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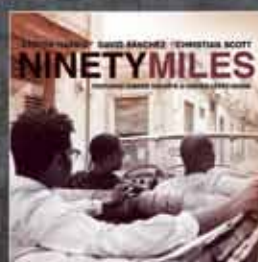
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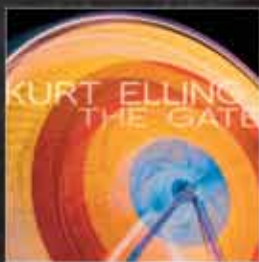
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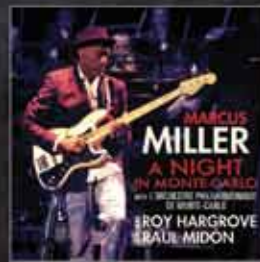
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HEADS UP

DECEMBER 2011

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ON THE COVER

24 Trombone Shorty *No Guts, No Glory*

BY JENNIFER ODELL

Trombone Shorty, one of the most exciting musicians on the scene today, plays his namesake horn with passion, and he's also a fiery trumpeter and an engaging vocalist. With the studio album *For True* (Verve Forecast), he and his backing band, Orleans Avenue, have reached a new peak.



Cover photograph of Trombone Shorty shot by Jimmy and Dena Katz in New York City. Image above of Trombone Shorty shot by Erika Goldring at Tipitina's in New Orleans.

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From left: Jack DeJohnette, Dave Holland and Miles Davis



Listening to the Best

The best. That's what people want to hear. Life is short and precious, so why waste time listening to subpar music? Assembling the December issue of *DownBeat* is always a thrilling and informative process because it gives us a clear picture of what our readers love, and what music they think is the very best.

The 76th Annual *DownBeat* Readers Poll includes such legendary names as Gary Burton, B.B. King, Pat Metheny, Wayne Shorter and Phil Woods, as well as younger artists who are performing at the highest level, such as Regina Carter, Anat Cohen, Christian McBride, Joshua Redman and Maria Schneider.

The Readers Poll contest for Historical Album of the Year wasn't even close. The landslide victor was Miles Davis' *Bitches Brew: 40th Anniversary Collector's Edition*. For listeners around the globe, Davis has provided the gateway to the world of jazz. The first time you hear *Kind Of Blue* or *Bitches Brew*, you immediately want to know the names of the musicians with whom Davis collaborated. So you read the liner notes. You memorize their names. Then you start exploring the music of those collaborators. And that leads you to other musicians with whom these players have recorded and toured. The process goes on and on, and along the way, your jazz library gets bigger and bigger. But it all started with Miles, the man at the top of the mountain.

In his superb essay on *Bitches Brew* (page 48), writer John Ephland caught up with musicians who played with Davis, such as Harvey Brooks, Chick Corea, Jack DeJohnette, Bennie Maupin, John McLaughlin and Lenny White. Ephland also quotes Dave Holland. It boggles my mind to ponder all the music I've discovered simply by seeking out the works of Davis collaborators Corea, DeJohnette, McLaughlin and Holland.

Elsewhere in this issue, we've got features on *DownBeat* Hall of Fame inductee Ahmad Jamal and Jazz Artist of the Year Esperanza Spalding, as well as poll winners Brad Mehldau and Jeff Beck.

Our cover subject, Trombone Shorty, mixes genres in a way that appeals to open-minded listeners who enjoy "Jazz, Blues & Beyond." This is a young man (only 25) who tours the globe, records original music, energizes festival stages and brings new listeners to jazz and improvised music. Keep your eye on him. We won't be surprised if his name turns up atop *DownBeat* polls in the near future. The fact that Troy "Trombone Shorty" Andrews uses his resources to donate musical instruments to schools makes us applaud him with even more vigor.

Thanks again for voting in the poll, and please keep on reading. **DB**

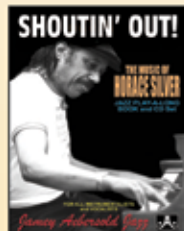
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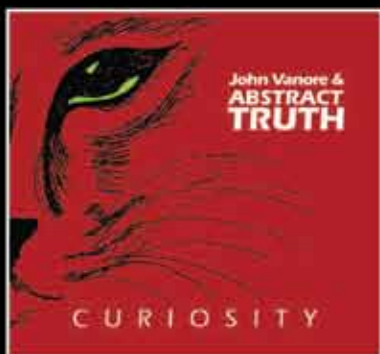
—Aaron Cohen, *Downbeat Magazine*

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—Thomas Conrad, *CD Review*



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Block Chord Champs

Champion Fulton's article ("Pro Session," September) about four jazz pianists who used block chords effectively—Milt Buckner, Erroll Garner, Red Garland and Oscar Peterson—was refreshing. I feel that Red Garland used block chords with the greatest artistic effect. When I listen to his use of block chords in the recordings that he made with Miles Davis in the '50s and his trio recordings, I am enthralled.

George Shearing is also a seminal pianist in the use of block chords. I feel that his influence on the development of jazz piano styles has been somewhat overlooked because of his "commercial" output of such albums as *Velvet Carpet* and *Black & White Satin*, in which his piano was swathed by string sections. When you listen to some of his quintet recordings, you can hear his deft use of block chords.

ADOLPHUS WILLIAMS
MAPLE GLEN, PENN.

Don't Steal From Artists

Chuck Sher's article ("Sher Denounces Piracy In Publishing," October) raises a profound and increasingly troubling issue: Musicians, music lovers and sensitive people need to thwart rampant electronic stealing. Music pirating is, in Sher's words, "just plain wrong." Each of us needs to do all we can to discourage music theft because along with the crime comes the coarsening of society, and a blurring between right and wrong. Humans cannot tolerate shameful actions. We should attend to Sher's plea to make certain that his life's work and other artists' creative efforts are not sucked into a deep, dark pit—one that

makes it increasingly impossible for music, art and humanity to flourish or even exist.

NED CORMAN
ROCHESTER, N.Y.

Remembering Eddie Marshall

I was saddened by the news of Bay Area jazz drummer Eddie Marshall's death on Sept. 7. I was immediately transported back to San Francisco's Keystone Korner, the mecca of my teenage years, where, as a Palo Alto high schooler in the early '70s, I used to see Marshall play with vibraphonist Bobby Hutcherson and saxophonist Manny Boyd. What a perfect, swinging, joyous combination of drums and vibes. I loved the way Marshall played, especially with Hutcherson! I consider these to be some of the happiest memories of my youth. I remember Marshall's drumming with a great deal of fondness and I will miss him. I hope Blue Note Records will reissue such Hutcherson gems as *Knucklebean* and *Waiting*. How I would love to hear those records again.

BOB ZANDER
PALO ALTO, CALIF.



Carl Allen

Allen's Perfect Score

Three cheers for Carl Allen ("The Blindfold Test," November). Not only did he bat a very rare 1.000, but his comments were lucid, perceptive and generous. And of course, Ted Panken's good choices helped make this a Blindfold Test to remember.

DAN MORGENSTERN
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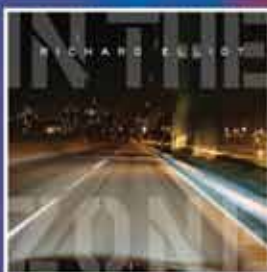
Soon-to-be classic duets with the pre-eminent bassist and Ron Blake, Dee Dee Bridgewater, Regina Carter, Chick Corea, George Duke, Gina Gershon, Roy Hargrove, Hank Jones, Angélique Kidjo, Russell Malone, Eddie Palmieri, Sting, Dr. Billy Taylor.



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Open Source is the sixth CD from violinist Gauthier, featuring guitarist Nels Cline, his twin brother Alex Cline on drums, trumpet player John Furno and pianist David Witham. Gauthier is a DownBeat Rising Star violinist and producer.



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Beat

Virtuosic History *Thelonious Monk Institute Turns 25*

Opulent virtuosity was on full display during the 2011 Thelonious Monk Institute's International Jazz Piano Competition and 25th anniversary gala celebration in Washington, D.C. The Sept. 12 competition, judged by a panel that included Jason Moran, Herbie Hancock, Ellis Marsalis, Danilo Pérez and Renee Rosnes, presented its semifinal and final rounds at the Smithsonian Institution's Baird Auditorium and Kennedy Center, respectively.

Competition winner Kris Bowers' harmonically jarring, stride-strutting rendition of "Blue Monk," underscored by the roadhouse thump of drummer Carl Allen and bassist Rodney Whitaker, earned the 22-year-old a place in the finals, where his original ballad "Hope" and devilish rendition of Monk's "Shuffle Boil" garnered him first prize. Bowers received \$25,000 and a recording contract with the Concord Music Group.

According to Moran, it was Bowers' "polish" that placed him at the top. "A lot of these musicians arrived with a certain kind of facility," Moran said. "[Bowers] put [his facilities] together in a way in which he would be a name that people would want to listen to." Moran also complimented Bowers' sense of touch, song choice and rhythm section interaction.

Pérez commented on the difficulty of judging a competition with so many dazzling improvisers. "To have a competition [with pianists and judges] coming from different places and aesthetics shows that there is a taste for everybody there," Pérez said. "It's the Monk competition, so there has to be a level of adventure and taking chances."

Runner-up Joshua White, 26, roughed up Monk's "Criss Cross" with brute rhythmic force, and third-place winner Emmet Cohen, 21, kicked off the finals with a soothing reading of Monk's "Ugly Beauty" and a jolting makeover of Monk's "Bright Mississippi."

Moran acknowledged the contestants' extravagant displays of technique but also spoke on the virtues of self-editing. "Playing fast does not necessarily mean that it's good. You have to consider how technique enhances a song, or, most importantly, the melody. Or even how it is enhancing the mood in the room—not just on the bandstand."

In honor of the institute's silver anniversary, the competition gave way to a mammoth celebration at the Kennedy Center's Eisenhower Theater. The Maria Fisher Founder's Award was presented to Aretha Franklin, who rewarded the audience with a gracious acceptance speech and a fiery rendition of "Moody's Mood For Love."

Dee Dee Bridgewater, Chaka Khan, Jane Monheit, Dianne Reeves and Kurt Elling also performed a rousing round-robin of tunes as homage to Franklin.



"You want to sing every note that she sings, because you feel that's the way the song goes," Reeves said. "Being able to sing for her and let her know how much we appreciate her has been the best thing they could have done for the 25th anniversary of the Thelonious Monk Institute of Jazz. This is a night that I will always remember."

For T.S. Monk, son of the legendary Thelonious Monk and board chairman of the Monk Institute, the tribute was a personal highlight. "I don't think that we had ever been honored in that fashion before," Monk said. "[Franklin] has been such a supporter of jazz and of the institute."

The institute reunited many of the winners of past Monk Competitions, including Monheit, Gretchen Parlato, Joshua Redman, Jacky Terrasson, Joey DeFrancesco and Ambrose Akinmusire, who grouped up in different configurations for a medley of Monk tunes. During the "Bebop Meets Hip-Hop" portion of the gala, rap legend Doug E. Fresh partnered with institute students on a noble jazz-hip-hop interpretation of Cole Porter's "What Is This Thing Called Love?" which featured some inspired beat-boxing and tasty riffs from turntablist DJ Spark.

Tom Carter, president of the Monk Institute, likened the gala to a cross between a class reunion and family reunion. "It was a true celebration of all the work that we've done for the past quarter-century," Carter said. "So many of the previous winners were on hand as well as many jazz greats. Another thing that was important to the institute is that all of the people who participate in our programs, and most especially the competition, are winners."

—John Murph



Honorable Mention: DownBeat Reviews Editor Aaron Cohen has been recognized with an ASCAP Deems Taylor Award for his article "Ray's Kind Of Jazz," published as the cover story in the October 2010 issue of the magazine. The article is an analysis of Ray Charles' connections and contributions to jazz. The awards are given in recognition of outstanding print, broadcast and new media coverage of music. The 19 winners and their respective publishers were honored at a special invitation-only ceremony and reception on Nov. 15 at ASCAP's New York offices.

History Remembered: Music historian and producer Frank Driggs died Sept. 20 at the age of 81. The Grammy award-winning producer of *Robert Johnson: The Complete Recordings* co-published the *Black Beauty, White Heat* pictorial history of jazz and collected more than 100,000 jazz-related images throughout his life.

Swing Kids: Author Kay James McCrimon released *Good Night Li'L Darlin*, a children's book that teaches kids aged preschool to grade six about the roots of bebop and swing. The book, which was released in July, includes a rendition of the similarly named Count Basie hit performed by Chicago vocalist Joan Collaso.

Musical Blog: Bret Primack, founder of the first major jazz website, Jazz Central Station, has launched the jazz video blog *Day By Day With Bret Primack*. Following in the footsteps of Primack' regular jazz webcasts, it will include reviews, interviews, on-site reporting and viewer feedback.

Save The Date: Several music festivals have announced the dates for the 2012 season: Winter Red Sea Jazz Festival, Jan. 19–21 in the seaside resort town of Eilat, Israel; Newport Jazz Festival, Aug. 3–5 in Newport, R.I.; and Cape Town Jazz Festival on March 30–31 in Cape Town, South Africa.

Anything You Can Do We Can Do Better

On The Baritone Saxophone

After years of being a professional baritone saxophonist, I still can't shake people's persistent assumption that the baritone saxophone is a lesser instrument.

This myth has understandable—if unfortunate—roots in popular perception. The only place most people see a baritone saxophone is in a rock horn section or anchoring a big band. Perhaps more perniciously, it's believed that the horn is somehow less agile than its smaller counterparts. It's unclear which came first, the baritone sax's underrepresentation in small groups, or the assumption of its sluggishness. But it's all hogwash.

Historically, there was no baritone champion among the coterie of musicians that popularized jazz. The trumpet has Miles Davis, the alto has Charlie Parker, and the tenor has John Coltrane. Sure, there were baritone saxophonists around, but none transcended to the level of this sanctified group. Many of the greatest baritone players have had love-hate relationships with big bands. Harry Carney, often considered the father of the baritone sax, will always be associated with the Duke Ellington Orchestra. Ellington knew how to write for the baritone and utilized the rumbling brilliance of Carney's low end and the luxurious tone of his upper register. But Carney was reportedly not fond of improvising, took few solos and recorded very few times as a leader. He never struck out to make his own name, and until his death, he never left his station anchoring the Ellington Orchestra.

Pepper Adams played for years with the Thad Jones/Mel Lewis Orchestra and eventually struck out on his own. The most vaunted of the jazz baritone saxophonists, Gerry Mulligan, was around and performing at the same time as many of the jazz giants. No one can really say Mulligan was underappreciated, but even he did not climb his way to the pantheon of untouchable jazz greats. He was another poor baritone saxophonist doomed to play section parts.

Ah, section parts—here truly we explore the hate portion of this relationship. In Western music, the lower registers are generally used for bass notes and tonics for slower-moving purposes. Lower instruments rarely tend to have as much movement as the higher-pitched ones. So despite its brilliant key system, the baritone is left with a lot of whole notes.

Given this trend, band directors tend to put baritone saxes in the hands of less-focused (read: less-talented) students, think-

ing the parts may be more appropriate to their level. These students are handed beat-up, barely functioning horns, making this unfair assumption ultimately self-fulfilling.

The physical properties of the instrument cannot be denied. As I write this, I'm seated on an airplane headed for the next gig after pleading shamelessly to allow my instrument on board. Of course it takes more air, but any saxophonist with the proper diaphragm con-



trol, air support, embouchure and setup can play the baritone without taxing their air supply. The mechanisms, keys and levers are not significantly harder to activate than those of the other saxophones.

Finding the right equipment is also an uphill battle. Players who prefer vintage horns have a hard time finding a bari sax in good condition, and players who like newer horns are even worse off. Manufacturers rarely pay as much attention to their baritone lines, assuming they even make one. Mouthpieces and reeds brands are *finally* including baritone models. While it irks me to no end, there is far less money to be made on baritones and thus less reason for investment.

The truth is, depending on a player's dedication and talent, the baritone sax can do what the other horns can do. But the harsher truth is that the misconceptions will persist. The harder I work and the better I sound, the easier it will be for people to overcome these notions. But for now, to all of you subway riders, fellow air-travellers and street-gawkers: No, this is not a cello, and it's going to melt your face off.



Randy Brecker (left)
with the Brecker
Brothers Band

Caught

Brecker Band Reunion Awes Blue Note

Five tunes into the Brecker Brothers Band Reunion's first Wednesday set before a packed house—which included Michael Brecker's widow and children—at the Blue Note, Randy Brecker introduced the band. "I know you've never heard of any of them," Brecker joked. "They want to be introduced—they have vast insecurity problems."

The evening's sonic evidence belied the notion that guitarist Mike Stern, keyboardist George Whitty, bassist Will Lee or drummer Dave Weckl—each a BBB alumnus—or Brecker's spouse, saxophonist Ada Rovatti, doubted their respective abilities to convey a message in notes and tones. The all-star cohort functioned as egoless team players with nothing more to prove than their ability to differentiate from the repertoire that they had done the night before.

With one rehearsal day and one bandstand hit behind them, they navigated famously difficult Brecker Brothers charts—chock-a-block with harmonic intervals of what one band member called "slide rule" complexity, shifting beats and declarative melodies—with panache, crisp ferocity and abiding bonhomie, auguring well for a forthcoming live-DVD/studio-CD package to be generated at week's end.

The 65-year-old trumpeter launched into an as-yet untitled number ("the first tune of the set is called 'The First Tune Of The Set,'" Brecker announced)—a hit-hard-from-the-jump vamp reminiscent of "Freedom Jazz Dance." He moved into a passage during which Brecker and Rovatti paired off against Stern and Whitty in an exchange of breathe-as-one unison riffs, evolving into solo dialogue between each set of protagonists. Propelled by the locked-in rhythm section, Brecker and Rovatti trad-

ed off five or six passages of delimited time-lengths. Brecker uncorked succinct, logical statements, illuminating a melodic through-line with golden tone across the trumpet's registral range; Rovatti riposted with dense, turbulent declamations. Stern and Whitty dialogued similarly, Weckl used all his limbs for a "how-did-he-do-that?" solo and Whitty delivered a few cool, simmering choruses that unfolded within the spaces before a closing vamp restatement.

Stern set up a medium-slow swamp-funk "thang" with a Meters feel, also untitled. Whitty channeled Professor Longhair, then a slick Brecker-Rovatti unison catapulted Brecker into solo flight. Stern and Whitty comped with long, smeary sounds, setting up a phantasmagoric Stern-Rovatti dialogue. The guitarist projected characteristic caffeinated energy and sharp intellect as Rovatti swung hard and deployed some sort of modulated, sculpted, wild shapes.

During the subsequent Brazil-tinged song, Brecker ascended through the changes with luminous tone, followed by Weckl's force-of-nature solo. He re-tweaked his younger brother's "Strap-Hanging," introducing the theme with a mock fanfare. Rovatti channeled her late brother-in-law's essence with a beautifully constructed statement built on compression-release motifs that set a template for master-class solos by Brecker and Stern.

The set ended with the Brecker Brothers staple "Skunk Funk" played, as Brecker put it, "as fast as humanly possible." *Late Show With David Letterman* bassist Will Lee belied his age with agile leaps and groove lockdowns. Rovatti declaimed eloquently with gritty tone, while her husband had the last word.

—Ted Panken

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Emanem Records: Martin Davidson's No-Frills Operation

The slogan of British record label Emanem reads "Unadulterated new music for people who like new music unadulterated." Such a brash claim could lack authority coming from some imprints dedicated to non-commercial music, but the label founded in 1974 by Martin Davidson, who documented and disseminated the radical sounds of free improvisation happening in England at the time, carries serious heft. The imprint has gone through several periods of inactivity, ranging from three to seven years, but few labels have endured as long as Emanem has without compromising their artistic vision and commitment. And for the last 16 years, Emanem has experienced its most consistent, fruitful period, releasing nearly 200 CDs by such legendary figures as Derek Bailey, John Carter, Evan Parker, John Stevens and Paul Rutherford as well as important younger musicians like John Butcher, Roger Smith, John Edwards, Charlotte Hug and Olaf Rupp. Davidson continues to issue newly recorded music as well as reissue vintage recordings or make them available for the first



Martin Davidson

time, from his exhaustive catalog of music by London's influential Spontaneous Music Ensemble or the overlooked People Band.

Davidson was first drawn to the London free improv scene some four decades ago and before long began lugging his reel-to-reel rig to concerts to tape the music. "I was hearing a lot of magnificent music which wasn't being preserved, and which I thought should be heard by more people," Davidson said recently. He took action in 1974, releasing a solo performance by soprano saxophonist Steve Lacy. Aside from some financial setbacks (and moves to the United States and

Australia in the '70s and '80s), he hasn't stopped since. Davidson said his enthusiasm for the music remains undiminished after all this time. "Many new performers have since come along and added their own dialects. Some have added new techniques, particularly using new computer-based technology. I personally prefer to hear acoustic instruments without any electronic manipulation or amplification, but I do enjoy some use of the new technologies. Nowadays, there are so many musicians around that it is impossible to keep up with them all."

