feel closer to parody than genuine cross-cultural expression, if not even a bit pretentious.



Promise is evident but seldom fulfilled throughout the album. One solo piano fragment, "Wonderland," starts with an open fifth pulsing in eighth-notes and an interesting melody speaking below in the bass register. As the title suggests, a childlike quality begins to emerge, only

to end after less than a minute. With so little substance and only a suggestion that Herman's ideas might have been nurtured further, one wonders why this mini-piece is even included at all.

With one exception, the covers are equally unrevealing. Radiohead's aptly named "No Surprises" is more or less recited, with no one stepping far beyond the written content. You could say that Herman and his group, playing sensitively and with restraint, are choosing to let the music speak for itself, but more ought to be expected in a jazz trio presentation. On the other hand, their rendition of Dov Aharoni's "Ein Gedi" is extraordinary. They take it at a very slow tempo as Herman caresses the melody with love and reverence. His harmonies enhance the performance simply but expressively. Rendered as if the group were handling a precious vase, these six minutes almost redeem the many moments on this album where stories are left unfinished or barely begun. —Robert L. Doerschuk

Follow The White Rabbit: Follow The White Rabbit; Saturn Returns; Trylon; Heart Shaped Box; Ein Gedi; The Mountain In G Minor; Cadenza; Airlines; Aladin's Psychedelic Lamp; Baby Mine; White Rabbit Robot; Clusterphobic; Wonderland; No Surprises. (60:00)

Personnel: Yaron Herman, piano; Chris Tordini, bass; Tommy Crane, drums.

Ordering info: actmusic.com

Jane Ira Bloom *Wingwalker*

OUTLINE OTL140

★★★★

Beginning an album with a ballad may be unusual, but Jane Ira Bloom does so with good reason on *Wingwalker*, her first release since 2008: What better way to showcase her chosen instrument, the soprano saxophone? Such repertoire is well-suited to the soprano's melancholy timbre. The ballad "Her Exacting Light" is a series of long, arching lines highlighting Bloom's beautiful tone. During the reading she sometimes holds the final note of a line, as if marking the end of a sentence before beginning anew. Blurring the boundaries between composition and improvisation, the track is brief but quite moving.

Bloom's affinity for abstract composition and electronics is prominently featured, although the set includes a blues and a Songbook standard, in addition to occasional jazz-rock references. "Life On Cloud 8" recalls Weather Report, circa



1977's *Heavy Weather*, both in the arrangement and in the groove underneath. It is the first of several tracks in which Bloom incorporates electronic effects that add width to her tone and, at times, amplify her sax from a single horn to a quasi-section.

The blues, "Freud's Convertible," is played fairly straight, albeit with quirky

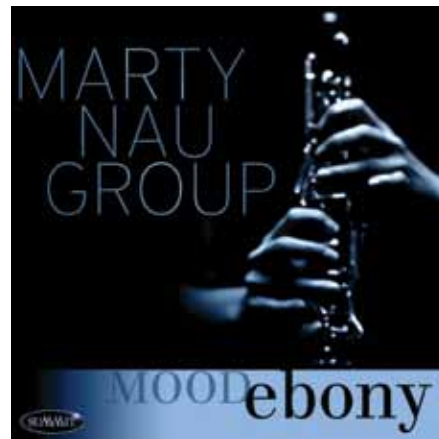
turnarounds, before it digresses from the form near the end. By contrast, "Frontiers In Science," an angular piece built around several intervals, affirms Bloom's avant-garde sensibilities. All in all, *Wingwalker* does nothing to undermine Bloom's reputation as a premiere soprano player. And Bloom's intonation and technique raise the bar for the soprano, primarily a second horn for most sax players.

—Eric Fine

Wingwalker: Her Exacting Light; Life On Cloud 8; Ending Red Songs; Freud's Convertible; Airspace; Frontiers In Science; Rooftops Speak Dreams; Rookie; Adjusting To Midnight; Live Sports; Wingwalker; I Could Have Danced All Night. (57:46)

Personnel: Jane Ira Bloom, soprano saxophone, electronics; Dawn Clement, piano, Fender Rhodes; Mark Hellas, bass; Bobby Previte, drums.

Ordering info: janeirabloom.com



Marty Nau Group *Mood Ebony*

SUMMIT 555

★★★½

Clarinetist Marty Nau follows up his three-alto sax album, *At The Bouquet Chorale*, with a showcase for his clarinet prowess. As he did on the earlier album with "Airmail Special," he includes a tune made famous by Benny Goodman, opening with Goodman's "Slipped Disc." Nau doesn't throw his back out with hasty blowing, however. He maintains his rich tone and crisp articulation with clear ideas, beautifully overdubbing several clarinets to idiomatically back-drop his lead voice. The whole neat conception is over in under three minutes yet contains sustained high notes, tight chromatic lines and perfectly poised antiphony, an abundance of musical elements.

Nau, with his precise intonation and phraseology, is clearly a man of discipline, whose considerable big band experience shines in his blending of voices—in this case, notwithstanding bass clarinetist/arranger Scott Silbert, primarily his own. No info is given as to how many clarinet tracks are overdubbed, though Phil Woods—who was on the front line of *At The Bouquet Chorale*—takes a guess in his liner notes. The primary feature for overdubbing, however, is a bravura take on "Night In Tunisia." The band is absent save for Silbert providing the bass counterpoint, leaving Nau to faultlessly juxtapose a gorgeous lattice of clarinet lines.

Robert and Chuck Redd get a taste on Nau's uptempo "Blues For Benny," where Silbert demonstrates his chops running basslines. Woods composes and arranges three tracks. His wistful "Doctor Tee," a duet with pianist Wade Beach, bookends jazz with a display of Nau's chaste classical chops. Ending the album with abrupt deployment of Fender Rhodes on a turgid ballad is this effort's only stylistic misstep.

—Michael Jackson

Mood Ebony: Slipped Disc; As Long As I Live; Smoke Dreams; Doctor Tee; Three In One; Night In Tunisia; Ballad For Hank; Bossa For Eddie; Blues For Benny; You Came Into My Life. (50:09)

Personnel: Marty Nau, clarinet; Scott Silbert, bass clarinet; Robert Redd, piano; Tommy Cecil, bass; Chuck Redd, vibes; Wade Beach, piano (3, 4, 7); Steve Noveski, bass (2, 10); Brooks Tegner, drums (2, 9).

Ordering info: summitrecords.com

Herb Alpert/Lani Hall *I Feel You*

CONCORD JAZZ 32757

★★★★½

This husband-and-wife outing of trumpeter Herb Alpert and singer Lani Hall has more than a few surprises, though not all of them pleasant. A protean rhythm section supports the duo, whose musical gifts are disparate. He's a warm trumpeter in the Chet Baker mode with a conversational style; she has an alto range with a formal address that can border on concert singing. Alpert will never be mistaken for Dizzy Gillespie but his lyricism and economy of expression are not to be sneezed at. Hall is a passionate singer who, while not quite as steeped in serendipity as the other participants, is intensely musical. Her Portuguese offerings ("Berimbau" and "Club Esquina") in particular breathe and dance in a natural way.

Bassist Hussain Jiffry serves as the supple spine of the ensemble. His virile, pliant lines can support the instruments or wholly define the music's contour. Bill Cantos wisely lies back when Alpert solos or accompanies; when his keyboards discreetly brush a backdrop or splash wildly, it's always meaningful.

Much of the material on hand is post-Great American Songbook standards, and all get overhauled. The casual arrangement sounds spontaneous and organic. Then again, there's some



downright deconstruction. Van Morrison's "Moondance" gets a one-chorus run-through, with an elliptical end. The gender reassignment of "Something Cool" wasn't the best vehicle for Alpert's wispy vocals. But savvy rhythmic recasting of a couple of tunes from Alpert's history ("What Now My Love," "Call Me") show he's not interested in legacy so much as new creation.

—Kirk Silsbee

I Feel You: Moondance; Cast Your Fate To The Wind; There Will Never Be Another You; Fever; Viola (Viola For a De Modaj); Something Cool; What Now My Love; Here Comes The Sun; Blackbird; Club Esquina; Berimbau; I Feel You; Call Me; 'Til There Was You. (48:30)
Personnel: Herb Alpert, trumpet, vocals; Lani Hall, vocals; Bill Cantos, piano, Fender Rhodes, organ, synthesizer, vocals; Hussain Jiffry, electric basses; Michael Shapiro, drums, percussion, loop arrangements.

Ordering info: concordmusicgroup.com

Rich Halley Quartet featuring Bobby Bradford *Live At The Penofin Jazz Festival*

PINE EAGLE 001

★★★★½

At this late juncture free-jazz players are like bare-knuckle fighters, throwbacks who are no more avant-garde (by definition, anyway) than their bop counterparts. Rich Halley, a tenor saxophonist from Portland, Ore., typifies the sensibilities of this era even more so by enlisting cornet player Bobby Bradford, an early colleague of Ornette Coleman.

Halley displays a bright tone and penchant for the horn's altissimo register on *Live At The Penofin Jazz Festival*, recorded in 2008 in northern California. What also distinguishes the album, though, is drummer Carson Halley, who does more than just ride shotgun; he not only provides a tangible pulse, but also a variety of rhythmic pockets.

His backbeat sets the tone on "Streets Below," during both the reading of the syncopated chart and the horn solos. At the beginning of "Grey Stones" he pounds the drum kit, particularly his snare, like a rock drummer; he moves into a march or parade beat and then, after the other instruments drop out, plays a really cool solo.

Halley and Bradford, whose style is less

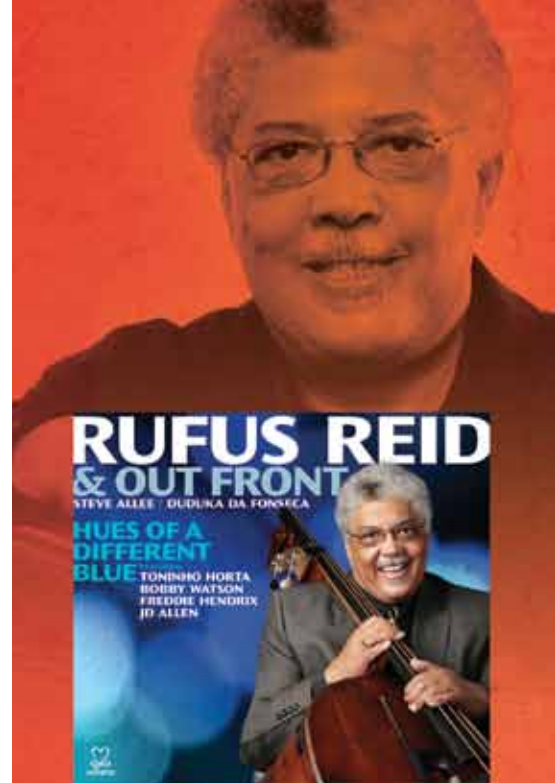


frenzied, play just enough within the harmonic framework provided by Clyde Reed's bass to keep things coherent. If the two horn players are carrying on a conversation, they alternate between the roles of the big talker—brash, direct, colorful—and the companion who says just enough. The absence of a piano allows the dialogue to encompass a broad range of topics. The result is freewheeling and satisfying.

—Eric Fine

Live At The Penofin Jazz Festival: The Blue Rims; Streets Below; Grey Stones/Shards Of Sky; The River's Edge Is Ice. (41:58)
Personnel: Halley, tenor sax; percussion; Bobby Bradford, cornet, percussion; Clyde Reed, bass; Carson Halley, drums.

Ordering info: richhalley.com



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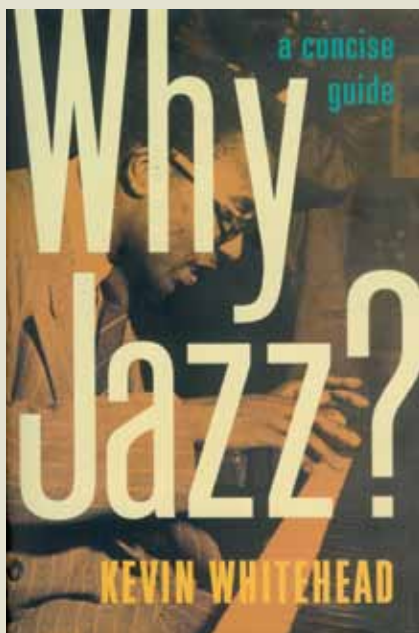
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Journalist Kevin Whitehead Pens A Jazz Bluffer's Guide for Students and Critics

As a fan of Kevin Whitehead's embedded documentation of the Amsterdam scene, *New Dutch Swing*, the blunderbuss target of *Why Jazz?* (Oxford University Press) came as a surprise, as the book kicked off like a Q&A Bluffer's Guide. Even Whitehead's inquisitive alter-ego asks himself in the introduction, "Isn't this a short book for such a complicated subject?" prior to the Socratic response: "We pack a small bag for a long trip."

Whitehead, who has taught at the University of Kansas, provides a Cliff Notes format to jazz, which might seem corollary to one of his music history classes. Despite its brevity it functions as effectively, in its way, as vaster tomes by the likes of Gary Giddins or Alyn Shipton because Whitehead is a succinct, amusing summarist (part of the gig as long-time National Public Radio critic) and commands a broad appreciation and experience of the music. He also values originality without pretense, which extends to his own prose. The questions posed during this five-chapter, 150-page volume vary from moderately naive ("Is jazz about self-expression?") to the technical ("What is the circle of fifths?"). Most of the dialectical inquiries concern individuals—"Why is Billie Holiday so beloved?" "What did Sun Ra contribute?"—eliciting thought-provoking links between Holiday and Bob Dylan or Ra and Tad Dameron. Some entries ("What were the early '90s 'Jazz Wars' all about?" "Didn't Anthony Braxton himself say he wasn't a jazz musician?") tackle ticklish issues regarding perceived credibility within factions of the genre. Whitehead doesn't shy from race issues, giving white musicians credit where due (notably the early freedom experiments of Lennie Tristano, Lee Konitz and Warne Marsh), but arguing the debate over who first pioneered 5/4 meter in jazz, scoring Max Roach's "As Long As You're Living" over "Take Five" with: "So Brubeck got credit for making sound hard what Roach got no credit for making sound easy."

Master of the wry putdown, Whitehead's more hilarious observations are often accurate sketches rendered in layman strokes, rather than smug; his offhandedness righted with further probing about imperatives behind the music. That said, Keith Jarrett's hubris is pierced with, "He also had the unfortunate tendency to sing along with himself in the voice of Jerry Lewis's nutty professor"; Albert Murray's hypothesis that jazz is more about imitation, variation and counterstatement than originality is dispatched with, "For Murray jazz train



songs are about other train songs more than actual trains."

Elsewhere Whitehead's condensed CD reviews (he restricts himself to one less-picked-over recording per artist) replace cliché superlatives with such endorsements as, "The music has the whirling intricacy and elegance of an atom." Whitehead draws cartoon music, western swing and Charles Ives into the orbit of jazz and compares John Coltrane's "Mr. Day" with a field recording of a West African playing an instrument fashioned from a millet stalk.

He focuses on the United States perspective, despite firsthand familiarity with the European scene but doesn't omit Asian American and Native American jazz musicians, nor the fact that the Vietnam War prompted Stateside bluesy swinging to be vetoed by European improvisers. There's no mention of Jamaican Joe Harriott (a free-jazz and Indo-fusion innovator), Trevor Watts (an improv and world music pioneer) or the '80s racial polarization in London between Courtney Pine and the Jazz Warriors, Django Bates and Loose Tubes.

Whitehead is no soothsayer, and his response to the final question from his Platonic jazz neophyte, "What is the Future of Jazz?" nips fanciful projections in the bud. He's concerned with brass tacks and nails points with precision, deftly handling the jazz education debate or the crux of George Russell's Lydian chromatic concept. But it's the erudite asides about lost-in-the-mist practitioners Wilbur Sweatman or vaudeville drummer Charlie Johnson, forgotten lore about how King Oliver and Louis Armstrong pulled off their uncanny two-cornet breaks, that makes Whitehead's tidbits more nouveau than just fun-size. **DB**

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Like maverick violinist Nigel Kennedy, cello virtuoso Haimovitz is *au fait* with Jimi Hendrix as J.S. Bach. This highly eclectic program features his groundbreaking cello octet with guests John McLaughlin, Matt Wilson and pianist Jan Jarczyk. Beginning bucolically with cellos slapped, bowed and plucked in counterpoint, a pause barely prepares us for the shimmering swagger of the Mahavishnu Orchestra's "Open Country Joy" with McLaughlin echoing tight swarms of cellos with trademark triple time licks. A lovely, layered intro introduces a benign *Birth Of The Cool*-inspired "Half Nelson." Sanford funnels "W.R.U." via John Zorn's hardcore Ornette album *Spy Vs. Spy*, with rockchops courtesy of Wilson. Haimovitz and Dominic Painchaud tackle John Lewis' 12-bar passacaglia "Blues in A Minor" as a duet. Painchaud faithfully exhumes Mingus' intro to "Haitian Fight Song" by tuning the cello's C-string to a low G, and Haimovitz attempts to mimic Booker Ervin's tenor solo on the original. Jaki Byard's piano solo is recast using pizzicato cellos, with dynamic subtlety. "Blood Count" reimagines Billy Strayhorn's hopital bed composition, Haimovitz simulating the melisma of Johnny Hodges' alto sax. The one original, "Triptych," is a spine-tingling intense performance in which this brilliant platoon of cellists scramble at red alert.

—Michael Jackson

Meeting Of The Spirits: Open Country Joy; Half Nelson; W.R.U.; Blues In A Minor; Meeting Of The Spirits; Blood Count; Triptych; Liza; Haitian Fight Song. (51:04)

Personnel: Matt Haimovitz, cello; Jan Jarczyk, fender Rhodes (track 5); John McLaughlin, electric guitar (1); Matt Wilson, drums (3, 5); Uccello: Chioe Dominguez, cello, cello drums, (track 2, 7, 9); Amarillys Jarczyk, cello (1-3, 5-9); Yoona Jhon, cello (2, 7, 9); Alice Nahyun Kim, cello (2, 7, 9); Dominic Painchaud, cello (tracks 1, 2, 4, 5, 7-9); Leana Rutt, cello (1-3, 5-9); Andrea Stewart, cello, cello drums (2-5, 6-9).

Ordering info: matthaimovitz.com



Grace Kelly & Phil Woods *Man With The Hat*

PAZZ18-11

★★★★½

Teen wunderkind alto saxophonist Grace Kelly previously paired up on CD with Lee Konitz. This outing finds her in the company of another alto patriarch, Phil Woods. This is not so much a summit meeting as a series of May-September exchanges; low-pressure reciprocity full of mutual respect and affection. If fireworks are not on display in this collection, subtle delights are.

It's a tribute to the contained musicality that some of the most satisfying passages are when Woods and Kelly blend on the heads. It's a pleasure to savor the two tones, slowly turning around each other, as on Woods' "Love Song." Another joy is the fatherly care he takes in his obligatti behind her vocals. It in no way diminishes her to say that his attack has more snap and his sound more ingredients; this is to be expected.

The preponderance of slow material is a programming problem. While it admirably showcases her emerging sound—pretty, controlled and wrestling with melodic strategies—more rhythm and movement throughout were in order. Kelly's own limpid "Gone" is overly long. It's followed by an even slower, out-of-tempo Woods feature, "Every Time We Say Goodbye." The pacing of the program is on life support when a brisk "Way You Look Tonight" fortunately closes, driven by the fine Monty Alexander-led rhythm section. Kelly sings a couple of original ballads. She's a modest, if charming instrumentalist-singer with a sparkle in her voice. She hits the notes, is able to throw in a couple of octave jumps, and has a little bit of soul in her delivery.

—Kirk Silsbee

Man With The Hat: Man With The Hat; Love Song From Brazilian Suite; People Time; Ballad For Very Sad And Very Tired Lotus-Eaters; Gone; Everytime We Say Goodbye; The Way You Look Tonight. (42:39)

Personnel: Grace Kelly, alto saxophone, vocals; Phil Woods, alto saxophone; Monty Alexander, piano, Rhodes, melodica; Evan Gregor, bass; Bill Goodwin, drums; Jordan Perlson, percussion.

Ordering info: gracekellymusic.com



Scorch Trio *Melaza*

RUNE GRAMMOFON 2104

★★★★

Deftly named, this incendiary triumvirate has recorded several times with a previous lineup featuring ferocious Norwegian drummer Paal Nilssen-Love. Chicago's Frank Rosaly recently replaced Nilssen-Love, and his punchy polyrhythms and restless creativity amply fuel this hyper-expressive date on which Ingebrigt Haker-Flaten's alternately motile/tethered Fender bass provides contrast to guitarist Raoul Björkenheim's adventurous forays. Björkenheim should be better known. His outsize musical personality explodes like a Jimi Hendrix, Frank Zappa or John McLaughlin, with plosive throwdowns like the title track and the power riffs and flangy heavy rock pyro of "Iesnu!" In contrast, "Raitru" occupies reverberant Scandinavian pastoral terrain, Björkenheim morphing his sound into arco bass or cello. As with Hendrix, there is camp flamboyance in Björkenheim's outrageousness, he embraces feedback and overtones. "Relajo" is loud and enervating, Haker-Flaten's eventual ostinato the flywheel for a rip-snorting drum/guitar stenchout. The band filters industrial rock and grunge through the dark kaleidoscope of King Crimson, or perhaps Motorhead; then "Orita" reminds of Marc Ribot's quizzical, elliptically comedic meanderings. Norwegian guitarist Terje Rypdal may be an influence, but Björkenheim flouts all pigeon-holes.

—Michael Jackson

Melaza: Relajo; Bambalán; Fajao; Orita; Melaza; Estinche; Raitru; Iesnúl. (40:33)

Personnel: Raoul Björkenheim, electric guitar; Ingebrigt Haker-Flaten, Fender bass; Frank Rosaly, drums.

Ordering info: runegrammofon.com



Peter Erskine/Bob Mintzer/Darek Oles/Alan Pasqua
Standards 2: Movie Music

FUZZY MUSIC 018

★★★

I won't apologize for liking albums devoted to Songbook standards. With a minimum of sight-reading and unusual chord changes to worry about, the musicians can find freedom in the familiar. Of course there's a caveat: While such an album doesn't have to break new ground, it needs to find its own entry point into the ageless repertoire. If not, the music runs the risk of sounding uninspired or predictable.

Standards 2: Movie Music, on drummer Peter Erskine's Fuzzy Music imprint, spotlights alumni from three noteworthy jazz-rock groups: Erskine (Weather Report), Alan Pasqua (Tony Williams Lifetime) and Bob Mintzer (Yellowjackets). Tenor player Mintzer, the group's nominal front man by virtue of his ax, displays an attractive tone, edgy but not overwhelmingly so. Rather than helming another horn-meets-rhythm-section date, Mintzer often cedes the first solo to someone else.

In addition, each musician contributes at least one arrangement, allowing the songs to transcend their war-horse status. The music is uniformly good, but may require more than one listen to fully appreciate. That may be a result of placing several ballads whose arrangements are a little stiff early in the set: the back-to-back positioning of "Somewhere" and "Dr. Kildare," and also "Rosemary's Baby." The mid- and up-tempo tunes, though, celebrate jazz's classicism, especially the readings of "Night And Day" and "Cinema Paradiso."