Throughout the label's long history, Davidson has privileged a clear and direct presentation, attempting to present the music as it would be experienced by an audience hearing a live performance. Emanem's often-utilitarian but always-tidy packaging is designed to keep the focus on the actual music. "Music is not about fashion, and this is sometimes reflected in the visual design," he said.

In an era of short-attention spans and media overload, Davidson takes an almost contrarian position in putting his faith in an

undiluted presentation. He's yet to release any of his titles digitally, although part of the reason is a lack of time (he runs the label by himself). "As soon as [a label] issues a CD these days, it appears available as a download on several websites in various parts of the world," Davidson said, noting that bloggers give away his releases illegally. Sales through conventional music distributors have also declined steadily in recent years, but direct sales from the label's website have increased to the point that Emanem continues to essentially break even.

About a decade ago, Davidson also began to help Evan Parker operate and distribute his Psi label. The saxophonist makes the artistic decisions, and Davidson implements them. In the end, Davidson doesn't look at Emanem as a business as much he does an act of devotion. "All of the music on Emanem is music I like," he said. "I never wanted to waste my limited resources on things I don't consider to be worthwhile. There is also a lot more music I like on other labels. Emanem is just part of the overall picture."

DB

Barranquijazz Flavors Colombia Coast with Latin Rhythms

Held every year during the second week of September, the Barranquijazz Festival has established itself as a stimulating musical crossroads in the form of a five-day party.

There's always a Brazilian presence at Barranquijazz, and the evening kickoff artist was 80-year-old Brazilian pianist João Donato, a key figure in the 1960s bossa nova boom. Donato's quartet (bassist Luis Alvez, drummer Roberto da Silva, percussionist Sidney Martin "Cidinho") played a laid-back set that included his '60s hit "The Frog" but ramped it up when Cuban trumpeter Mayquel González stepped on stage for a Havana-Rio crossover. The highlight of the set was the onstage reunion of Donato with a hometown favorite, Colombian flute-and-saxman Justo Almario—the match to the gasoline—whose body-rocking telegraphed the rhythm to the audience as he blew.

The second night began with a compelling performance from Terence Blanchard's quintet, followed by Seis del Solar, directed by pianist Oscar Hernández. Originally founded as Rubén



Eddie Palmieri (left) with Luques Curtis

Blades' backup band, the group also functions as a chops-heavy Latin-fusionist jazz group fronted by saxman Bobby Franceschini. Adding extra firepower were bassist Rubén Rodríguez, conguero Paoli Mejías, timbalero Ralph Irizarry and drummer Robby Ameen. Bronx hornman Mitch Frohman, who happened to be in town, also sat in.

Barranquijazz also presented free outdoor shows for seemingly marked younger crowds. Rising star pianist Harold López-Nussa fronted

the Cuban quartet of González, bassist Gaston Joya and drummer Rui Adrián López-Nussa. The pianist combined muscular polyrhythm with complex composition, holding off with his tumbao a tropical downpour that turned the drainless Barranquilla streets into rushing downhill rivers. The final night *postre* (dessert) was Eddie Palmieri and La Perfecta II, a dynamic front line that included sonero Herman Olivera, tresero Nelson González, maraca player Joseph "Quique" González and flutist Karen Joseph. On a riser in the back, trombonists Jimmy Bosch and Doug Beavers stepped in time, held together by conguero "Little" Johnny Rivero, timbalero José Claussell, bongosero Orlando Vega and bassist Luques Curtis. Another poignant reunion took place between Palmieri and Donato, who had not seen each other in 50 years. (One-time trombonist Donato played on Palmieri's first record in 1962.) The festival was closed by vibist Alfredo Naranjo y su Guajeo, and who wouldn't want to hear a Venezuelan salsa band under a full moon?

—Ned Sublette

Caught

Rollins Delivers High-Energy Set at UCLA

Sonny Rollins treats melody like magicians treat coins. He bounces a refrain over long fingers with the deftest sleight of hand. Sometimes he flips it, sometimes he spins it, but in the end he always spends it on a new improvisation. On Sept. 22, the Saxophone Colossus took the stage at UCLA's Royce Hall for the 10th stop on the Sonny Rollins Quintet world tour. Rollins entered in style, sporting white sunglasses to match his white hair and beard.

The quintet exploded into their set with "Patanjali," named for an ancient guru who compiled the Yoga Sutras in the second century BCE. Rollins' hard-bopping tenor sax line was anything but tranquil as he danced in and around a motif with superhuman speed. It was wonderful to hear the turbulent energy of "Oleo" and *The Bridge* reflected in this current project. Rollins may be 81, but he's forgotten nothing.

He greeted the audience with a short list. "Royce Hall, UCLA, California, U.S.A., Harlem, me!" Rollins was far more thorough when introducing the band: bassist Bob Cranshaw, with whom he's played on and

off since recording *The Bridge* in 1962; New York guitarist Peter Bernstein; young drummer Kobie Watkins; and veteran percussionist Sammy Figueroa, who was largely responsible for the Latin infusion that characterized even the set's straight bop arrangements.

On the syncopated ballad "Serenade," Watkins and Figueroa drummed in disparate time signatures, a tireless effort for both percussionists that clearly demonstrated their place in the quintet. Every solo held the complicated time, from Cranshaw's relaxed arpeggiated walk to Bernstein's succinct voice leads. But the difficult rhythmic backdrop was just another game for Rollins, who rified in time and in double time. The bossa-inspired "Blue Gardenia" showcased Rollins' astute sense of dynamics. When a crescendo spreads out over a mile-a-minute line of 32nd notes that maintain a Brazilian groove, the rising intensity lands in the form of goose bumps, rather than a distinctly audible swell.

The quintet closed with Rollins' new signature, "Don't Stop The Carnival." Rollins has earned the right to a little flash, and at one point he dropped his right hand and blew



Sonny Rollins

a note that lasted over a minute. "We've tried, folks," he said. "That's all you can do—try to be the good guy, try to do right by people. I'm tryin', baby." He may call it trying, but Rollins succeeded admirably. —Zoe Young

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Terence Blanchard

GRACE LOVELL

Caught Monterey Smartens Up, Spotlights Sidemen

The MVP of the 54th Annual Monterey Jazz Festival (MJF) also turned out to be its Rookie of the Year—a free, first-time app that provided, among other things, a customizable master schedule, helping smartphone owners navigate performances on seven bandstands and a screening/simulcast viewing area.

Erik Telford's Collective was an early indicator of the historical continuity that was certainly a theme of this year's programming. Telford, who grew up in neighboring Pacific Grove, was the first winner of the MJF's Jimmy Lyons Scholarship to the Berklee College of Music.

The trumpeter humbly announced that he hoped his band would do justice to the stage that pianist/keyboardist and 2011 Showcase Artist Robert Glasper had christened the same evening. Telford's sextet seamlessly incorporated electronic, global, ambient and fusion elements into its 21st Century instrumental sound.

Another MVP candidate was fellow trumpeter Terence Blanchard, who officially participated in two separate events and extemporaneously joined two others. Blanchard was Dizzy Gillespie to conguero Poncho Sanchez's Chano Pozo during Friday night's "Cubano Be! Cubano Bop!" program. He then took the solo spot for most of Sunday night's stunning tribute to the Miles Davis and Gil Evans studio collaborations. The tribute featured conductor Vince Mendoza with the Still Ahead Orchestra and special guest drummer Peter Erskine.

Blanchard also took part in Saturday's spirited "An Afternoon In Tremé" set, which was emceed by actor and Jazz at Lincoln Center radio host Wendell Pierce, Blanchard's hometown friend from New Orleans. Pierce was an able last-minute replacement for trom-

bonist/vocalist Glen David Andrews, who was absent due to illness and would later go on to sit in on the Robert Glasper Experiment's final Sunday night set featuring vocalist Bilal.

Pianist Geri Allen performed this year's commission, "The Dazzler," a jazz tap tribute to Sammy Davis Jr., Saturday night on the Main Stage. Serving in a percussionist role, tap dancer Maurice Chestnut's well-received soloing reached a peak during the eight-minute compositional homage to the iconic multifaceted artist and entertainer.

The traditional Sunday afternoon MJF Next Generation Jazz Orchestra main stage concert featured three of the all-star high school band's alumni—pianist Benny Green and saxophonists Joshua Redman (this year's Artist-in-Residence) and Donny McCaslin, who grew up in nearby Santa Cruz County. Vocalist Hope Flores, from the Los Angeles County High School for the Arts, had star-making takes on "Cheek To Cheek" and "Gee Baby, Ain't I Good To You?"

Another unofficial theme for this year was that of the super sidemen—pianist/keyboardist Uri Caine with McCaslin's group, drummer Marvin "Smitty" Smith with pianist Helen Sung's superb trio, and drummer Matt Wilson, who performed with saxophonist Sarah Wilson's excellent quintet and kept time for pianist Bill Carrothers much-buzzed-about trio. The artist most likely to next headline the Main Stage was saxophonist Tia Fuller, whose Sunday evening Garden Stage show opened the ears of critics and fans alike.

As the weekend wound down, Sonny Rollins closed out the Main Stage with a predictably rousing two-hour set, including a new number, "Professor Paul," that mixed deep, authoritative funk with spry overtones.

—Yoshi Kato



WNYC's Julie Burstein (left) with Manfred Eicher

Manfred Eicher's Quiet Worldview

Often the world seems like a small place, but there are occasional reminders that the world is diverse and full of surprises. The documentary *Sounds And Silence: Travels With Manfred Eicher* delivers such a reminder.

The film, created by Peter Guyer and Norbert Wiedmer, centers on the life and art of Manfred Eicher, ECM Records' famed founder and producer. Its New York premiere was on Sept. 12 at the IFC Center in Manhattan's Greenwich Village. Some 200 intense New York fans (including pianist Ethan Iverson, saxophonist Tim Berne, trumpeter Tomasz Stanko, guitarist David Torn, bassist Michael Formanek and many others) attended the premiere. The DVD and Blu-ray editions, as well as a sparkling soundtrack (also on ECM), were released Sept. 13.

Sounds And Silence opens with Eicher sitting silently in a living room listening to Keith Jarrett—perhaps ECM's most famous artist—playing solo on “Reading Of Sacred Books,” from *Sacred Hymns Of Gi Gurdjieff* (ECM). From there, the documentary becomes a travelogue of exotic locales and music. One moment Eicher is in Estonia, meticulously recording classical composer Arvo Pärt, and the next, he's in the studio with trance jazz musician Nik Bärtsch's Ronin.

A few of the film's most fascinating storylines follow oud master Anouar Brahem, percussionist Marilyn Mazur and bandéon king Dino Saluzzi with cellist Anja Lechner.

Following the IFC screening, Eicher took questions from WNYC DJ Julie Burstein and audience members. “It's very difficult to be surrounded by cameras,” Eicher said. “It's very difficult for everyone because sometimes you need extra light. Sometimes, you need extra sound.”

When asked about developing an appropriate creative “space” for musicians, Eicher noted, “My task is to try to be a good listener who is patient. And if I lose patience, then I have to say something. Sometimes I wait for a long time and the musicians find out which directions they have to go and they have to change. But it's a mystery, sometimes, how things develop and how they come out. And you cannot really foresee it all the time—fortunately not.”

Regarding high-resolution recording in an MP3 world, Eicher quipped, “So far, I don't realize that there is a dominance of MP3.” The only sound was loud applause, which brought a wry smile to the producer's face. —Frank Alkyer



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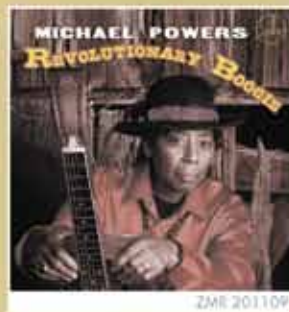
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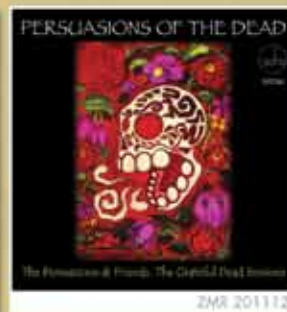
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Michael Kaeshammer

Hitting His Stride

Michael Kaeshammer grew up harboring a musical secret. To his friends, he was a decent garage-band drummer and a card-carrying member of the AC/DC fan club. But he had a nimble-fingered alter ego, spending hours a day at the piano emulating his musician father, who owned a substantial collection of boogie-woogie records. Young Kaeshammer was a piano prodigy and no one knew it.

That all changed at age 16, when one of his school teachers caught wind of his hidden talent and blew his cover in class. “I felt so embarrassed, just because I didn’t think it was cool,” Kaeshammer recalled.

These days, Kaeshammer wears his early influences proudly on his sleeve. His pop-tinted 2011 release, *Kaeshammer*, and 2009’s *Lovelight* (both on Alert Music) are laced with spirited stride solos and New Orleans-style grooves à la Art Tatum and James Booker. “That’s just home to me, musically speaking,” he said.

Kaeshammer, who is currently based in Toronto, has built a reputation across North America as a gifted pianist and a stylish singer, not to mention an affable showman. His formidable chops and accessible tunes draw large crowds at jazz festivals and garner comparisons to crossover stars like Harry Connick Jr. and Jamie Cullum. His joy on stage is palpable.

But Kaeshammer’s upbeat music belies a period of personal reckoning during which self-doubt, loneliness and a feeling of ostracism from jazz peers almost led him to give up his career entirely. Take “Rendezvous,” the foot-stomping opener on his latest album. In the song, Kaeshammer coolly offers a helping hand to a friend in need. He said the friend he had in mind when he penned the lyrics was Michael Kaeshammer, circa 2006.

“I felt it was very personal for me to go, ‘I’m going through some stuff in my life and I’m gonna let you know’—to say it in the third person felt a lot easier,” Kaeshammer explained. “That song was a little bit of therapy for me.”

Kaeshammer, 34, began his career as a teen sensation, traveling with his father on weekends to play solo gigs around his native Germany. He moved to Vancouver Island, Canada, at age 18 and cut his teeth playing blues and boogie-woogie standards at clubs.

There, Kaeshammer began to explore bebop and other styles but became preoccupied with others’ opinions of his playing. “When you’re younger on the jazz scene starting out, there’s a lot of judgment,” he said. Kaeshammer also suf-



fered from a growing sense of listlessness about performing. “It just became a gig, a job—like going to the bank and being a teller.”

If there was a silver lining, though, it’s that Kaeshammer’s solution to his doldrums did more than merely ward off thoughts of early retirement—it transformed him as an artist. He began to write stream-of-consciousness journal entries every morning, later turning his thoughts into lyrics. Composing his own songs became a way to deal with his personal blues. It also added another arrow to his musical quiver: vocal talent.

Kaeshammer found further artistic inspiration in New Orleans, where he lived prior to Hurricane Katrina. “I remember the first time I went, just reading the street names gave me chills,” he said. “I started having memories of all these songs I used to listen to.”

During what was supposed to be a two-week visit, he fell into a weekly five-hour gig on Bourbon Street with singer Marva Wright. He ended up staying nine months. The weekly sessions sharpened his sense of groove, but perhaps more importantly, they reinforced the need to

express himself emotionally in his playing.

“At the time, I liked to show off with stuff that I was doing on the piano,” Kaeshammer said. “I remember Marva saying, ‘I see you can play. Why are you playing what you play? Is there a deeper meaning to what you do?’”

For Kaeshammer, that musical *raison d’être* was a desire to make worthwhile connections with audiences. It led him to embrace the unabashed playfulness of his favorite musicians.

“You look at Louis Armstrong stuff, and that guy’s putting on a show,” he said. “When I go see shows, I don’t have to be entertained, but I like feeling a connection with what’s going on.”

Drummer Johnny Vidacovich, a New Orleans player who’s appeared on several albums with Kaeshammer over the years, praised the pianist’s magnetism in performance settings. “He totally hypnotizes the crowd in every possible way without sacrificing integrity, without sacrificing musicality,” Vidacovich said. “He has a great sense of humor in his playing, and he plays the piano like I would like to play the drums.”

—Eric Bishop

Jakob Bro Unlimited Light

Performing with his trio at a festival several years ago, Jakob Bro was surprised when an audience member approached the stage, his eyes on the Danish guitarist's white Telecaster.

"This guy who I didn't know asked to borrow my guitar," the 33-year-old, Copenhagen-based musician recalls. "He wanted to play with the group. So I said, 'Sure,' and handed him my guitar. He played a solo—and that was Kurt Rosenwinkel. He said afterwards, 'I never take a guitar out of somebody's hand and play a solo. But you guys sounded so good I had to join you.' Kurt asked me to come to New York, and he said he would hang out with me anytime."

Since that invitation in 1998, the quiet guitarist with the luminous sound has forged many musical friendships, both in the United States and abroad. A member of Paul Motian's defunct Electric BeBop Band and a current member of trumpeter Tomasz Stanko's quartet, Bro seemingly brings the existentialist yearnings of his homeland to original material that qualifies as jazz—and something else.

Opening for Gretchen Parlato this July at Skuespilhuset hall during the Copenhagen Jazz Festival, Bro and his flexible trio—accompanied by wild-eyed tenor player Bill McHenry—played variations on a gleaming whisper. Bro guided the group through at-times ethereal, at-times shimmering and even spectral music (from two forthcoming albums) that floated, slowly grew in power and intensity like a sunrise, then dissipated like leaves settling after a rustle of wind.

"Bill adds a lot of contrast to these songs," Bro says, referring to the saxophonist. "He makes the simple melodies exciting. But it's also nerve-wracking—you never really know *what* Bill does."

Like many players on the Danish jazz scene, Bro's interest in classical, rock and jazz is reflected in his growing catalog of seven albums. His compositions are heavily influenced by the works of Motian and Stanko.

"I've listened to Paul's music more than Tomasz's," he says. "But I am inspired by Tomasz's way of leading a band. At first with Tomasz, it felt like I was from another planet; I didn't know how to fit in with a grand piano and drums and bass. That gig helped me to make a soloistic statement. With Motian's band, I was so overwhelmed playing with Chris Cheek and Mark



Turner. That was a study in learning how to blend in."

Bro is less concerned with guitar solos than group conceptions, evident in his two latest Loveland Records releases: *Balladeering* (with Motian, Lee Konitz, Bill Frisell and Ben Street) and *Sidetracked*, where layer upon layer of unguitar-like sounds create an acoustic/electronic texture web. Bro's group performed selections from these two albums at the Copenhagen festival; a DVD, *Weightless*, reveals the recording process behind *Balladeering*.

"*Balladeering* is more like sketches," Bro explains. "I was very aware of not writing too much stuff. I wanted open sketches to create enough room for everyone to play. Everything was like I dreamed it should be. *Sidetracked* had many tracks on the computer, but I didn't want to do an electronic record. I wanted it to be alive, somehow. That was the challenge, because everything was so totally organized. I am doing a similar project now."

Though quiet in nature, Bro is ambitious. He's currently working on two projects: one, a followup to *Balladeering* with a similar lineup; the other, a broad-ranging, large-scale work involving Kenny Wheeler, Roswell Rudd, Paul Bley, Thomas Morgan, Jeff Ballard and a boys choir.

"Denmark is a small scene," Bro explains. "We have opportunities; there's no limit to what you can do. But the musicianship is different than in the States. When I studied at Berklee in '96, there were so many people who could play stuff that overwhelmed me. I would never be able to do those things. But in terms of making music, we've found ways of expressing ourselves in a slightly different way. And we have the history of great musicians living in Denmark."

—Ken Micallef

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Players ▶

Tineke Postma *Transatlantic Blend*

Tineke Postma insists that she is first and foremost an improviser. “I want to be as creative as possible while having a dialogue with the other musicians,” says the 33-year-old Dutch saxophonist, speaking by phone from her home in Amsterdam. “The dialogue part is in the improvisation.”

While working toward that goal, Postma has honed equally proficient chops on alto and soprano saxophones and developed considerable prowess as an arranger and composer. She is also an able bandleader and since 2005 has fronted a post-bop quartet that comprises some of Holland’s most respected jazz musicians: pianist Marc van Roon, bassist Frans van der Hoeven and drummer Martijn Vink. Postma’s fifth album, *The Dawn Of Light* (Challenge), is her first studio outing with the band, and demonstrates an audible chemistry that fuels their musical dialogue. It also evidences an ensemble of players on equal terms with each other.

“I’m not looking to be the only soloist on stage, accompanied by the rest of the band,” says Postma. “It’s not so much about one person as it is about the collective music—that’s what matters. I just try to react as best I can to what I’m hearing onstage.”

“She doesn’t play with an agenda,” said drummer Terri Lyne Carrington, a frequent collaborator whom Postma regards as her mentor. “Some people come in and you can hear what they’ve practiced, you can hear the arc to their solo before they’ve even finished it. But with Tineke it’s very in the moment, and the music really does influence where she goes. And that’s a very mature quality.”

It’s also a quality that filters into Postma’s other musical endeavors, in particular her composing. Though she sometimes works in traditional song form on *The Dawn Of Light*, more often her constructions are less conventional and more organic, ranging from long, through-composed lines to the development of a single riff or melodic passage. “It’s a very instinctive kind of composing—it’s not very mathematical,” she explains. “What I do is record myself practicing, improvising on the piano, and just pick phrases and analyze what I’ve been doing and then build a song around that.”