—Eric Fine

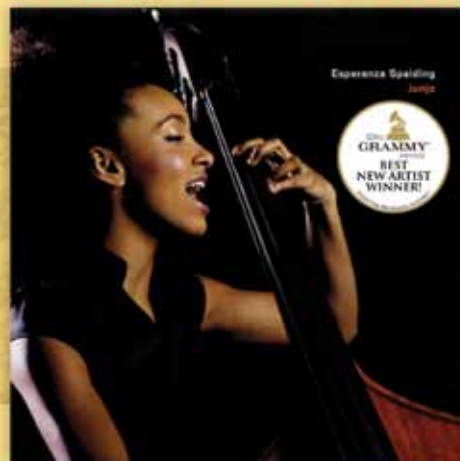
Standards 2: Movie Music: Tara's Theme; Somewhere; Dr. Kildare; Three Stars Will Shine Tonight; Night And Day; Rosemary's Baby; Cinema Paradiso (into and tune); I Concentrate On You; For All We Know. (59:45)

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

Ordering info: fuzzymusic.com



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★★★

As they've done since their inception, Gutbucket delights in moments of aural squirming and brainy humor. Here, the band tried out a new approach, recording the new material to analog tape, before overdubbing and editing their most produced effort to date.

Replete with awkward squawks, power chords and smart alecky song titles like "Dyslexic Messiah (Where's Your Dog?)," the results are still 100 percent Gutbucket. But as the quartet storms through a series of odd-meter rhythms and dissonant melodies, an underpinning of tenderness emerges to smooth out some of the material's complex, angular edges. "Tryst 'n Shout" gets a dose of emotion from Eric Rockwell's deep electric and acoustic bass plunks. Ken Thomson marries beauty and tension in a series of sax and clarinet lines that rise above the swell of grinding guitar and drums on "Fuck You And Your Hipster Tie."

That constant presence of something soft and vulnerable throughout such math-rock-oriented material adds depth. It also provides a lifeline when the band's punk instincts kick into overdrive and they start grinding out chords with the frenetic pace that makes their live shows so memorable.

—Jennifer Odell

Flock: Fuck You And Your Hipster Tie; Zero Is Short For Idiot; 4 9 8; d0g Help Us; Murakami; Tryst 'n Shout; Said The Trapeze To Gravity (Why Are You So Old?); Give Up; Born Again Atheist Suite: Part One: Dyslexic Messiah (Where's Your Dog?); Part Two: Sacrificial Vegan; Part Three: Turning Manischewitz Into Wine. (60:20)

Personnel: Ty Citerman, electric guitar, prepared guitar (7), electronics (7); Adam D. Gold, drums, percussion, Wuritzer (6); Eric Rockwell, electric upright bass, acoustic bass (1, 6, 9), bass guitar (3, 8, 9), cello (1), Wuritzer (3, 6, 10, 11), bass synth (3, 6, 10); Ken Thomson, alto saxophone (1–6, 8–11), baritone saxophone (4, 5, 7), soprano saxophone (1, 3), clarinet (6), bass clarinet (8–10), contrabass clarinet (1, 4, 11).

Ordering info: cuneiformrecords.com



joe lovano | Us five
bird songs

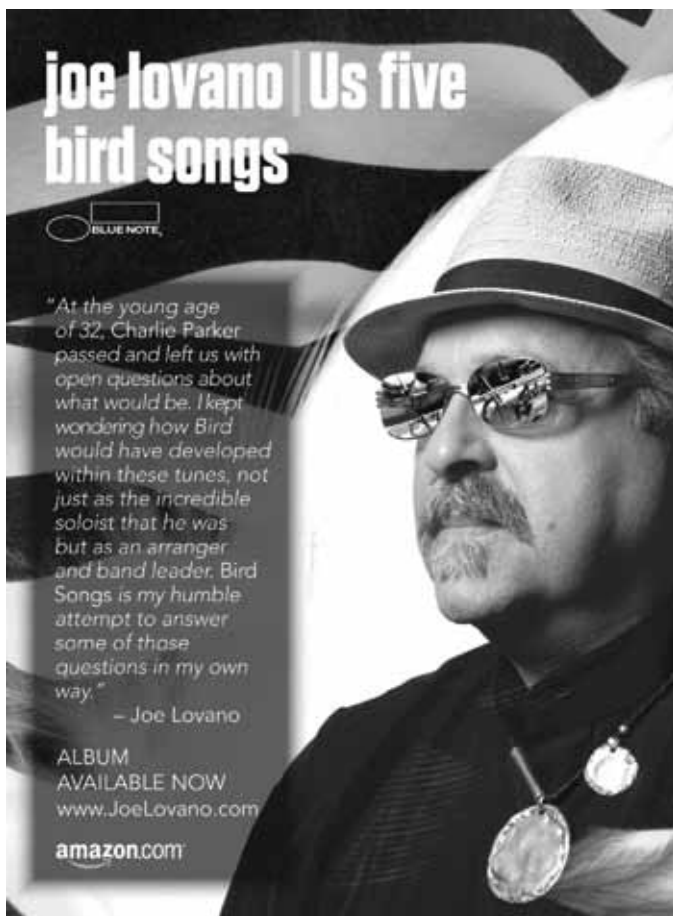
BLUE NOTE

"At the young age of 32, Charlie Parker passed and left us with open questions about what would be. I kept wondering how Bird would have developed within these tunes, not just as the incredible soloist that he was but as an arranger and band leader. Bird Songs is my humble attempt to answer some of those questions in my own way."

—Joe Lovano

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Sax Section Evolution: Leading The New Pack

Size matters. Or does it? There was a time during my development as a lead alto saxophonist when I was obsessed with my own volume. Whether it was competing with a Stan Kenton-sized brass section, a bombastic rhythm section, or just staying on top of the other saxes, the answer always seemed to be “play louder.” There was definitely a time when this was in vogue, perhaps a leftover sentiment from the Buddy Rich and Maynard Ferguson schools. But the scene has changed quite a bit and so have the rules. It’s not all about volume and pyrotechnical chops anymore.

In my world as a saxophonist and woodwinds specialist in New York City, “size matters” doesn’t carry the usual innuendo. Rather, the clever play on words points to an ongoing concert series at the Tea Lounge in Brooklyn, the brainchild of trombonist/composer JC Sanford. Monday nights have traditionally been “rehearsal big band night” in the city, but Sanford curates a completely different evening of large ensemble music every week. Bandleaders and composers have been coming out of the woodwork with their own individual takes on what the new modern big band sound should be. Despite the abysmal state of the industry, large ensemble jazz is thriving, and there is more interest than ever in writing in this format. What is also apparent is that the sound has changed and so has the need for a different kind of musician, particularly in the role of a lead saxophone player.

There is nothing like the experience of being in the midst of a great swirling, swinging, grooving mass of sound, everyone giving their all to combine into a sum greater than its parts. But think about what you have to give up: The big band is *not* a democracy. It is an autocracy, or perhaps a dictatorship. There is a chain of command and, as a saxophonist, you are pretty much on the bottom rung of that ladder. Your choices on how to phrase a line are limited to what is being dictated by the lead trumpet or trombone. As the leader of a saxophone section, you need to set the example: impeccable intonation; accurate sight reading and rhythm; being able to listen, understand and follow the hierarchy of drums to lead trumpet to lead trombone; knowing when to blend instead of being on top; producing a clear, classical tone on all your doubles; phrasing intelligently and doing it consistently and correctly each time.

There is definitely a tradition of leading a saxophone section, and many of the principles remain the same to this day. Right out of Eastman College, I spent a year touring with the Tommy Dorsey Orchestra under the direction of Buddy Morrow. It was a crucial part of my education, for the band was a direct connection to

the big band era, and I learned a great deal about phrasing, swing feel and tonal concept from the guys who were actually there. I played tenor, but I learned a lot about how to lead a section from our lead alto saxophonist, Tracy Knoop. This was very traditional big band writing from the ‘40s and ‘50s—many arrangements by Billy Byers, Nelson Riddle, Neal Hefti, Bill Finegan—where you played in a sax section that almost always took its cue from the lead alto, and you had to be aware of how you fit within the group: how to feel the time; exactly on what part of the beat to cut off a note; when and when not to use vibrato; inflections; volume. These are the things a lead player must always make decisions about and do *exactly the same way each time*.

After leaving the Dorsey band I went to the University of North Texas to get a master’s in woodwinds, and while there I played lead alto in the One O’Clock Lab Band. Talk about a completely different experience! Suddenly I found myself sight-reading all the time. There was just so much material; we would literally be sight-reading new charts during concerts. It could be frustrating not getting to “settle in” with the music at times, but it truly prepared you for the New York scene where rehearsal time is at such a premium. Coming from mostly a tenor saxophone background, I spent many hours listening to, transcribing and playing along with some essential recordings from the Count Basie, Thad Jones/Mel Lewis and Stan Kenton orchestras and trying to get the sound and phrasing right. Since much of what we were playing in school came from these libraries, it was important to notice the different approaches: the lush vibrato of Marshal Royal with Basie, the dry and austere tone of Lee Konitz with Kenton and Gil Evans, and the pungent, penetrating, almost tenor-like approach of Dick Oatts at the Vanguard. I spent the next four years after UNT honing my lead alto skills with the U.S. Army Jazz Ambassadors. It was a good time to practice woodwind doubling, build chops and write music, but by the end of my hitch I was ready for a move to New York and to work on my career as a solo artist.

Of course all those skills came in handy for the New York big bands scene. I arrived in the city at a time when Maria Schneider’s orchestra was starting to attract a lot of attention with her new sound, informed more by the orchestral colors of Gil Evans and Bob Brookmeyer than the hard swing of Basie and Thad. At the time, the BMI Jazz Composers Workshop Orchestra needed a saxophonist; the lead tenor was required to play English horn, so I subbed in that chair and eventually moved over to the second alto spot, where I still play. After years of play-



Suggested Listening

Duke Ellington, “Jeep’s Blues,”
Ellington At Newport 1956 (Columbia)

Count Basie, “Jessica’s Day,”
The Complete Roulette Studio Recordings Of Count Basie (Mosaic)

Miles Davis/Gil Evans, “Move,”
Birth Of The Cool (Blue Note)

Thad Jones/Mel Lewis, “Tiptoe,”
Consummation (Blue Note)

Thad Jones/Mel Lewis, “Little Pixie,”
The Definitive Thad Jones: Live From The Village Vanguard, Vol. 1 (Nimbus)

Maria Schneider, “Dissolution,”
Allegresse (Enja)

John Hollenbeck, “The Cloud,”
Eternal Interlude (Sunnyside)

John Hollenbeck, “A Blessing,”
A Blessing (OmniTone)

Darcy James Argue, “Zeno,”
Infernal Machines (New Amsterdam)

Ed Palermo, “What’s New In Baltimore,”
Eddie Loves Frank (Cuneiform)

Ben Kono Group, “Castles And Daffodils,”
Crossing (Nineteen-Eight)

ing lead alto, it was a great education to play second to Mike Migliori and, often, Gerry Niewood. I tell students the best way to learn lead is to play second—you learn by shadowing the lead and playing inside their sound. The majority of the bandleaders I play for in New York all went through the BMI program at one point, so it was a great launching pad for me. It was here that I met composers Sanford, Darcy James Argue and Joe Phillips, and reconnected with a classmate from Eastman, John Hollenbeck. The workshop requires all participants to work within the big band instrumentation, but beyond that the sky is the limit. Strong reading skills are a must to navigate most modern charts, and sometimes math skills are a plus. I would say that rhythmic complexity is the most distinguishing factor separating the newer breed of writers from the old. In Argue's band *Secret Society*, we are often playing in several time-feels layered at once. Hollenbeck had once written a piece for us based on the transcribed rhythm of raindrops falling on a roof—probably the most rhythmically complex thing I've ever read.

Hollenbeck's large ensemble writing spotlights another departure from tradition. In the reed section the baritone sax is replaced by contra-alto and bass clarinet; one of the saxophone chairs is almost entirely clarinet; one of the tenors doubles on English horn; and the lead alto plays primarily flute and soprano saxophone. The addition of vibes and Theo Bleckmann's voice round out a sound that is very orchestral in color. In fact, the instrumentation and his writing for it grow largely out of the musical relationships Hollenbeck has with his musicians; he's writing for the performer's unique voice, not necessarily the instrument. This seems like a return to Duke Ellington's concept of writing for a particular group of players and using their particular personalities to mold the music. Another parallel to Ellington's approach is how Hollenbeck often doubles instruments across sections. Your focus of attention gets moved around the band in interesting ways and doesn't reside within a section for very long.

Other favorites of mine in this regard include Joe Phillips' *Numinous*, which started out with the BMI big band instrumentation and quickly morphed into a much more orchestral instrumentation with strings, voices and mallet percussion replacing much of the brass and woodwind roles; the reed players themselves would be doubling on five or six woodwinds. It's a thrill to improvise over such a rich tapestry of sound, and the rhythms and harmonies owe more to modern classical genres than jazz. Sanford's own band, *Sound Assembly*, has gradually taken on a more chamber music vibe, eschewing the typ-

ical sax section in favor of double reeds, flutes and clarinets. Then there is Argue, who retains the traditional instrumentation but uses the horns in unusual ways. Again, it's pretty heavy on the woodwind doubles; the lead book has some features on alto flute and often calls for advanced techniques like flutter-tonguing and growling.

Being proficient on multiple woodwinds and saxophones has been absolutely central to my success in this arena. I actually detest the term "doubling," because the great doublers in New York are at the top of their game on every instrument. I prefer "woodwind specialist." The way composers are writing for large ensembles is more demanding than ever and assumes the reed player has a fairly wide arsenal of woodwinds to bring to the music. If you have a special skill, you might want to advertise it.

One of my favorite bands to play with is led by Ed Palermo, who has been arranging and performing the music of Frank Zappa for more than 15 years. In his band I play tenor, flute and oboe and will probably never play alto. What sets this band apart is the stylistic thing you need to bring to the gig—straight-up hard rock and funk. What I love is that a song like "King Kong," which has basically two chords, can become such a great solo vehicle when it's opened up and stretched way out in creative ways. It's changed the way I like to improvise.

Some of the new bands can get quite "out there." In the BMI class there is always somebody trying to reinvent the wheel. What I like to hear is some kind of connection to the lineage of the big band, writing that displays a sense of the history and tradition while still pushing the boundaries of the new and unfamiliar. Just as the jazz improviser's unique voice grows out of what has been handed down, so does the tradition of writing, and the composer almost always has some sonic picture of what the saxophone section should sound like. You just can't play this music right without having at least checked out Johnny Hodges, or Marshal Royal, or Art Pepper and Lee Konitz, or Jerome Richardson and Dick Oatts. And now the big band has changed again, and it is lead players like Tim Ries, Charles Pillow and Steve Wilson who are setting the standard with strong woodwind doubling and instantly recognizable solo voices.

I am happy to say, after so much large ensemble participation, I am finally releasing my own debut recording, *Crossing*, on Nineteen-Eight Records. Interestingly enough, many of the tunes have long, complicated forms, complex rhythms, dense textures and lots of woodwind orchestrations. You can take the player out of the big band, but just try it the other way around—the big bands have come back to haunt me! **DB**

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The Eternal Quest For The Perfect Saxophone/Mouthpiece/Reed Combination

The subject of this article is a highly personal and subjective topic. One person's dark is another person's bright. One person's hard (as in reed strength) is another's soft. One person's open (as in tip opening) is another person's closed. So, I must state my disclaimer right off the bat: I will be speaking in generalities, not in definitive terms, but my opinions are based on more than 40 years of enduring "the quest."

I polled more than 50 of my closest friends, colleagues and saxophone enthusiasts on this subject. As you can imagine, I received a wide range of answers, opinions and conclusions. First, from David Demsey (William Patterson College): "For my students and developing players in general, I always follow the rule of 'everything in moderation.' In other words, nothing too open, too closed, too dark, too bright. The key is to find a mouthpiece that allows you to find *your* sound, and not let the mouthpiece 'put an attitude' on your sound. In the case of high-baffle pieces, Mike Brecker used to call this a 'false brightness'; the same thing is true with super-dark mouthpieces that deaden the sound too much. Every player has their own individual sound, and a middle-of-the-road mouthpiece/reed approach will help them discover what that sound is and develop their own personality." I couldn't agree more with his comments regarding moderation.

There are always exceptions to every majority, but a great place to start is with medium-strength reeds (e.g., Rico Jazz Select 2H, 3S; Java 3) combined with medium-open and medium-chamber mouthpieces (e.g., Meyer 5M, 6M for alto; Otto Link 6*, 7* for tenor), but many artists I polled do prefer a small chamber. Those choices were by far the most commonly recommended by the saxophonists I polled. Other mouthpieces included (for soprano) Selmer C*, D, S90/190, Vandoren, Bari and Jody Jazz; (for alto) Vandoren V16, Rousseau, Jody Jazz, Bay and Morgan; (for tenor) Berg Larsen, Jody Jazz and Bay; and (for baritone) Berg Larsen, Otto Link and Bay. With tip openings/numberings of mouthpieces, there is no standardization across the industry. There are many mouthpiece comparison charts online to check out. Accepted wisdom dictates that metal mouthpieces should be reserved for tenor and baritone, yet there are many fine artists who play metal pieces on soprano and alto and hard-rubber pieces on tenor and baritone. For more than 10 years I

have been playing on a gold Charles Bay 7 with Rico Jazz Select 3M reeds (unfiled). In a "blind" listening test, many of my students will say that my Bay metal setup is actually darker than my Meyer hard-rubber setup.

Bob Mintzer emphasizes the idea not to choose a mouthpiece/reed just because someone else plays it and to concentrate on the music, not the equipment: "The idea, as I see it, is to find a mouthpiece that affords you the ability to produce the sound you are hearing in your head, as well as the ability to play bright, dark, loud, soft, and blend in a wind section," Mintzer said. "You want to have a mouthpiece that is easy to play in tune, and with a good sound from top to bottom of the horn. You don't need a mouthpiece that is so loud that you can play louder than a guitarist on 11. You will most likely be playing into a microphone in these instances. So it is better to go for a good sound that will translate well when playing into the microphone (and that is a whole other conversation). I've played Freddie Gregory mouthpieces for many years. They work for me. This is not to say that they would work for everyone. Never buy a mouthpiece because someone else plays it. You really need to try the mouthpiece to see if it



works for you. There are many ‘designer’ mouthpieces that guys play and sound very good on. You would have to try one to make sure it is right for you. Be ready to shell out *beaucoup dinero* if you take this route. I guess the main thing is to find a mouthpiece, reed and horn that get you close to being able to produce a good sound. Stay with that mouthpiece, reed and horn for a good long while and learn how to make them work. Rather than spending too much time on equipment, spend the time learning the music.”

Traditionally, “German-cut” (unfiled) reeds work well for jazz and “French-cut” (filed) reeds work best for classical. Examples of German-cut reeds are Rico Jazz Select (unfiled), Vandoren Java (green box), LaVoz and Rico. Examples of French-cut reeds are Rico Jazz Select (filed), Rico Reserve Classic, Vandoren Java (the new red box), Vandoren Traditional (blue box), Hemke and Rico Royal. There are many other brands, but these were the reeds that were mentioned the most in my polling. This is not to say that a “classical-cut” reed (French-cut/filed) is not a good reed in combination with a jazz mouthpiece. Many fine jazz artists I polled use Vandoren Traditional or Rico Royal reeds. Beware: Much like a mouthpiece tip opening, the labeling of the strength of a reed has no consistency or standardization from brand to brand. Most reeds come in one-half sizes; Rico Jazz Select reeds are offered in one-third sizes (3S, 3M, 3H, etc.); and LaVoz lists their strengths as medium soft, medium, medium hard, etc. Your best bet is to check out the many reed-strength comparison charts that are online. Here’s a unique exception to the majority: Jeff Coffin (saxophonist with Béla Fleck, Dave Matthews and the Mu’tet) uses tenor reeds on his alto. I have actually tried this and it works for me, also! I’ve found that you usually have to go up a strength or two to make it work. For the past five years, I’ve been using tenor Rico Reserve 3.5 or Vandoren Traditional 3.5/4.0 with my Meyer 7M (small chamber) alto mouthpiece. Once again, neither Coffin nor I recommend this, but it’s definitely something to consider and explore.

In conclusion, I can say that these are only choices for exploration. After 30 years on the prowl, I have found my “perfect” setups, and have been playing on the same ones for more than 10 years, so maybe the search isn’t quite “eternal.”

DB

MILES OSLAND IS A SELMER (PARIS) SAXOPHONE, AVANTI FLUTE AND RICO REED CLINICIAN/ARTIST. HE IS CURRENTLY DIRECTOR OF JAZZ STUDIES AND PROFESSOR OF SAXOPHONE AT THE UNIVERSITY OF KENTUCKY. HIS RECORDINGS HAVE GARNERED HIM 4-STAR REVIEWS FROM DOWNBEAT MAGAZINE AND MULTIPLE RECOMMENDATIONS FOR GRAMMY NOMINATIONS.

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Gary Thomas



Gary Thomas' Intervallic Flute Solo On 'Chiaroscuro'

Gary Thomas has a unique voice, both as a saxophonist and a composer. He is also quite a flute player, as he displays on “Chiaroscuro,” from his 1987 album *Seventh Quadrant* (Enja). The improvisation section of the song consists of long modal sections in G minor separated by an eight-bar chord sequence (16–24), and then one that’s 15 bars (32–47). The changes in this second section are particularly angular in that the chords aren’t key-related to one another (e.g., Bm7 isn’t in the key of G minor and vice versa).

This could be enough of a challenge for some improvisers, but Thomas goes further by making his solo less about playing the changes and more about the intervallic ideas he is incorporating—while still making those ideas work within the context of the harmonies. The intervals he favors are fourths and steps, which he breaks up with long chromatic runs, tending to group his ideas into sections. The first 18 measures are all intervallic, with a chromatic passage appearing at the end of measure 19 (and foreshadowing where he’ll be going). We then hear some more intervallic material before the long chromatic 16th-note passage that spans from the end of bar 22 to the middle of 23, where he ends with some more fourths. Thomas continues with

these ideas until the next section change (at 32), where he goes chromatic again, only this time for most of the next 10 measures (until 43). Then he condenses his ideas, playing a handful of intervallic licks, one quick chromatic idea (measure 50) and ending with a short intervallic lick. There is a sense of closure that Thomas creates by ending with the same descending fourths (C-G-D) that he played in the first measure. At the beginning he resolved up a minor third to F (the seventh), but here he resolves up a major second (1/2 step difference) to E (the sixth).

Let’s look at how Thomas constructs some of these phrases. Some are just stacked fourths, like the descending line from F to D in the first measure (which includes all the elements of Gm11 except the third and ninth), which happens again over the barline from 3–4. It’s no surprise that he would put these early in his solo, making the listener aware of the sound he will be developing. Sometimes he varies this idea just by inverting a fourth into a fifth. We see this in measure 36, where instead of descending from F# to C# to G# (which would be descending in fourths), Thomas puts the first note an octave lower so he ascends a fifth and then descends a fourth. There is a great lick in measure 18 where he goes up a

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fourth from E to A, then down a fifth to D and up a fourth to G. What's great about this lick is that the notes all fit well with the Fmaj7 chord (7, 3, 6, 9) but emphasize the upper degrees.