This method works because she sees her compositions’ primary purpose to be a framework for improvising. “They are the playground for my musicians and myself,” she says. “They’re really just sketches to allow us to be as free as we can, without sticking to it too much—every night playing the same way. And I find that in playing, I always try to focus on



the melody, which for me is the important part of the song.”

There is, however, more dimension to Postma’s work than her apparent single-mindedness about improvisation might suggest. Take, for example, her double instrumentation. Postma started as exclusively an alto player, but to take advantage of a greater sonic range she now divides her time equally between it and the soprano—playing the latter with soaring lyricism and the former with more gravel and bottom.

She’s also a serious student of classical music. “I really only studied jazz in school,” she says, referring to both the Conservatorium van Amsterdam and Manhattan School of Music. “But now I find classical music very inspiring, all the beautiful harmonies and the melodies of composers like Debussy and Tchaikovsky.” *The Dawn Of Light* also features a robust, alto sax-led interpretation of a section from *Floresta do Amazonas*, a concert classical work by Brazilian composer Heitor Villa-Lobos. (Another Villa-Lobos piece appears on her 2009 Etcetera Now release, *The Traveller*.)

If she’s currently fascinated with the European tradition, however, Postma’s respect for and engagement with American musicians is inescapable. She describes Wayne Shorter and Herbie Hancock as her heroes. At the Manhattan School, her saxophone teachers were Dave Liebman and Dick Oatts. Postma has frequently collaborated with Carrington, and the saxophonist appeared on Carrington’s 2011 release, *The Mosaic Project* (Concord). On *The Dawn Of Light*, Esperanza Spalding appears as a guest vocalist, and the Villa-Lobos piece is balanced with a cover of Thelonious Monk’s “Off Minor.”

Improvisation may be her stated forte, but Postma’s artistic voice is ultimately a personal one on all fronts.

—Michael J. West



Matt Jorgensen

Seattle Beat

After a decade in New York, drummer Matt Jorgensen needed a change of scenery. His timing couldn't have been better. Returning to Seattle in 2002, Jorgensen not only established a reputation as a versatile sideman throughout the West Coast; he also helped operate a record label that was starting to receive attention. "The attraction of moving back to Seattle was being able to stay in one town and really have more of a home base," he said.

Jorgensen, 39, moved to New York in 1992. He attended the New School for Jazz and Contemporary Music, studied privately with Carl Allen and Kenny Washington, and played countless gigs. He also met and married his wife, Rebecca.

The early 2000s marked the end of an era in jazz, according to Jorgensen. By then, he recalled, a significant number of prominent musicians from the 1950s and '60s had died or had stopped performing. "I feel really lucky that I got to see Max Roach [perform] live a number of times," he said, adding: "I got to have lunch with him, and he played my drums."

"I got to meet Arthur Taylor and see Arthur Taylor play," he continued. "I gave Elvin Jones a ride in my car. I became friendly with Joe Chambers. My time in New York was really like finishing school."

Jorgensen and John Bishop, another Seattle drummer, began Origin Records in 1997 as a means to document their own work, in addition to the music of their friends and peers in the Pacific Northwest. It has developed into an imprint whose catalog includes 340 albums, many featuring nationally recognized artists. After producing a series of bookings at

Dimitriou's Jazz Alley, the two established the Ballard Jazz Festival in 2003, a five-day event showcasing regional and national artists.

"We're basically about as far away from [Los Angeles] and New York as you can get," Jorgensen said. "In the late '90s, no one was going to give us a record deal. So we decided to just do it ourselves and see what would happen."

Jorgensen's six albums on Origin include his most recent, *Tattooed By Passion* (2010). He describes his recordings with his former band, 451, as an amalgam of rock and free-jazz. Trumpet player Thomas Marriott's *Human Spirit* (2011) featured Jorgensen and saxophonist Mark Taylor, a member of Jorgensen's 451 group. The lineup coalesced into a working band that adopted its moniker from the album. The three musicians have recorded albums for Origin, and also appear on releases throughout the label's catalog. The group had planned to record a live album in October at Seattle's Earshot Jazz Festival, with pianist Orrin Evans and bassist Essiet Essiet. (The first album features organ player Gary Versace.)

The band's ever-changing rhythm section is no accident. Jorgensen enjoys performing with a variety of musicians, including Eric Alexander, Corey Christiansen, Tim Ries' Rolling Stones Project, Stanley Jordan and Ian Hendrickson-Smith (formerly of the Dap-Kings). "I always try to approach any given musical setting I'm in [by playing] that music, not necessarily [playing] my vibe," Jorgensen said. "Dissecting the history of this music and being able to cover a lot of different gigs and being able to play a lot of different music in the appropriate way—that, to me, is what's inspiring right now." —Eric Fine

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No Guts, No Glory

Brash Brassman Trombone Shorty's Experimental Attitude Yields Major Payoffs

By Jennifer Odell : Photography by Jimmy and Dena Katz

Most Sundays in New Orleans, the streets of one neighborhood give themselves up to the bamboula-based rhythms, brassy improvised melodies and gravity-defying dance moves that define a second line. As the multi-generational social aid and pleasure club roves jubilantly from block to block, its dancers leap onto sign posts or hurl themselves on the pavement, experimenting with the possibilities afforded by strutting their stuff at various altitudes while a brass band improvises over a mix of jazzed-up traditional hymns, soul jams and hip-hop hits. From the music to the dance moves to the parade route, the more inventive the improvisation, the better.



In the early '90s, Troy "Trombone Shorty" Andrews, a young brass player who could keep up with pros three times his age before he could fully extend his instrument, was an integral part of this scene. As that kid—now a 25-year-old, Grammy-nominated star—looks back on his career and the development of his new disc, there's a sense that he never really gave up the creative wagering or constant motion of a second line.

"It's crazy where music will take you in New Orleans," Andrews says wistfully. Shorty, as he's still called despite his lanky stature, is seated in the green room of New Orleans music mecca Tipitina's a few days before the Sept. 13 release of his Verve Forecast disc *For True*, which debuted at No. 1 on Billboard's Contemporary Jazz chart. He gives bear hugs to club employees, all of whom ask about the record release party he'll host here in a few days. Then he casually mentions the time he confounded a Tipitina's audience by diving off the stage in the middle of a performance.

"There's no boundaries," Andrews announces, looking utterly at ease under the watchful gaze of Fats Domino and Professor Longhair, whose portraits loom above him on the venue's walls. "Once we actually played a second line in somebody's bedroom."

He pauses and smiles, delighting in the memory of a mid-parade surprise. "The band surrounded the bed. The person had just passed away ... and the bandleader was like, 'We're goin' in the house!' So we're knockin' over ceiling fans. We got 200 people in one house. It was shaking with the music, and the lights go out. It's amazing where music will take you in this city. It's probably the only place you could play a funeral, a second line, a birthday party and then go play on a stage in one day."

Andrews' itinerary nowadays often involves stages of the big, international variety. *For True* arrived just a year-and-a-half after *Backatown* (Verve Forecast) captured the top slot on Billboard's Contemporary Jazz chart, stayed there for nine weeks straight and earned Andrews his first Grammy nod. The new CD serves as a second installment of his unique mix of multiple genres of music. He calls it "supafunkrock," but that term leaves out blues, r&b, brass band music, Motown, bounce and the serious jazz training through which he and his band filter all of these elements.

Supremely driven and focused, Andrews works constantly, shuns alcohol and counts among his heroes high school teachers like Kent Jordan and the late Clyde Kerr Jr., both of whom drilled him endlessly on jazz fundamentals. But when it comes to his own music, Andrews is all for taking chances. In the last few years, he's left his bop and funk albums behind to engineer his own genre of music. He has also conquered a fear of singing to become a full-fledged vocalist.

Additionally, Andrews is working on a signature line of horns, which are designed to allow music students more flexibility and less fatigue. But he doesn't plan to put the instruments on the market until he gets them "in every school in New Orleans with a music program." True to his word, Andrews delivered a set of horns—and a performance alongside Mayor Mitch Landrieu—to his alma mater, KIPP McDonogh 15 Middle School for the Creative Arts, on Sept. 7.

"A life without risk is no life at all," Andrews is fond of saying.

The material on *For True* was written in spurts during a year that saw Andrews evolve from local New Orleans celebrity to international star, thanks to exhaustive touring, national TV appearances and high-profile events like the Red Hot + Blue fundraising concert he curated at the Brooklyn Academy of Music in December. Cameo appearances on the HBO series "Treme" also helped raise his profile.

Sitting in the green room of Tip's, clutching a bag of fries, a confident yet sleep-deprived Andrews believes he's ready to tackle phase two of his major-label career. He is also acutely aware of the challenges at hand.

"We've been rehearsing non-stop," he says. "We're really cramming it in, in a short time. I want to get it to where we can play both records down. We haven't played every song off of *Backatown* yet and we just learned the entire new record this week."

Just as *Backatown* was, *For True* is heavily overdubbed. Members of Andrews' band, Orleans Avenue, recorded their parts separately, and Galactic's Ben Ellman worked long hours with Andrews in the studio to develop the finished CD. Besides singing and playing trombone and trum-



pet, Andrews also contributes drums, organ, piano, synth bass and percussion parts to the 14 tracks, all of which he wrote or co-wrote. Guest appearances by Lenny Kravitz, Warren Haynes, Kid Rock and others who will not appear on most of the band's tour dates add to the challenge of translating the album to the concert stage.

As Ellman points out, that difference can be a learning tool. "I think it's a great way to grow as a band because you can get things done in the studio that you could never get done live," says Ellman, who has known Andrews since the early '90s when they played together in the New Birth Brass Band. "It's a good way to take your band to the next level, and I think that's happened with Troy. He wasn't going to play most of *Backatown* live, but slowly he started learning the songs. As for the new songs I've heard him playing, he's come up with arrangements that work great live."

Timing hasn't been easy. Andrews' languid cadence and easygoing demeanor do little to mask what his constantly buzzing phone makes quite clear: Success like this takes work. The band's packed schedule necessitated composing new music during sound checks, on tour buses or during all-nighters in the studio with Ellman. And even when ideas had been explored and song structures started coming together, maintaining a cohesive sound required extra vigilance.

"It's hard to make albums with us, because we play so many different styles," explains Andrews. "We get in the studio and we start playing something, but it might not [fit] what we're doing at this particular moment. If we were limited musicians, we'd finish the album really fast, but our minds go into these different avenues and it's hard to focus."

Slippery genre definitions aside, *For True* falls impressively into place as a compendium to *Backatown*. Andrews' r&b-soaked crooning returns, his efforts split in even ratios between vocals, trumpet and his namesake horn. Bass-heavy arrangements again play up the big-beat horn lines. Bassist Mike Ballard says the chords for "One Night Only (The March)" from *Backatown* inspired the *For True* opener, "Buckjump," which he co-wrote. He explains: "I wanted to keep the same energy and show that we can be more mature with it."

Other innovations changed this time around.

"The initial tunes [Andrews] came in with were more developed this time than the last time," says Ellman. "I think he'd spent more time songwriting with a record in mind, so our jumping off platforms were a little more defined. Some of the best stuff comes from the spontaneity of being in a studio session where you're not on the clock and you're able to experiment, which is a lot of what we did. We scratched at his preconceived



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Orleans Avenue: Michael "Bass" Ballard, "Freaky Pete" Murano, Joey "In and Out" Peebles, Troy "Trombone Shorty" Andrews, Tim McFatter, Dwayne "Big D" Williams and Dan "Uncle Potato Chip" Oestreicher

Orleans Avenue : Treme Risk-Takers

The cover of the first record by Troy "Trombone Shorty" Andrews & Orleans Avenue, as they were then billed, featured five fresh-faced teenagers Photoshopped into an image of the New Orleans skyline. Dressed in near-matching striped and plaid button-down shirts, the musicians on the cover of *Orleans & Claiborne* (Treme Records) doled out liner-note thanks to their jazz camp, to their high school and to their family members—all expressions of youthful enthusiam, to be sure.

The band's recent ascent to international acclaim may have ushered in an era of swankier album packaging, but in a way that first cover illustrates what makes 2011's version of Orleans Avenue click. Members of the now seven-piece ensemble share so many common experiences that they seem to trust each other completely with new ideas and approaches.

Though relatively new to the group, percussionist Dwayne "Big D" Williams has known Troy Andrews for most of his life and was part of the early Trombone Shorty Brass Band back when they were kids. The lifelong friends are given to gleeful accounts of hanging out on their block of Dumaine Street, using cardboard boxes, water bottles and tree branches to imitate their idols, the Rebirth Brass Band. Their neighborhood included the Candlelight Lounge, where Lionel Batiste and the Treme Brass Band still hold court on Wednesday nights, as well as the now-shuttered Joe's Cozy Corner and Trombone Shorty's, the barroom that Andrews' mother named after him when he was still in grade school. Together, Williams and Andrews navigated the Treme's ups and downs.

"All of those kids were playing this music," Williams says, but he believes his and Andrews' decision to avoid drugs, alcohol and cigarettes helped them to get ahead. Williams' previous stint in the Stooges Brass Band also keeps him rooted in what his neighborhood peers are up to musically.

Andrews and bassist Mike Ballard, meanwhile, met at Louis Armstrong Jazz Camp during elementary school, and they immediately understood each other's approach to music.

"We read each other's thoughts," says Andrews. "It's like we know our instincts, and when we don't, you'll hear some noises onstage like, 'Oh, OK, I see where you're going.'"

Another jazz camp alum, drummer Joey Peebles, caught Andrews' eye during a performance. "I went backstage after the show to meet him," Andrews recalls. "I asked him to come sit in with me. We played Donna's, I think, and he came in and he upstaged my drummer at that time ... he's been with me every day since."

Andrews, Ballard, Peebles and former Orleans Avenue member Jonathan Batiste all went on to study jazz together at the New Orleans Center for Creative Arts, where they gained experience with new instruments as well as new ideas.

"I was a horn player, so I can hear a lot of melodic parts or spell out parts on the horn," says Ballard, explaining another way in which he and his bandmates work through new music together.

Guitarist Pete Murano (a rock-rooted graduate of Loyola University), baritone saxophonist Dan Oestreicher and tenor player Tim McFatter round out the band.

Between them, the members of Orleans Avenue have access to a wide range of tastes and abilities. Ballard says they have no problem taking the time to explore new territory.

"You try it all," he advises. "If you don't, no ideas will be able to get out. If you can't feel what you're doing, then it won't work. If it starts to feel good, you can form it into anything."

—Jennifer Odell

notions and built on things with an experimental attitude.”

As a result, melodies on *For True* sometimes lurk within meandering motifs. It’s interesting to hear Ellman—who performs as a DJ under the name Gypsyphonic Disko and plays with the New Orleans Klezmer All-Stars—on “Unc,” one of the disc’s highlights. The tune juxtaposes Serbian music concepts with a gregarious beat representative of Treme Brass Band legend Lionel Batiste, a bass drum player and singer known around town as “Uncle Lionel.” (Beneath those layers lies a seed rooted in hip-hop: Andrews says that Snoop Dogg and Pharrell Williams’ 2004 chart-topper “Drop It Like It’s Hot” was an influence on the composition.)

The song “Big 12,” on the new album, draws on Andrews’ impressions of scenes and characters from where he grew up. Neighbors tend to hang out in the covered area beneath the I-10 highway at the intersection of Orleans and Claiborne avenues. It’s a part of the Treme that was verdant and foot traffic-friendly decades ago, before city planners tore up the oak trees on Claiborne Avenue and built the interstate along what had been the heart of the neighborhood. It’s also a favorite haunt of James Andrews II and his friends, who like to observe the comings and goings there.

“‘Big 12’ is about my dad,” says Andrews. He wanted to recreate that corner’s activity as if he were scoring a film. So he wrote funky music to suggest action: “Because that’s what you see under the bridge: police driving fast, you see some people might get in a fuss, some people having fun, some people dancing with no music.” Inspired by his father’s pastime, Troy adds, “I want to sit there with him one day and just see what happens.”

Growing up, Troy’s older brother, James “Lil’ 12” Andrews, was his constant mentor. When Troy was still a toddler but clearly a prodigy, James dubbed him “Trombone Shorty” for obvious reasons. He took Shorty on the road with his own band, the New Birth Brass Band, taught him what he knew and kept him in contact with legendary Treme musicians like Anthony “Tuba Fats” Lacen, Kermit Ruffins and Rebirth Brass Band founders Keith and Philip Frazier, all of whom Troy played with on second lines around the 6th Ward.

In 1995, the Andrews family was devastated by the tragic death of James and Troy’s brother, Darnell. Soon thereafter, Troy began living with Susan Scott, a longtime family friend, who helped raise him and supervised his education.

At the prestigious New Orleans Center for Creative Arts, Troy went from child prodigy to well-rounded musician. “I was already exploring [music] before I got to NOCCA. I was already touring,” he says. “They wanted me to know and speak the language of what I was doing. It was more about backtracking so I could understand everything that I was playing.”

By 2002, when Andrews released his debut, *Swingin’ Gate*, (Louisiana Red Hot Records), the advantages of having learned “backwards,” as he likes to say, were evident. Originals highlighting his post-bop compositional chops, an homage to his grandfather (the Crescent City songwriting icon Jessie Hill, who penned “Ooh Poo Pah Doo”) and a Latin-tinged interpretation of “St. James Infirmary” all featured an intangible creative passion that was almost as memorable as his technical mastery.

Embraced by critics, *Swingin’ Gate* kicked off a flurry of wide-ranging recording projects for Andrews, including a bluegrass project and a soulful, funk-infused jazz recording with James called *12 & Shorty* (Treme Records, 2004) that showcased the brothers’ symbiotic relationship on trumpet and trombone.

The End Of The Beginning (Treme Records), by the Troy Andrews Quintet, dropped in 2005, the same year as *Orleans & Claiborne*, an original electric funk romp backed by the first incarnation of Orleans Avenue. In those days, Andrews did not yet consider himself a singer. An invitation from Lenny Kravitz to join his tour as a featured player took both his vocal and rock interests in new directions.

Suddenly, Andrews was paying close attention to the new information he could absorb on the road with Kravitz. During stopovers in New York, he’d visit with his former classmate and original Orleans Avenue band mate Jonathan Batiste, who was studying at The Juilliard School.

“We would hang out in the hotel room,” Batiste recalls, “and he would tell me about what they were doing and how they rehearsed. Touring with

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Lenny opened his eyes to a lot.” Andrews returned with a new focus and applied it to Orleans Avenue. Percussionist Dwayne “Big D” Williams believes that touring with Kravitz put everything into place for Andrews.

“After he went on tour, came back and started playin’ this music, we were like, ‘Whoa, you took a chance,’” says Williams, who grew up banging on makeshift instruments with his neighbor, Troy. “His chance paid off.”

Musicians whom Andrews had emulated since childhood noticed the change, too. As Rebirth Brass Band bass drum stalwart Keith Frazier points out, “When you’re a kid, you wanna rush and do a whole lot all at once. As he gets older, he’s hearing how to take his time.”

The Rebirth Brass Band provides the foundation for “Buckjump” on *For True*. On the increasingly rare occasions when Andrews and Rebirth find themselves sharing a second line, Frazier says Shorty’s creative choices are more careful now than they once were. Still, he says, Andrews is “technically astute” enough to take plenty of risks with his music.

“When you’re in a brass band playing on the street, you can do a lot of stuff you wouldn’t do on a stage,” says Frazier, tracing Andrews’ development back to his parade experience. “You can experiment a little. There’s a lot of improvisation going on, a lot of call-and-response. You really have no idea what they’re going to play [on the street], so you’re taking the chance that it’s gonna come off.”

In the afternoon quiet of Tipitina’s, Andrews pauses at the top of the stairs to the club’s second level. The worn patches and missing tiles of a floor roughed up by decades of dancing lend the space an air of a cozy neighborhood barroom before its regulars trickle in. He looks at the stage, now eerily awash in a few rays of 3 o’clock sunlight.

“Man, one thing I have learned is that every place in New Orleans looks different during the day,” he says, prophetically.

Three days later, that same lovingly bruised floor is invisible, bearing the weight of nearly 1,000 fans. The only light pouring in from outside on Tchoupitoulas Street comes from four rotating searchlights. As the diverse crowd chatters in front of the dark stage, a skronking scramble of intentionally mismatched power chords announces that Orleans Avenue has arrived. Dressed in black and wearing sunglasses, Andrews takes center stage with a trombone in one sinewy arm and a trumpet in the other.

Without a word, he gets to work, shaking milliseconds of vibrato into a hard-hitting trombone attack, as guitarist Pete Murano and bassist Mike Ballard keep things firmly rooted in rock. Almost immediately, the floor seems to pulse with ricocheting hips and a flurry of feet. Andrews’ swagger energizes a mix of head-spinning unison horn lines while the band gracefully rolls into tune after tune. Melodies and bass lines merge as the band kicks into a booming rendition of “Buckjump,” complete with local bounce artist 5th Ward Weebie’s teasing, breathy staccato rhymes.