Thomas also intersperses whole steps into his fourths (a la Eddie Harris' "Freedom Jazz Dance"). Thomas alluded to this right at the beginning when he played the B \flat , a step below the C of his fourths lick in both measures 1 and 3. He develops this more as the solo goes on (e.g., at measure 7 we have a step, a fourth, a fourth and a step). We also see Thomas exploring the minor third he ended his first lick with. In measures 29 and 30 Thomas constructs a lick with a descending fourth, an ascending third and a descending fourth, playing this idea on a high B \flat , but playing the same sequence of intervals off middle C in the next measure (and all those notes fit within the Gm11 sound). Thomas does this to a less-

er extent in other places. In measures 18 and 19 there is a descending whole step from E to D that Thomas then transposes down a fourth to B and A (which all work within Fmaj7#11). The same idea happens in the beginning of measure 23, only inverted (an ascending whole step transposed up a fourth).

You can find more examples of this kind of thinking throughout Thomas' solo. In fact, there's almost never a scalar run (measures 23 and 32 possess four-note scale fragments, but that's the closest thing to a scale I can find here). It's astounding how he can approach his improvisation with a mind toward the intervallic aspect of his lines and yet still remain within the sound of the harmonies. **DB**

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

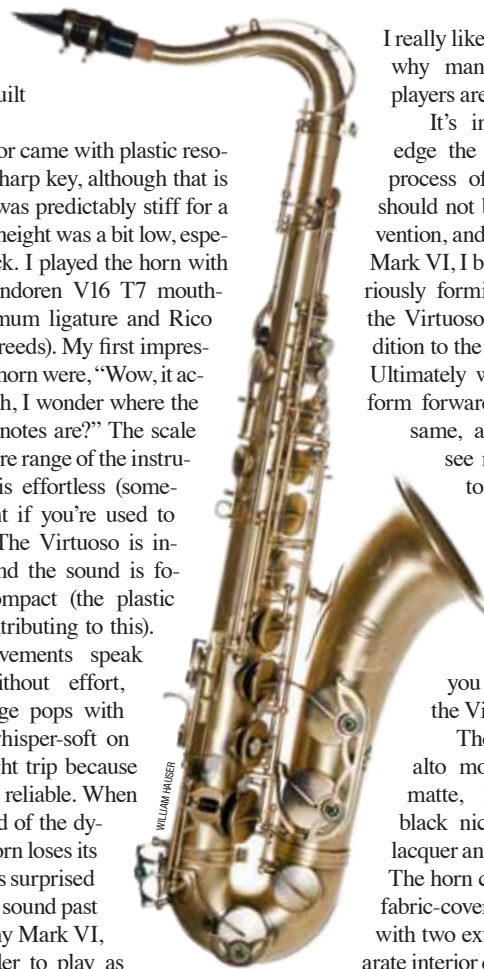
RS Berkeley Virtuoso Saxophone *Solid Vintage Design*

The search continues for the saxophonist's holy grail: that is, of course, a new horn with the sound and feel of the legendary Selmer Mark VI. I am one of those vintage lovers, playing an early 1960s tenor Mark VI. As such, I am frequently skeptical and even dismissive of most new horns because they simply lack something—let's call it the “X” factor—that makes the Mark VI sing. Suffice it to say, the brand new, in-the-wrapper RS Berkeley Virtuoso tenor I've been playing for a week needed to be pretty spectacular to win my affection.

RS Berkeley obviously takes their pursuit very seriously, and they clearly believe they have the ability, willingness and passion to make a stellar horn. Tim Ries (of The Rolling Stones, Maria Schneider's Jazz Orchestra, etc.) and the late Michael Brecker have collaborated with RS Berkeley to provide feedback on many design elements of the horn. I ran into Ries several weeks ago, and he's loving his horn (he isn't just holding it for the photo shoot and then pulling out the VI on gigs). The horn feels perfectly natural and comfortable in the hands of someone used to the Mark VI, but I was immediately struck by how substantial the horn feels. I haven't weighed the Virtuoso to compare it to a Mark VI, but it sure does feel heavier. The bracing, guards, rods and keywork are all impeccably crafted, the matte finish on the model I've been playing (VIRT2001M) is flawless, and the engraving work (if you care about such things) is also nicely done. Perhaps the one unfortunate visual element of the horn is the brown “Virtuoso” logo on the bell, which I think makes it look more like a student horn than it should. These horns are being manufactured in China, but they certainly aren't

being made on the cheap—the Virtuoso is incredibly well built and in a word, solid.

This particular tenor came with plastic resonators and no high F-sharp key, although that is an option. The action was predictably stiff for a new horn, and the key height was a bit low, especially in the upper stack. I played the horn with my regular setup (Vandoren V16 T7 mouthpiece, Vandoren Optimum ligature and Rico Jazz Select 4S unfiled reeds). My first impressions upon playing the horn were, “Wow, it actually plays,” and, “Huh, I wonder where the weird, temperamental notes are?” The scale is even through the entire range of the instrument, and intonation is effortless (something of an adjustment if you're used to playing older horns). The Virtuoso is incredibly responsive, and the sound is focused—even a bit compact (the plastic resonators may be contributing to this). Wide intervallic movements speak immediately and without effort, and the altissimo range pops with equal ease. Playing whisper-soft on this horn is a downright trip because it is so easy, stable and reliable. When pushed to the other end of the dynamic spectrum, the horn loses its manners a bit, and I was surprised by the spreading of the sound past a certain point. With my Mark VI, I definitely work harder to play as softly as I was able to play with ease on the Virtuoso, but when pushed, I feel like the Virtuoso runs out of room before I do. All in all,



I really like this horn and I can see why many significant modern players are picking it up.

It's important to acknowledge the fact that the creative process of finding one's sound should not be constrained to convention, and although I do love my Mark VI, I believe the arrival of seriously formidable new horns like the Virtuoso are an important addition to the player's list of options. Ultimately we don't move our art form forward if we all sound the same, and I predict we will see more players choosing to play the RS Berkeley Virtuoso. If you're in the market for a new horn, or if the staggering price tag of the vintage horns is putting you off, you need to give the Virtuoso a try.

The Virtuoso tenor and alto models are available in matte, lacquer, silver-plated, black nickel, gold-plated, dark lacquer and unlacquered finishes. The horn comes in a lightweight, fabric-covered rectangular case with two exterior zip pockets, separate interior compartments for neck and mouthpiece, and a large compartment for additional storage. —Nic Meyer

Ordering info: rsberkeley.com

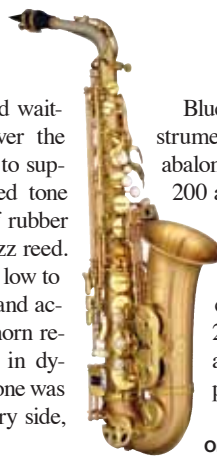
P. Mauriat Le Bravo 200 Alto Sax *Serious Punch*

P. Mauriat has introduced the Le Bravo 200 alto saxophone, a step-up instrument with a thick sound and serious punch, as well as several nice professional appointments.

The Le Bravo 200 features a red brass body tube with matte lacquering and yellow brass keys. A solid nickel-silver neck comes standard. Red brass is used for warmth and depth of tone color, and the nickel-silver neck provides extra punch.

I play-tested the Le Bravo 200 alto on a rowdy Mardis Gras gig, and I found that it projected exceptionally well—unmiked—over the perpet-

ual din of impatient diners, rushed waiters and over-served revelers. Over the course of a 7-hour job, I was able to support the instrument's well-rounded tone with relative ease, playing a Couf rubber mouthpiece and a medium-soft jazz reed. Intonation was nice and even from low to high registers, keywork was tight and accurate under my fingers, and the horn responded immediately to changes in dynamics and embouchure. Overall tone was slightly bright, on the contemporary side, without being brittle or shrill.



Blued steel springs are standard on the instrument, and the key touches are all genuine abalone. Like all P. Mauriat saxes, the Le Bravo 200 alto comes equipped with Pisoni professional pads containing metal resonators. A high F-sharp key is included.

With its matte lacquer finish and engraved nickel-silver neck, the Le Bravo 200 has a striking, satiny look that will add a touch of class to your onstage appearance. It carries an MSRP of \$2,540.

—Ed Enright

Ordering info: pmauriatmusic.com

Buffet 400 Series Saxes *French Style, Modern Design*

It was an eye- and ear-opening experience to play-test the new Buffet 400 Professional Series alto and tenor saxophones, made in China and designed for advancing students and pro players.

At first I was struck by how beautiful these saxophones looked. The tenor I played had an antique brass/matte finish. There is a lot engraving on this horn—including engraving on the bell, the neck and the keys—yet it is not overstated. I brought the tenor to a jam session, and right away other musicians remarked on its nice appearance. The alto had a gold lacquer finish and the same engraving style, which really makes the horn stand out.

The first horn I played was the tenor, and after about 15 minutes I was able to adjust rather well to the keys—especially the left-hand palm keys, whose profile filled my hand more than my own tenor, a vintage Martin. I was able to move up and down the horn and hit a high G with ease after getting used to the feel and the keywork of the instrument. The Buffet 400 series tenor also has a high F-sharp key, however I preferred my own fingering for F-sharp simply out of habit.

Overall I found the tenor to be very expressive. I could play softly with a nice, full tone. When I put in some air, I really liked how bright the sound was. This was a nice surprise to me,

and is one of the reasons I like old Martin tenors. I was very comfortable playing a warm ballad with this tenor. I found the tone to be fairly consistent throughout the range of the horn as well.

The next day I played the Buffet 400 alto. It took me about 20 minutes to get reasonably comfortable with the keys, but I was soon playing up and down the horn with no trouble. The alto also has the high F-sharp key, which I found I could easily work into my scales after a while. I found the key action in general to be very responsive. My tone was solid and consistent through the range of the horn. I also found that I could play brightly when I put a lot of air in the horn. The alto's lacquer finish gave the instru-



ment a slightly brighter tone color without losing the focus and core of the traditional French sound Buffet is known for.

Both the tenor and alto 400 Series horns feature a large bow (for improved response on low C-sharp, C, B and B-flat) and double bracing to keep the low C, B and B-flat keys in adjustment for a tight seal.

The have a focused, clear tone that's suitable for both jazz and classical performance and come in a durable, lightweight deluxe backpack case.

Overall, I am very impressed with the Buffet 400 series, which is very affordably priced. If Buffet is attempting to make a statement with the 400 series, I would say the company has done an excellent job. These are beautiful horns to see and play.

—Peter McCormack

Ordering info: buffet-crampon.com

Theo Wanne Gaia Soprano Sax Mouthpiece *Large-Chamber Tonal Options*

Theo Wanne has introduced the Gaia mouthpiece for soprano sax, an innovative design that gives players a wide-open airstream and plenty of tonal options to experiment with.

With the Gaia, you get a choice of different pressure plates to hold the reed in place, and each plate has its own unique tonal characteristics. The Alive Gold plate allows a free and vibrant sound, while the Heavy Copper plate emphasizes the core of the sound with fewer harmonics. Both come included with the piece, and additional pressure plates (Solid Silver, Titanium, Stainless Steel and Vintified) can be ordered to further personalize your sound. The instructions that come



with the ligature make it easy to change out the plates using a special screwdriver that's included.

On soprano, I usually prefer a darker-sounding setup, as I find sopranos to be edgy and bright by nature. I preferred the Gaia's Heavy Copper plate, which created a duller sound with fewer harmonics and more laid-back projection than the Alive Gold, which was significantly brighter. I could further adjust the tonal response by changing the ligature position on the mouthpiece: Moving it forward toward the tip focused the sound more, and moving it back spread the sound into a brighter, wider tonal spectrum.

The Gaia features a true large chamber, which makes it feel more like an alto or tenor sax mouthpiece and allows more air to enter the horn. It's a strong, full-play-

ing piece that gives a thick sound and allows for plenty of volume. High notes in particular pop out easily; low notes respond nicely, too, but require quite a bit of air. If you're trying to blend with other woodwinds in a classical or chamber type setting, you might blow your fellow instrumentalists away with the Gaia. But if you're playing in a big band or a jazz combo, you're definitely going to be heard, and felt, and your preferred tone will shine through. I tried both a size 7 x 266 and an 8 x 280 Gaia; I felt the 7 was more than sufficient and much more manageable than the 8, which required huge amounts of air for a soprano mouthpiece and might take some getting used to.


Everything from sensible packaging to quality of tone production to ease of hardware-tweaking made the Gaia experience a good one on soprano. It's well designed, well thought-out and a pleasure to play.

—Bruce Gibson

Ordering info: thewanne.com


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{2}



{1}



{5}



{3}



{4}

{1} BARITONE RED ZONE

Vandoren has released its Red Java reeds for baritone saxophone. The Reds are the company's first file-cut (or "French cut") reeds and have been gaining popularity since Vandoren released them for soprano, alto and tenor sax in spring of 2009. The driving force behind the Reds is to offer more sonic possibilities to saxophonists while keeping the qualities of the original German-cut Java reeds (green box), which were developed in 1983 for jazz and commercial music. The Reds offer a little more tonal body and flexibility, contributing to a rich, centered sound and excellent projection with an extremely precise attack. The differences between the Reds and the original unfilled green

Javas are particularly noticeable on the baritone sax, where the reeds' sonic subtleties are exaggerated by their relatively large surface area. "We've received a lot of very positive comments on the new Java Reds," said Sylvain Carton, west coast artist advisor and product specialist for Dansr, distributor of Vandoren products. "Every artist we've worked with has noticed the increased flexibility, projection and 'snap' of the new cut. For saxophonists who are looking for these kinds of playing characteristics, this is a reed they must try." Especially bari players. —Ed Enright

More info: vandoren.com

{2} RESERVED RICOS FOR ALTO

Rico has added alto saxophone reeds to its Reserve Classic line. The Reserve Classic Alto Saxophone reeds are made from lower-

internode cane for consistent tone. The reeds feature a thicker blank that allows for more resonance as well as a profile that provides

more flexibility than standard alto saxophone reeds. Reserve Classic Alto Saxophone reeds are available in strengths of 2.0 to 4.5. "The Reserve line for saxophone has been out for about two years, but we've made some upgrades to the alto reed specifically that have gone over well with sax players," said Robert Polan, woodwind product manager for D'Addario. "It's more of a traditional classical style reed—some guys do play jazz on our traditional cut—designed as a classical setup. And the thing that has won over so many people is the consistency." The Reserve Classic line also offers 3.0+ strength, making Reserve Classic the first line of reeds to offer this strength option for the alto saxophone. "The point of that is it's an in-between strength, slightly harder than a 3 and softer than a 3.5, which is the number-one thing that classical alto guys are always asking for," Polan said. "It falls right smack in the middle." —Ed Enright

More info: ricoreeds.com

[3] BLOW-DRY YOUR SAX

Hollywood Winds' Horn Blower extends the lifespan of saxophone pads and relieves instruments of unhealthy bacteria that can build up when a horn is put away damp. The lightweight unit, crafted from ABS polycarbonate plastic and featuring a battery- and USB-powered fan, is inserted into the sax's bell after play. At a noise rate of 15–20db, the Horn Blower emits quiet airflow at room temperature without creating unnecessary heat within the instrument.

More info: hollywoodwinds.com

[4] TUNED IN

Cherub Technology has enhanced its tuner offerings with the WST-910 universal orchestra tuner. The WST-910 features similar functions as its predecessor, the WST-920, in a more traditional desktop style. An LCD displays a non-linear analog meter and shows the pitch and tuning mode (chromatic, F, B-flat, E-flat, guitar, bass, violin, C ukulele, D ukulele, and Chinese erhu and pipa).

More info: cherubtechnology.com

[5] BLUES AT MIDNIGHT

Hohner's Blue Midnight is the latest addition to the MS series of 10-hole diatonic harmonicas. Named after the instrumental hit "Blue Midnight" by Little Walter Jacobs, the new model features a blue plastic comb, stainless steel cover plates and closed side vents similar to those of the company's Blues Harp. Setting the harp apart is a custom Chicago-style tuning from Hohner's vaults, offering the strong chords that vintage blues requires, as well as melodic single notes. The Blue Midnight comes in seven keys: A, B-flat, C, D, E, F and G.

More info: hohnerusa.com

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A close-up, profile shot of a man with short dark hair and a beard, wearing dark sunglasses and a blue and white plaid shirt. He is playing a brass trombone, with his mouth on the mouthpiece and his hands on the valves. The background is a bright, out-of-focus outdoor setting.

INTERNATIONAL **Summer Festival** GUIDE **2011**

Complete Listings For 160 Festivals

Blue Skies & Blue Notes

Musicians, fans traverse the globe during jazz festival season

Xerox Rochester International
Jazz Festival Turns 10

PAGE 90

Claire Daly Pays Tribute To
Feminist Hero at Juneau

PAGE 100

Bix Beiderbecke Memorial
Jazz Festival @ 40

PAGE 110

EAST COAST

Cape May Jazz Festival

Cape May, New Jersey

April 8–10

The fest harbors both the Big Apple and an ever-improving roster of artists, including “Tonight Show” alum Kevin Eubanks and percussionist Poncho Sanchez, who headline at Our Lady Star of the Sea Auditorium in the Washington Square Mall. Patrons can also converse with artists personally at a special CD signing party and various workshops.

Lineup: Kevin Eubanks, Gregory Porter, Leon Jordan Jr. Quintet, Winston Byrd, Lauren Hooker, Tom Larsen Blues Band, John Beasley, Rotimi Hundeyin and de Afrophonic Rhythms Crew, Warren Wolf, Kim Clarke’s Inner Circle Trio with Sheryl Bailey and Sylvia Cuenca, Point Blank with Gerald Chavis, Andrew Boy Jr. Blues Band, Blue Bone.

More info: capemayjazz.org

Harlem Jazz Shrines Festival

New York, New York

May 9–15

A brainchild of the Apollo Theater, Jazzmobile and Harlem Stage, the inaugural Harlem Jazz Shrines Festival reinvents the neighborhood’s jazz heyday by presenting big band concerts, late-night cutting contests, dance jams and conversations about jazz culture across a wide swath of Uptown Manhattan, with most ticket prices hovering at an affordable \$10. In “Blazing Tongues: The Singers and Writers of Lenox Lounge,” the festival explores the legendary venue’s rich history of showcasing both artists such as John Coltrane and Harlem Renaissance authors like James Baldwin, through a selection of music and literature presentations on May 11. Panel discussions focus on intersections between jazz and gospel, the music’s Afro-Cuban connections and more.

Lineup: Jason Moran and Meshell Ndegeocello, Wycliffe Gordon with Savion Glover, Carla Cook and Nikki Yanofsky, Jimmy Heath Big Band, Geri Allen.

More info: harlemjazzshrines.org

Kennedy Center’s Mary Lou Williams Women in Jazz Festival

Washington, D.C.

May 19–21

Off the heels of the Mary Lou Williams’ centennial birthday celebration, the D.C. showcase pays homage to the genre’s paramount female performers. The Kennedy Center highlights piano as its keynote instrument for this year’s Emerging Artist Workshop, which rediscovers the Williams catalog and culminates in a Millennium Stage performance.

Lineup: JaLaLa (featuring Janis Siegel, Laurel

Massé and Lauren Kinhan), Jamie Baum Septet, Tia Fuller Quartet, Corky Hale, Peggy Stern and Sue Terry.

More info: kennedy-center.org

DC Jazz Festival

Washington, D.C.

June 1–13

For its seventh year in the nation’s capital, the festival is hosting events throughout the city and bringing back the free all-day concert, Jazz At The National Mall.

Lineup: Bobby McFerrin, Roy Hargrove, Eddie Palmieri, Donald Harrison, more.

More info: dcjazzfest.org

Pittsburgh JazzLive International

Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania

June 3–5

Situated in Pittsburgh’s thriving cultural district, The Pittsburgh Cultural Trust presents its first jazz program apart from the organization’s weekly summer series. A JazzLive Club Crawl and the Three Rivers Arts Festival accompany three days of music on the JazzLive Summer Stages, along with the Showcase Noir African-American Fine Art Sale.

Lineup: Soulive, Gretchen Parlato, Sean Jones, Roger Humphries, more.

More info: pittsburghjazzlivefest.com

Burlington Discover Jazz Festival

Burlington, Vermont

June 3–12

The New England fest celebrates its 28th year amid a scenic backdrop of Burlington greenery and a slew of local and national musicians. The lineup offers up an versatile combo of everything from Latin rhythms to epic names in fusion.

Lineup: Herbie Hancock’s Imagine Project,

Béla Fleck and the Original Flecktones, “Cubano-Be, Cubano-Bop” featuring Poncho Sanchez and Terence Blanchard, Bitches Brew Revisited, JD Allen Trio, Myra Melford Be Bread Sextet, Sheila Jordan and Jay Clayton, Catherine Russell, Ray Vega Latin Jazz Quintet.

More info: discoverjazz.com

Vision Festival

New York, New York

June 6–12

The Abrons Art Center remains the epicenter of this Lower East Side standby, adding to the mix an array of emerging young talent in the fields of music, dance, poetry and visual art. Peter Brötzmann will receive lifetime achievement honors, marking the first time in Vision’s history that a European has been recognized.

Lineup: David S. Ware, Kidd Jordan, John Tchicai, more.

More info: visionfestival.org

Xerox Rochester International Jazz Festival

Rochester, New York

June 10–18

With the help of a multi-venue pass, patrons can frequent 17 stages over the course of nine days, all within the confines of the burgeoning East End. Among the 250 shows and 1,200 artists, the 10th edition of this Rochester staple hosts a variable who’s who of global all-stars.

Lineup: Natalie Cole, Elvis Costello and The Imposters, Béla Fleck and The Flecktones, Kenny Barron Trio, Regina Carter’s Reverse Thread, Mark Murphy, Trombone Shorty & Orleans Avenue, Bill Charlap Trio, Bill Frisell’s Beautiful Dreamers, G. Love & Spe-



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REGINA CARTER'S REVERSE THREAD

STEVE COLEMAN AND FIVE ELEMENTS

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HIROMI

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BRUBECK BROTHERS

AVISHAI COHEN'S TRIVENI
WITH GUEST **ANAT COHEN**

RAVI COLTRANE QUARTET

HIROMI: THE TRIO PROJECT

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CHARLES LLOYD
WITH GUEST **ZAKIR HUSSAIN**

MINGUS BIG BAND

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RANDY WESTON'S AFRICAN RHYTHMS TRIO

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* Artists subject to change. Artists in alphabetical order

OTHER SPECIAL GUESTS TO BE ANNOUNCED...