Delving into the *Backatown* material, Andrews punctuates “Hurricane Song” with numerous bars of circular breathing, a reliable trick that intensifies the fans’ dancing frenzy. For more than two hours, Andrews seamlessly shifts from trombone to trumpet solos, leading the band through instrumental funk jams replete with long percussion breakdowns. The forays into neo-soul show off his syrupy vocals.

At a recent New Orleans Jazz & Heritage Fest performance, Andrews’ originals had been complemented by a rock-meets-traditional rendition of “On The Sunny Side Of The Street.” Tonight’s gig is more focused. It has the feel of a show that could appeal to arenas, TV audiences, festivals and rock clubs. The fact that jazz only comprises part of the menu is a non-issue for Andrews.

“We get a lot of flak from certain people that say we’re not keepin’ the tradition alive,” he acknowledges. “That’s not our responsibility. Louis Armstrong and Miles Davis sounded very different even during those times. We get a lot of young musicians that get caught up into trying to re-create what those people have done, not knowing that the people who made that music were always trying to move it forward. I think that’s part of the thing that hurt the jazz community. Because people just started recycling after a while.”

Andrews and his bandmates know that certain audiences will always tag them as a jazz group because the bandleader wields two horns. “My rhythm section might be laying power chords, but I’m still playing influences of jazz on top of it. But it’s just music. One thing I’ve noticed is that the whole world will never be my audience.”

If misperceptions about Andrews’ music exist, they’re likely to fuel new ideas rather than cause him to rethink previous ones.

“You can’t worry about it,” he says. “You just gotta do it.”

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By John McDonough :: Photograph by Jimmy Katz

“Currently the hottest trio in jazz,” the magazine said in August 1959.

Not this magazine, mind you, but Time magazine, which rarely stooped to notice the increasingly arcane goings-on of the '50s jazz world. But it's a measure of the breadth of Ahmad Jamal's sudden and unexpected breakthrough that year with “Poinciana” that it was both noticed and noted in the global menu of America's most august news weekly.

Back in the trenches of the jazz world, though, where suggestions of commercial popularity, especially those reported in Time magazine, were like Kryptonite, a certain chill fell over Jamal's music, which was viewed by some with boredom if not suspicion. Examine the numbers he piled up in the DownBeat Critics Poll during the early height of his popularity—say, from 1958 into the middle '60s—and the main number you find is zero. Believe it or not, Jamal never even appeared in the Piano category, let alone rose to contender level. The Readers Poll numbers were not much better. Jamal did crack the paydirt of single digits once—No. 9 in his big year of 1959—only to drop down to No. 19 by 1964.

Such far-off trivia seems amusing today, now that history has finally caught up to Ahmad Jamal and the pianist wears the mantle of an accredited and active living legend. So patience does prevail. Sixty years after his first trio recordings (for the Okeh label) and 50 years after his first DownBeat cover story (March 16, 1961), Jamal enters the community of his peers that is the DownBeat Hall of Fame.

“Well,” he reacted a few weeks ago, “I've gotten a lot of awards in my life, and you always appreciate them. And that's it. I don't underestimate or overestimate them. I give them their due.”



Jamal's restraint was consistent with his famous rectitude. But I wondered: Once, I told him, I asked Frank Capra for his reaction to becoming the 10th recipient of the American Film Institute Life Achievement award. "It's about time," the director snapped.

Any of that simmering beneath all that rectitude? "None of that," Jamal laughed. "I don't mimic the quotations of others unless they're valid for me. That's not a valid one for me."

DownBeat critics may not have been swept away by Jamal at first. But two of the jazz world's most influential judges of talent were behind him from the start. One was John Hammond, whose uncanny ear had an incredible affinity for the kind of raw originality that made us reimagine what music could be: Billie Holiday, Benny Goodman, Count Basie, Lester Young, Charlie Christian and many more. In 1951, it was Hammond who brought Jamal to Danny Kessler at Columbia's Okeh division.

"That happened," Jamal says, "because John was very locked into Israel Crosby, one of the greatest bassists of all time. I was working with Israel, and because of that he discovered me. Interestingly enough, I was Israel's pianist first

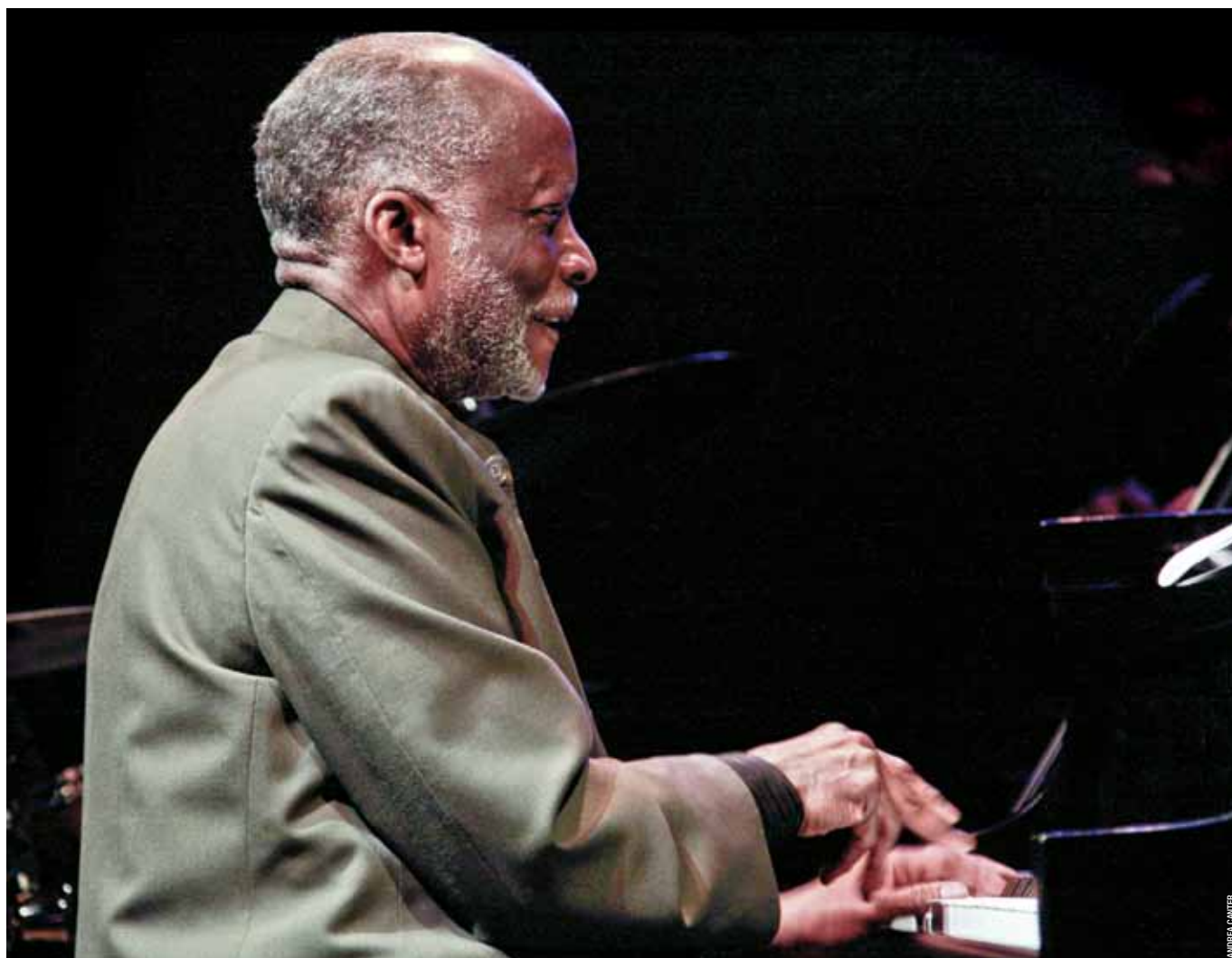
and then I managed to hire him when I formed my own group." (Hammond had found Crosby in Chicago in 1935 and recorded the milestone "Blue Of Israel" that year, perhaps the first jazz work in which solo pizzicato bass carried a thematic line.)

The other early adopter was Miles Davis, who (along with pianist Red Garland) discovered Jamal at the Pershing Hotel a few years later and who began recording his tunes before either he or Jamal had become household names. "Ahmad's Blues" was on *Workin'* for Prestige, and "New Rhumba" was arranged by Gil Evans for *Miles Ahead*. "I'd love to have a little boy," Davis said in 1959, "with red hair, green eyes and a black face—who plays piano like Ahmad Jamal."

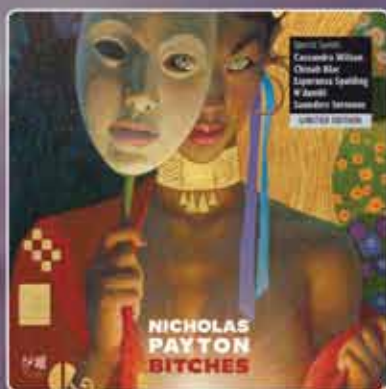
What did Hammond, Davis and soon thousands of fans hear in Jamal that seemed to elude some critics? Simplicity, perhaps, and an authority that dared to exhalt restraint. For 35 years the history of jazz had been a continually expanding universe of virtuosity, speed, density and intricacy. With the arrival of bebop, the last frontiers of sheer technique had been conquered and settled. Notes could not grow any higher or faster, only more iconoclastic. Jamal, like Davis

in his way, declined to play the musical athlete—or anarchist. Instead, he eased back on the throttle and helped locate an alternate route into a new modernity. Its spirit was open, ambivalent, sometimes intellectual and seldom dependent on olympian virtuosity (although Jamal was and remains a first-rate technician). At a time when many critics were beguiled by the frontiers of total freedom, Jamal found his voice by digging deeper into what more restless players were trying to escape, and by anchoring his material around recurring riffs and refrains.

Jamal's untimate wedge into the big time was an unlikely tune on an even more unlikely label. To the extent that the new post-war jazz scene retained any vestige of the once massive mainstream market it had held during the swing era, it was ruled by a handful of young pianists who recorded for major labels and were said to appeal to "people who normally didn't like jazz." Dave Brubeck and Erroll Garner led the pack, and both were skillfully nurtured and marketed by Columbia Records (which was also laying plans for Davis by the late '50s). Another was George Shearing, whose albums for Capitol deftly served both art and commerce. Toward the end of the '50s, as Norman Granz's Verve



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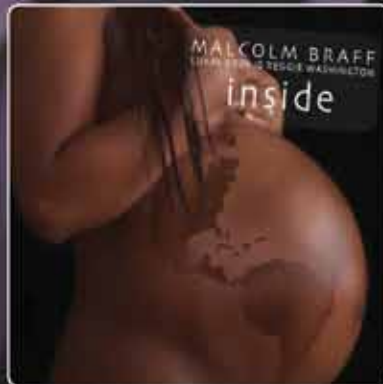
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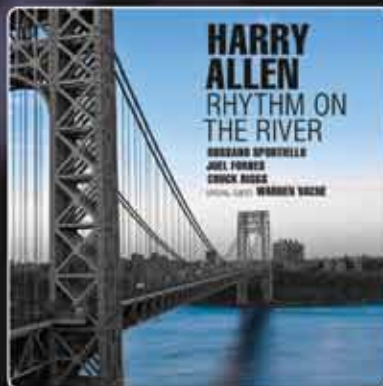
MALCOLM BRAFF
Inside

Malcolm Braff grew up in Brazil, moved to Senegal, and now lives in Switzerland. With his love of jazz as a guiding light, he plunges into the volcanoes of African music to create his version of soul jazz with help from electric bassist **Reggie Washington** and young drum wizard **Lukas Koenig**.



CHRIS CONNOR
Sings Gentle Bossa Nova

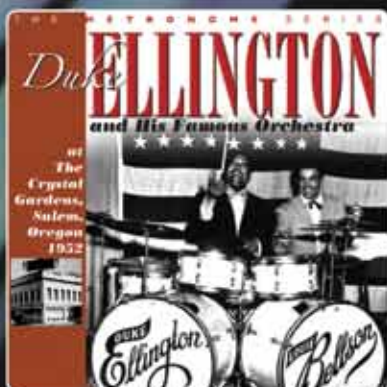
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Rhythm on the River

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label made its play for the commercial market, Oscar Peterson joined their ranks. All had risen to major record companies and large audiences from smaller jazz labels, where they had paid their dues with the cognescenti.

For Jamal, though, it all seemed to work in reverse. He started at the top—Okeh and Epic, both imprints of Columbia—put out a few singles and an album that went nowhere, and then worked his way down to achieve remarkable fame on an obscure label. Along the way through the mid-'50s, with a wife and daughter, he scuffled. He went east in search of work for his trio but found none; then came back to Chicago, replaced guitarist Ray Crawford with drummer Vernel Fournier, and found a steady gig leading the house trio at the Pershing Lounge, a modest hangout off the lobby of the slightly shabby Pershing Hotel. The pay was \$300 a week—for the whole trio. Only when he went with Argo, a tiny South Side Chicago label with almost no jazz catalog or promotional budget, did he take off. In 1958, *At The Pershing: But Not For Me* made Jamal the talk of the jazz world and took up a long-term lease on the Billboard album charts for more than two years. Suddenly he was an overnight success.

"It wasn't so sudden," he laughs today, reflecting on his perspective. "We'd been recording for seven years. First for Okeh, then Epic in 1955, then to Al Benson's Parrot label, and those masters were bought by Leonard Chess. Finally to Argo. Yes, I had a meteoric rise."

For a jazz musician who had once been with Columbia, Argo seemed like the last stop on a steep slide to oblivion. The label was a sister brand to Chess Records, which was far more interested in selling Bo Diddley, Chuck Berry and Muddy Waters to the swelling rock'n'roll market than in marketing a shy and thoughtful young jazz musician to a cultish niche of beatniks.

And if Argo was a long shot, don't even mention "Poinciana." Jamal's hypnotic version of the traditional Spanish melody that Bing Crosby had Anglicized onto the Hit Parade in 1943-'44 became as close to a hit record as any jazz musician could ever hope to have. "It made the jazz division of Chess," Jamal says without false modesty, "and changed my life." The change came quickly. In 1956 he might do an occasional press interview in his small room in Chicago's Sutherland Hotel. A few years later the same reporters pulled up to a massive 16-room home he bought in 1960 in the vicinity of the University of Chicago. His fees went from \$300 a week to \$3,000, according to Time magazine.

"It's still changing my life," he says today. "I just got back from Istanbul, Turkey, after doing 16 concerts in Europe in July and August. So it's still changing my life. There

DownBeat Hall Of Fame

Legends in jazz, blues and beyond can be elected into the DownBeat Hall of Fame by way of the annual Critics Poll (designated by "C"), Readers Poll ("R") or Veterans Committee ("V"). It all started in 1952 with the Readers. The Critics got into the game in 1961—50 years ago—and the Veterans Committee began voting in 2008. With this month's addition of Ahmad Jamal, there are now 128 DownBeat Hall of Famers, listed here in alphabetical order.

A-B

Muhai Richard Abrams (C 2010)
Cannonball Adderley (R 1975)
Louis Armstrong (R 1952)
Albert Ayler (C 1983)
Chet Baker (C 1989)
Count Basie (R 1958)
Sidney Bechet (C 1968)
Bix Beiderbecke (C 1962)
Ed Blackwell (C 1993)
Art Blakey (R 1981)
Jimmy Blanton (V 2008)
Lester Bowie (C 2000)
Michael Brecker (R 2007)
Clifford Brown (C 1972)
Ray Brown (R 2003)
Dave Brubeck (R 1994)

C-D

Harry Carney (V 2008)
Benny Carter (C 1977)
Betty Carter (C 1999)
John Carter (C 1991)
Paul Chambers (V 2011)
Charlie Christian (C 1966)
Kenny Clarke (C 1988)
Nat "King" Cole (R 1997)
Ornette Coleman (R 1969)
John Coltrane (R 1965)
Chick Corea (R 2010)
Tadd Dameron (V 2009)
Miles Davis (R 1962)
Paul Desmond (R 1977)
Baby Dodds (V 2010)
Johnny Dodds (C 1987)
Eric Dolphy (R 1964)

E-G

Billy Eckstine (V 2010)
Roy Eldridge (C 1971)
Duke Ellington (R 1956)
Bill Evans (C 1981)
Gil Evans (C 1986)
Maynard Ferguson (R 1992)
Ella Fitzgerald (R 1979)
Erroll Garner (V 2008)
Stan Getz (R 1986)

Dizzy Gillespie (R 1960)
Benny Goodman (R 1957)
Dexter Gordon (R 1980)
Stéphane Grappelli (R 1983)

H-J

Lionel Hampton (R 1987)
Herbie Hancock (R 2005)
Coleman Hawkins (C 1961)
Roy Haynes (C 2004)
Julius Hemphill (C 1995)
Fletcher Henderson (C 1973)
Joe Henderson (R 2001)
Jimi Hendrix (R 1970)
Woody Herman (R 1976)
Andrew Hill (C 2007)
Earl Hines (C 1965)
Milt Hinton (C 2001)
Johnny Hodges (C 1970)
Billie Holiday (R 1961)
Freddie Hubbard (C 2009)
Milt Jackson (R 1999)
Ahmad Jamal (R 2011)
Keith Jarrett (R 2008)
Antonio Carlos Jobim (R 2002)
James P. Johnson (C 1992)
J.J. Johnson (R 1995)
Elvin Jones (C 1998)
Hank Jones (C 2009)
Jo Jones (V 2008)
Philly Joe Jones (V 2010)
Thad Jones (C 1987)

K-M

Stan Kenton (R 1954)
Rahsaan Roland Kirk (C 1978)
Gene Krupa (R 1972)
Steve Lacy (C 2005)
John Lewis (C 2002)
Abbey Lincoln (C 2011)
Jimmie Lunceford (V 2008)
Jackie McLean (C 2006)
Glenn Miller (R 1953)
Charles Mingus (R 1971)
Thelonious Monk (R 1963)
Wes Montgomery (R 1968)
Lee Morgan (R 1991)
Jelly Roll Morton (C 1963)

Gerry Mulligan (R 1993)

N-P

Fats Navarro (C 1982)
Joe "King" Oliver (C 1976)
Charlie Parker (R 1955)
Jaco Pastorius (R 1988)
Art Pepper (R 1982)
Oscar Peterson (R 1984)
Oscar Pettiford (V 2009)
Bud Powell (R 1966)

Q-S

Sun Ra (C 1984)
Django Reinhardt (C 1971)
Buddy Rich (R 1974)
Max Roach (C 1980)
Red Rodney (R 1990)
Sonny Rollins (R 1973)
Pee Wee Russell (C 1969)
Artie Shaw (C 1996)
Woody Shaw (R 1989)
Wayne Shorter (C 2003)
Horace Silver (R 1996)
Zoot Sims (C 1985)
Frank Sinatra (R 1998)
Bessie Smith (C 1967)
Jimmy Smith (R 2006)
Billy Strayhorn (R 1967)

T-Z

Art Tatum (C 1964)
Cecil Taylor (C 1975)
Jack Teagarden (C 1969)
Clark Terry (R 2000)
Lennie Tristano (C 1979)
McCoy Tyner (R 2004)
Sarah Vaughan (R 1985)
Joe Venuti (R 1978)
Fats Waller (C 1968)
Chick Webb (V 2010)
Ben Webster (C 1974)
Mary Lou Williams (C 1990)
Tony Williams (C 1997)
Teddy Wilson (C 1987)
Lester Young (R 1959)
Frank Zappa (C 1994)
Joe Zawinul (C 2008)



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Jazz trio led by pianist **Helge Lien**, one of the most exciting young talents in Scandinavia. *Natsukashii* channels the entire breadth of the trio's influences—from classical to jazz and from folk to progressive rock.



KARL SEGLEM Ossicles

One of the most exciting tenor saxophonists from Norway, **Karl Seglem's** latest album is propelled by the pulse of former Madrugada-Drummer **Erland Dahlen**. A beautiful blend of jazz and folk.



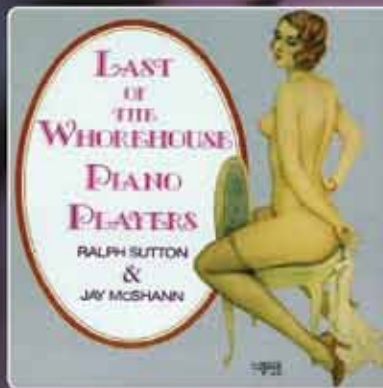
THE TAAL TANTRA EXPERIENCE Sixth Sense

An exciting and colorful album with an East Indian core and European wrapping. Featuring **Tanmoy Bose**, who is touring with **Ravi Shankar** and **Anoushka Shankar**, and who participated on two Grammy winning recordings, *Concert for George (Eric Clapton)* and *Full Circle*.



REINALDO BRAHN Brasileiro Soul

Singer-songwriter **Reinaldo Brahn** offers up his personal melting pot of beats and pieces. *Brasileiro Soul* features master percussionist and producer **Jim Brock**, who calls Brahn "the new voice of Brasil."