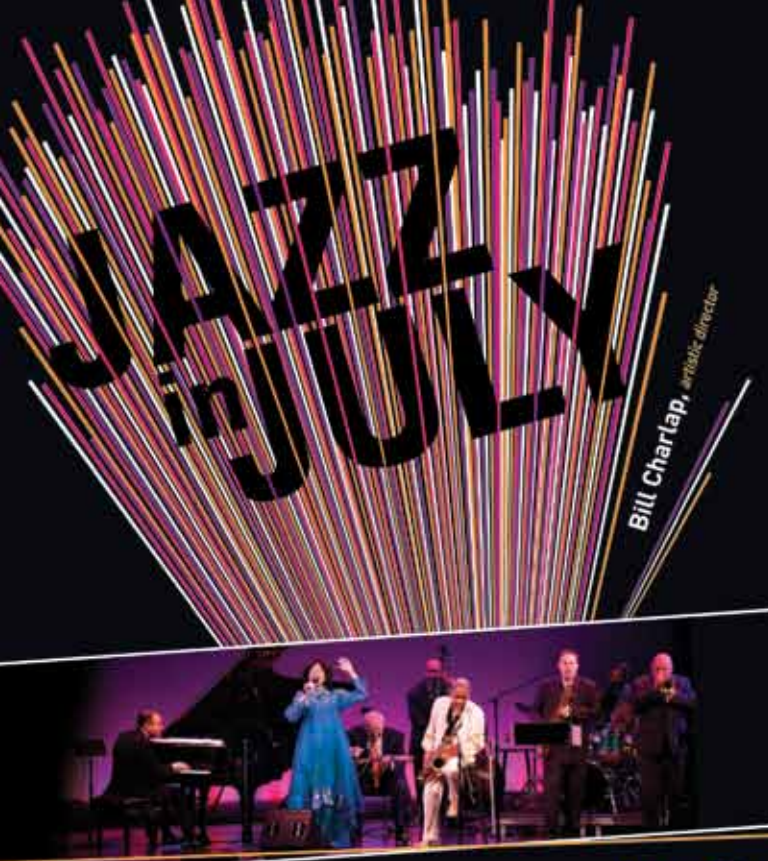


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JAZZ + FOLK

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The festival is sponsored in part by

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92nd Street Y Jazz in July Summer Festival July 18-28, 2011

Mon, Jul 18, 8 pm

JAZZ PIANO MASTER CLASS

Bill Charlap, piano / Ted Rosenthal, piano
Sean Smith, bass / Kenny Washington, drums
Participants to be announced

Tue, Jul 19, 8 pm

SWING, SWING, SWING!

Marilyn Maye, vocals / Bucky Pizzarelli,
guitar / Houston Person, tenor sax / Ken
Peplowski, clarinet / Aaron Weinstein, violin
Bill Charlap, piano / Jay Leonhart, bass
Dennis Mackrel, drums

Wed, Jul 20, 8 pm

THE KEY PLAYERS

Kenny Barron, piano / Bill Mays, piano
Bruce Barth, piano / Bill Charlap, piano
Peter Washington, bass / Willie Jones III, drums

Thu, Jul 21, 8 pm

SUMMER SERENADE: THE MUSIC OF BENNY CARTER

Mary Stallings, vocals / Phil Woods, alto sax
Jon Gordon, alto sax / Harry Allen, tenor sax
Jimmy Greene, tenor sax / Gary Smulyan,
baritone sax / Bill Charlap, piano / Peter
Washington, bass / Kenny Washington, drums

Tue, Jul 26, 8 pm

TRUE BLUE: THE BLUE NOTE RECORDS LEGACY

Randy Brecker, trumpet / Steve Wilson, alto
sax / Eric Alexander, tenor sax / Dave Stryker,
guitar / Renee Rosnes, piano / Bill Charlap,
piano / Peter Washington, bass / Lewis Nash, drums

Wed, Jul 27, 8 pm

IN HIS OWN SWEET WAY: CELEBRATING DAVE BRUBECK

Dick Oatts, alto sax / Scott Wendholt, trumpet
Chris Brubeck, bass trombone / Bill Charlap,
piano / Harvie S, bass / Terry Clarke, drums

Thu, Jul 28, 8 pm

ALWAYS: IRVING BERLIN

Sandy Stewart, vocals / Sachal Vasandani,
vocals / Jeremy Pelt, trumpet / Grant
Stewart, tenor sax / Joe Locke, vibes
Bill Charlap, piano / Renee Rosnes, piano
Sean Smith, bass / Lewis Nash, drums

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Visit www.92Y.org/Jazz, call 212.415.5500 or visit
our **Box Office** at Lexington Ave and 92nd Street.

Jazz in July is partially endowed by a generous
gift from Sonia and Jerome A. Chavet.
The July 21 and 27 concerts receive support
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92Y

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cial Sauce, The Trio of OZ, Supersilent, In The Country, The
Jazz Passengers, Kevin Eubanks, Martin Taylor, Sheila Jordan
and Jay Clayton, Rick Braun, Bonerama, Lucky Peterson,
Matt Wilson's Arts & Crafts, Pee Wee Ellis, Billy Bang, Ronnie
Scott's All Stars.

More info: rochesterjazz.com

West Oak Lane Jazz and Arts Festival

Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

June 17-19

Free to visitors, the eighth annual northwest Philly gala offers an array
of worldly fare for eyes and ears, including a marketplace of original
local artwork, a 72nd Avenue food vending area and non-stop live jazz
rippling down Ogontz Avenue. The three-day outdoor event sticks to its
New Orleans theme, offering up its Second Line parade in true Mardi
Gras fashion.

Lineup: TBA. Last year's lineup included Al Jarreau, Dirty Dozen Brass
Band, Preservation Hall Jazz Band, Dianne Reeves, George
Duke, David Sanborn.

More info: westoaklanefestival.com

Paulie's NOLA Jazz & Blues Festival

Worcester, Massachusetts

June 24-25

This central Massachusetts celebration of New Orleans music takes
place at an urban fairground. Talent comes straight from Louisiana and
various parts of the Bay State.

Lineup: Tab Benoit, Eric Lindell Band, Mem Shannon & The Mem-
bership, Big Sam's Funky Nation, Henri Smith with Charles
Neville, Anders Osborne, Chris Fitz Band, more.

More info: baevents.com/pauliesnolabluesandjazzfestival/

Freihofer's Saratoga Jazz Festival

Saratoga Springs, New York

June 25-26

Freihofer's 34th-anniversary year brings more than 20 ensembles and
solo artists to the Saratoga Performing Arts Center. The two-day week-
end fest also features a fine arts and crafts area with a children's tent.

Lineup: Michael McDonald, Dee Dee Bridgewater, "Sing The Truth"
featuring Angélique Kidjo, Dianne Reeves and Lizz Wright,
Jack DeJohnette Group featuring Rudresh Mahanthappa,
Eliane Elias, Sharon Jones & The Dap-Kings, The Bad Plus,
Tia Fuller, Ben Allison.

More info: spac.org/jazzfest/

Syracuse Jazz Festival

Syracuse, New York

June 25-26

Held at the Onondaga Community College campus, the largest free
jazz fest in the Northeast puts an emphasis on education with comple-
mentary clinics, master classes and workshops. Per usual, producer
Frank Malfitano delivers a solid lineup of soul, jazz and fusion talent.

Lineup: TBA. Past performers have included Aretha Franklin, Dave
Brubeck, Wynton Marsalis, Pete Fountain, Sonny Rollins,
Smokey Robinson, Sergio Mendes, Chaka Khan, Roberta
Flack, Jeff Lorber Fusion.

More info: syracusejazzfest.com

Belleayre Music Festival

Highmount, New York

July 3-September 3

The Catskill Forest Preserve has become a focal point for festival-goers
seeking entertainment outside the urban limits of New York. They can
find it two-and-a-half hours away, when the Belleayre Mountain ski
resort offers two sessions of jazz programs ranging from the traditional
to the experimental.

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Catskill Mountain Jazz Series

FRIDAY | JULY 29 | 8pm

KJ Denhert

SATURDAY | JULY 30 | 8pm

Global Noize

FRIDAY | AUGUST 5 | 8pm

Ravi Coltrane Quartet

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Lineup: Ravi Coltrane, Jimmy Cobb's "So What Band," k.d. lang, Bela Fleck and the Original Flecktones, more.

More info: belleayremusic.org

Briggs Farm Blues Festival

Nescopeck, Pennsylvania

July 8-9

Not far from Wilkes-Barre, this 14-year-old event takes place on a 350-acre farm. In addition to top blues performers from the Delta, Chicago and elsewhere, there's food—people swear by the roasted corn-on-the-cob—and on-site camping.

Lineup: Eddie Shaw & the Wolf Gang, James Armstrong, Jimmy "Duck" Holmes, Alexis P. Suter Band.

More info: briggsfarm.com

North Atlantic Blues Festival

Rockland, Maine

July 16-17

Right on beautiful Penobscot Bay, this gala is going strong in its 17th year. During the same weekend, several restaurants and pubs in tourist-friendly Rockland provide blues entertainment.

Lineup: Eric Bibb, Brooks Family Reunion, Magic Slim & The Teardrops, Robert Cray, Billy Branch, more.

More info: northatlanticbluesfestival.com

Jazz in July

New York, New York

July 19-28

Artistic Director Bill Charlap takes the 92nd Street YMCA gig back to an unforgotten era of New York swing. This year's July festival spotlights jazz pianists with additional tributes to Benny Carter, Dave Brubeck and Irving Berlin. This year's event will also and also give special attention to the influence of New York-based Blue Note Records.

Lineup: Kenny Barron, Marilyn Maye, Houston Person, Bucky Pizzarelli, Renee Rosnes, Phil Woods.

More info: 92y.org/jazz

Maryland Summer Jazz Camp & Festival

Rockville, Maryland

July 20-22, July 27-29

The two sessions of Maryland's capital city festival consist of three instruction-heavy days of workshops and jam sessions, each of which offers a 7:1 student-to-teacher ratio for extremely personal instruction. The festival culminates in faculty and student concerts to demonstrate newly acquired techniques.

Lineup: Jeff Antoniuk, Fred Lipsius, John D'Earth, Alex Norris, Tom Baldwin, Amy Shook, James King, Steve Rochinski, Steve Herberman, Tony Martucci, Frank Russo, Wade Beach, Alan Blackman, Greg Boyer, Alison



Jimmy Heath © Litchfield Jazz Festival

Crockett, Felicia Carter.

More info: marylandsummerjazz.com

KoSA International Percussion Workshop

Castleton, Vermont

July 26-31

This intensive hands-on experience lectures "campers" on a spectrum of drumming technologies and hosts informal daily jams. Along with a memorable faculty of seasoned percussionists, the Castleton State College six-day workshop includes globally diverse seminars and video conferences.

Lineup: TBA. Past performers have included Glen Velez, Steve Smith, Horacio Hernandez, Antonio Sanchez, Dave Samuels, Mike Mainieri, Giovanni Hidalgo.

More info: kosamusic.com

Pennsylvania Blues Festival

Palmerton, Pennsylvania

July 30-31

Rising out of the ashes of the late Pocono Blues Festival, the first festival at the Blue Mountain Ski Resort in the Pocono Mountains offers world-class acts on two stages. Chairlift rides, food and craft booths, and on-site camping are also part of the attraction.

Lineup: Shemekia Copeland, Bettye LaVette, Lil' Ed & the Blues Imperials, John Nemeth, Kenny Neal, Samuel James, more.

More info: skibluemt.com

Caramoor Jazz Festival

Katonah, New York

August 5-7

Organized by jazz producer Jim Luce, the 18th edition of the weekend-long Caramoor



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International Music Festival subsidiary boasts a lineup ranging from ambitious up-and-comers to crowd-pleasing chart-toppers. Once again, the fest will commence amid the Caramoor Center's Mediterranean-style villas, opera-epicentric Venetian Theater and scenic botanical gardens.

Lineup: Jason Moran and The Bandwagon, John Scofield Trio, Joshua Redman's James Farm, Christian McBride Big Band, Fred Hersch & Nico Gori Duo, Renee Rosnes Quartet, Robert Glasper Trio, Lucky Peterson, Edmar Castaneda Quartet, Juan-Carlos Formell & Johnny's Dream Club, more.

More info: caramoor.org

Litchfield Jazz Festival

Kent, Connecticut
August 5-7

The grounds of the Kent School provide a wealth of entertaining and educational opportunities, such as Q&A with artist-in-residence Matt Wilson and NEA Jazz Master Roy Haynes, and various clinics by festival performers. Step outside the confines of the Springs Center, and jazz enthusiasts can delight in between-show performances by the school's own jazz ensembles, as well as the charm and cuisine of downtown Kent.

Lineup: The Clayton Brothers, Trombone Shorty & Orleans Avenue, Albert Rivera Organ Trio, Champian Fulton Quartet, The Bronx Horns, Vijay Iyer, Ray Charles Tribute featuring Davell Crawford, Roy Haynes, Dena DeRose Trio, Dr. Lonnie Smith, Matt Wilson Quartet Plus Strings, Joe Lovano Nonet, Jimmy Heath Big Band.

More info: litchfieldjazzfest.com

Newport Jazz Festival

Newport, Rhode Island
August 5-7

George Wein's flagship festival returns to Rhode Island this summer under the auspices of a non-profit organization, the Newport Festivals Foundation. Wein hopes the move to non-profit status will extend the event's potential lifespan and allow foundations and others to make donations to the cause throughout the year.

Lineup: Mostly Other People Do The Killing, Regina Carter, Steve Coleman, Wynton Marsalis, Charles Lloyd, John Hollenbeck Large Ensemble, Eddie Palmieri, more.

More info: newportjazzfest.net

Scranton Jazz Festival

Scranton, Pennsylvania
August 5-7

Now in its eighth year, the Scranton fest delivers another round of stellar jazz performances, expanding its repertoire outside of the historic



Radisson Lackawanna Station Hotel to a number of other downtown venues.

Lineup: TBA. Past performers have included the Marko Marcinko Latin Jazz Sextet, Nate Birkey, Pete McCann Quintet, Bill Carter and the Presby-bop Quartet.

More info: scrantonjazzfestival.org

Provincetown Jazz Festival Cape Cod, Massachusetts August 12–13 and 15

The seventh annual festival brings three days of jazz to the furthest reaches of Cape Cod, with concerts held at Provincetown Town Hall and the Cotuit Center for the Arts.

Lineup: Adrienne and Josh Hindmarsh, String of Pearls, Dane Vannatter, Stage Door Canteen, Bruce Abbott, Holli Ross.

More info: provincetownjazzfestival.org

Tanglewood Jazz Festival Lenox, Massachusetts September 2–4

Held over Labor Day weekend in a historic and scenic part of the state, the Boston Symphony Orchestra revue will showcase a stellar roster of artists, as well as a featured presentation of NEA Jazz Masters Jimmy Cobb and Gunther Schuller.

Lineup: Jimmy Cobb, Angélique Kidjo, Dianne Reeves, Lizz Wright, Gunther Schuller, Mingus Orchestra, Michael Kaeshammer, Robin McKelle, Judy Carmichael, John Santos Quartet, Federico Britos Quintet.

More info: tanglewoodjazzfestival.org

The Many Colors of A WOMAN Hartford, Connecticut September 3, September 24

The 24th annual celebration of female performers worldwide offers patrons a broad education in contemporary jazz and now includes an additional day of festivities.

Lineup: Nicki Mathis' Afrikan Amerikan Jazz New Millennium All Stars, International Women In Jazz Chorus.

More info: themanycolorsofawomanincorporated.webs.com

COTA Jazz Festival Delaware Water Gap, Pennsylvania September 9–11

This promising jamboree unites Poconos artists of multiple disciplines, from classical music to dance, and provides juried reviews for each area. The event also features artisan booths, as well as a children's area.

Lineup: A tribute to vocalist Bob Dorough will feature music from the Bob Dorough Songbook and "Schoolhouse Rock," as well as a guest appearance by Dorough himself and many of his bandmates.

More info: cotajazz.org

Berklee BeanTown Jazz Festival

Boston, Massachusetts
September 24

The city comes out in force—a record-breaking 80,000 for its 10th anniversary in 2010—for jazz and Latin artists on three stages for six-blocks in Boston's South End neighborhood. Along with ticketed concerts, the festival also features more than 15 artists on three stages.

Lineup: Joshua Redman, more.

More info: beantownjazz.org

Pittsfield CityJazz Festival Pittsfield, Massachusetts October 7–20

A Berkshire Hills annual jazz crawl complements the much-anticipated reunion of headliners Grace Kelly and Phil Woods. This year will mark the fifth anniversary of the pair's performance at the festival with the U.S. Army Jazz Ambassadors rhythm section.

Lineup: Grace Kelly, Phil Woods, Armen Donelian.

More info: berkshiresjazz.org



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Music Stars, Nightly Jam Sessions Anchor Upstate New York Rochester Festival

By Thomas Staudter

Guitarist and educator Bob Sneider, the majordomo for the nightly jam sessions at the Xerox Rochester International Jazz Festival in upstate New York, recalls leading the informal soiree the first night when the event began in 2002 and wondering if any of the “big names” would show up. Saxophonist John Nugent, founder and artistic director of the festival, had stopped by to play and was so-loing “with his eyes closed tight,” Sneider says, when headliner George Benson sneaked onto the stage, commandeered his guitar and joined right in mid-“Cherokee.”

“The second John heard a different guitarist comping behind him he opened eyes, saw George, then turned to me with the biggest smile,” says Sneider. “Immediately, we both knew we were into something special.”

The 10th Anniversary Edition of the Xerox Rochester International Jazz Festival takes place June 10–18, and the galaxy of performers slated to appear include popular acts like Chris Botti, k.d. lang, Bela Fleck and the Original Flecktones, Natalie Cole and Elvis Costello along with top purveyors and progenitors of the improviser’s art, world music and rootsy Americana genres. Serious jazz fans undoubtedly will make a beeline to shows led by Jim Hall, Kenny Barron, Bill Frisell, Mark Murphy, Regina Carter, Bill Charlap and Lew Tabackin, to name a few, but the full lineup—all 120 acts—poses the sort of conundrums that happily agog festival goers always face.

This year, Nugent is also on the bill, as an anniversary gift to himself, in a performance with strings on 10 commissioned arrangements.

“Our philosophy, from the beginning, has been to bring in music fans with all kinds of music, including pop shows, to get people walking around to hear everything we have to offer,” Nugent said. “This is no different than, years ago, George Wein bringing to Newport both Duke Ellington and Chuck Berry. With Aretha Franklin, Sonny Rollins, Dianne Reeves and Dr. John as our headliners in 2002, we were able to pack the big venues and get people to check out what was going on in the clubs. This idea is what’s behind the festival’s motto: It’s Not Who You Know, It’s Who You Don’t Know. That’s how we’ve been able to build an audience that gets excited about discovering new music.” Indeed, Nugent books dozens of lesser-known acts and groups made up Eastman School of Music students, giving festival-goers an opportunity to catch tomorrow’s headliners in their



John Nugent

nascency.

Attendance at the Rochester Jazz Festival (hometown office products giant Xerox has been the title sponsor for the past three years, with M&T Bank serving as a presenting sponsor) has grown from 15,000 to 2010’s 165,000 across 17 venues. Nugent and Marc Iacona, the festival’s executive director, wisely organized the footprint of the festival so that attendees need only walk less than 10 minutes from gig to gig and lobbied city officials to close down a mile-length section of East Avenue to create a promenade during the festival. A “club pass” ticket system ensures that people are on the move from one show to the next until the end of the night, when a line develops outside the Rochester Plaza Hotel for admittance into the jam session.

Musical artists appreciate that the local citizenry shares in the excitement of the Rochester festival. Jake Shimabukuro, the crossover ukulele virtuoso, was one of those lesser-known artists Nugent invited to the festival a few years back and then returned as a headliner.

“Performing at the Rochester festival has been one of the most inspiring events in my career,” Shimabukuro said. “Initially, I was nervous about how I’d be received because I’m not a jazz artist, but everyone welcomed and embraced me and my playing. There are so many people from the community involved in the festival, and their energy and enthusiasm are totally infectious.”

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MIDWEST

Tri-C Jazz Fest

Cleveland, Ohio

April 28–May 8

In its 32nd year, Tri-C will be the quintessential fest for up-and-comers and legends alike. This Playhouse Square program sports big names like Smokey Robinson and tributes from Dee Dee Bridgewater and Sammy DeLeon, once again bringing education to the forefront with its “Jazz for Kids” and “Debut” series.

Lineup: Smokey Robinson, Trombone Shorty & Orleans Avenue, Tribute to Ella Fitzgerald featuring Dee Dee Bridgewater, Maurice Brown, Sammy DeLeon y su Orquesta, The Robert Glasper Trio, Oikos Ensemble, Regina Carter's Reverse Thread.

More info: tricjazzfest.com

Glenn Miller Festival

Clarinda, Iowa

June 9–12

For the 36th time, a fellowship of jazz fans head to the legendary bandleader's birthplace to pay homage to the man himself. The festival celebrates all things Alton Glenn Miller, from tribute stage shows to picnics and historical displays, including tours of the Glenn Miller Birthplace Museum and Home.

Lineup: The World Famous Glenn Miller Orchestra, United States Airforce Noteables.

More info: glennmiller.org

Chicago Blues Festival

Chicago, Illinois

June 10–12

While Chicago will have a new mayor this year, the city remains the proud host of the largest free-admission blues festival in the world. The annual celebration will mark the centennial of the legendary Robert Johnson.

Lineup: TBA. Last year included Zora Young, Lurrie Bell and John Primer.

More info: chicagobluesfestival.us

Ravinia Festival

Highland Park, Illinois

June 11–August 26

The summer home of the Chicago Symphony Orchestra continues its grand tradition of superior jazz programming with more commissioned works and ensembles throughout the summer. The season's anticipated performances include Ramsey Lewis' debut of “Colors: The Ecology of Oneness.”

Lineup: Jazz at Lincoln Center Orchestra with Wynton Marsalis, Steans Music Institute Jazz Showcase, Dave Brubeck and Sons, Ramsey Lewis Trio, Eldar Djangirov, Tony Bennett.

More info: ravinia.org

Brian Simpson Quartet @ Columbus Jazz & Rib Fest

**Twin Cities Jazz Festival**

Saint Paul, Minnesota

June 23–25

Minnesota's largest jazz festival converges on the historic Lowertown district for the 13th year, offering free concerts on two Mears Park stages.

Lineup: Gary Burton Quartet with Julian Lage, Antonio Sanchez and Jorge Roeder, Danilo Pérez, Deodato, Airforce Noteables.

More info: hotsummerjazz.com

Elkhart Jazz Festival

Elkhart, Indiana

June 24–26

A diverse lineup of more than 90 performers, ranging from traditional gypsy swing and Delta blues to New Orleans and Dixieland brass, brings Elkhart full-circle at six separate downtown venues.

Lineup: Alfonso Ponticelli & Swing Gitan, Ariel Pocock Trio, Bill Allred's Classic Jazz Band, Bucky Pizzarelli Quartet, Cakewalkin' Jass Band.

More info: elkhartjazzfestival.com

Mississippi Valley Blues Festival

Davenport, Iowa

July 1–3

Launched in 1986, this Mississippi Valley Blues Society-produced concert weekend features about 30 leading bands and solo performers in LeClaire Park, on the banks of the mighty Mississippi. Performers in recent years have included Buddy Guy, Mavis Staples and Honeyboy Edwards.

Lineup: TBA.

More info: mvbs.org/fest

Toyota-Scion of Iowa City Jazz Festival

Iowa City, Iowa

July 1–3

Courtesy of a grant from the National Endowment for the Arts, this year's festival ups its instructional offerings. A Saturday morning educational workshop spotlights the experience and technical advice of mainstage acts.

Lineup: Roswell Rudd, Bob Washut, Deborah Weisz, The Trombone Tribe,

Washut's Dream Band.