SUTTON & McSHANN Last of the Whorehouse Piano Players

Chiaroscuro presents *Last of the Whorehouse Piano Players*, the winner of the coveted Grand Prix du Disque de Jazz. This recording features the very best of **Ralph Sutton** and **Jay McShann** in a tight quartet with **Milt Hinton** and **Gus Johnson**.



PABLO ASLAN QUINTET Piazzolla in Brooklyn

Recorded in Buenos Aires by New York-based Argentine bassist **Pablo Aslan**—and his quintet, all fluent in jazz and tango, *Piazzolla in Brooklyn* reclaims the music of Piazzolla's cursed jazz tango experiment *Take Me Dancing*.



LALO SCHIFRIN Invocations: Jazz Meets the Symphony #7

"One of the great musical talents of his generation, and his majestic JMTS enterprises deserve to be more largely feted than currently seems to be the case...sit back (and often sit up) to enjoy a truly distinguished hour-plus of orchestral jazz at its finest." — *Jazz Journal*

are few instrumentalists that get hit records. Singers, yes. But sometimes we instrumentalists get a breakthrough. I was one. Those things change your life forever."

He sounds grateful. But does he ever tire of "Poinciana" or resent the way it has stalked him for the last 50 years? "Get tired of 'Poinciana'?" he replies incredulously. "It's my thrill and I love it." He speaks of it as a source of inspiration for endless interpretation, no different from the standard classical repertoire. "As we speak," he continues, "symphonies are still programming Beethoven. ['Poinciana'] is still a baby

compared to that. I don't get tired of 'Poinciana' because it's still an embryo. Six thousand kids within a radius of where I live [in western Massachusetts near the Berkshire Mountains] are trying to learn Mozart. So why should I get tired of 'Poinciana'?"

Why, indeed. Its compelling accessibility drew millions to his music, and on his own terms. If some take that for pandering, they will get a polite argument from Jamal. "That's the way it's supposed to be," he insists. "I think American classical music [his coinage for what the world calls "jazz"] is certainly underrated

culturally. This is the area in which we function. This music is very important and should be able to reach a lot of ears and not just jazz fans. My record was on the charts for 108 weeks and certainly helped build Chess Records." For that he sees no cause for apology.

"Poinciana" gave him something even more important. "I was fortunate," he says, "that I had one of the rare contracts in the industry in which I had control over my music, and I still demand that when I record. Leonard Chess gave me control over everything from music to album graphics. I knew what I wanted to do and didn't need anyone to tell me. I know my music better than anybody. I think one should avoid getting into the 'business' of music."

When the general public discovered Jamal, they found a man who didn't fit the stereotypical profile of the modern jazz musician. At 30, he had come to fame with a distinctly unique identity. He looked almost boyish. To some skeptics, he was circumspect in his abstention from the usual vices of the trade. Other listeners inferred a mystic quality to his marvelous discipline and dignity.

Jamal remained with Argo and its successor label, Cadet, well into the '60s. He then moved on to projects for Impulse, 20th Century Fox, Atlantic and others. His profile leveled off as the jazz world turned the page to new controversies over the avant-garde, fusion and historicism. For a while he seemed to fall out of popularity. But Jamal never stopped playing or recording. In the last decade or so, he has re-emerged stronger than ever as a force in jazz.

Some of his recent recordings include *A Quiet Time* (2010), *It's Magic* (2008), *After Fajr* (2005) and *In Search Of Momentum* (2003).

If you ask him to mark any special favorite period in the long arc of his career, he goes back to the beginning. "I look back on the history of my coming up years in Pittsburgh," he says and reels off a diverse list of its sons and daughters. "A very important place for musicians. I used to sell newspapers to Billy Strayhorn's family when I was seven. There was Ray Brown, Art Blakey, Kenny Clarke, Stanley Turrentine, Billy Eckstine—nobody better than Billy. Maxine Sullivan, Earl Hines, Roy Eldridge, Earl Wild, the exponent of Liszt. And a little tap dancer named Gene Kelly. And don't forget Erroll Garner." Jamal talks about being a classmate of singer Dakota Stanton at Westinghouse High School in the mid-'40s. "And by the way," he adds, "George Benson, one of the newer crop from Pittsburgh."

His early keyboard models were Garner, Teddy Wilson, Art Tatum and Nat "King" Cole. "You always have models and you imitate them," he says. "But the thing about Pittsburgh is you eventually come into your own."

Coming from such a place also made Jamal conscious of the tradition he aspired to join. I asked for a memorable moment and again he reached back before fame delivered him to a wide public. "Yes," he said without hesitation.

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"Carnegie Hall, [Nov. 14] 1952, Duke Ellington's 25th anniversary. I was on with Charlie Parker and strings, Billie Holiday, Dizzy Gillespie, Stan Getz and the Ellington band. I'm the only one living today. I was 22—pretty good for just 22. I'm a walking historian to some of those things that happened in our musical world, and I look back with fond memories."

He performed with his trio that night, and the trio has remained his preferred setting ever since, though he has taken on such occasional co-stars as Stanley Turrentine, Gary Burton and George Coleman. But they're the exception. Unlike Oscar Peterson, who played with everybody, Jamal has no regrets over any missed brief encounters.

"I was leading at a very young age," he recalls. "I've been in my own zone as a leader for so many years, so I haven't longed to do anything different. I look forward to expanding repertoire, and I'm getting ready for another record session in October. So I'm preparing for that. I always look forward and try not to look back and think of what should have been or could have been. That's not worth two dead flies."

As for repertoire, he introduced himself in the '50s playing mostly familiar standards but has moved steadily toward his own music since. It's a privilege he's earned. "I've grown accustomed to my compositions," he says. Then, like a player startled to find his fingers have accidentally stumbled into a famous phrase in the middle of a solo, he laughs. Then he goes with it. *"They almost make the day begin ... I've grown accustomed to the tunes I whisper night and noon ..."* Jamal pauses to consider how aptly the Lerner and Loewe song applies. "Probably about 80 percent of my repertoire today comes from my own things," he continues, "and 20 percent are the works of others, which is about the reverse of what I did years ago. But Billie, Louis, Tatum and others did standards. They interpreted the works of others beyond their wildest dreams, just as I did with 'Poinciana' or Coltrane did with 'My Favorite Things.' That's the beauty of the art form."

Last year Mosaic Records compiled a monument to his formative Argo work. "He had been unhappy in the past about how Universal handled his Argo material in the CD era," says producer Michael Cuscuna, who invited him to consult. "We wanted him happy with as much previously issued material as possible. He was very caring and enthusiastic about this set."

At 81 Jamal still enjoys playing, "but my favorite venue is home," he says. "I live in Massachusetts because I don't have the energy for New York any more. Performance is easy—it's traveling that's difficult now. So I pick and choose where I play. Number one, I don't do nightclubs any more, just concerts. Two, I prefer indoor, not outdoor, stages. But I've done Saratoga Springs and especially Millennium Park in Chicago—one of the exceptions. But for the most part, outdoors is not for music.

"I enjoy performing; otherwise, I wouldn't

do it. But you don't just go out to hear the applause and please others. I have to be pleased, and then perhaps somebody else will be. I enjoy the rapport and interaction between my ensemble and myself. And the audience usually senses those sparks and responds." He reads off a busy schedule for the balance of 2011: the Musical Instrument Museum in Phoenix; then Rockport, Mass.; then with Diane Reeves in St. Louis; and so on.

After such a storied career, one which critic Stanley Crouch has called, with the exception of Charlie Parker's, the single most important

"to the development of fresh form in jazz" since 1945, Jamal seems uninterested in turning to autobiography.

"But I've been having a film crew follow me around for the last couple of years," he says, "in preparation of my OK-ing a documentary film. But I don't know whether I'm going to do it or not. I have to look and see what the footage looks like."

Ahmad Jamal joins the DownBeat Hall of Fame in the best possible way—alive and kicking, playing at the top of his form, enjoying it all, and best of all, in control.

DB

Enrico Rava Quintet Tribe

Enrico Rava trumpet
Gianluca Petrella trombone
Giovanni Guidi piano
Gabriele Evangelista double-bass
Fabrizio Sfera drums

On tour:

2/17 San Francisco, CA
2/18 Portland, OR
2/21 – 2/25 New York, NY
2/26 Buffalo, NY



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ECM

Jazz Artist of the Year :: Esperanza Spalding

Breaking Boundaries

By Shaun Brady :: Photo by Andrea Canter

Esperanza Spalding has become one of the biggest breakout stars of 2011 — not just in jazz, but in all genres of music. The bassist/singer/composer has been voted the DownBeat Readers Poll Jazz Artist of the Year. A few months ago, she won a category in the DownBeat Critics Poll: Rising Star—Electric Bass.

The most shocking moment at this year's Grammy ceremony undoubtedly was Spalding's win in the all-genre Best New Artist category. For an understandably cynical jazz community, it was shocking that she was even nominated in a category without "jazz" in its name. For TV viewers, it was shocking that this relative unknown could take an award over pop superstars like Canadian r&b singer Drake, English folk-rockers Mumford & Sons and of course, teen idol Justin Bieber, whose heartbroken fans spent the rest of that Feb. 13 evening calling for her head.

But most of all, on an awards show dominated by the shallow, massive-selling glitz of mainstream pop music, it was shocking simply because, as Joe Lovano says, "she deserves it."

Lovano is one member of the "incredible community and family of musicians" that Spalding thanked by name during her acceptance speech that night. Many other people have recognized her talents, too. In just a few years, she's gone from studying at Berklee College of Music to sharing stages with McCoy Tyner and Stevie Wonder and being handpicked by President Obama to perform at the Nobel Peace Prize ceremony.

When Spalding was profiled for a September 2010 cover story in DownBeat, journalist Dan Ouellette asked her about the future. She replied, "I want to hold on to that idea of being small and unnoticed, yet excited and curious. I don't want to change that." As her next album, *Radio Music Society*, becomes one of the most anticipated releases of 2012, and she continues to attract media attention from far outside the jazz world, it will be impossible for Spalding to go unnoticed.

Producer Gil Goldstein, who worked with Spalding on both her 2010 album, *Chamber Music Society* (Heads Up), and its impending sequel, finds at least part of the key to her

spectacular ascent in her remarkable poise, as exemplified by her grace in victory at the Grammys.

"I don't remember anybody who looked that relaxed at any awards ceremony over the last 25 years," Goldstein laughs. "She was so not blown away by the moment. She didn't stutter, she didn't cry. She just was totally in the moment, which is rare. That's such a great skill to have. And then, she came offstage and just went back to work. She's totally unaffected personally by the hype of it all. It was just a moment in the sun and nice that the whole community got recognized through her."

Every so often, another artist comes along who seems to offer a bridge for jazz and popular music to finally reunite. "Crossover" may be a dirty word to some, but in Spalding both camps might have to concede their approval, however grudging. She's a bassist with chops enough to stand her ground alongside Lovano and a pair of serious drummers; and she has a voice that can flit between jazz and soul idioms with the ease of the "Little Fly" whose story opens *Chamber Music Society*.

The demand for her talents has been intense. Just this year, Spalding contributed to Francisco Mela's *Tree Of Life* (Half Note) and Tineke Postma's *The Dawn Of Light* (Challenge). On the latter, she illuminates "Leave Me A Place Underground," which is the saxophonist's original setting of a Pablo Neruda poem. Spalding also appeared on a compilation of highlights from the Kennedy Center's 2010 Women in Jazz tribute to Mary Lou Williams; contributed a whimsical rendition of "Chim Chim Cher-ee" to the Disney jazz tribute album *Everybody Wants To Be A Cat*; and provided considerable inspiration for Terri Lyne Carrington's all-female recording *The Mosaic Project* (Concord).

"She kind of completed a circle for me," Carrington says of meeting Spalding. "I hadn't played with any female bass



players like her. I tease her that we play like an old married couple. We both agree on what we think is hip or not, and for that project I really needed somebody who completed me in that way—since bass and drums are the foundation of everything. I have people on that CD representing three or four different generations, and she's kind of one of the younger people but one of the more accomplished as well. I learn a lot from Esperanza."

Somehow in the midst of all of that, Spalding found time to record *Radio Music Society*. Originally intended to be released simultaneous-

ly with *Chamber Music Society*, the forthcoming album promises to reveal yet another aspect of her musical personality, focusing on her soul and r&b influences. The album will feature collaborations with A Tribe Called Quest rapper/producer Q-Tip as well as reunions with *Chamber* collaborators like Carrington and Goldstein, who contributed an arrangement of Wayne Shorter's "Endangered Species."

Goldstein, who has yet to hear the finished product, anticipates that "it's not going to totally surprise everybody in terms of where her skills are and where her ability is as a singer

or bass player or arranger. Not that we take her for granted, but I already think of her as being someone like Pat Metheny or Paul Simon, who have an almost conscious way of making each record show another layer of their personality. I think she's going to be one of those people who's not going to make the same record year after year and is going to be rediscovering in themselves what music is for them."

For Lovano, Spalding's artistic evolution is evidence of her deeply personal approach to music. Lovano invited her straight from one of his student ensembles at Berklee into his double-drummer Us Five quintet, with whom she's since recorded two CDs.

"She didn't come in like a typical bass player because she was new on the scene and experiencing things for the first time," Lovano recalls. "But she lives in the world of music, and she's influenced by many things, and she can execute her ideas in a lot of different ways. That's coming out in a real personal way and to me, that's what jazz music is about. When you went to hear Miles, you didn't just go to hear jazz, you went to hear *Miles*. And Esperanza's personality is what people want to hear—her sound and feeling and approach."

Spalding repaid Lovano's support recently, inviting him to perform with her on a high-profile gig opening for Prince at the L.A. Forum, where the Purple One sat in. Also in the group were guitarist Jeff Lee Johnson, keyboardist Raymond Angry and Carrington (on drums), who saw the eclectic lineup as proof of Spalding's open-mindedness and instinct for combining musicians and influences from diverse backgrounds. Carrington is working closely with Spalding on *Radio Music Society* and sees those traits as a strong component of the forthcoming album.

"She's young and a product of the new school hip-hop and r&b generation as well as a student of the classic stuff," Carrington says. "Her music is global. It feels very accessible but not dumbed-down to be accessible. It's just great songwriting."

As Carrington points out, that unique combination of accessibility and depth has earned Spalding fans from the pop music world who typically wouldn't look twice at a jazz record and from among jazz diehards who would normally scorn mainstream success. "She's a real-deal talent," Carrington says. "A lot of times it takes a minute for the less-sophisticated listener to get it, but somehow everybody seems to embrace her. She has a way of getting through those boundaries; even if people don't understand the music, they appreciate her personality and overall vibe. I think that's the key to her success."

At only 27 years of age, Spalding's already-impressive resume only has room to grow. In Lovano's words, "Music is a blessing, and Esperanza definitely has a voice out here that will carry on into the future beautifully. And she's just scratching the surface."

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Beyond Album Runner-Up: **Vinnie Colaiuta**



Jazz Album & Pianist of the Year :: Brad Mehldau

1 Pianist, 2 Hands

By Geoffrey Himes :: Photo By Michael Jackson

Brad Mehldau's double CD *Live In Marciac* (Nonesuch), the Jazz Album of the Year in the DownBeat Readers Poll, comes with a DVD, and when you click on the encore track "Martha My Dear," the first thing you see is a close-up of Mehldau's hands. Those hands, sticking out from sleeves of brown cotton and shiny, coppery stripes, are surprisingly small, especially when curled up like eagle talons over the keys.

The right hand begins by picking out the familiar Beatles melody, but the left hand doesn't play the expected comping chord or even a parallel harmony. Instead, Mehldau's left hand carves out a brisk, descending melody that doesn't echo the right hand but complements the tune perfectly.

A mere eight bars later, his right hand is spinning variations on Paul McCartney's theme, while the left jabs at a circular arpeggio of eighth notes. It sounds as if his hands belong to two different musicians engaged in a dialogue. The camera pulls back to reveal the pianist's long arms, square jaw and brown hair, confirming the obvious: It's all Mehldau. But the close-up emphasizes how independently his hands can operate, and that remarkable give-and-take is expressed on all of the album's 14 tracks.

"Playing different lines in each hand is something I've done for a long time," Mehldau says by phone from Amsterdam. "I do it more and more because it's so much fun. I love Brahms' piano music where there's all this melodic activity in the bass. And Art Tatum is huge for me, because he does things with his thumbs and little fingers to generate more melody. He's really heavy.

"Having each hand play independently stems from the desire to hear more melody in the lower register. It's more expressive in some ways to hear the tune down there. It's more touching because you don't expect it.

And then you realize you can still play a different melody up high. If you're involved in the piano to any extent, this approach calls out to you. You realize you've got 10 fingers, and they can all add to the melody."

The conversation between Mehldau's two hands is more obvious on a solo album like *Live In Marciac* than on a combo record like 2008's *Brad Mehldau Trio Live*, a chamber orchestra project like 2010's *Highway Rider*, or a duo session like the new *Modern Music*. When Mehldau ascended the immense wooden stage at the Marciac Jazz Festival in southwestern France, his trio mates Larry Grenadier and Jeff Ballard weren't there to fill up the bottom with their own inventions. The whole lower range was left to Mehldau's left hand, which he used to spawn one melodic theme after another.

Mehldau, who was also voted Pianist of the Year in the Readers Poll, alternates between live recordings and studio recordings. In the studio, he points out, he has a lot more control over the performance. Recording multiple takes allows an artist to select the one with the optimal balance of precision and excitement. He cites *Modern Music*, engineered by Tom Lazarus, as "the best-sounding piano record I've ever been part of." In a live setting, by contrast, you have far less control over the sound and you only get one take each night. The compensation is the stimulation from the audience.

"Perhaps it's ego-driven," he jokes, "but you get this excitement and this drive to do something special for those people who are sitting out there. You can feel that they want it, and so you want to give it to them. It's the same whether you're playing for 80 people at a club or 8,000 people at a festival; they took time out of their lives to show up and hear what you do. I never take that for granted."

On Aug. 2, 2006, when *Live In Marciac* was recorded, Mehldau felt like he was having a special night, but he wasn't 100 percent sure until he listened to the tapes.

"I felt like it was a good night when I was on stage," he recalls, "but sometimes I'm wrong. Sometimes I think it's a good night, because I'm excited about something new I was trying to do. But when I listen later I realize it's not something I want to listen to again and again. But this time, when I listened to the tapes, I liked it even more. It's not an obvious cause-and-effect thing; it doesn't have much to do with what happened earlier in the day. It goes in cycles—you'll have several good shows, and then one will fall flat, and then every week or so, you'll have a really great show."

Nine of the tracks on the album are outside compositions, including—in typical Mehldau fashion—standards by Cole Porter and Rodgers & Hammerstein, as well as more modern standards by Kurt Cobain and Nick Drake. Mehldau has long been a

Jazz Album of the Year

1 Brad Mehldau, *Live In Marciac* (NONESUCH) 351

A formidable piano performance recorded during a jazz festival in southern France, *Live In Marciac* stands out as this year's favorite jazz album among DownBeat readers. (See page 44.)



2 Keith Jarrett/Charlie Haden, *Jasmine* (ECM) 336



Collaborators Jarrett and Haden delved deeply into a program of romantic standards during an intimate duet recording. The pianist and bassist play with what might be described as awesome restraint.

3 Joe Lovano Us Five, *Bird Songs* (BLUE NOTE) 300



Lovano's latest Blue Note release, from his dynamic intergenerational ensemble Us Five, breaks the mold of Charlie Parker tribute records. This CD is a thoroughly modern, thoughtful look at a titan by one of the most important voices in jazz today.

4 Esperanza Spalding, *Chamber Music Society* (HEADS UP) 300



The Grammy-winning bassist/vocalist creates a modern image of a chamber group with classical string trio arrangements and her own jazz/folk/pop compositions. Milton Nascimento and Gretchen Parlato contribute their genius and elegance to Spalding's ever-deepening vision.

5 Chick Corea/Stanley Clarke/Lennie White, *Forever* (CONCORD) 267



The trio of Corea, Clarke and White—the core of '70s electric-jazz supergroup Return To Forever—transcends nostalgia, asserting its authority from the get-go and finding its roots in crystal-clear, hard-swinging jamming.

6 Charles Lloyd Quartet, *Mirror* (ECM) 237



A poignant mix of tender romances and transcendent spirituals, this CD draws the listener into a world of feeling and meaning. The saxophonist has amazing sidemen in Jason Moran, Reuben Rogers and Eric Harland.

7 Wynton Marsalis & Richard Galliano, *From Billie Holiday To Edith Piaf: Live In Marciac* (RAMPART STREET/JAZZ IN MARCIAC) 198



The trumpeter's quintet joined with French accordionist Galliano to respectfully reflect on two very different national legacies, both bronzed in the immortality of victimization and early demise. This sweet, joyful and dynamic disc is accompanied by a smartly shot DVD of the same performance.

8 Bill Frisell, *Beautiful Dreamers* (SAVOY JAZZ) 195



Frisell continues to be a self-effacing and spectacular player, as evidenced by this recording of the guitarist's novel trio with viola player Eyvind Kang and drummer Rudy Royston. The CD consists of short tracks based on simple ideas with a down-home flavor.

9 Herbie Hancock, *The Imagine Project* (HANCOCK) 192



Featuring a huge cast of global all-stars, Hancock's re-imagining of the ideals of the 1960s overflows with musical interaction and artistic integrity. The pianist and impresario re-establishes himself as a true believer in the philosophy of music-as-universal-language.

10 Avishai Cohen, *Introducing Triveni* (ANZIC) 189



The trumpeter demonstrates "terrifying control, great taste and personal style" in this setting with no fellow horns and no harmonic safety net, according to DownBeat Hot Box reviewer John Corbett. Cohen chose versatile collaborators: bassist Omer Avital and drummer Nasheet Waits.

- 11 Ambrose Akinmusire, *When The Heart Emerges Glistening* (BLUE NOTE) 186
- 12 Rudresh Mahanthappa/Bunky Green, *Apex* (PI) 183
- 13 James Moody, *Moody 4B* (IPO) 162
- 14 Dave Holland Octet, *Pathways* (DARE2) 159
- 15 Charlie Haden Quartet West, *Sophisticated Ladies* (EMARC) 147
- 16 Dr. Lonnie Smith, *Spiral* (PALMETTO) 135
- 17 Abdullah Ibrahim & Ekaya, *Sotho Blue* (SUNNYSIDE) 126
- 18 Arturo O'Farrill & The Afro Latin Jazz Orchestra, *40 Acres And A Burro* (ZOH) 120
- 19 Dave Douglas & Keystone, *Spark Of Being* (GREENLEAF) 117
- 20 Vijay Iyer, *Solo* (ACT) 117
- 21 Al DiMeola, *Pursuit Of Radical Rhapsody* (TELARC) 116

- 22 The Bad Plus, *Never Stop* (E1) 115
- 23 Chucho Valdés & The Afro-Cuban Messengers, *Chucho's Steps* (40) 115
- 24 Stanley Clarke, *The Stanley Clarke Band* (HEADS UP) 112
- 25 Anat Cohen, *Clarinetwerk: Live At The Village Vanguard* (ANZIC) 99
- 26 Bryan Lynch, *Unsung Heros: A Tribute To Some Underappreciated Trumpet Masters* (HOLISTIC MUSICWORKS) 99
- 27 Dave Liebman Group, *Turnaround: The Music Of Ornette Coleman* (JAZZWERKSTATT) 90
- 28 Danilo Pérez, *Providencia* (MACK AVENUE) 90
- 29 Bill Charlap/Renee Rosnes, *Double Portrait* (BLUE NOTE) 87
- 30 Lee Konitz New Quartet, *Live At The Village Vanguard* (ENJA) 84

pioneer in using rock songs in the same way that earlier generations of jazz musicians used swing-era songs—as fodder for improvisation.

“Playing pop tunes just seemed a no-brainer to me,” he says. “I never thought of it as particularly weird; I had Blue Note records where Lee Morgan played Beatles tunes. It had something to do with me living in L.A. from 1996 to 2001, because that’s when I started recording with the trio and started playing those songs by Radiohead and Nick Drake. Radiohead became a big band for me, because I hadn’t heard any new bands in a while, and they were really hitting it then. *OK Computer* was happening, and when I heard that, I went out and got the earlier albums. Not only were they a great band, but they were also here and now; they felt relevant.

“It was a renaissance for me in listening to pop music, because I had put it aside when I dived into jazz, just as I had put aside classical. Classical came back to me when I was 20 in New York. Pop came back to me when I was 24 in L.A. Pop was the first music I had an emotional response to. When I was young, I had a clock radio in my bedroom and I’d wake up to the sounds of Steve Miller, the Eagles and Steely Dan, and I loved that music.”

More recently, however, Mehldau has been consumed by listening to Bach’s preludes and fugues and Beethoven’s sonatas. As he gets older—he’s now 41—he finds himself exploring a single composer or work for months at a time. This allows him to dive deeply into the details.

Months of listening to Richard Strauss’ *Metamorphosen* led to Mehldau’s first long work, his own through-composed *Highway Rider*. That, in turn, led to him occupying the prestigious Debs Composer’s Chair at Carnegie Hall for the 2010–’11 season, the first jazz artist to do so. That doesn’t mean that he is forsaking jazz to become a classical composer or pianist.

“Just because I listen to a lot of Bach doesn’t mean I play a lot of Bach at my gigs,” he points out, “but the listening comes out in unexpected ways. I can study the Faure nocturnes for a few months and then later on a live date, covering a Pink Floyd tune, something will come out in my playing, and I’ll say, ‘Ah, that’s Faure.’”

Mehldau has long been fascinated by canonical classical composers, especially the Germans from the 18th and early 19th centuries and the French from early 20th century, but he had never explored contemporary art music in quite the same way. That changed with his newest album, *Modern Music* (Nonesuch), a duo project with fellow pianist Kevin Hays based on arrangements by the classical and jazz composer (and saxophonist) Patrick Zimmerli.

Mehldau and Zimmerli actually went to the same school at the same time—William H. Hall High School in West Hartford, Conn. Hays was simultaneously attending a different Connecticut high school; he met Zimmerli at a national music competition for students. Like Mehldau, Hays held the piano chair in Joshua

Redman’s early ’90s bands.

Mehldau is two years younger than the other two, and grew up admiring them. When he and Hays committed to a two-piano recording, Zimmerli stepped forward with the idea of improvising within structured arrangements of contemporary classical pieces. As the idea evolved, the pieces by Arvo Pärt and Henryk Gorecki dropped out, and the final lineup included four compositions by Zimmerli and one apiece by Mehldau, Hays, Ornette Coleman, Steve Reich and Philip Glass.

For the album’s title-track composition,

Zimmerli asked Mehldau and Hays to play a written part in the left hand and to improvise with the right. This pushed the concept of right-/left-hand independence to an extreme that even Mehldau had never attempted. But he was game, and after a few stumbles, Mehldau started to get the hang of it.

“You have this burden of playing something as it’s written and also being intuitive enough to improvise at the same time,” he recounts. “Each one is challenging enough by itself, but to do both at once is a real test. The brain feels like it’s split in half.”

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Historical Jazz Album of the Year : *Bitches Brew*

The Party Continues

By John Ephland

What were they responding to? That's what occurred to me when I learned that Miles Davis' *Bitches Brew* box set won for best Historical Jazz Album of the Year in DownBeat's 2011 Readers Poll.

What were readers getting from this new package when they said "yes" to yet another reissue of a reissue of a reissue? And the most expensive one, to boot.

On one level, they were voting for the transcendent music, of course. On another level, they were voting for a choice between two versions from Sony: the Legacy Edition versus the far more expansive 40th Anniversary Collector's Edition. It's the latter of the two that won. The Collector's Edition, incidentally, came in second place in the 2011 DownBeat Critics Poll this year, just 15 votes shy of beating out the massive, 11-disc complete 1932–1940 box set of Duke Ellington's work.

The Legacy Edition of *Bitches Brew* includes the original double album and six bonus tracks (two CDs) as well as a DVD of an unissued live gig from Copenhagen in 1969 that featured *Brew* players Wayne Shorter, Chick Corea, Dave Holland and Jack DeJohnette. But, in the end, it was the "super-deluxe" package that won the hearts and minds of DownBeat readers. In an LP-sized box, fans get a CD of another previously unissued show from 1970 that adds Keith Jarrett, Aírto Moreira and Gary Bartz; an audiophile 180-gram vinyl replication of the original release; Greg Tate's extensive liner notes; an interview with *Brew* player Lenny White; tons of photos; a fold-out

poster and more.

Bitches Brew certainly has shown it has legs. Just consider the various *Bitches Brew* offshoots that have emerged in recent years, including separate projects from drummer Bobby Previte, trumpeter Wadada Leo Smith, and a program that starred guitarist Vernon Reid, trumpeter Graham Haynes, drummer Cindy Blackman and percussionist Adam Rudolph. Then there's the Animation band featuring trumpeter Tim Hagans and saxophonist Bob Belden (their recent release *Asiento* recreates the full double-LP release of *Bitches Brew* in the order in which the six pieces were originally released).

As for the story behind the music and impact it has had, well, the anecdotes seem endless, the party a continual amazement. The initial roster of players for the recording sessions included the budding talents of Chick Corea, John McLaughlin, Jack DeJohnette, Dave Holland, Lenny White, Harvey Brooks and Bennie Maupin.

DownBeat conducted a series of interviews to check in with numerous musicians who played on *Bitches Brew*, as well as some other artists whose lives were forever changed because of Miles Davis and this iconic album.

"Miles knew if he picked the right person and just



gave them enough room, he'd get fantastic music," bassist Dave Holland commented to this writer back in 2001. "He knew if you do that, musicians come up with their best work. He never said much about what the music should be; he mostly created a setting and asked you to figure out what you were supposed to do. He had enough trust in you to do that. For example, he'd leave the stage after he finished his short solo, which was another sign of his generosity; it was never about Miles only.

"Of course, anytime he was on the stage, you couldn't take your eyes off him."

If you took your eyes off Miles Davis, you missed a lot. The man was a font of musical wisdom and experience. Everyone who came in contact with him realized that. He may have earned his stripes with Charlie Parker, but he still had to show up and get the job done after he left Bird to form his own music, bands and concepts. In August 1949, two decades before the recording of *Bitches Brew*, he was starting to experiment with large ensembles, which resulted in the landmark *Birth Of The Cool* sessions. Fast-forward 10 more years to August 1959. A few months earlier, Davis had just finished laying down music for what would become an even more historic recording, *Kind Of Blue*. Only now he was having to deal with the cops and getting hassled outside New York's Birdland, where he was performing but taking a cigarette break. The results? A conflict with the police, who, Davis later said, "beat me on the head like a tom-tom." From the sublime to the ridiculous, Davis had to contend with racism even as he continued to put forth some of the greatest music ever recorded—not only *Kind Of Blue* but also the large-ensemble works *Miles Ahead* and *Porgy And Bess* with soulmate/collaborator Gil Evans.

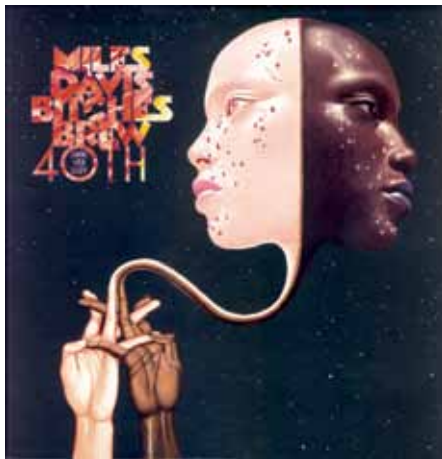
Fast-forward another 10 years and what's happened? Readers of DownBeat back then knew a lot had happened—to Miles Davis, to jazz and to America. The DownBeat Readers Poll results reflected how Davis' career was being followed. And his music continued to be a reflection of it all: *Filles De Kilimanjaro* (1968), *In A Silent Way* (1969) and *Bitches Brew* (1969), for starters.

Remembering those fruitful times, when his piano chair (soon to become a keyboard chair) was like a setting for a game of musical chairs, Davis told this writer back in 1988: "Say I'm a piano player ... so if I had any sense at all, I would have to go with Herbie [Hancock], Chick Corea, Keith Jarrett. Herbie can't play like Keith, and Chick can't play like Keith. Nobody plays like Keith. Chick can't play like Herbie, but Herbie might be able to play like Chick; I doubt it because Chick plays like he would play drums." All of these musicians were important, essential members of the *Bitches Brew* experience.

Likewise, as he told Howard Mandel for DownBeat in 1984, a good 15 years after

Bitches Brew: "I used to have big arguments with Dave Holland and Chick about electric pianos and stuff, but how many years ago was that? And you can see what happened."

Indeed. The world Davis had inhabited with the likes of Red Garland, Bill Evans and Wynton Kelly, and those heady days when he got his head beat in by a stupid New York cop had radically changed, if only musically.



"The session was a lesson in a new musical methodology that transcended any music I had ever played before. No form, no charts. It was all spontaneous. [We followed] Miles' conducting."
—Harvey Brooks

The difference between everything that came before the *Bitches Brew* era of the late 1960s and what came afterward can be comprehended through, among other things, one instrumental change in Davis' music. Because he was no longer using just one keyboardist, *Bitches Brew*, like *In A Silent Way* earlier that year, sported a tripling up of artists at that position. Joining Corea again (with Hancock gone after *In A Silent Way*) was Joe Zawinul along with Larry Young. Dig it: Three keyboardists, extra drummers and percussion, an electric guitarist, reed players and an extra bassist—one who was playing a Fender and coming from a rock and studio-recording background. For Davis, it was a return to large ensembles.

"I met Miles through Teo [Macero]," that "extra" bassist, Harvey Brooks, remembers. "We were both producers at Columbia Records. Two events connected me with Miles for the *Bitches Brew* sessions. One was meeting Teo, and the other was a recommendation by Jack DeJohnette, who heard me play on an album by Eric Mercury entitled *Electric Black Man*. Teo asked me if I wanted to do this demo ses-

sion for Miles' wife, Betty [Mabry]. The session was recorded May 20, 1969, at Columbia Studio B, with John McLaughlin, Larry Young and Mitch Mitchell, with Miles producing. After the session, Miles asked me to do some sessions he had coming up, which turned out to be *Bitches Brew*.

"The session," Brooks continued, "was a lesson in a new musical methodology that transcended any music I had ever played before. No form, no charts. We followed the conductor. It was all spontaneous, with very little thought except to follow Miles' conducting. The one constant was the motion of the rhythm. Miles was creating space and filling it with sound. There were no charts, or specific directions; maybe an occasional tone center. I was in new territory for an r&b, folk, rock and blues musician.... The most amazing part was the way Miles and Teo edited what we did to create structure out of creative chaos. I'm still digesting what went down on those sessions."

"You write to establish the mood," Davis told Dan Morgenstern for DownBeat back when *Bitches Brew* was fresh in the record shops. That's what was going on in the studio with pieces to be named later (for example, "Bitches Brew" and "Miles Runs The Voodoo Down"). "That's all you need," Davis stated. "Then it can go on for hours. If you complete anything, you play it, and it's finished. Once you resolve it, there's nothing more to it. But when it's open, you can suspend it."

"For me, this was a life-changing event," explains drummer Lenny White, who recalls playing with Davis as though it were yesterday. "Miles called the session for 10 a.m. I was there at 9:30. The cleaning lady let me in. While everyone was coming in and setting up, I started to loosen up. Miles comes in the control room and over the talk-back he says [to DeJohnette], 'Hey Jack, tell that young drummer to shut up.' Now I'm on pins and needles."

"We all set up in a semi-circle," White goes on to say, "drums together, percussion together, basses, keyboards, guitar, bass clarinet, saxophone and Miles. It was kind of like a small orchestra. Miles would snap his fingers to start a groove and then point to a soloist to play. With John [McLaughlin], Wayne [Shorter] and Bennie [Maupin], they soloed with us accompanying them, but when Miles let the keyboards, drums, or basses play, it was the whole section. Miles said to me, 'Let Jack play the basic rhythm and you add spice like a big pot of brew.' I wanted it to sound like one drummer with eight arms."

And DeJohnette did just that, embracing this brave new world of studio recording. "The concept of going into the studio for weeks at a time came from the rock world," DeJohnette recalls, "and Miles was probably the first jazz artist to do that. Except he was an improviser and creator of the highest level. It was like a lab where we were all part of the experiment, with the help of Teo Macero. I don't think



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Miles or Teo or anyone knew what the outcome was going to be or the influence it would have on the future of music. I just knew it was an important recording.”

Guitarist John McLaughlin also remembers those days well. “Like a lot of Miles’ work at that time, around 1969 and ’70, the titles of the tunes came later,” he says. “For sure nobody on those recordings knew the name of the album. That said, it was clear to me from the outset that Miles was changing the ‘rules.’ My most important impression was that Miles didn’t really know what he wanted with this recording. What was very clear was that he knew exactly what he didn’t want. It’s for this reason that there was lots of experimentation going on in the studio. This entailed jamming in one way or another, with Miles ‘tweak-ing’ all of us till he liked what was happening. And then we’d record and let it go wherever with all of us being free, which was what Miles wanted. At the same time we were keeping an eye on Miles, waiting for silent instructions, whether to play or shut up.”

As for “John McLaughlin,” the title of one of the tunes on *Bitches Brew*, McLaughlin says, “Miles rarely had titles on the tunes in the studio, [so] I only discovered that he’d given me a tune when I bought the LP! I was more shocked than anyone, and very, very flattered. At the same time it was a humbling experience. Very strange.”

Chick Corea’s memories are similar to McLaughlin’s. “Miles was definitely searching for a new form of communication,” Corea says. “He seemed to want at least a steady beat in the music—something that listeners could grasp onto. The quintet I was a part of and the great quintet just before, with Wayne [Shorter], Herbie [Hancock], Ron [Carter] and Tony [Williams], were high-art ensembles. They shared the technical factor of very sophisticated and impressionistic rhythms. I think Miles knew that this was difficult for audiences to be in rapport with. I think he also wanted to play for younger audiences.

“One night,” Corea adds, “after playing the acoustic piano every show since I started with the band, Miles pointed me toward an electric piano that had been rented for the club we were playing. As I headed for the acoustic piano, he just pointed to the rented electric piano and said, ‘Play that.’ From that moment I never again played an acoustic piano in the band, in performance or in the studio. Soon after, he had Dave Holland playing electric bass as well. I think as cultures change, so do the forms of art and entertainment change. Miles was at the forefront of the changes occurring in music in those changeable ’60s and ’70s.”

The addition of bass clarinet for *Bitches Brew* was more than a novel touch, signaling yet another change in Davis’ music. “It was my very good friend Jack DeJohnette who actually told Miles about me,” reed player Bennie Maupin recalls. “During that time, I was work-

Miles Davis (left) with *Bitches Brew* producer Teo Macero.



ing with McCoy Tyner’s band. One night Miles came to hear us at Slug’s. From my days working with the great pianist Horace Silver, I was already seriously experimenting with the bass clarinet and using it more often in McCoy’s music. Shortly after that night, Miles called and asked me to be at Columbia Studios, and to bring that ‘funny horn.’ He and Wayne both guided me openly from their hearts and provided the perfect forum for my individual musical voice to emerge and be heard. Magic!”

But *Bitches Brew* wouldn’t mean a thing if it didn’t have that spring, so to speak, into the future. Unlike much of what was produced during that transitional period in jazz—when rock elements were fused to jazz—*Bitches Brew* sounds anything but dated. And its impact has been felt by multiple generations.

Bob Belden, a Grammy-winning co-producer for the 1998 reissue of *Bitches Brew*, said that the album “represents many levels of innovation.” He adds, “One level that is rarely discussed is the personal freedom Miles gained from the success of this recording. Freedom not only financially, but artistically. No longer was Miles bound to the written composition; he only needed a sketch—or suggestion—and the compositions would evolve from this open approach.

“It was Harvey Brooks,” Belden continues, “who offhandedly explained to Miles how rock musicians made their own music of the day. Harvey said that, for the most part, the music that his bands created came from jam sessions, when they would find a common idea and develop this idea until it became a form. Teo and Miles took this idea and added the element of tape-editing. The result was a recreation of the jam-session vibe of early jazz using mod-

ern studio technology.”

Collector’s Edition co-producer Michael Cuscuna explains what makes the set unique: “This box was different than any of the other Miles Davis box sets I did because it wasn’t something that was ‘the complete’ anything. It was done more editorially. I had done a *Complete Bitches Brew Sessions* box with Bob Belden a few years back, and that brought together all of the [original] double album plus all the subsequent sessions over the next few months with the same instrumentation and aesthetic. The content of this 40th anniversary box was chosen to illustrate the influence that *Bitches Brew* had on Miles and his music.

“The first two discs are the music from the album plus some new alternate takes and all of the singles that Columbia released at the time by Miles,” Cuscuna continues. “The third CD and the DVD capture Miles live, performing material from *Bitches Brew* live. The DVD comes from a concert only a few months after the sessions, and the quintet takes that music out! It has morphed out of the grooves created on the record into something else entirely. Disc three is from a Tanglewood concert a year after the record dates, and the expanded band with Gary Bartz, Keith Jarrett and Airto Moreira plays the same material in a more rhythmic, earthbound groove, closer to the album but still very different. The music on *Bitches Brew* took on a life of its own and would constantly change in the hands of its creator. That essentially is what we were trying to show with this set.”

Although he didn’t participate in the sessions, drummer Ngudu Chanler was on the scene at that time. “*Bitches Brew* impacted me as the beginning of the revolution in jazz that was the bridge between all of the existing

styles coming together into one," he says. "The album mixed the avant-garde with contemporary rhythms, along with electronic instruments. And the concepts of more than one player on an instrument paved the way for jazz and other bands to use multiple keyboards, guitars and percussion."