More info: summerofthearts.org

Sioux Falls Jazz Festival

Sioux Falls, South Dakota

July 14–16

In addition to three days of live music on two stages, this family-friendly jazz cornerstone hosts a summer jazz camp for budding musicians and a Yankton Trail Park 5K. The festival celebrates its 20th anniversary this year.

Lineup: TBA. Past performers have included Keb' Mo', Bettye LaVette, Jonny Lang, Taj Mahal, Dr. John.

More info: jazzfestsiouxfalls.com

Columbus Jazz and Rib Fest

Columbus, Ohio

July 22–24

The annual competition for the area's best finger-licking 'Q celebrates its 32nd year at the downtown riverfront and hosts a surplus of glory-seeking rib-burners from 10 states and Canada, along with a variable smorgasbord of national and international jazz fare. For a sample of regional musical flavor, head to the Jazz Cafe, which serves up the hottest local jazz acts.

Lineup: TBA. Past performers have included Trombone Shorty & Orleans Avenue, Tito Puente Jr.

More info: hottribscooljazz.org

Prairie Dog Blues Festival

Prairie du Chien, Wisconsin

July 29–30

Arrive via boat, plane, car or foot for this gala—two stages, 12 bands, food vendors—on scenic St. Feriole Island, near the confluence of the Mississippi and Wisconsin Rivers. On-site camping is available.

Lineup: TBA.

More info: prairiedogblues.com

Bix Beiderbecke Memorial Jazz Festival

Davenport, Iowa

August 4–7

For its 40th run, this popular Quad City gathering relives its humble origins, recreating its first

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Detroit International Jazz Festival



lineup with a slew of Bix fest vets. This hotbed of traditional jazz brings back some of the festival's original performers at some of Bix's old stomping grounds.

Lineup: Vince Giordano and The Nighthawks, Jim Cullum, Andy Schumm, West End Jazz Band, Statesmen of Jazz, Dave Greer, Josh Duffee, Jimmy Valentine, Hot Club of Davenport.

More info: bixsociety.org

Lansing JazzFest

Lansing, Michigan

August 5-6

Drawing nearly 15,000 people annually, the 16th edition promises an even greater lineup of artists amid the artistic ambience of Old Town's gallery row. Each of the artists is asked to play an original composition never played at previous festivals.

Lineup: Nicole Mitchell Quartet, more.

More info: jazzlansing.com

Chicago Jazz Festival

Chicago, Illinois

September 1-4

The Chicago Jazz Festival is the city's longest running lakefront music festival and a Labor Day Weekend tradition. The festival is free and features four stages of jazz performances. Other jazz events are planned for the nearby Millennium Park and Chicago Cultural Center during the weekend. Orbert Davis is this year's artist-in-residence.

Lineup: TBA. Last year included Nicole Mitchell, Henry Threadgill, Brad Mehldau.

More info: chicagojazzfestival.us

Detroit International Jazz Festival

Detroit, Michigan

September 2-5

The 32nd annual Detroit Jazz Fest will set sail once again with its annual fundraising cruise. Subtitled "We Bring You the World," the 2011 season will celebrate world influences on jazz, as well as its influence on the world. As is the tradition at the festival, Detroit's significant jazz legacy will be front and center.

Lineup: 2011 Artist-in-Residence Jeff "Tain"

Watts, Ivan Lins, Amina Figaro-va, Sing the Truth featuring Angélique Kidjo, Dianne Reeves and Lizz Wright, Kevin Eubanks, Vijay Iyer, Dave Holland.

More info: detroitjazzfest.com

Blues At The Crossroads

Terra Haute, Indiana

September 9-10

This party takes place on 7th and Wabash with a host of blues and beyond headliners.

Lineup: Mike Nelson, Jacob Jones, more.

More info: bluesatthecrossroads.com

World Music Festival

Chicago, Illinois

September 16-22

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

Lineup: TBA.

More info: worldmusicfestivalchicago.org

Hyde Park Jazz Festival

Chicago, Illinois

September 24

Throughout the afternoon and late into the night, this historic neighborhood will host the fifth anniversary of this festival that brings in more than 100 musicians to a dozen venues in and around the University of Chicago. Expect a mix of the city's veterans and new talent, as well as national stars.

Lineup: TBA.

More info: hydeparkjazzfestival.org

Edgefest

Ann Arbor, Michigan

October 19-22

Edgefest remains Michigan's perennial hot spot for the avant garde. This year will focus on multi-instrumentalists who blend classical music and jazz.

Lineup: Andrew Bishop, Tony Malaby, Vinny Golia, more.

More info: kerrytownconcerthouse.com

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SOUTH

French Quarter Festival

New Orleans, Louisiana

April 7–10

The 27th edition of this New Orleans standard—offering three waterfront stages—now features an extra day of Big Easy diversions, including an opening Bourbon-to-Jackson street parade, a Thursday night kickoff party and the “World’s Largest Jazz Brunch.”

Lineup: Trombone Shorty & Orleans Avenue, Lost Bayou Ramblers, Freddy Omar con su Banda, Banu Gibson & The New Orleans Hot Jazz.

More info: fqfi.org

Festival International De Louisiane

Lafayette, Louisiana

April 27–May 1

For its quarter-centennial, the fest emphasizes a “Past, Present and Future” Louisiana theme that celebrates its evolution with a plethora of old and new artists. In addition to its traditionally Francophonic, Cajun-style lineup, patrons can delight in similarly themed culinary demonstrations and artwork.

Lineup: Lil Nathan & The Zydeco Big Timers, Horace Trahan & the Ossun Express, Keb’ Mo’, Master Drummers of Burund, Rootz Underground, Sonny Landreth, The Duhks, Soul Express Brass Band, Locos Por Juana, Bomba Estéreo, Red Baraat, Toubab Krewe, Terrance Simien & the Zydeco Experience, Brass Bed, Steve Riley & The Mamou Playboys, Jesse Legé & The Cajun Country Revival, Michael Juan Nunez, Balkan Beat Box, JJ Grey & Mofro, BeauSoleil avec Michael Doucet, Soul Express Brass Band.

More info: festivalinternational.com

Denton Arts & Jazz Festival

Denton, Texas

April 29–May 1

As a hat tip to North Texan artists, this two-and-a-half-day festival donates proceeds to the Denton art community, attracting 200,000 spectators to see more than 2,700 artists at seven stages, eat at six food courts, and mold and sculpt at a children’s art tent.

Lineup: “A Tribute to Leon Breeden” featuring Tom Malone, Lou Marini and Marvin Stamm and the Official Texas Jazz Orchestra, The Quebe Sisters Band, Texas Tornados, Brave Combo.

More info: dentonjazzfest.com

New Orleans Jazz & Heritage Festival

New Orleans, Louisiana

April 29–May 8

The 42nd annual JazzFest pays tribute to New Orleans’ deep cultural connections with Haiti in a vast programming initiative that

Kris Kristofferson (left) and Elvis Costello @ Denton Arts & Jazz Festival



features dozens of critically acclaimed Haitian artists and musicians in what’s being touted as the “largest celebration of Haitian culture in the United States” since the January 2010 earthquake. “Where They At,” a photographic and archival exploration of the history of New Orleans bounce, joins the usual lineup of Mardi Gras Indian costumes, Creole cooking demos and artist interviews inside the grandstand this year.

Lineup: Sonny Rollins, Ahmad Jamal, Ron Carter, Terence Blanchard, Maceo Parker with PeeWee Ellis, Allen Toussaint, Irma Thomas, Kermit Ruffins, Henry Butler, Preservation Hall Jazz Band, Jeremy Davenport, Robert Randolph & The Family Band, the Avett Brothers, Pete Fountain, Soul Rebels Brass Band, Amos Lee, Willie Nelson.

More info: nojazzfest.com

Hill Country Harmonica

Waterford, Mississippi

May 21–22

Fifty miles south of Memphis, Tenn., at Foxfire Ranch, this rural “Northern Mississippi Blues Harp Homecoming” brings together top harp players and the listening public for lectures, concerts and jam sessions.

Lineup: Satan & Adam, Sugar Blue & Band, Jason Ricci with The Hill Country All-Stars, Charlie Sayles, Sonny Boy Terry, more.

More info: hillcountryharmonica.com

Jacksonville Jazz Festival

Jacksonville, Florida

May 26–29

Along with the usual spectacle of jazz performance, this fest offers a unique array of activities outside the norm. The Round Midnight Jazz Jam, the Wine Down Tasting Experience and the Sunday Jazz Brunch are featured highlights, along with a juried art show.

Lineup: TBA. Last year’s performers included

Patti LaBelle, Spyro Gyra, Tito Puente Jr.

More info: jaxjazzfest.com

Spoletto Festival USA

Charleston, South Carolina

May 27–June 12

Now in its 35th season, this year marks the debut of guest conductor James Gaffigan as leader of the Spoleto Festival USA Orchestra. Among other noted events is the presentation of “13 Most Beautiful ... Songs for Andy Warhol’s Screen Test” featuring Dean Wareham and Britta Phillips.

Lineup: Dianne Reeves, Béla Fleck and the Flecktones, Dean Wareham, Britta Phillips, Karrin Allyson, Ketil Bjørnstad, Toningo Ferragutti, Willy Gonzalez and Micaela Vita, Danilo Rea, Trombone Shorty & Orleans Avenue.

More info: spoletousa.org

Atlanta Jazz Festival

Atlanta, Georgia

May 28–29

Following a brief hiatus, the annual festival returns to its original home in Midtown Atlanta’s Piedmont Park for a second consecutive year.

Lineup: Ninety Miles with Stefon Harris, David Sanchez and Christian Scott, Gerald Clayton Trio, Regina Carter’s Reverse Thread, Sean Jones.

More info: atlantafestivals.com

Eureka Springs Blues Weekend

Eureka Springs, Arkansas

June 2–5

A Victorian resort town in the Ozark Mountains becomes a blues hot spot every summer, with shows inside at the Eureka Springs Auditorium and the Basin Park Hotel and outdoors at the Basin Park Shell. Blues also offered nightly at area clubs and restaurants.

Lineup: TBA. Last year’s artists included Charlie Musselwhite and John Hammond.

More info: eurekaspringsblues.com

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Virginia Blues & Jazz Festival Hot Springs, Virginia

June 10-12

Friday night jazz in the Garth Newel Music Center's Herter Hall, a converted horse barn, is followed by a Saturday afternoon lawn concert. The musical weekend in the Allegheny Mountains wraps up on Sunday with a New York Style Jazz Brunch.

Lineup: Chris Potter Underground, Bert Carlson Quartet, Tizer, Duke Robillard, Mark Hummel's Blues Harmonica Blow-Out, Steve Hudson Chamber Ensemble.

More info: garthnewel.org

Bentonia Blues Festival Bentonia, Mississippi

June 18

In the heart of the Delta, this free festival features gospel in the morning followed by 11 hours of Southern soul and raw blues at the Blue Front Café. Also part of the festivities are food vendors, arts and crafts displays and all kinds of family fun.

Lineup: T. K. Soul, Johnny Rawls, Big Joe Shelton, Terry "Harmonica" Bean, Kenny Brown Band, Jimmy "Duck" Holmes, more.

More info: yazoo.org

Satchmo Summerfest New Orleans, Louisiana

August 5-7

Directors coined the name of the French Quarter fest after the alias of the gravelly toned trumpeter it celebrates. Planned purposely around New Orleans-native Louis Armstrong's birthday weekend, the host of events includes tribute concerts, a children's stage and Satchmo seminars.

Lineup: TBA. Past performers have included Yoshio Toyama, Kermit Ruffins, Shamarr Allen, Treme Brass Band, Rebirth Brass Band, Leroy Jones.

More info: fqfi.org

Les DesMerle Amelia Island Jazz Festival

Fernandina Beach, Florida

October 2-9

With ticketed and free offerings at multiple venues, the festival brings attention to mainstream artists, as well as Latin and blues talent.

Lineup: TBA. Past performers have included Ramsey Lewis, David Sanborn, Marcus Printup, Harry Allen.

More info: ameliaislandjazzfestival.com



Jeremy Davenport @ Satchmo SummerFest

Clearwater Jazz Holiday

Clearwater, Florida

October 13-16

White sandy beaches of Coachman Park in downtown Clearwater become home to this warm autumnal event. Mainstream jazz is usually featured along with a healthy dose of Latin music.

Lineup: TBA.

More info: clearwaterjazz.com

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www.jazzavienne.com



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July 14 – 24
www.antibesjuanlespins.com
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July 8 – July 17
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Norway
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www.moldejazz.no



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July 11 – July 16
www.jazzvitoria.com



Holland
North Sea Jazz Festival
July 8 – July 10
www.northseajazz.com



Turkey
Istanbul Jazz Festival
July 1 – July 18
www.iksv.org



Canada
Festival International de Jazz de Montreal
June 25 – July 4
www.montrealjazzfest.com



Canada
Vancouver International Jazz Festival
June 24 – July 3
www.coastaljazz.ca



Switzerland
Montreux Jazz Festival
July 1 – July 16
www.montreuxjazz.com



USA
Monterey Jazz Festival
September 16 – 18
www.montereyjazzfestival.org



USA
Ravinia Festival
Summer 2011
www.ravinia.org



UK
London Jazz Festival
November 11 – November 20
www.serious.org.uk



Belgium
Gent Jazz Festival
July 7 – July 17
www.gentjazz.com

Claire Daly Brings Inspiration to Juneau Jazz & Classics Fest

By Ken Micallef

Alaska has always drawn more than its share of adventurers, pioneers, prospectors and plain crazy fools, but none more courageous than Wisconsin-born Mary Joyce. In the 1930s, when most women were confined to the kitchen while dreaming of romancing “A Latin From Manhattan,” Joyce became a Hollywood actress, a nurse, a stewardess, a bush pilot, a bar owner and a hotel entrepreneur. Joyce was the first non-white Alaskan to dogsled the 1,000-mile run between Juneau and Fairbanks in 1936, the first ham radio operator in the Alaskan Territories and undoubtedly the only woman to run supplies for the Allies by dogsled during WWII.

“She was different from anyone I’ve ever met,” recalls Claire Daly, baritone saxophonist and composer of *Nothing To Lose*, a 12-song homage to Joyce that will debut at the Juneau Jazz & Classics Music Festival, which is celebrating its 25th anniversary this spring. “I thought she was cool, but I didn’t realize how cool until later in my life. She had these little bangs, and she wore fashionable clothes, but fashionable from a previous generation. She was just different. She always sat with me and showed me her scrapbooks when she visited us in the 1970s.”

A second cousin to Joyce and first cousin to Mary Anne Greiner, who collected Joyce’s memoirs for the book *Mary Joyce Taku to Fairbanks 1,000 Miles by Dogteam* (AuthorHouse), Daly collaborated on *Nothing To Lose* with pianist Steve Hudson, the pair working together in her New York apartment. Accompanied by Mary Ann McSweeney (bass), Peter Grant (drums) and Napoleon Maddox (human beatbox), *Nothing To Lose* is by turns earthy, evocative, introspective and elusory, but always swinging. Daly, whose saxophone work and hard-bop-tinged, conversational compositions recall Dexter Gordon or Vince Guaraldi, envisioned *Nothing To Lose* not so much as a soundtrack to Joyce’s legendary Juneau-to-Fairbanks run, but as tribute to her willpower and endurance.

“I am so impressed with her spirit,” Daly says. “I found tremendous strength in her fortitude, her resolve to make her own path in life. I admire her humility, her determination and sense of humor.”

Joyce’s Lady Luck Saloon (b. 1898) and Taku Glacier Lodge (b. 1923) still stand today, the bar’s walls lined with photos and remembrances of its former proprietor’s heroics. The sled and harness from her dogsled journey are on display at Taku Glacier Lodge. Joyce remains a revered figure in Juneau, and was even inducted into the Pioneers of Alaska. An excerpt from *Taku to Fairbanks 1,000 Miles by Dogteam* reveals her courage. At one point, accompanied by her five-dog team and guide Chocak Lagoose and his sons, Joyce crossed the frozen Taku River. Joyce’s journal reads, “Chocak scolded his sons and made them put boughs over holes so I could not see the water underneath while crossing. ‘White Lady plenty scared.’ Crossed on my hands and knees and dogs followed like soldiers. Crossed upper Taku and another place over rapids on huge cakes of ice three feet apart helped by sweepers and snags. Put chain on Tip (lead dog) and each dog fell into water, pulled them out on another cake of ice. In places, just room for sled on ice cakes with water leaping over and gurgling underneath.”

The next 300 miles proved treacherous for both woman and beast. The team was exposed to the elements, with nighttime temperatures dipping below –50 F. Finally stopping to travel by plane, Joyce returned to her dogs and pressed on through a blizzard, eventually reaching Fairbanks on March 26, 1936.

It’s hard to imagine Joyce’s frozen adventures sitting in Claire Daly’s cozy Chelsea apartment. Here, her quintet rehearses *Nothing To Lose*, working out the kinks, adding spoken-word tributes, finding the right bal-



ance of mood and melody to reflect Joyce’s true grit. The as-yet unnamed song that will open the piece includes a spoken-word introduction: “Time to explore the universe again/Quiet breeze on a Taku wind.” The uptempo “Cluane” swings hard, Daly’s bari snorting like an Alaskan moose. The Latinish “Gotta Go” is followed by a 6/8 hand-drum-led piece inspired by the Alaskan Tlingit Indians. The group also covers the 1935 smash hit “When I Grow Too Old To Dream,” a favorite of Joyce.

The debut of *Nothing To Lose* marks Daly’s second visit to Alaska. During the festival’s 16 days, her quintet will conduct a jam session at the Lucky Lady, debut *Nothing To Lose* at a Juneau theater and host a concert for “the Young and Young at Heart.” A perennial DownBeat poll winner, Daly has recorded a handful of recordings, including *Heaven Help Us All* with the trio Solar, *Rah! Rah!* with the Claire Daly Band, and Two Sisters Inc.’s *Scaribari*. But the creation of *Nothing To Lose*, like any homage, required more than the standard songwriting approach.

“We didn’t want to only draw a picture of Mary’s dogsled trip, but inspire the listener to think about what inspires them. We’d like the listener to have some kind of transformational experience through the music. Mary was a joyous person, but she experienced some pretty dramatic tragedies in her life, too. Her life informed our music. Some of the music is dark and textural, some of it is warm and beautiful.”

Mary Joyce’s life has inspired Claire Daly, and through more than music.

“This project inspired me personally and musically,” Daly adds. “All of a sudden, after all these gigs I’ve spent my time and energy on, I’m ready to shift focus. I can trust that my needs will be met and now it’s time to concern myself with the quality of the work and the joy of expression, my humanity. This is the beginning of a new phase for me, of creating new projects.”

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Greeley Blues Jam

Greeley, Colorado

June 10–11

In northern Colorado, this citywide event offers popular acts in Island Grove Regional Park Arena and many of Colorado's leading blues artists on the Back Porch Stage. Tie-in blues activities are held at local taverns and restaurants.

Lineup: North Mississippi All-Stars, Night-hawks, Robert Randolph & The Family, Coco Montoya, Trampled Under Foot, Dwayne Dopsie & the Zydeco Hellraisers.

More info: greeleybluesjam.com

Jazz Aspen Snowmass

Aspen and Snowmass, Colorado

June 24–July 2, September 2–4

Aspen's four days of jazz veer a bit mainstream with world-class acts performing nightly at the Benedict Music Tent. Like its Aspen sister fest, Snowmass Village offers not only big names, but up-and-comers out of JAS Academy and small venue shows.

Lineup: Wynton Marsalis & Jazz At Lincoln Center Orchestra, others TBA.

More info: jazzaspen.org

Salt Lake City International Jazz Festival

Salt Lake City, Utah

July 8–10

The 11th year of downtown Salt Lake revelry brings national and Utah artists to the stage, as well as free clinics to the University of Utah.

Lineup: TBA. Past artists have included Nancy Wilson, The Yellowjackets, Kurt Elling, Juan & Pete Escovedo.

More info: slcjazzfestival.org

New Mexico Jazz Festival

Albuquerque and Santa Fe, New Mexico

July 19–31

The sixth annual edition of New Mexico's premier fest takes the jazz aesthetic and free outdoor offerings across city limits, featuring concerts in Albuquerque and Santa Fe, with the Summerfest celebration featuring the Maceo Parker Band in Nob Hill. NEA Jazz Master Randy Weston will also be on hand to discuss his recent autobiography.

Lineup: Randy Weston and his African Rhythms Sextet, Dee Dee Bridgewater, Maceo Parker Band, Preservation Hall Band.

More info: newmexicोजazzfestival.org

Telluride Jazz Celebration

Telluride, Colorado

August 5–7

Telluride celebrates the life and work of Paquito D'Rivera, honoring the versatile Cuban jazz



Charlie Hunter © Telluride Jazz Celebration

artist with a headline spot, as well as toting a stellar supporting backing lineup.

Lineup: Paquito D'Rivera, Clayton Brothers, The Bad Plus, Badi Assad, Melvin Taylor, Tower of Power, Alex Brown Quartet, March Fourth Marching Band, Telluride Student All Star Jazz Ensemble.

More info: telluridejazz.org

Blue Star Blues Festival

Littleton, Colorado

August 6

This Clement Park concert is produced by a non-profit organization that benefits children and young adults with serious health concerns. There's a mix of national, international and regional musicians.

Lineup: Tommy Castro, Ana Popovic, Jack Hadley, Mike Zito, Zac Harmon, Deanna Bogart.

More info: bluestarconnection.org

Vail Jazz Party

Vail, Colorado

September 1–5

The reunion of the Monty Alexander Trio—featuring Monty Alexander, John Clayton and Jeff Hamilton—equals big news for this ski-town fest. A Vail Jazz workshop precedes the Rocky Mountain soiree and is led by artists-in-residence the Clayton Brothers, whose quintet will perform at the weekend party.

Lineup: Monty Alexander Trio, Clayton Brothers Quintet, Shelly Berg, Bobby Floyd, Graham Dechter, Tom Kennedy, David Tull, Jerry Weldon, Warren Wolf, Ernie Adams, Louis Armstrong Salute featuring Byron Stripling.

More info: vailjazz.org

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WEST

Paradise Valley Jazz Party

Phoenix, Arizona

April 16–17

This year's soiree brings attention to the man who started it all, naming Jazz Valley co-founder and compère Don Z. Miller as the festival's 2011 guest of honor with equally honorable backup by a posse of venerable trios.

Lineup: Jeff Hamilton Trio, John Clayton Trio, John Proulx, Dee Daniels, Mike Kocour, Jodi Proznick, Herlin Riley, Bruce Forman, Wycliffe Gordon, Bobby Shew, Warren Vache, Houston Person, Ritchie Cole, Eric Schneider, Arizona State University Jazz Band.

More info: paradisevalleyjazz.com

Ballard Jazz Festival

Seattle, Washington

April 20–23

In addition to a not-to-be-missed mainstage performance, the Ballard Jazz Festival serves up a lineup of events for Puget Sound out-of-towners, including a Sunset Tavern guitar and drum summits, the 16-band/12-venue Jazz Walk and the ever-popular Swedish pancake brunch.

Lineup: TBA. Last year's performers included Claudio Roditi, Hadley Caliman, John Moulder.