"*Bitches Brew* had a huge impact on me," recalls trumpeter Graham Haynes. "The music, the title, the artwork. What also helped was that I saw the band live earlier before the release, when Miles was still in the experimental period. They played one long set. No breaks, no stopping and applause. It was like a suite. Inside of that set he played some of the material that was to become *Bitches Brew*."

"Around 1968," Haynes adds, "my dad [Roy Haynes] took me to see the film Monterey Pop. And my dad had a residency at the club called The Scene, and I'd go there. [Jimi] Hendrix, [John] McLaughlin, Tony Williams, Jack Bruce, a lot of the British rock guys hung there. Tony Williams was starting his Lifetime band. Cannonball [Adderley] was stretching out into some funky electronic things with [Joe] Zawinul. So Miles going in this direction wasn't entirely new. What was new and unique was his conception of how he did it; and I believe the seeds of this concept can be found as far back as *Kind Of Blue*."

"Miles was a musical alchemist," Haynes continues. "It wasn't just about the 'tunes' or the electric instruments. It was about an overall revolutionary concept that had been brewing in him for some time. Jimi, McLaughlin, Tony, Jack DeJohnette, Airto, Wayne, Herbie. Those cats were the mortar. Miles was the architect."

Someone who would end up playing with Davis during the mid-'80s and whose own career has been influenced by *Bitches Brew* is percussionist Marilyn Mazur. "When I was 14," Mazur recalls, "a Danish piano player/friend left me in his parents' living room with headphones on, turned off the light and played me the entire *Bitches Brew*. I fell into a kind of trance and had vivid dreams with strong symbolic images. Afterward, he showed me the cover and I was shocked to see the same symbolic images painted there! I've loved this mysterious soundscape ever since. It is my very favorite Miles recording."

Yet another musician who's been shaped by Davis and *Bitches Brew* is trumpeter and film composer Mark Isham. "It changed my whole perception and idea of what jazz could be," Isham states, "starting with *In A Silent Way*, but *Bitches Brew* drove it home! It focused my attention on wanting to make records that contained a lot of the qualities and ideas that I heard. Many years later I recorded a Miles tribute album that contained a lot of the same material [1999's *Miles Remembered: The Silent Way Project*]. The 'orchestration' of the album also had a large impact on me, as did the production style. I was, and still am, a big fan of the non-traditional ideas that Teo Macero

brought to the table. My biggest attraction to Miles' playing has always been the sense of melody and his use of space and time. He was at his best in those regards on this release!"

Speaking for many artists who have been deeply affected by the music that became *Bitches Brew*, percussionist Adam Rudolph fondly recalls, "I bought *Bitches Brew* as soon as it was released. I had only recently started playing music seriously, and this was the single most inspiring record in my collection. I both practiced to it and studied it. The music was liberating to the mind and spirit because it opened

doors to possibilities of what music could be. With that record, Miles showed us how important it is as an artist to cultivate imagination, develop craft, and then have the courage to project our expression into the world."

"Every few years when I come back and again listen deeply to *Bitches Brew*," Rudolph notes, "I find that, as I evolve as a composer and percussionist, I can discover and hear new things Miles did with the color palate, the form, orchestration and the rhythm concepts. I am as inspired today by the feeling and sound of *Bitches Brew* as I was 40 years ago." **DB**

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Jeff Beck at the Crossroads Guitar Festival, Bridgeview, Ill., June 26, 2010

Beyond Artist & Beyond Album of the Year :: Jeff Beck

Deep Roots and New Heights

By Bobby Reed :: Photo by Paul Natkin/Photo Reserve

Two of Jeff Beck's recent projects illustrate his deep roots and some new heights in his incredible career. The guitarist's ATCO album *Rock'n'Roll Party (Honoring Les Paul)* is a tribute to the music that Beck heard as a young lad, such as Les Paul and Mary Ford's "How High The Moon." The phenomenal ATCO record *Emotion & Commotion* was voted the DownBeat Beyond Album of the Year, and it demonstrates how Beck, who is the Beyond Artist of the Year, continues to explore new territory.

Highlights on *Emotion & Commotion* include instrumental versions of two incredibly famous songs: "Over The Rainbow" and Puccini's aria "Nessun Dorma." Both tracks were recorded with a 64-piece orchestra. The fact that Beck can make these warhorses sound refreshingly vibrant is a testament to his virtuoso skills as a guitarist.

Irish singer Imelda May knows Beck well. She collaborated with him on *Rock'n'Roll Party*, she toured with him, and she delivered a transcendent version of "Lilac Wine" on *Emotion & Commotion*. In a phone conversation from Boston, she described him: "When you're around Jeff, his enthusiasm is infectious. He just loves music, and he always has his guitar with him. It's like a part of his body. It's an extra limb. Straight after the show, he's back in his dressing room, playing guitar. We'll have a jam session *straight* after the show. He never stops. Right *before* the gig, he'll say, 'Come here, sing this, I love this song. Do you want to sing it with me?' Jeff is always evolving, which is amazing. He's always changing and coming up with his own thing. He's constantly creating. It's a joy to watch."

DownBeat contacted Beck at his home outside of London for this email interview.

DB: "Hammerhead" (on *Emotion & Commotion*) is a composition you wrote with Jason Rebello. What was the inspiration for it?

Beck: "Hammerhead" was definitely inspired by Jan Hammer. Jason, my keyboard player, is a massive fan of his work. So, a while back, I asked Jason to create a different riff to "Hi Ho Silver Lining." Jason wrote something incredible with Jan Hammer in mind that evolved later into "Hammerhead."

DB: Tell me about the process of selecting and recording that incredible version of "Over The Rainbow."

Beck: Jason [Rebello] said one day, "Why don't we play 'Over The Rainbow' at the end of the show for a change?" I was not keen at all, but we tried it out one day. I distinctly remember where we first tried it out, and all the band and crew were in the rehearsal studio. [Drummer] Vinnie [Colaiuta] was writing emails, not listening to what we were doing until I played the first few lines of it. And he folded the top down on his laptop, and he went, "F**k me. That's great, unbelievable." Goose bumps, because once again, the tune is familiar.

When Judy Garland sang "Over The Rainbow," the beauty of her voice was like something I had never heard before. I wanted to portray that when I was playing it on my guitar without the vocals. When Judy sang, her vibrato was unsteady, which made the song so special. When I play it, I try and hope that I get that special vibrato across, [as well as] the emotion out of the notes I hear.

DB: *Emotion & Commotion* has a perfect blend of instrumental tracks and songs with vocals. Singers Imelda May ("Lilac Wine") and Joss Stone ("I Put A Spell On You") both make great contributions to the album. How did Olivia Safe become part of this project?

Beck: Olivia was in the studios where we were recording one day and I heard her voice, and I knew I wanted to have her on the album somehow. She has such a beautiful, operatic voice that enhances the orchestra and lifts "Elegy For Dunkirk" and "Serene."

DB: Trombone Shorty performs on the Les Paul tribute record with you, and you play on Trombone Shorty's new album, *For True* (Verve Forecast). How did you meet him and start collaborating with him?

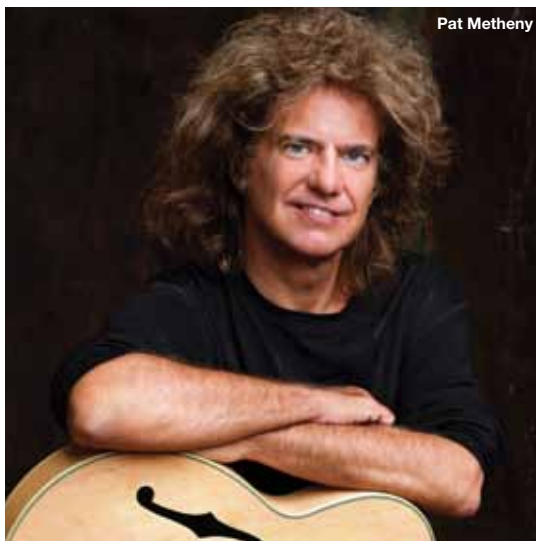
Beck: I met Trombone Shorty two years ago at the New Orleans Jazz Festival. After I had finished performing onstage, I was told I had to get down to this jazz club and see this guy called Trombone Shorty play. Wow, I was completely blown away—what a phenomenal talent he has. After that, he and his band supported me on my U.K. tour, and it has just gone on from there.

DB: Your tribute concert to Les Paul at the Iridium in New York was recorded and became an album, a DVD and a TV special. Then you toured to support the project, bringing Imelda May and her band on the road with you. The *Rock'n'Roll Party* project has introduced many young listeners to the music of the incomparable genius Les Paul. What were the challenges and rewards of performing Les Paul's music and honoring his legacy as a guitarist?

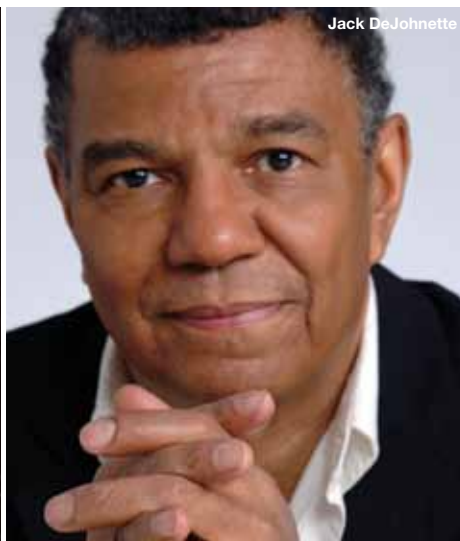
Beck: Les was an innovator. He created the most incredible sounds, and [he] was also my friend. I wanted to put on a tribute show to him which I knew he would have appreciated and enjoyed. The challenge was that we had very little time—a few hours—to rehearse through the show as a band and with the guest artists [at the Iridium]. I wanted to keep my playing as true to Les' style as possible to do the show justice, and I hope I achieved that. Choosing the numbers to put in the set was also hard because he just had so many amazing tracks. But if we had done them all, we would have been there all night. **DB**



Kurt Elling



Pat Metheny



Jack DeJohnette

76th Annual DownBeat Readers Poll

COMPLETE RESULTS

This year's poll had 6,902 voters.

Hall Of Fame

Ahmad Jamal 573

Pat Metheny	393
Ron Carter	348
Les Paul	321
B.B. King	305
Carmen McRae	233
Phil Woods	228
Lee Konitz	225
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Benny Golson	198
John McLaughlin	195
Oliver Nelson	180
Hank Mobley	180
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Richard Bona	225
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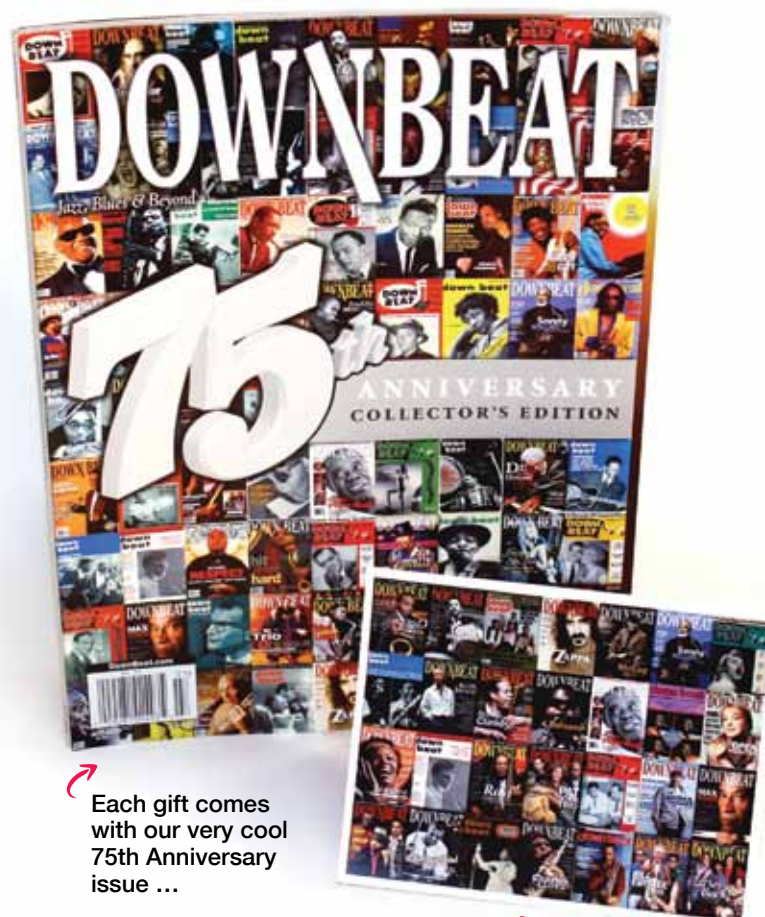
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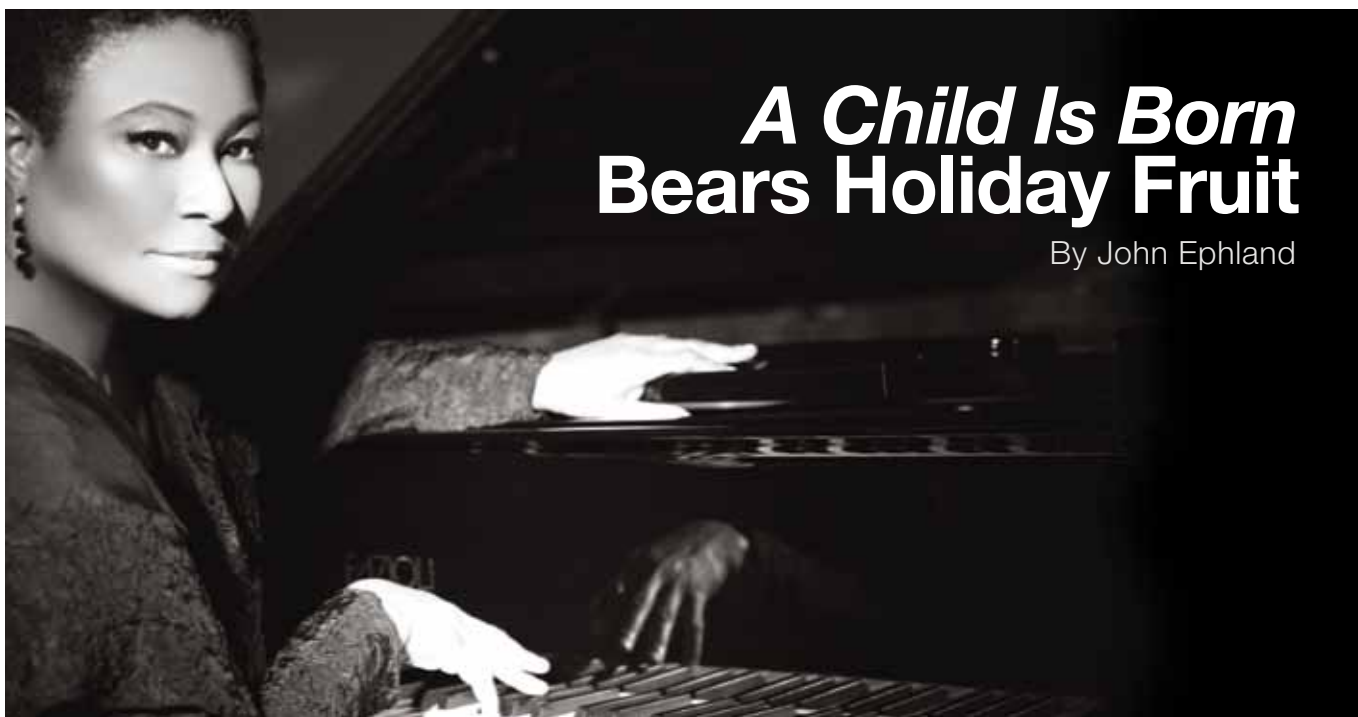
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HOLIDAY GIFT GUIDE 2011



A Child Is Born Bears Holiday Fruit

By John Ephland

It's the kind of holiday music that somehow manages to transcend the holidays. Pianist Geri Allen's *A Child Is Born* (Motéma) is music that's reminiscent of all things year-end, but it's also something that...stays with you.

Yes, it's jazz—maybe not as jazzy or whimsical as Vince Guaraldi. But it's every bit as expressive, a spiritually driven work in the tradition of Mary Lou Williams and Duke Ellington.

"My family is spiritually based," Allen said, citing her paternal grandfather, a Methodist minister, as one of her primary inspirations. "My pastor, Dr. William Howard, hugely impacted my musical and spiritual growth by warmly welcoming me into the church."

Perhaps it also has something to do with the title track, written by the late, great Thad Jones.

Asked in September when she'll start playing tracks from the CD on her fall tour, Allen said, "I won't start performing this music until after Thanksgiving." She added that her trio with Jeff "Tain" Watts and Kenny Davis, along with Marcus Belgrave, did do a version of the title track when they performed at the Village Vanguard earlier that month.

"It's a wonderful focus for this CD," Allen noted. "I had participated with Marian McPartland on her *Piano Jazz* program, and she was reminiscing about having played the song and how appropriate it would be for the Christmas canon. And I was like, 'Yes! You're absolutely right.' It's a perfect addition to the Christmas season and the songs we're used to."

The end of that tour includes a special performance at her home church, Bethany Baptist,

in Newark, N.J., on Dec. 17.

An integral part of *A Child Is Born*, the second in a piano-driven trilogy for the Motéma label, is Allen's selective use of voices. "We decided to create three solo-piano-driven conceptual records," Allen explained. "*Flying Toward The Sound* was the first one. [Her second release is the quartet date *Timeline Live*, also released in 2010. The third piano project is in the works.] And now, *A Child Is Born*. It's still piano-driven, but I felt I really needed the voices. The human voice resonates in a way that connects us all. And I think that the voices that are part of this project are clear, pure sounds in concert with each other."

These voices include Connaitre Miller, Allen's daughter Barbara Roney, Carolyn Brewer, Farah Jasmine Griffin and the women of the Gee's Bend Quilter's Collective. All of the vocalists are used in different configurations on selective tracks, some of which include spoken word, sampled vocals, and vocal soundscape engineering and design. Among the songs are Allen's touching "Journey To Bethlehem" and the more traditional (both arranged by Allen) "O Come, O Come, Emmanuel" and "Amazing Grace." Allen added other "voices" that join her acoustic piano in the forms of concert celeste, Fender Rhodes, Farfisa and Hohner clavinet. Along with the human voice, these other "voices" reminded Allen of her "early experiences

with a harp-and-vocal program in high school," she recalled. "It included 20 harps, pump organs and bells, all on stage. It was like a choir, a chorus. That was my reason for wanting to go back to those older-sounding instruments."

This release is replete with thanks, starting with her parents—Mount Vernell Allen Jr. and her late mother, Barbara Jean Allen. The pianist also acknowledges such musical influences as Dr. Billy Taylor and Hank Jones; The Reverend Dwight D. Andrews, who wrote the liner notes, and is a composer, musician and a published author on jazz and spirituality; Jana Herzen from the Motéma family; co-producer Kunle Mwanga and associate producer Jim Luce; and cover artist Kabuya Pamela Bowens, whose evocative print artwork feels like an extension of the music. Allen mentions Dorthaan Kirk "because she has brought jazz to the community through Bethany Baptist's jazz vespers ministry. People like Jimmy Heath, Randy Weston and Barry Harris, but also young and upcoming jazz musicians have been part of this program. A program that was so influential to me coming to this church."

With an album both serene and imaginative, Geri Allen says simply, "*A Child Is Born* is a celebration of the joys and blessings of the Christmas season."

DB

Ordering info: motema.com, geriallen.com



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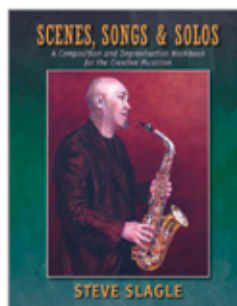
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Chris Standing (right) and Kathrin Shorr



Holiday Music : Sounds of the Season

By Frank-John Hadley

Geri Allen's emotional attachment to a dozen hymns and Ethiopian Christmas melodies is absolute on ***A Child Is Born*** (Motéma Music 69; 50:37 ★★★★★). Allen uses her questing musical intelligence and technique to express gratitude for a loving family and redeeming Messiah. Her music, including samples of the singing quilters of Gee's Bend, Alabama, is suffused with grace.

Ordering info: motema.com

On **Susie Arioli's *Christmas Dreaming*** (Spectra Musique 7821; 48:28 ★★★½), Montreal vocalist Arioli's pristine style—clear, classy, lightly swinging, unruffled in emotion—suits a program loaded with surprising tunes like “La Peregrinación” by Argentine folk composer Ariel Ramirez and the bluegrass tune “Call Collect On Christmas.” Guitarist Jordan Officer is secure on her sleigh for the entire smooth ride.

Ordering info: susiearioli.com

Ellis Marsalis: *A New Orleans Christmas Carol* (Nu Jazz Entertainment 19790; 72:14 ★★★★★) is a set of predictable hymns and secular selections. Marsalis imparts beauty on his piano while displaying his humility, order, wisdom and love of melody. He plays solo, and in a trio and quartet (his son Jason plays drums and vibes; Cynthia Liggins Thomas and Johnaye Kendrick make cameos).