More info: ballardjazzfestival.com

Juneau Jazz and Classics

Juneau, Alaska

May 6–21

This 25-year-old southeast Alaskan festival celebrates this important milestone with separately ticketed shipboard performances/wine tastings, educational workshops and various concerts throughout the capital of Juneau. Venues range from in-office atriums to schools.

Lineup: Adawagin Pratt, Evan Drachman, Chuck Cooper, Claire Daly, Richard Dowling, Poncho Sanchez, Rick Estrin and the Nightcats, Jasper String Quartet.

More info: jazzandclassics.org

Sonoma Jazz

Sonoma, California

May 20–22

With a seventh edition that promises a notable lineup, Sonoma turns its focus to what it does best, along with excellent food and wine. This year's edition of vino-country's Wine & Song brunch pre-empta a Gipsy Kings performance and centers around a N'awlins culinary theme.

Lineup: John Fogerty, Sheryl Crow, Gipsy Kings.

More info: sonomajazz.org

Sacramento Jazz Festival & Jubilee

Sacramento, California

May 27–30

Although the party kicks off in typical Mardi



Jazz at the Bowl



Fairbanks Summer Arts Festival

Gras fashion—boasting a Friday parade with beads in tow—the West Coast's premier jazz feast includes a renowned lineup of artists unlimited by genre. Included among the blues, gospel, barbershop and zydeco acts is the Pianorama jazz ivory-tickling showcase and a Lindy-inspired swing dance competition.

Lineup: Banu Gibson & New Orleans Hot Jazz, Vince Bartel's All Stars, Mick Martin and The Blues Rockers, Tom Rigney & Flambeau, Natural Gas, Johnny Cash Tribute featuring James Garner, Steelin' Dan, Lisa Haley & The Zydekats.

More info: sacjazz.com

Bellevue Jazz Festival

Bellevue, Washington

June 1–5

Even with a roster of national and Seattle metro-area talent, this four-day festival channels small-club feel with a mishmash of familiar venues.

Locations range from tableside sit-ins to the intimate acoustics of the Meydenbauer Theater, with a Sunday brunch finale that features the area's most prestigious high school bands.

Lineup: TBA. Past performers have included Dianne Reeves, Kurt Elling, Danilo Pérez.

More info: bellevuejazz.com

Healdsburg Jazz Festival

Healdsburg, California

June 3–12

The 13th run of this Sonoma staple promises seasoned talent from all walks of the jazz community. The standby Hotel Healdsburg and the Dry Creek Kitchen become the mise-en-scène for wine country jazz dinners, along with a Raven Theater kickoff concert by pianist Fred Hersch and emerging guitarist Julian Lage.

Lineup: Fred Hersch, Julian Lage, Charles Lloyd, Zakir Hussein, Eric Harland, John Santos Sextet featuring Pete Escovedo



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More info: healdsburgjazzfestival.org

Playboy Jazz Festival

Los Angeles, California

June 11–12

The 33rd venture of the L.A. Philharmonic sister fest will undoubtedly guarantee a respectable turnout and a surge of top-notch talent. Once again, the genial Bill Cosby will serve as master of ceremonies at the picnic-friendly confines of the Hollywood Bowl, which offers a revolving stage to readily present upcoming acts.

Lineup: The Roots, Lee Konitz, Dianne Reeves, Buddy Guy, John Scofield, Robben Ford.

More info: playboyjazzfestival.com

Jazz At The Bowl

Los Angeles, California

June 22–September 7

Once again, the Hollywood Bowl delivers a variable Mount Rushmore of jazz greats during this summerlong series, from Delta blues legends to r&b all-stars on Wednesdays at 8 p.m. The program deigns to venture into the little known work of big name artists, including Joni Mitchell's jazz repertoire and George Benson B-sides.

Lineup: Jazz at Lincoln Center Orchestra with Wynton Marsalis and Hugh Masekela, Chris Botti and Bobby McFerrin with Yellowjackets, Gladys Knight, Robert Cray, Keb' Mo', Mavis Staples, Dave Koz & Friends, Spyro Gyra, Herbie Hancock, Wayne Shorter, Cassandra Wilson, Orquesta Buena Vista Social Club featuring Omara Portuondo, Ninety Miles featuring Stefon Harris, David Sanchez, Christian Scott, George Benson, George Duke, Marcus Miller, David Sanborn, The Quincy Jones Band featuring The Global Gumbo All-Stars & Friends, Patti Austin, Nikki Yanofsky.

More info: hollywoodbowl.com

Monterey Bay Blues Festival

Monterey, California

June 24–26

Celebrating its 26th year, this gala takes place on three stages at the 22-acre Monterey County Fairgrounds, near the Pacific.

Lineup: TBA. Last year's performers included Tommy Castro, Candye Kane and Johnny Rawls.

More info: montereyblues.com

JAZZ

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JUN 22

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with Wynton Marsalis • Hugh Masekela

JUL 13

Chris Botti
Bobby McFerrin with Yellowjackets

JUL 27

Gladys Knight • James Ingram

AUG 10

Blues Night
Robert Cray • Keb' Mo' • Mavis Staples

AUG 14

Smooth Summer Jazz
Dave Koz & Friends
with Bobby Caldwell and Sheila E
Larry Graham and Graham Central Station
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AUG 17

Joni's Jazz
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Herbie Hancock, Chaka Kahn, Wayne Shorter,
Cassandra Wilson, special guests

AUG 24

Orquesta Buena Vista Social Club®
featuring Omara Portuondo
Arturo Sandoval & The L.A. All-Star
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AUG 31

George Benson
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SEP 7

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Safeway Waterfront Blues Festival Portland, Oregon

July 1–4

The afternoon and evening boat cruises on the Willamette River have about 20 acclaimed acts playing on three stages for a great cause. This fundraiser for the non-profit Oregon Food Bank—a modest charge and two cans of nonperishable food gets each person in—even has fireworks on the Fourth.

Lineup: Buddy Guy, Maceo Parker, Robert Cray, James Harman, Corey Ledet & His Zydeco Band, Grady Champion, Black Joe Lewis, more.

More info: waterfrontbluesfest.com

Fairbanks Summer Arts Festival Fairbanks, Alaska

July 17–31

A self-proclaimed “summer camp for adults,” the 31st edition of the Fairbanks festival keeps education in check with musically minded classes and workshops. Campers appropriately matriculate at the University of Alaska, Fairbanks. Off-campus participants can complement their broadening jazz education with the charm and coziness of Fairbanks’ many bed and breakfasts.

Lineup: Bill Anschell, Brad Boal, Barney McClure, Chris Symer.

More info: fsaf.org

Jazz Port Townsend

Port Townsend, Washington

July 24–31

New to the festival this year is the premiere of NEA composer and arranger Bill Holman, a seasoned jazz veteran of more than 60 years. Holman will instruct various jazz workshops and perform in student lab combos. The focus turns to grandiose big band stints with artistic director John Clayton premiering his piece.

Lineup: Jeff Hamilton Trio, Dee Daniels and Charenee Wade, Paquito D’Rivera,

Jiggs Whigham, Matt Wilson and Friends, Gerald Clayton Trio with Special Guest, Stefon Harris Festival All-Star Big Band in a Celebration of NEA Jazz Masters.

More info: centrum.org/jazz

Port Townsend Acoustic Blues Festival

Port Townsend, Washington

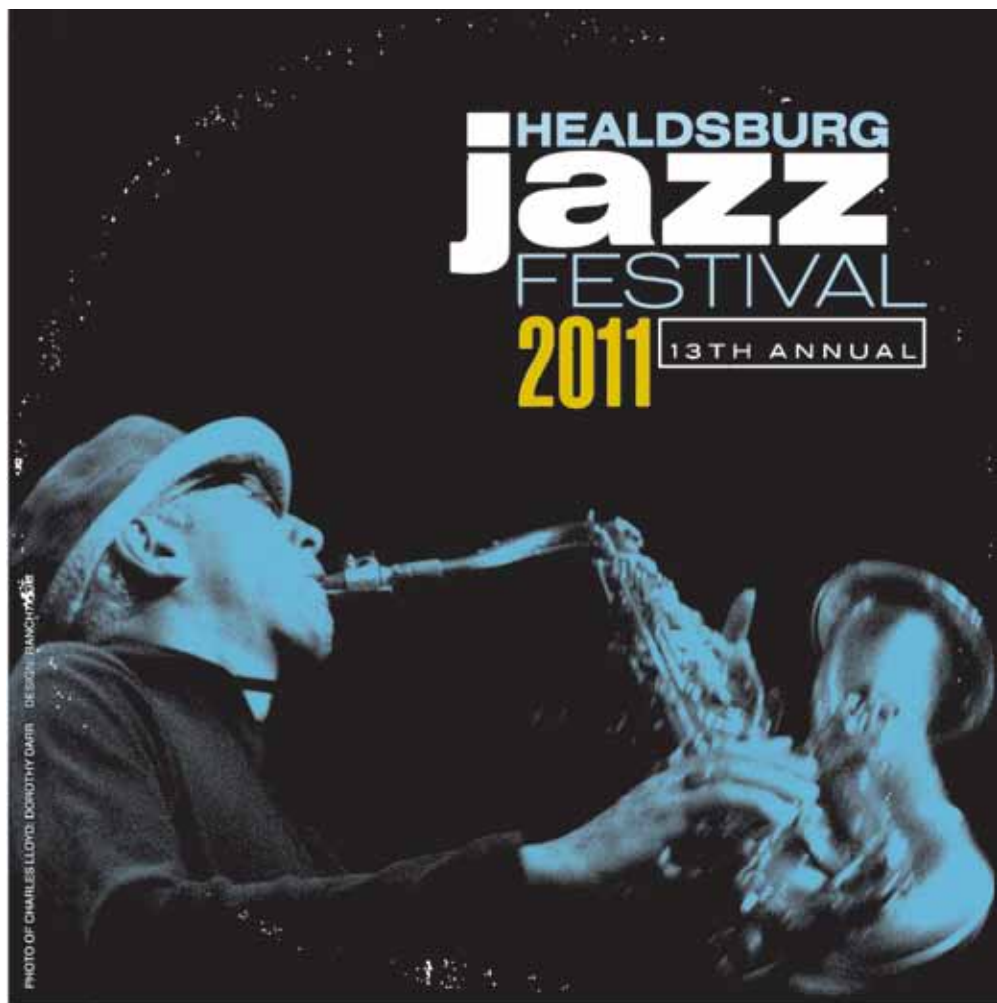
July 31–August 7

The Centrum at Fort Worden State Park—

a gathering place for artists—sponsors a week of country blues with up-and-coming musicians grouped with masters of guitar, harmonica and other instruments. Mountain ranges and the Strait of Juan de Fuca provide the beautiful backdrop for the grand finale concert.

Lineup: Artistic Director Corey Harris, Guy Davis, Otis Taylor, Orville Johnson, Nat Reese, Ann Rabson, Erwin Helfer, more.

More info: centrum.org/blues



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AT&T San Jose Jazz Festival
San Jose, California
August 12-14

The recently upsized venue offers nine stages—four of which are indoors—for a quintessential something-for-everyone experience. Along with a dense lineup of funk and jazz powerhouses, patrons can navigate an expansive club crawl to pick and choose select venues.

Lineup: TBA. Last year's lineup included Tower of Power, Marcus Miller,

George Clinton.

More info: jazzfest.sanjosejazz.org

Jazz 88 Ocean Beach Jazz Festival
Ocean Beach, California
September 10

The Ocean Beach pier soiree jam-packs 26 live bands on seven stages for a stellar one-day event. Vendors also display various murals and trinkets on the block long Art Walk, which boats 60-plus artisans.

Lineup: TBA. Past performers have included

Bonerama, Marcia Ball, Charlie Hunter Trio, Justo Almaro Quartet.

More info: oceanbeachsandiego.com

San Francisco Jazz Festival
San Francisco, California

September 15–November 20

Programmed by the thriving SFJAZZ organization, this festival continues to bring high-profile jazz artists and talented local musicians to venues throughout the city. Genre-crossing heroes are also included.

Lineup: TBA.

More info: sfjazz.org

Monterey Jazz Festival

Monterey, California

September 16–18

The world's longest continually running jazz festival presents another packed weekend of music in this Pacific Coast town. Big ticketed events take place in the arena, while the fairgrounds feature indoor and outdoor stages that often host the main stage performers after their arena sets.

Lineup: TBA.

More info: montereyjazzfestival.org

Angel City Jazz Festival

Los Angeles, California

September 20–October 9

The emerging Angel City fest exposes a diverse cast of Los Angeles patrons to a realm of avant-garde jazz and world artists. The series brings creativity to six different venues, with a culmination performance at the John Anson Ford Amphitheatre.

Lineup: Tigran Hamasyan, Rudresh Mahanthappa, Pan Afrikan People's Arkestra.

More info: angelcityjazz.com

Jazz at Newport

Newport, Oregon

September 30–October 2

Settled on the Oregon coast, this workshop-intensive program features a plethora of seasoned talent at the Newport Performing Arts Center.

Lineup: TBA. Past performers have included Dave Captein, John Clayton, Jim Douglas.

More info: jazzatnewport.org

Earshot Jazz Festival

Seattle, Washington

October 14–November 6

The yearly rite of fall in the Pacific Northwest has a twofold mission: to present artists whose music falls outside the mainstream and to provide a showcase for Seattle's multigenerational jazz scene.

Lineup: TBA. Last year included Erik Friedlander and Henry Threadgill.

More info: earshot.org

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SAT One Voice: An Afternoon of Vocal Jazz and Blues

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SUN Latin Jazz on the Green

John Santos, Pete Escovedo, Arturo Sandoval, Romero Lubambo, Claudia Villela, Harvey Wainapel, Pamela Driggs, Ricardo Peixoto, Ami Molinelli, and many more
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WEEKEND 2 | JUNE 9-12

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FRI Sangam with Charles Lloyd, Zakir Hussain, and Eric Harland

SAT All-Star Evening

with George Cables, Bobby Hutcherson, Bobby Watson, Craig Handy, David Weiss, Ray Drummond, Victor Lewis, plus Denny Zeitlin and the John Heard Trio with Lorca Hart

SUN Sunday Morning Spirituals

with Ruth Naomi Floyd, James Newton, Bennie Maupin, and the HJF All-Stars

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Bix Beiderbecke Festival Keeps The Trad Faith

By John McDonough

The Bix Beiderbecke Memorial Jazz Festival in Davenport, Iowa, which marks its 40th anniversary and the 80th year since Beiderbecke's death Aug. 4–7, is the Mostly Mozart of American jazz festivals, the only one branded and dedicated to the music and spirit of one musician.

When the first Bix Festival was organized in the summer of 1972, Beiderbecke was long gone, dead at 28 in 1931. But some locals in that first crowd such as Espen Spurrier had memories of hanging out with him or hearing him play. And many of Beiderbecke's contemporaries were still active: Bing Crosby, Benny Goodman, Hoagy Carmichael, Gene Krupa, Al Rinker Bud Freeman and others. They never visited a Bix Fest, but others did, according to music director Josh Duffee, including Bill Challis, Chauncey Morehouse, Bill Rank, Wingy Manone, Paul Mertz and Doc Ryker.

The Beiderbecke branding may come from a distant antiquity, but it touches the present in ways that aren't discussed much at the festival. Beiderbecke is the romantic template of a uniquely 20th-century hero. The self-extinguishing artist-martyr is an extension into modern pop culture of the 19th century literary triumvirate of John Keats–Percy Shelley–Lord Byron. In his footsteps would follow a tragic procession of later cultural heroes made incomplete by their own hand: Charlie Parker, Jimi Hendrix, Kurt Cobain, etc. Yet, in a way, Beiderbecke was truest to the 19th century romantic ideal, dying in uncelebrated obscurity to be discovered posthumously and reborn in mythic legend.

No one has nourished that legend more diligently than the Bix Beiderbecke Memorial Society, which was founded in 1971. Its focus has never roamed from its original mission, which remains not merely “traditional” jazz, but specifically that unique slice of tradition that centers on the white Midwest and New York scenes of the 1920s.

Those who recoil at tubas and banjos or believe that Dixieland has been squeezed of any capacity for surprise may find unexpected delight in its fundamental logic. As for the True Believers, they need no convincing. This amiable assortment of camp followers remains the core of the festival audience. But it's hard not to notice the aging demographics. Last year 92 percent of the crowd had attended previous Bix festivals. While such loyalty may be warming, it also means that new attendees numbered only 8 per-

cent. Moreover, 74 percent of those white-haired stompers were older than 60 while only 5 percent were under 41, according to the festival's own survey.

“Certainly that's a concern,” said Michael Boyler, president of the Bix Society. “One of the main strategies of preservation is through music education. For several years we've sponsored a Bix Youth Band, which involves students chosen from high schools within about 50 miles of Davenport. It's a purely extracurricular activity outside the public school band programs and covers a fairly broad range of big band music beyond Bix and the Paul Whiteman era. But it's remarkable how involved these kids get. Many are going outside on their own to get more education in this genre of music.”

A case in point is festival musical director

and drummer Josh Duffee, who at 31 is nearly a decade younger than the event he oversees.

“I was a part of the Bix Youth Band in 1998 and I loved it,” Duffee said. “About that same time I watched the New Wolverine Jazz Band do Jean Goldkette's ‘I'm Going To Meet My Sweetie Now’ [1927], and the light bulb went on. This is what I want to do, play '20s music.”

Duffee promises 17 bands this year, more than at any previous festival. Dick Hyman, Allen Vache and Randy Sandke (whose four-year-old son is named Bix) will headline the Statesmen of Jazz. Vince Giordano's Nighthawks and the West End Jazz Band will provide a wider period context of 1920s dance music. The Giordano and Duffee bands will also stage a battle reenacting the 1926 Roseland showdown between Goldkette and Fletcher Henderson.

DB



Josh Duffee

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de Lucia**
June 25



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To Forever IV**
June 26



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June 30



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June 28



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Robert Cray
Eliane Elias
The MG's
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CANADA

Festival de Musique Actuelle de Victoriaville

Victoriaville, Quebec

May 19-22

FIMAV offers a unique, eclectic lineup of jazz, electronic music and sonic experimentation. The intimate venues and imaginative programming make this small Quebec city a destination for music fans from around the world.

Lineup: The Ex & Brass Unbound, Koi-chi Makigami, Kid Koala, Peter Brötzmann, Anthony Braxton Echo Echo Mirror House, Ig Henneman Sextet, Wolf Eyes, more.

More info: fimav.qc.ca

World Guitar Festival

Rouyn-Noranda, Quebec

May 28-June 4

Now in its seventh year, the World Guitar Festival celebrates an array of jazz performers touting influences of blues, reggae and Latin rhythms.

Lineup: Jose Feliciano, Don McLean.

More info: fgmat.com

TD Ottawa International Jazz Festival

Ottawa, Ontario

June 23-July 3

Canada's capital city offers tremendous venues both outside at Confederation Park and inside the National Arts Centre. The festival's late-night jam sessions are particularly well attended by headliners and fans alike.

Lineup: Elvis Costello & The Imposters, Return To Forever IV, Paco de Lucia, Brad Mehldau & Joshua Redman, Darcy James Argue's Secret Society, Kurt Elling, Christian McBride & Inside Straight, Kenny Wheeler, Evan Parker, more.

More info: ottawajazzfestival.com

Edmonton International Jazz Festival

Edmonton, Alberta

June 24-July 3

One of Canada's original jazz festivals, the Edmonton event has maintained this northern city's reputation as a great jazz town. Venues include the legendary Yardbird Suite and the soft-seat Winspear Centre.

Lineup: TBA.

More info: edmontonjazz.com

TD Toronto Downtown Jazz Festival

Toronto, Ontario

June 24-July 3

Featuring more than 350 concerts, the festival spreads across 40 venues in Toronto's core. The programming runs from noon to 4 a.m. daily, and covers a broad range of genres.

Lineup: Kurt Elling, Béla Fleck & the Original Flecktones, Paco de Lucia, Return To



Stanley Jordan @ World Guitar Festival

Forever IV, Dave Brubeck, Jacky Terrasson, Randy Weston, Eliane Elias, Yousou N'Dour, more.

More info: tojazz.com

TD Winnipeg International Jazz Festival

Winnipeg, Manitoba

June 16-25

Festivities in this culturally rich prairie city culminate with a weekend-long series of outdoor concerts at Old Market Square in the heart of the historic Exchange District.

Lineup: Jazz at Lincoln Center Orchestra featuring Wynton Marsalis, Robert Glasper, Trombone Shorty, The Lost Fingers, Gary Burton, more.

More info: jazzwinnipeg.com

TD Vancouver International Jazz Festival

Vancouver, British Columbia

June 24-July 3

During its 26 years, the festival has established a reputation for combining the best European improvising artists with homegrown talent and U.S. headliners. Among the highlights are free weekend concerts and daily workshops.

Lineup: Paco de Lucia, Jazz at Lincoln Center Orchestra featuring Wynton Marsalis, Peter Brötzmann, Trombone Shorty, Christian McBride Inside Straight, Satoko Fujii, more.

More info: coastaljazz.ca

SaskTel Saskatchewan Jazz Festival

Saskatoon, Saskatchewan

June 24-July 3

The festival is held on two riverfront stages and a number of indoor venues around this

lushly treed northern prairie city.

Lineup: Christian McBride Quintet, Holly Cole, Oliver Jones, Hilario Duran Latin Jazz Big Band featuring Jane Bunnett, more.

More info: saskjazz.com

TD Victoria International JazzFest Victoria, British Columbia

June 24–July 3

The festival features more than 90 performances in Canada's westernmost city. Venues include outdoor stages and four hotels.

Lineup: Paco de Lucia, Lincoln Center Jazz Orchestra featuring Wynton Marsalis, Trombone Shorty, Christian McBride & Inside Straight, Madeleine Peyroux.

More info: jazzvictoria.ca

Festival International de Jazz de Montreal

Montreal, Quebec

June 25–July 4

From the intimate confines of Salle de G  su to the free outdoor extravaganzas, which regularly draw tens of thousands of revelers to Rue Ste. Catherine, North America's largest celebration of jazz, blues and beyond remains the summer's best opportunity to immerse yourself in music.

Lineup: Diana Krall, Paco de Lucia, Milton Nascimento, Pink Martini, Holly Cole, Sade, Madeleine Peyroux, George Wein's 85th Anniversary Celebration, more.

More info: montrealjazzfest.com

TD Halifax Jazz Festival Halifax, Nova Scotia

July 8–16

Known for its casual, intimate atmosphere and late-night hangs on the city's waterfront, the festival features 450 artists and dovetails with the annual Creative Music Workshop, which brings together players from all musical traditions to work together and study with drummer Jerry Granelli, saxophonist David Mott and other clinicians.

Lineup: TBA.

More info: halifaxjazzfestival.ca

Vancouver Island MusicFest Courtenay, British Columbia

July 8–10

On the Comon Valley Exhibition Grounds, alongside farmland on the island's east coast, MusicFest hosts several dozen acts from various roots-music styles.

Lineup: Steve Riley & The Mamou Playboys, Alison Krauss, more.

More info: islandmusicfest.com

Vancouver Folk Music Festival

Vancouver, British Columbia

July 15–17

At Jericho Beach Park on the Pacific, seven

daytime stages and three evening main stages share green space with International Food booths and the Arts Market.

Lineup: TBA. Last year's artists included Alvin Youngblood Hart, Jim Byrnes.

More info: thefestival.bc.ca

Kitchener Blues Festival Kitchener, Ontario

August 4–7

In its 11th year, Canada's largest free blues festival, held downtown, hosts leading regional, national and international artists. This year there's a special salute to Muddy Waters Band alumni Pinetop Perkins, Bob Margolin and Willie Smith.

Lineup: Johnny & Edgar Winter, John Mayall, Jimmie Vaughan, Bettye LaVette.

More info: kitchenerbluesfestival.com

Labatt Blues Festival Edmonton, Alberta

August 19–21

The only Canadian event to earn an international Blues Foundation award takes place at Hawrelak Park's Heritage Amphitheatre in the panoramic North Saskatchewan River valley.

Lineup: John Nemeth Big Band, Guitar Shorty, Chubby Carrier & The Bayou Swamp Band, more.

More info: bluesinternationaltd.com

Guelph Jazz Festival Guelph, Ontario

September 7–11

Located in a university town an hour outside Toronto, the festival is set apart by the inclusion of an academic jazz colloquium and numerous workshops featuring musicians in intimate settings. The festival has a history of booking artists who are rarely featured on the North American festival circuit.

Lineup: TBA.

More info: guelphjazzfestival.com

Pender Harbour Jazz Festival Pender Harbour, British Columbia

September 16–18

Set in a picturesque fishing town north of Vancouver on Canada's Sunshine Coast, the 15-year-old festival uses a variety of waterfront venues, including a floating one.

Lineup: Amanda Tossoff Quintet, Jesse Cahill's Night Crawlers, more.

More info: penderharbourmusic.ca

Quebec City Jazz Festival Quebec City, Quebec

October 24–30

Focused in the Saint-Roch neighborhood and a beautifully restored concert hall overlooking the gates of the old city, this four-year-old event has established itself as a great fall festival.

Lineup: TBA.

More info: jazzquebec.ca



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EUROPE

International Jazz Festival Bern

Bern, Switzerland

March 11–May 21

This Swiss festival hosts plenty of international jazz and blues artists at multiple venues within this metropolis of jazz, such as ticketed evening concerts at classic house of jazz Marian's Jazzroom and the historic National Bern Theater, while the park of the Hotel Innere Enge provides free entertainment.

Lineup: Biréli Lagrene Trio, Jean-Luc Ponty & Wolfgang Dauner Duo, Joe Louis Walker, Sista Monica, Roy Gaines Orchestra, Ahmad Jamal, Carmen Lundy, The Overtone Quartet, Pacquito D'Rivera's Tango Jazz Septet, Tom Harrell Quintet, Michel Camilo Trio, Bob Wilber & The Young Generation All-Stars, Patti Austin and Trio, Michel Legrand Trio, HKB Jazzorchestra featuring Bert Joris, Pommelhorse, Bounce, Wolverines Jazz Band.

More info: jazzfestivalbern.ch

Barclays Cheltenham Jazz Festival

Cheltenham, England

April 27–May 2

Held in association with BBC Radio 2, this festival has featured mainstream and cutting-edge jazz from around the world, including young British talent. The fest is located about 100 miles west of London.

Lineup: Overtone Quartet, BBC Concert Orchestra, James Hunter, Tord Gustavsen, Jamie Cullum, Django Bates, Kyle Eastwood, Curios, Andrea Triana, Susanna, Kit Downes.

More info: cheltenhamfestivals.com/jazz

Ulrichsberger Kaleidophon

Ulrichsberger, Austria

April 29–May 1

From North America to Asia, this gallery-style exhibition draws in international movers and shakers from the jazz and art worlds and occurs circa the Bohemian Forest. Markus Riebe will showcase his digital media works to the sounds of improvisational and contemporary jazz numbers.

Lineup: Deployment 3, Violin and Electronics, Red Trio, Recall Pollock, Lazro/Pauvros/Turner, Theseus vs. John Lindberg's TriPolar, Sebastian Lexer, Sum, B:F:N, Dawn of Midi.

More info: jazzatelier.at

Jazzfestival Basel

Basel, Switzerland

April 30–May 13

The jazz organization Offbeat lives up to its name, honing a variable hodgepodge of underground artists while enlisting big names, as



Mary Halvorson Trio @ Jazz Festival Willisau

well as various combos and ensembles.

Lineup: George Gruntz and Concert Jazz Band, Nigel Kennedy Septet, Colin Vallon Trio, Gianluigi Trovesi/Gianni Coscia-Duo, François Couturier Quartet "Songs For Tarkowsky," Bobo Stenson Trio, Tobias Preisig Quartet, Dave Holland's Overtone Quartet featuring Jason Moran, Muthspiel & Grenadier & Turner, Jean-Paul Brodbeck Quintet, Joe Locke/Dado Moroni/Rosario Giuliani, Renaud Garcia Fons Sextett plays the Filmmusic "Prince Ahmed" (mit Film!), Dianne Reeves Guitar Project, Incognito: The Jubilee Band, Rita Marcotulli-Nonett play Pink Floyd, Till Brönner Group, Bobby McFerrin.

More info: jazzfestivalbasel.ch

Moulin Blues Festival

Ospel, Limburg, the Netherlands

May 6–7

The popular Dutch festival is in its 25th year and imports talent from the United States, France, Great Britain, Denmark and other places. B.B. King and Buddy Guy are among the scores of musicians who've performed here.

Lineup: Dave Riley & Bob Corritore's Juke Joint Blues Band, Homemade Jamz Blues Band, Nick Moss & the Flip-tops, Los Lonely Boys, more.

More info: moulinblues.nl

New Conversations–Vincenza Jazz

Vicenza, Italy

May 6–14

The 16th run of this renowned jazz extravaganza brings present-day artists to the quaint and intimate venues of Renaissance-era Vincenza, including the city's Teatro Olimpico, the world's oldest indoor theater.

Lineup: TBA. Last year's lineup included Kurt Rosenwinkel Trio, Chuck Israels European Group.

More info: vincenzajazz.org

Matosinhos Jazz

Matosinhos, Portugal

May 11–14

In this fishing town close to Oporto, new architecture and historical monuments create the festival's unique setting. This year the Matosinhos Jazz Orchestra will perform with Maria Joao.

Lineup: Matosinhos Jazz Orchestra, Larry Carlton, Tania Maria, Ivan Padois, more.

More info: cm-matosinhos.pt

Estoril Jazz

Estoril, Portugal

May 27–June 5

This festival devoted to mainstream jazz takes place in a sea-coast town near Lisbon. All concerts take place at the Casino Estoril.

Lineup: Joe Lovano, Tia Fuller, Anat Cohen, Jack Walrath, more.

More info: projazz.pt

Iford Festival 2011

Brandford on Avon, England

June 10–11, August 12–13

The Italianate Peto Garden sets the stage for four nights of otherworldly jazz experiences, offering jazz promenade performances and seated cloister shows. Iford's diverse program succeeds an intimate pre-show picnic, with programs such as "First Night Jazz Party," "Midsummer Jazz" and "Friday Fiesta."

Lineup: Tina May, The Numbers Racket, Jim Hart, Digby Fairweather, Omar Puente, Claudia Aurora, Kosmos, She'koyokh.

More info: ifordarts.co.uk



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Moers Festival

Moers, Germany

June 10–12

This year marks the 40th anniversary of the festival that may be best known in America for its live recordings of progressive jazz and new music artists of the '70s and '80s—like Fred Anderson and Anthony Braxton. The event that spawned this creativity carries on with a dynamic mixture of artists.

Lineup: Achim Tang, more.

More info: moers-festival.de

Stockholm Jazz Festival

Stockholm, Sweden

June 17–19

For its 28th run, one of Sweden's oldest festivals moves from the island of Skeppsholmen to the highly regarded Skansen venue. The acclaimed soiree brings together a variety of noted jazz, rock and r&b artists.

Lineup: Cassandra Wilson, Lagaylia Frazier & Jan Lundgren Trio, Hal Frazier, Lekverk, Niklas Barno with Je Suis!, Robert Glasper Experiment.

More info: stockholmjazz.com

JazzAscona

Ascona, Switzerland

June 23–July 3

For his birthday centennial, bebop trumpeter Roy Eldridge gets recognized in a series of tribute performances at this multicultural gathering. Widely regarded as a paramount European jazz event, the Lake Maggiore fest presents more than 200 concerts and 300 artists, with emphasis on New Orleans-style acts.

Lineup: TBA. Last year's lineup included Wycliffe Gordon, Herlin Riley, Jay Leonhart.

More info: jazzascona.ch

Jazz A Vienne

Vienne, France

June 29–July 13

With around 150,000 people attending the various concerts, Vienne is truly one of the major jazz events in Europe. The festival will be celebrating its 31th anniversary this summer with a program as eclectic as it has always tried to be, mixing straight-ahead jazz with pop acts. They also try and focus on a different theme each night—blues, soul, gospel, funk, etc. The festival makes the most of its four different stages, including the prestigious Roman theater for the bigger names, the midnight club devoted to the rising stars or the Jazz Mix for musicians beyond the strict jazz canon.

Lineup: Tom Jones, Jamie Cullum, Rhoda Scott, a Tribute To Miles Davis by Marcus Miller, Herbie Hancock and Wayne Shorter.

More info: jazzavienne.com

Lakeside (Puisto) Blues Festival

Jarvenpaa, Finland

June 29–July 3

One of Europe's most popular festivals, Puisto takes place in a modest-sized city north of Helsinki. The festival runs five days and concludes with dozens of musicians performing in a park next to Lake Tuusula.

Lineup: TBA.

More info: puistoblues.fi

Ljubljana Jazz Festival

Ljubljana, Slovenia

June 29–July 3

The Ljubljana Festival has always been impressively programmed and wide ranging. The venues range from clubs to a sizable amphitheater. Check out the view from the hilltop castle.

Lineup: TBA.

More info: ljublana.si

Copenhagen Jazz Festival

Copenhagen, Denmark

July 1–10

With more than 1,000 concerts spread out over 100 venues, Copenhagen always delivers with a sublime program of international A-list talent that never edges out the country's own Nordic jazz greats. This festival takes up the entire city; its friendliness and walkability make the event all the more attractive to international visitors and locals.

Lineup: Keith Jarrett Trio, more.

More info: jazz.dk

Istanbul Jazz Festival

Istanbul, Turkey

July 1–18

This cosmopolitan event brings international stars and newcomers together in stadiums and small venues throughout the city.

Lineup: Chick Corea, Stanley Clarke, more.

More info: iksv.org



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Montreux Jazz Festival

Montreux, Switzerland

July 1-16

The most notable Swiss event continues mixing great jazz with rock and blues stars.

Lineup: TBA.

More info: montreuxjazz.com

JazzBaltica

Salzau, Germany

July 1-3

Held in the historic Salzau castle, this year's Baltica program honors Esbjörn Svensson with a promising lineup of jazz greats. The festival also hosts the premier of supergroup Apex featuring Rudresh Mahanthappa and Bunky Green.

Lineup: Apex, Pat Metheny, Nils Landgren, Vijay Iyer, Donny McCaslin, Dave Douglas.

More info: jazzbaltica.de

Kongsberg Jazz Festival

Kongsberg, Norway

July 6-9

With a name similar to a Sonny Rollins classic, the "Silver City" mining town exhibits a four-day lineup of eclectic artists a mere 90 miles from Oslo. While the Scandinavian festival serves up an array of international artists, its claim to fame is the focus on local talent.

Lineup: Bergen Big Band with Terje Rypdal & Skywards, Monolithic, Andrea Rydin

Berges quintet, Joshua Redman/Brad Mehldau, Gumbo, Maya Homburger/Barry Guy, Maria Kannegaard Trio with Siri Gjaere and Ola Kvernberg, Chili Vanilla, Charles Lloyd, more.

More info: kongsberg-jazzfestival.no

Gent Jazz Festival

Gent, Belgium

July 7-17

Once again, the medieval-style port city offsets its traditional architecture with a stellar lineup of fusion and contemporary jazz names. The festival annually presents its Django D'Or Award to standout European musicians.

Lineup: B.B. King, Steven De Bruyn, Tony Gyselinck & Roland.

More info: gentjazz.com

Nice Jazz Festival

Nice, France

July 8-12

The Nice Jazz Festival has been a musical event with a shifting identity. Two years ago, they had showed a clearly ambitious jazz program with Brad Mehldau, McCoy Tyner, Joshua Redman and Sonny Rollins. Last year's focus had been on Al Jarreau, Earth, Wind & Fire, Dweezil Zappa, Herbie Hancock, Fiction Plane, Pat Metheny and Pink Martini. The main body of the program branches out into pop,

rock and folk directions. There has been a clear strengthening of the jazz program, with a different theme each night (jazz & folk night, funk night, etc.). It remains one of the most lively festivals in the southeast of France.

Lineup: TBA

More info: nicejazzfestival.fr

North Sea Jazz Festival

Rotterdam, The Netherlands

July 8-10

This classic northern European festival brings between 60,000 to 70,000 people to its three-day bash at the city's Ahoy Complex. Most of the festival's 200-plus jazz, blues and pop acts on 15 stages are free.

More info: northseajazz.com

Umbria Jazz Festival

Perugia, Italy

July 8-17

One of Europe's most grand and classy affairs, the Umbria Jazz Festival celebrates its 38th year with a supergroup of Wayne Shorter, Herbie Hancock and Marcus Miller paying tribute to their former bandleader, Miles Davis. Also, to celebrate the 150th anniversary of Italian unification, all of the country's homegrown artists will perform their own rendition of "Inno Di Mameli," the national anthem. Most of the concerts are ticketed, but there is also a large

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Lineup: Anat Cohen, Tia Fuller, B.B. King, Ahmad Jamal, Michel Camilo, Sergio Mendes, Caro Emerald, Trombone Shorty, more.

More info: umbriajazz.com

Aarhus Jazz Festival

Aarhus, Denmark

July 9–16

This adjunct of the trademark Copenhagen Jazz Festival prides itself on the evolution of its lineup. The popular Danish fest brings in artists from all over the world for an enticing program of many jazz sects, among them Latin jazz and world music.

Lineup: TBA.

More info: jazzfest.dk

Pori Jazz Festival

Pori, Finland

July 9–17

Attracting 60,000 patrons last year, the west Finland coastline fest hopes to garner a few more with Elton John as its Saturday night headliner. Infamous for bringing a realm of jazz legends to the forefront of international festivals, Pori also attracts a wealth of genre-spanning talent, including world music and hip-hop artists.

Lineup: Elton John, Sing the Truth, Jo Stance.

More info: porijazz.fi

Jazz Vitoria-Gasteiz

Vitoria-Gasteiz, Spain

July 10–16

The 35th anniversary of the Spanish fest honors Miles Davis with a triumvirate of jazz legends: Herbie Hancock, Marcus Miller and Wayne Shorter. The historic Basque region tempts festival-goers with a pastiche of local venues, from century-old theaters to intimate jam sessions.

Lineup: Herbie Hancock/Wayne Shorter/Marcus Miller "Tribute to Miles Davis," Jamie Cullum, Jose James, Branford Marsalis, Miguel Zenón, Ruben Blades, more.

More info: jazzvitoria.com

Roma's Jazz Cool Festival

Rome, Italy

July 11–17

The seventh edition of this workshop-affiliated program showcases two performances per day: an earlier presentation of well-known artists and original works, as well as a late-night showcase of young emerging artists and experimental acts. Concurrently, master classes are conducted alongside the festival's top-tier talent.

Lineup: Danilo Perez, Sheila Jordan, John Patitucci, Lage Lund, Dave Liebman, Joe La Barbera.

More info: jazzschool.it

Bohemia Jazzfest

Various cities, Czech Republic

July 12–16 & July 21–24

The largest jazz festival in the Czech Republic offers a series of free outdoor concerts on beautiful town squares in Domazlice, Plzen, Tabor, Brno, Prachatice, Ceske Budejovice and the stunning baroque capital of Prague. Run by Rudy Linka, the Czech-born, internationally acclaimed jazz guitarist, Bohemia Jazzfest has succeeded in presenting a dynamic mix of top European and North American artists since its inception in 2005.

Lineup: McCoy Tyner Quartet, John Scofield Quartet, Dr. Lonnie Smith Trio, Terje Rypdal Big Band, Rudy Linka & Bobo Stenson, more.

More info: bohemiajazzfest.cz/en

Jazz A Juan

Juan-les-Pins, France

July 14–24

After last year's celebration of its 50th anniversary and concerts by Marcus Miller, Keith Jarrett, or David Sanborn, Jazz à Juan will try and keep up the good work. The Gould Theatre among the pinewood by the sea has always hosted prestigious bills and this year again a number of famous artists will grace its stage, among them B.B. King. Other guests will be the French singer Ben Oncle Soul and

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Lineup: B.B. King, more.

More info: jazzajuan.fr

Jazzfest Wien

Vienna, Austria

July 15-17

The Vienna-based fest brings an onslaught of international jazz performers to venues once frequented by Beethoven and Mozart, including the Vienna State Opera, Town Hall, Konzerthaus and others. The urban house of neo-classical music also boasts a diverse nightlife that includes soul and blues performances.

Lineup: Chick Corea, Omara Portuondo, Thomas Quasthoff.

More info: viennajazz.org

MoldeJazz

Molde, Norway

July 18-23

Even in the 50th year of this Norwegian standard, festival directors organize a program that gravitates toward an audience of younger jazz enthusiasts. The lineup combines contemporary jazz with a selection of mainstream pop and hip-hop acts, with Nils Peter Molvaer resuming the role of artist-in-residence.

Lineup: John McLaughlin, Dianne Reeves, Mostly Other People Do The Killing, Trombone Shorty, more.

More info: moldejazz.no

Heineken Jazzaldia

San Sebastian, Spain

July 21-25

The 46th annual coastline concert brings big-name jazz artists to the medieval Plaza Trinidad and state-of-the-art Kursaal Auditorium during ticketed shows. Talent also performs seaside, courtesy of the free concerts at Zurriola Beach.

Lineup: TBA. Last year's lineup included Elvis Costello and Kris Kristofferson.

More info: heinekenjazzaldia.com

Siena Jazz Festival

Siena, Italy

July 24-August 7

The multifaceted, workshop-intensive Siena fest lets jazz students participate in various master classes ending in publicly open concerts. The concerts combine student artists with venerable Italian talent.

Lineup: TBA. Past performers have included Miguel Zenón, Eddie Henderson, George Garzone.

More info: sienajazz.it

Jazz A Foix

Foix, France

July 25-31

Located in the southwest mountains near the Spanish border, Foix has been an ambitious festival for 11 years. Ira Gitler presented last year's concerts (notably Kenny Barron, the Curtis Fuller Quintet, the Charles McPherson Quartet), showing that the festival's philosophy is about no-nonsense jazz. The program will feature Ahmad Jamal, The Cookers, Gypsy guitarist Stevee Laffont, as well as piano legends René Urtreger and Roger Kellaway with altoist Dimitri Baevsky. Foix is renowned for its spectacular landscapes.

Lineup: Ahmad Jamal, The Cookers, more.

More info: jazzfoix.com

Jazz in Marciac

Marciac, France

July 29-August 15

As one of the main European festivals, Marciac as always made specific efforts to offer both high-profile bills for the general public and a demanding content representing a wide spectrum of the contemporary jazz scene. The music outside the main venue during the day is very varied and plentiful (and by no means a lesser program) than the evening concerts. The village of Marciac and the surrounding countryside in the southwest of France is also of particular interest in itself as a place for summer holiday.

Lineup: TBA.

More info: jazzinmarciac.com

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Jazz in Ramadan

Istanbul, Turkey

August 1–29

Each year, Jazz Ramadan brings new perspective to this sacred time of cultural unity, combining social peace with a unique jazz experience. Patrons make pilgrimage to the landmark Sultanahmet venues to listen to jazz by enlightening Middle Eastern artists. Directors readily incorporate a lineup of traditional and classical Turkish music into the mix of regional jazz.

Lineup: Last year's performers included Ahmad Jamal, Anouar Brahem, Abdullah Ibrahim, Dhafer Youssef, Ilhan Ersahin, Aydin Esen.

More info: heproductions.com;
jazzinramadan.com

Ystad Sweden Jazz Festival

Ystad, Sweden

August 4–7

Due to its increasing prominence in the Scandinavian jazz scene, Artistic Director Jan Lundgren adds another day to the Ystad program, rounding out the weekend with 10 more concerts for 32 total performances. A mere ferry away from Danish jazz epicenter of Copenhagen, this festival prides itself on its pastiche of world-class and breakthrough Swedish talent.

Lineup: Herb Geller, Richard Galliano, Enrico Pieranunzi, Paolo Fresu, Toots Thielemans, Miriam Aida, Youn Sun Nah, Stefano Bollani, Scott Hamilton, more.

More info: ystadjazz.se

Gouvvy Jazz & Blues Festival

Gouvvy, Wallonia, Belgium

August 5–7

"Gouvvy is Groovy" remains the rallying cry for the 32nd open-air concert weekend at Madelonne Farm. The host family brews festival beer. European and American musicians are featured.

Lineup: Ricky Ford, Michel Legrand, David Sanchez, Bernard Allison, "Girls With Guitars" Blues Caravan, Christophe Marquilly Blues Trio, more.

More info: gouvvy.eu/madelonne

Jazz Em Agosto

Lisbon, Portugal

August 5–14

This year, the festival will take place for 10 straight days without a break, bringing together the leading lights in European and American jazz and free improvisation.

Lineup: Cecil Taylor, Wadada Leo Smith, Fight The Bull with Steven Bernstein, more.

More info: musica/gulbenkian.pt/jazz

Jazz Festival Willisau

Willisau, Switzerland

August 24–28

Along with a weekend of camping, visitors can partake in a jazz program that offers contemporary and traditional jazz in the confines of the Festhalle in medieval Willisau. This year marks the fest's 37th anniversary.

Lineup: TBA.

More info: jazzfestivalwillisau.ch

International Jazz Festival Saalfelden

Saalfelden, Austria

August 25–28

The region of Salzburg remains an artistic centerpiece for this promising festival, now in its 31st year. The avant-garde lineup performs not only on the festival's main stage but also on a number of stages dispersed throughout historic Saalfelden, such as the "Short Cuts" secondary venue.

Lineup: TBA.

More info: jazzsaalfelden.com

Sierre Blues Festival

Sierre, Switzerland

August 25–28

In the middle of the Swiss Alps not far from Italy, this open-air festival has two stages on fairgrounds and several more downtown.

Lineup: TBA.

More info: sierrebluesfestival.com

Ystad 4-7aug Sweden 2011 JazzFestival



Jan Lundgren, Artistic Director

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www.ystadjazz.se

Voll-Damm Barcelona
Barcelona, Spain

October 4–December 1

Meticulous year-round planning results in a two-month marathon event in the fall that offers more than 50 shows at some of the region's most prestigious jazz haunts in Spain's most beautiful city. For the 43rd run, venues range from the more prominent Palau de la Musica to some of the party city's hole-in-the-wall jazz gems, such as the Jamboree and Harlem Jazz Club.

Lineup: TBA. Past performers have included Wayne Shorter, Marcus Miller, Jimmy Cobb.

More info: barcelonajazzfestival.com

Akbank Jazz Festival
Istanbul, Turkey

October 13–23

Turkey's premier jazz celebration occurs for the 21st year throughout downtown Istanbul at a variety of venues, from the large-scale Lutfi Kirdar Concert Hall boasting festival mainstays to the more modest Babylon, Ghetto and Nardis hotspots.

Lineup: TBA. Last year's performers included John Suman, Miroslav Vitous, Nils Petter Molvaer, Ahmad Jamal.

More info: akbanksanat.com/jazz_festival

Salzburger Jazz-Herbst
Salzburg, Austria

October 25–November 6

With more than 50,000 visitors attending more than 100 events in this historic music city, Salzburger Jazz-Herbst has been expanding since its inception in 1996. Performances take place in elegant concert halls as well as in clubs and outdoor venues.

Lineup: Hans Salomon & Vienna Big Band Machine, Tia Fuller, Hugh Masekela, Jeremy Pelt, Charlie Haden Quartet West, Bettye LaVette, more.

More info: salzburgerjazzherbst.at

Seixal Jazz
Seixal, Portugal

October 26–29

This festival near Lisbon brings together American and European post-bop musicians alongside a healthy representation of contemporary Portuguese players.

Lineup: TBA. Last year included Dave Holland, Charlie Haden, Odean Pope.

More info: cm-seixal.pt/seixaljazz

JazzFest Berlin
Berlin, Germany

November 3–6

Self-proclaimed as a "capital city" of the genre, Berlin's four-day marathon of non-stop

jazz has since transcended from its 40-year-old origins, and makes this title well-deserved. Though the festival traditionally offers a heady series of noteworthy American names, it has since shifted its focus toward regional artists. JazzFest brings local folk sounds to the forefront but has established itself as a borderless European forum for the genre.

Lineup: TBA. Past performers have included Rudresh Mahanthappa, Terence Blanchard, Peter Erskine.

More info: jazzfest-berlin.de

London Jazz Festival
London, England

November 11–20

Once an offshoot of the extinct Camden Festival, the north London jazz week exploded into a highly anticipated, 10-day event now honed as the region's largest music festival. Among its developments is the New Audience scheme, which exposes young listeners to emerging talent at some of the city's most historic performance halls, such as the Barbican, Wigmore Hall and Ronnie Scott's legendary digs. The BBC also presents concert broadcasts.

Lineup: TBA. Last year's performers included Sonny Rollins, Charles Lloyd, Robert Glasper.

More info: londonjazzfestival.org.uk

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Melbourne International Jazz Festival Melbourne, Australia

June 4–13

Melbourne reimagines its popular themed programming streams with the Modern Masters collection, which explores the handiwork of professional jazz gurus, and the Metropolis Series, which bridges the gap between symphonic music and improvisational jazz by the Melbourne Symphony Orchestra.

Lineup: Sonny Rollins, Lee Konitz, Chris Botti, Jason Moran, more.

More info: melbournejazz.com

Rio Das Ostras Jazz and Blues Festival

Rio Das Ostras, Brazil

June 22–26

For the ninth edition of this beachfront celebration, a fourth stage in St. Peter's Square has been added to accommodate the festival's vast array of Brazilian-flavored artists. Additional acts will perform both indoors and outdoors at Lagoon Iriri, Turtle Beach and Costazul, complementing a harvest of Rio de Janeiro fare.

Lineup: Yellowjackets, Nicholas Payton, Bryan Lee, Azymoth com Leo Gandelman.

More info: riodasostrasjazzblues.com

Red Sea Jazz Festival Eilat Harbor, Israel

August 22–25

At the banks of the Red Sea, Israel's feature jazz event celebrates 25 years in existence, offering more than 32 concerts at modestly sized venues. The 4,000-seat Arena, 2,000-seat Hall and 1,000-seat Jazz Club host at least 20 Israeli ensembles along with a lineup of internationally renowned artists. Within the three different halls, guests can attend up to four concerts each evening, and with various celebrations and pool parties occurring simultaneously, guests can enjoy the pleasures of the Red Sea to the tune of jazz.

Lineup: TBA. Last year's performers included Rickie Lee Jones, Gary Burton, Stefon Harris, Danilo Pérez, Nikki Yanofski.

More info: redseajazzzeilat.com

Curacao North Sea Jazz Festival Piscadera Bay, Curacao

September 2–3

The Lesser Antilles region becomes a hybrid of noteworthy jazz and r&b acts combined with regional Caribbean cultural influences. The festival attracts about 70,000 visitors annually and will incorporate soul- and world music-inspired artists for this September's event.

Lineup: Dionne Warwick, Chic, Earth Wind & Fire, Rubén Blades.

More info: curacaonorthseajazz.com



Tudo E Jazz



Rio Das Ostras Jazz and Blues Festival

Tudo E Jazz

Ouro Preto, Brazil

September 8–11

The 10th edition of this Brazilian program taps an all-star band and the Symphonic Orchestra of Minas Gerais for its tribute to Tom Jobim. Dubbed "The Golden Years," the aptly themed lineup is derived from previous programs, based on audience votes.

Lineup: TBA.

More info: tudoejazz.com.br

Kathmandu Jazz Festival Kathmandu, Nepal

October 14–25

The Nepalese capital city is quickly becoming a prominent name on the global jazz circuit, and hosts the ninth edition of this culturally interactive fest. "Jazzmandu" hosts a plethora of general education workshops for jazz novices and experts alike, along with a Peace Parade in Lazimpat that aims to be as awe-inspiring as the festival's Himalayan setting.

Lineup: TBA. Past performers have included

Don Burrows, Louis Banks, Natalie Williams, Simark Dialog, Remi Abram.

More info: jazzmandu.org

International Jazzuv Festival Xalapa, Mexico

November 3–13

Situated near the Gulf of Mexico, Veracruz's jazz event allows student and audience participation via jam sessions and seminars. The Universidad Veracruzana-affiliated festival celebrates its fourth year of educational and recreational jazz performances.

Lineup: TBA. Last year's performers included McCoy Tyner, Jack DeJohnette, Mulgrew Miller, Ray Drummond, Lewis Nash, Jason Palmer, Francisco Mela.

More info: jazzuv.com

LISTINGS COMPILED BY HILARY BROWN, AARON COHEN, JOSE DUARTE, ED ENRIGHT, FRANK-JOHN HADLEY, JAMES HALE, MICHAEL JACKSON, PETER MARGASAK, JENNIFER ODELL, JON ROSS AND JEAN SZLAMOWICZ.

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AIRFRANCE

Francisco Mela Hopes To Turn Xalapa Into Mexican Jazz Education Mecca

Outside the packed Casa Del Lago in Xalapa, Mexico, the lakeside venue currently bouncing with the sounds of the Latin-tinged Big Band JazzUV, Grace Kelly is swamped by young fans wielding T-shirts and program books for her to autograph. That's an unusual experience in itself for an 18-year-old jazz saxophonist not used to the rock star treatment, but the situation turns even stranger when the gaggle sheepishly ask if her father will sign as well. "Why?" the elder Kelly asks incredulously.

The answer is simple: "Because you're a part of it, too!"

That vigorous embrace of every aspect of the Festival Internacional JazzUV is typical of the overwhelming response it has received in this small but vibrant city.

"I'm honestly blown away at the enthusiasm of the people who come to this festival," Kelly said on the final evening of the weeklong festival. "Every place is packed to the walls, they all go crazy for the music, and it's just a very warm festival."

Drummer Francisco Mela first encountered that warmth in 2008, when he played the festival as a sideman for pianist Gabriel Hernández. The event was inaugurated as a showcase and learning experience for the students and teachers of JazzUV, a newborn jazz school formed under the aegis of the Universidad Veracruzana. Mela has maintained a close relationship with the school and its founder, pianist Edgar Dorantes, ever since, and became the festival's artistic director in this, its third year.

"I have a goal," Mela said, "which is making Xalapa the mecca of jazz in Mexico."

For now, the city's music scene, while thriving, still stands far behind that of the much larger Mexico City. A native of Córdoba, Veracruz, Dorantes recognized a need for jazz education when he returned to Mexico after a three-year stint in the States, where he earned his masters in jazz studies at the University of North Texas. "I found a large community here in Xalapa that was hungry for learning," he explained.

The school was founded in February of 2008, and Dorantes was stunned when 140 students enrolled—followed by another 140 for the second term. That number has remained steady throughout all three years, with a 30-member faculty instructing students ranging in age from 8 to 18 years old for individual tutoring and a di-



Francisco Mela

ploma program. Dorantes hopes to offer a bachelor's degree in the years to come.

The festival, which this year featured top-tier artists including McCoy Tyner, Jack DeJohnette and Ray Drummond, is focused on providing not just performances but opportunities for students to interact with the headliners through master classes and jam sessions. "The idea of this festival," Mela said, "is not only bringing, for example, McCoy Tyner and his trio and they play, they make their money and they go home. The idea is they come here, they interact with the students, they play with the students, and they stay for one week. The purpose of this festival is making sure the students have a connection with the artists."

Dorantes insists that the school's small size—it is housed in eight small classrooms in a former residence, ringing a central courtyard that serves during the festival as a stage for master classes—is an advantage, allowing the faculty to work collaboratively.

"We try to teach the tools you need for being a good, creative musician who can solve problems in the moment and adapt to different realities," Dorantes said. "It doesn't matter if you're playing at a jazz festival or in a church, it doesn't matter if you like cumbia or classical or son jarocho or swing or Latin jazz, we can provide the students with a good attitude, musical and human, to do the job at the moment."

—Shaun Brady



Terence Blanchard

Blanchard Directs Mancini: Trumpeter

Terence Blanchard has been named artistic director of the Henry Mancini Institute at the University of Miami Frost School of Music. Blanchard's duties will primarily include conducting the Mancini Institute Orchestra throughout the year. Also, at Miami, the university's student-run Cane Records has released *Breaking The Surface, Volume 1—Miami Artists On The Rise*. The disc includes jazz vocal student John Splithoff.

Details: miami.edu

New Oklahoma Program: Beginning this fall, the Academy of Contemporary Music at the University of Central Oklahoma will offer a bachelor's of applied technology with a focus in contemporary music to students who graduate with an associate's of applied science degree. It will be the only program of its kind in the United States.

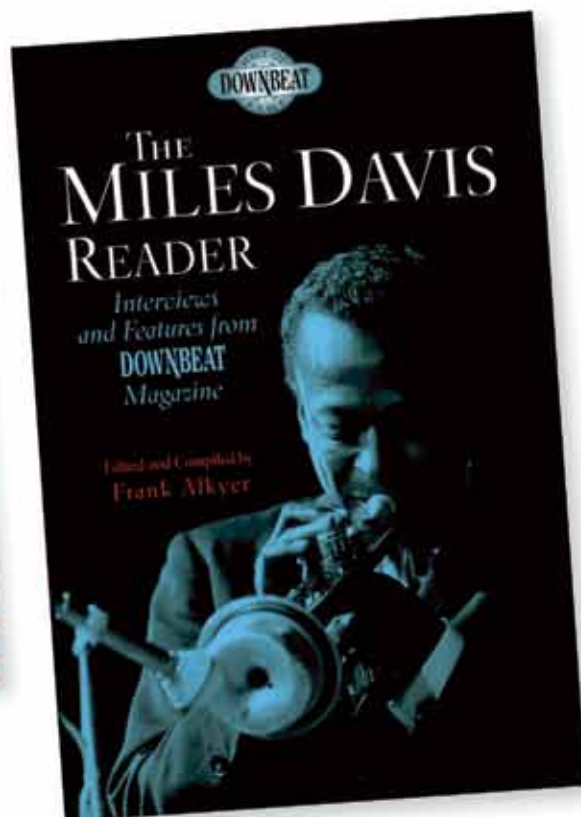
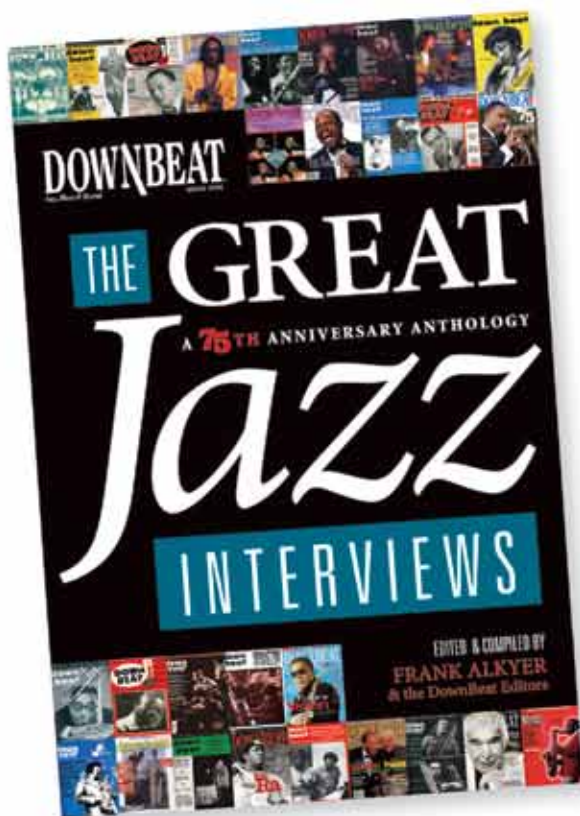
Details: acm-uco.com

Hamilton, Nash Sit In: Drummer Jeff Hamilton will join the DePaul University Jazz Ensemble at Chicago's Jazz Showcase April 28–May 1. Just north of Chicago in Evanston, saxophonist Ted Nash will collaborate with Northwestern University's Jazz Orchestra at Pick-Staiger Concert Hall on May 18. Details: depaul.edu, northwestern.edu

Berklee Disc: Berklee's student-run label, Jazz Revelation Records, has released its eighth compilation, *Octave*. The disc includes combinations of jazz, electronic and international musicians. Details: berklee.edu

Harvard Exhibit: Harvard University in Cambridge, Mass., is exhibiting a collection of scores, letters and other memorabilia from such composers as Benny Carter, Buck Clayton and Jane Ira Bloom at the Richard F. French Gallery in the school's Music Building. Harvard Jazz Bands and the university's Office of the Arts donated the collection, which will be on display through Sept. 30. The event is part of Harvard's celebration of 40 years of jazz at the institution.

Details: harvard.edu



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Nellie McKay

Veteran New York Times music critic Jon Pareles once described Nellie McKay's style as "arch but amiable, with teeth behind the giggles." It's an apt description for the 28-year-old singer-songwriter's comportment during her first Blindfold Test, conducted between the release of her fourth album, *Normal As Blueberry Pie: A Tribute To Doris Day*, and her late-2010 issue, *Home Sweet Mobile Home* (Verve/Forecast).

Tierney Sutton

"Whatever Lola Wants, Lola Gets" (*Desire*, Telarc, 2009) Sutton, vocal; Christian Jacob, piano; Trey Henry, bass; Ray Brinker, drums.

It's dream-like. It's getting what you want through sheer force of will. It's that power that comes out of desperation, or perhaps nothing to lose. Over a driving, propulsive rhythm and bass, it's drawn out like taffy. You have the sense of being underwater. The vocal, even though it's stretched, is very precise, very tart and pointed. [afterwards] I never would have guessed Tierney Sutton.

Madeleine Peyroux

"Love And Treachery" (*Bare Bones*, Rounder, 2009) Peyroux, vocal, lyric, acoustic guitar; Walter Becker, co-lyric; Larry Klein, bass; Vinnie Colaiuta, drums; Dean Parks, pedal steel guitar; Jim Beard, Wurlitzer piano; Larry Goldings, Hammond organ.

What a great beat! I really liked the kind of two-feel and guitar line. I think that was Madeleine Peyroux. God, what a sad song that was! But beautifully sung. The quality of her voice and that kind of lonely tumbleweed feel is fantastic.

John Pizzarelli

"Perdido" (*Rockin' In Rhythm*, Telarc, 2010) Pizzarelli, vocals, guitar; Kurt Elling, Jessica Molaskey, vocals; Larry Fuller, piano; Martin Pizzarelli, bass; Tony Tedesco, drums.

That rendition has such a happy feel. It makes me want to go out and get a tattoo. I love that song. The whole track had a sense of humor. I wonder if in the beginning I could feel that "Perdido" was coming, or if I like the beginning on its own as much as I thought I did. I also found myself wondering how many overdubs they had to do to get everybody that in-sync, and whether everybody was isolated or all in the same booth.

Dee Dee Bridgewater

"You've Changed" (*Eleanora Fagan 1915-1959: To Billie With Love From Dee Dee*, Verve, 2010) Bridgewater, vocals; James Carter, tenor saxophone; Edsel Gomez, piano, arr.; Christian McBride, bass; Lewis Nash, drums.

I love that saxophone, and what a heartfelt vocal. The arrangement was simple, not embellished, which I liked a lot. The song is a powerhouse. It always feels wrenched from the singer, as opposed to deliberately sung. I guess you could look at it as the peak of the mountain on *Lady In Satin*. It ties the whole album together; it comes in the middle like a shot. I'm so familiar with Billie Holiday's version, I don't think I could ever attempt that song, but she pulled it off with something completely different. It feels a little angrier than Billie Holiday's version.

Melissa Walker

"Where Or When" (*In The Middle Of It All*, Sunnyside, 2009) Walker, vocals; Aaron Goldberg, piano; Gregoire Maret, harmonica; Christian McBride, bass; Clarence Penn, drums.

Those liquid piano lines! I liked the *ay-yi-yi-yi* at the end. That's nice—not exactly humming, but humming through singing. That song always reminds me of *Alice Doesn't Live Here Anymore*, and, for some reason, St.



Louis in the winter. It sounded very live. I kept seeing her singing it, just as kind of a light on stage; I kept going off in my own world, which is one of the greatest recommendations you can give.

Champion Fulton

"If I Had You" (*The Breeze And I*, Gut String, 2010) Fulton, vocals, piano; Neal Miner, bass; Fukushi Tainaka, drums.

One of the greatest songs and one of the most under-performed. I'd quite like to perform it, so I hope it doesn't get performed that much! The vocal felt very feral and feline. Sinuous. Shades of Dinah Washington and Eartha Kitt. I liked those chunky chords from the piano in the beginning. I'd do the song differently—I can't sing like Dinah Washington or Eartha Kitt! The vocal almost sounded like a guitar at times. [afterwards] She played piano during that? Incredible. She was doing some lovely filigrees while she was singing. She's really good.

Patricia Barber

"Hunger" (*Mythologies*, Blue Note, 2006) Barber, piano, vocal, lyric; Neal Alger, guitar; Michael Arnopol, bass; Eric Montzka, drums.

I think it's fitting that a song that mentions foie gras sounds like a vision of Hades in some wretched corner of the tourist section of Cancun. It has a mean, hard-bitten quality, and when the vocal breaks out of the threat of the bass and the metallic guitar sounds, it's as if she's gasping for air. That song is potent! The singer has the reassuring quality of a modern-day Doris Day ... although she doesn't sound like Doris Day. It's a very soothing voice; she could easily sing a lullaby, and yet she sings this kind of song. There were some wonderful images. That sense that everybody's hungry could apply to anything. And that you can never lick your plate clean.

Jamie Cullum

"Just One Of Those Things" (*The Pursuit*, Verve Forecast, 2010)

Was that Jamie Cullum? He's got some piano chops. I think people could go for it that way more often, with those boulders falling from the sky. His delivery sounds so disillusioned, like a Fiona Apple, "This world is bullshit" feeling. Then that ending swoop up is so glorious. That's a new take on the song. It's so punky! I feel like he's going to sing that and go and trash his hotel room.

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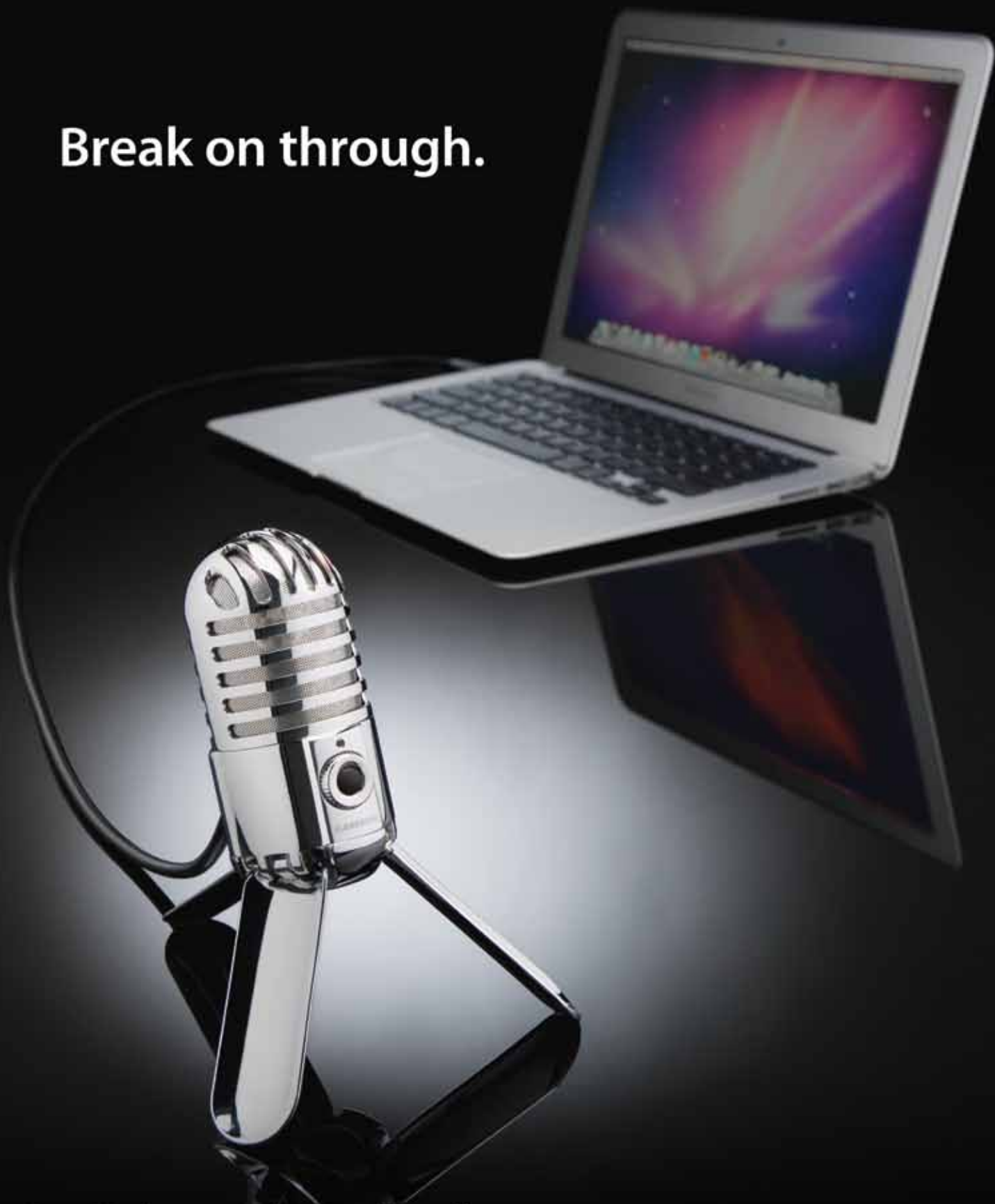
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