Ordering info: nujazzentertainment.com

Active in imagination, and witty and resolute in expression, **Marcus Roberts Trio: *Celebrating Christmas*** (J-Master; 64:55 ★★★★★) surmounts the usual trite material. Aided by drum-

mer Jason Marsalis and bassist Rodney Jordan, the pianist gives special glows to his interpretations of “O Holy Night” and 14 more.

Ordering info: marcusroberts.com

The pleasure of guitarist Doug Munro's album ***Doug Munro & La Pompe Attack: A Very Gypsy Christmas*** (GotMusic 002; 55:25 ★★★½) rests in his obvious fondness for Django Reinhardt and the Quintette du Hot Club de France. Munro's high-level care and craft recharge 15 overfamiliar seasonal songs. Howard Bujese is his Stéphane Grappelli, and clarinetist Ken Peplowski and singer Cyrille-Aimee Daudel also contribute.

Ordering info: dougmunro.com

With China Forbes' exquisite singing voice featured on ***Pink Martini: Joy To The World*** (Heinz 2007; 46:33 ★★★½), this jet-setting 13-member pop-jazz band blends sentimentality and wonderment. Careful thought went into the song choices and arrangements, which include a Verdi opera, an Ukrainian bell carol, a Judeo-Spanish Hanukkah song and “We Three Kings.”

Ordering info: pinkmartini.com

Two stalwarts of Trevor W. Payne's choir (on three of 10 holiday favorites) project warmth on ***Oliver Jones/Ranee Lee/Montreal Jubilation Gospel Choir: A Celebration In Time*** (Justin Time 234; 44:39 ★★). The Haitian Daphnée Louis Singers also offer an Afro-Caribbean pop number. Soot in the stocking: tart-toned sax solos.

Ordering info: justin-time.com

Trumpeter Frank London and his regular rompers, along with clarinetist Dave Krakauer

and other guests, know what they are about when it comes to vintage Yiddish folk music on ***The Klezmatics: Live At Town Hall*** (Klezmatics 2010; 48:43/48:46 ★★★★★). “Hanuka Gelt,” of 20 concert tracks, addresses the holiday with dizzy glee.

Ordering info: klezmatics.com

For **Chris Standing & Kathrin Shorr: *Send Me Some Snow*** (Ultimate Vibe 004; 33:56 ★★★½), Shorr's folk-soul voice fits in snugly with the middlebrow jazz guitar of Standing and the other instrumentation (including a string section). The duo's original, giddy straight-from-the-heart Noel tunes such as “Someone's Gonna Get Something (For Christmas)” sound like a classic you've known for years.

Ordering info: theultimatevibe.com

Encouraged by George Avakian, David Ian has completed this holiday album, ***David Ian: Vintage Christmas*** (Prescott 0001; 34:17 ★★), which he worked on while touring with his successful pop band Superchick. Joined by adequate guest vocalists and a hushed rhythm section, the guitarist-pianist trowels sweet charm thickly over “Let It Snow” and other merry songs.

Ordering info: iantunes.com

The 12 girls of ***Viva Girls: Christmas*** (Domomusic 73132; 18:14 ★★) combine Chinese traditional strings and flutes with modern pop production. The lavishly reconfigured “Auld Lang Syne” and blissful “Christmas Joy” supply perfect listening for jaw-dropping views of 50-foot Christmas trees adorned with blinking bulbs.

Ordering info: domomusicgroup.com

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Smithsonian Collection: Any Questions?

As far as collections or anthologies go, this one has a setup to beat the band. *Jazz: The Smithsonian Anthology* is not the work of one mind, but many. And not just at the Smithsonian Institution. In preparing this 111-song package of six discs (almost eight hours of music) and a 200-page booklet with photos, the creators took seven years and involved not only jazz scholars, but performers and writers as well. The results add to and expand on the palette first dished up by Martin Williams (acting alone) in 1973 with the *Smithsonian Collection Of Classic Jazz* (with a cut-off in the early 1960s).

The new set is educational, informative and obviously instructional, as well as enjoyable. It's also bound to ruffle the feathers of some purists. Unlike Williams' "classic jazz" collection, this one tries to be more comprehensive, taking "jazz" off the pedestal to allow for serious consideration certain contributions from not only electric jazz à la fusion, but also avant-garde music beyond Ornette Coleman (an artist Williams championed) and Cecil Taylor. Discs 5 and 6 reflect this, also containing jazz musicians beyond America's shores (with eight cuts). Notable selections include Gary Burton's "The New National Anthem," Weather Report's "Birdland," Herbie Hancock's "Watermelon Man" (from *Headhunters*), Medeski Martin & Wood's "Hey-Hee-Hi-Ho," the Art Ensemble of Chicago's "Bush Magic," Anthony Braxton and Muhal Richard Abrams' update of Scott Joplin's "Maple Leaf Rag," The Hot Club of France with "Minor Swing" and Tomasz Stanko's "Suspended Night Variation VIII," which closes the whole shebang.

The collection remains light on women artists, but now includes non-singers. Cuts come



from Marjorie Hyams, Toshiko Akiyoshi (with Lew Tabackin and their big band), Astrud Gilberto (with Stan Getz), Sarah Vaughan, Ella Fitzgerald (with Duke Ellington and with Louis Armstrong), Mary Lou Williams (with Andy Kirk and on her own), Bessie Smith (with James P. Johnson), Billie Holiday (with Teddy Wilson) and the Boswell Sisters. That's it. And Latin jazz makes its first appearance, including Dizzy Gillespie's "Manteca," Machito ("Tanga") and Tito Puente ("Airegin").

As expected, the usual suspects and styles are included. What's more interesting in sets like these is, first of all, who is left out; then, which selections from the artists are picked; and, finally, how many artists are represented with more than one appearance. The consensus seems to be in on who are the musts, with a few idiosyncrasies reflected in the whats (e.g., Thelonious Monk's "Misterioso," Fats Waller and "Dinah," Charlie Parker and "Embraceable You.")

With *Jazz: The Smithsonian Anthology* you start with Scott Joplin's groundbreaker "Maple Leaf Rag" (1899) and end with a stunning, impressionistic swinger by a Polish trumpet player in 2003. What happened in between is a story that this set captures.

—John Ephland

Ordering info: folkways.si.edu/jazz



Birthday Blues

Fueled up on 1971 Canadian Club and a zeal for Chicago blues, Bruce Iglauer recorded Hound Dog Taylor through rickety guitars and shoddy amps—marking the birth of Alligator Records. Forty years and more than 300 releases later, Iglauer still hasn't lost sight of the imprint's humble origins, as evidenced by its new compilation *40th Anniversary Collection*.

A charmingly dysfunctional family reunion for blues junkies, the two-disc set chronicles the transformation of Alligator from honky-tonk scrapheap to underground wealth. It simmers with roots-rock modesty and cooks with legendary blues, from Koko Taylor's gravelly romp "I'm A Woman" to Son Seals' sweltering-hot refrain "Going Home (Where Women Got Meat On Their Bones)." Juggernaut axe-handler Luther Allison's "All The King's Horses" spices the set with filthy, overdriven licks, and harpist Charlie Musselwhite offers "Where Hwy 61 Runs" with spacious, soul-baring Mississippi-style bends. Sprinkled with zydeco, Delta sludge and rock verve, this concoction confirms Iglauer as the indie blues *chef de cuisine*.

—Hilary Brown

Ordering info: alligator.com

Bennett Box A Treasure Trove For Voracious Fans

Mammoth. Colossal. Gigantic. Such terms describe the biggest box set we've ever seen—a beautiful behemoth with 73 CDs and over 1,000 songs. It's the perfect gift for the Tony Bennett fan who wants *everything*.

The crooner's entire career is covered by *Tony Bennett: The Complete Collection* (Columbia/RPM/Legacy), from his first known recording (a 1946 Army V-Disc of "St. James Infirmary Blues") all the way up to his 2011 album *Duets II*. Additionally, there are three DVDs and a 250-page booklet with an essay by Bennett, whose diverse collaborators have

included Ralph Sharon, Art Blakey, Dave Brubeck, Count Basie, Bill Evans, Ray Charles and Amy Winehouse.

Voracious fans who already own, say, 20 Bennett CDs, will salivate over dozens of rarities. *Live At The Sarah*—a previously unreleased 1964 Las Vegas recording—features a version of Antonio Carlos Jobim's "Quiet Nights Of Quiet Stars" and a hilarious, impromptu comedy routine spearheaded by Milton Berle.

The joy of exploring Bennett's oeuvre lies in hearing how his artistry has evolved, but also



how he has remained a steadfast champion of the Great American Songbook. —Bobby Reed

Ordering info: tonybennett.com



Geri Allen
A Child is Born

Allen combines her glorious pianistic genius with the full strength of her spiritual conviction to create an ultimate holiday CD for jazz connoisseurs or initiates.

The cover image by master printmaker Kabuya P. Bowens is also available in greeting card form. The cards and CD are available separately or as a bundle.



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com/holiday_specials.

www.motema.com



Maciej Sikala—Sax
Tyler Hornby—Drums
Piotr Lemanczyk—Bass
Able to Fly

The Sikala / Lemanczyk / Hornby project brings spirited playing and virtuosic musicianship together to fuse elements from the contemporary jazz worlds of both Europe and North America.

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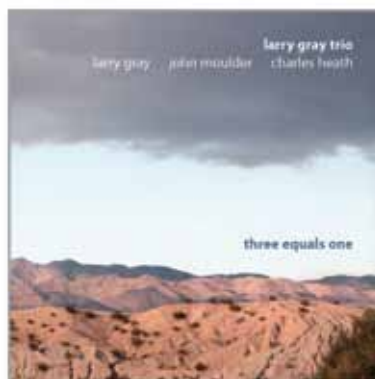


Rondi Charleston
Who Knows Where the Time Goes

Experience the powerfully poetic originals and luminous vocals that have audiences and critics raving! Singer/songwriter Rondi Charleston's magically transcendent originals make time stand still on her Motéma debut release, *Who Knows Where the Time Goes*. Vocal artistry at the highest level.



www.rondicharleston.com



Larry Gray Trio
three equals one

★★★½

"The surprises come in subtle, consistent ways ... a simple yet elegant trio... these guys play up to the album title's meaning." —*DownBeat*

Available at CDBaby and iTunes



www.chicagosessions.com



Marian McPartland
In Good Time The Piano Jazz of Marian McPartland

This film documents jazz legend Marian McPartland as a musician, composer, and host of National Public Radio's *Piano Jazz*. *In Good Time* features Marian McPartland's own tunes and improvisations.

Also featuring: Billy Taylor, Elvis Costello, Dave Brubeck, Diana Krall, Bill Frisell, Nnenna Freelon and Renee Rosnes.

This new DVD is available at
www.filmsbyhuey.com



David Ian
Vintage Christmas

While dozens of Christmas albums are released each year, the most evocative ones are often those made by jazz musicians, from the likes of Chet Baker's *Have Yourself A Jazzy Little Christmas* to Vince Guaraldi's *A Charlie Brown Christmas*.

Taking a proud place in this musical lineage is David Ian's *Vintage Christmas*.

amazon.com



www.naxosusa.com

Must-Have Jazz DVDs Of 2011

By James Hale

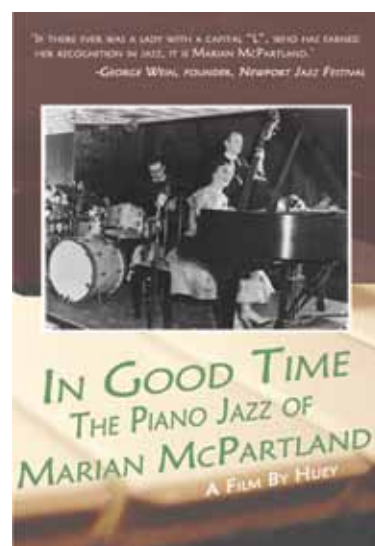
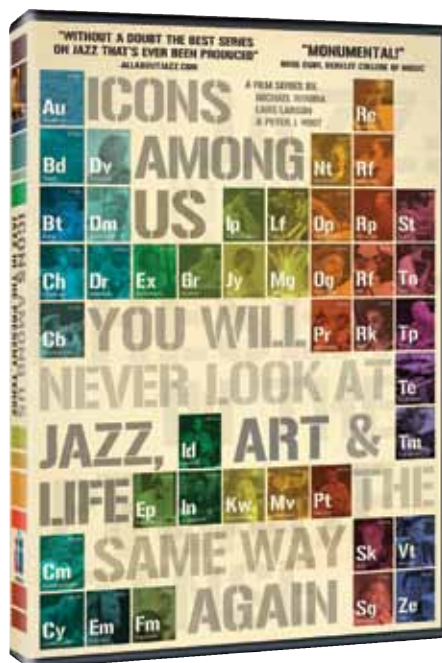
Originally broadcast on U.S. cable TV in 2009, **Icons Among Us** (Indiepix 3939; 219:00 ★★★★★) could be an attempt to address what many viewed as Ken Burns' folly. Burns' decision to give perfunctory notice to the music of the past 30 years riled many viewers of his massive *Jazz* project. Commentators like Matthew Shipp, John Medeski and The Bad Plus legitimize contemporary improvised music, while Bill Frisell, Dafnis Prieto and Bugge Wesseltoft are superbly captured in performance. Once past the Burns issue—summarized in point/counterpoint statements from Wynton Marsalis and Medeski—the four episodes and accompanying study guide provide an expansive look at the global jazz community.

Ordering info: indiepixfilms.com

Breezy and well-edited, **In Good Time: The Piano Jazz Of Marian McPartland** (Films By Huey; 85:00 ★★★★★) has all the elements of a great biopic: a charismatic subject and entertaining storytellers. Radio host McPartland is no stranger to jazz biography, and she knows which parts of her life are most interesting. Billy Taylor, Diana Krall, Renee Rosnes, Elvis Costello, Nnenna Freelon and others help tell the story. Perhaps the most charming part of the film is its honesty in emphasizing McPartland, unflinchingly, in old age, more so than her younger years. A number of performances from McPartland's program *Piano Jazz* are included, featuring Bill Frisell, Mulgrew Miller and Mary Lou Williams. Another large segment is devoted to McPartland's interest in author Rachel Carson and environmentalism, which she turned into an elegiac suite. Queen Elizabeth II and former President Bill Clinton also pay tribute.

Ordering info: filmsbyhuey.com

The fifth installment of *Jazz Icons* returns with a slate of marquee names and a new partner in Mosaic Records. Shot less than four months after Wayne Shorter joined the group, **Art Blakey's Jazz Messengers: Live In France 1959** (2003; 82:29 ★★★★★) showcases the burgeoning talents of Blakey and trumpeter Lee Morgan. Shorter's distinctive approach to improvisation gives a new spin to tunes like "Blues March" and "A Night In Tunisia." Despite the disappointing evidence that just 12 minutes of the only live performance of "A Love Supreme" were filmed, **John Coltrane: Live In France 1965** (2001; 52:31 ★★★★★½) catches the saxophonist's quartet in Antibes near the end of its existence and in top form. Coltrane fully synthesizes the melodic structure of "Naima" and "Ascension" with ecstatic, extended solos, and Dizzy Gillespie's walk-on for two bop classics adds a spark. **Johnny Griffin: Live In France**



1971 (2004; 76:45 ★★★★★½) has much to offer, particularly the interplay with drummer Arthur Taylor in concert and studio settings. Watching **Freddie Hubbard: Live In France 1973** (2005; 50:39 ★★★★★) is like seeing Willie Mays in his prime: young, powerful and graceful. Leading his CTI-era quintet—with an equally muscular Michael Carvin on drums—Hubbard's virtuosity is nothing short of stunning. Saxophonist Junior Cook and Fender Rhodes keyboardist George Cables are almost superfluous. Taped in an exhibition hall lobby, **Rahsaan Roland Kirk: Live In France 1972** (2006; 74:21 ★★★★★) lacks the revival tent atmosphere of some of Kirk's other television appearances from the era. There is blistering tenor and rich clarinet on a piece dedicated to Duke Ellington and some of his horn players, but even a raucous "Volunteered Slavery" fails to raise this above a one-sided conversation. From

its casual mise en scène opening to the closing lurch from the piano bench, **Thelonious Monk: Live In France 1969** (2002; 55:34 ★★★★★) is an intimate view of solo Monk, up close and in color.

Ordering info: mosaicrecords.com

Released in celebration of the bandleader's centenary, **Stan Kenton: Artistry In Rhythm** (Jazzed Media 9004; 117:00 ★★★★★) starts with a number of former band members acknowledging Kenton criticisms over his career. It never fully escapes his image as an underappreciated genius and a somewhat tragic hero, which wears thin over two hours. Commentators like Bill Holman and Dr. Herb Wong have incisive things to say, but the film would be stronger if the input of historian Ken Poston had been used as a formal narration. The extensive Kenton visual archive, however, balances out the film's shortcomings.

Ordering info: jazzedmedia.com

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www.concordmusicgroup.com



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with Rick Braun and Mindi Abair

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www.mackavenue.com



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Ordering info: planetwaves.com



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Cleartone's series of treated guitar, drop-tuning, mandolin and bass strings are made to not only sound great but also last a long time. A micro-thin protective film significantly prolongs the lifespan of each set without compromising tone or flaking off. MSRP: \$22.

Ordering info: cleartonestrings.com



ARCHTOP ELEGANCE

Godin has beefed up its 5th Avenue series of Canadian-made archtop guitars with the Uptown GT and Jazz editions. The Uptown GT (gloss top) features a pair of custom Godin humbucker pickups and Bigsby tremolo, and it's available in Solid Black GT and Trans Red Flame GT finishes. The Jazz model has an arched back and top, a mini humbucker, and an ebony fingerboard, and it comes in high-gloss Piano Black HG and Natural Flame HG finishes.

Ordering info:
godinguitars.com



BLUE BIGFOOT

The Blue Yeti Pro USB microphone upgrades the original Blue Yeti USB mic with 24-bit recording and a stereo XLR output.

It stands a foot high when mounted on its base stand and weighs just over 3 pounds. A black metal encasement rises to a chrome screened caged protector of three 14-mm condenser capsules.

The Yeti Pro features four mic patterns and works without loading any drivers or software. MSRP: \$249. Ordering info: bluemic.com



RING- A-DING

Easy to play and bursting with improvisational possibilities, the Dingdrum is a steel hand drum with a soothing, hypnotic tone. There are eight tabs on its face, and each produces a different tone. Dingdrums are available in a variety of five- and six-note melodic scales, each with its own distinct character. Ideal for percussionists looking for a simple way to get some melody into their art, the drums are designed to be completely intuitive and fun for kids as well.

Ordering info: dingdrums.com



CREATIVE FLASH

A great "first serious keyboard," Yamaha's PSR-S650 boasts FlashROM Expansion and offers MegaVoice-enhanced styles found on higher-end Yamaha arrangers. The portable digital keyboard can load sample data such as voices and drums, and makes them instantly available in FlashROM without reloading at each power-up. It can store up to 16 MB of sample data, which is great for augmenting the existing set of 864 internal sounds with your own. The keyboard also offers 181 built-in styles, and instrument voices such as guitars and basses sound authentic using articulation previously not playable from a keyboard. Custom tunings (such as Arabic or Pythagorean) are available using the nine preset scales—or create your own. MSRP: \$649.

Ordering info: yamaha.com/keyboards



CLARINET MASTERY

The Masters series of clarinet mouthpieces from Vandoren represents an entirely new approach to the relationship between tip opening and facing length, and introduces some innovative chamber-design adjustments. Easy-blowing and responsive with beautiful tone color across a range of reed strengths, the Masters mouthpiece series includes two models—the CL4 and CL5—crowned with the company's MO ligature.

Ordering info: dansr.com



SMART 'PHONES

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Ordering info: fuseplusyou.com



PORTABLE PROWESS

Zoom's H2n portable recorder is stuffed with pro recording features. It has five studio-quality microphones onboard and four recording modes: mid-side stereo, 90-degree X/Y stereo, two-channel surround and four-channel surround. The recorder's 1.8-inch backlit LCD display provides clear visual monitoring, and a built-in reference speaker lets you play your recordings. MSRP: \$199.

Ordering info: zoom.co.jp



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Liner notes by Jasper van 't Hof.

www.joepvanleeuwen.nl
www.organpromotion.org



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www.dimitriosvassilakis.com
www.candidrecords.com



Shawn Maxwell
Urban Vigilante

★★★

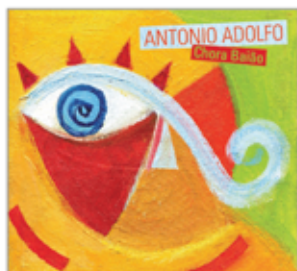
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Antonio Adolfo
Chora Baião

For his new CD, *Chora Baião*, pianist and composer Antonio Adolfo, with his quintet, chose to focus on the Brazilian music styles choro and baião. The album presents the works of two brilliant and innovative Brazilian composers: Chico Buarque and Guinga, besides Adolfo's own compositions.

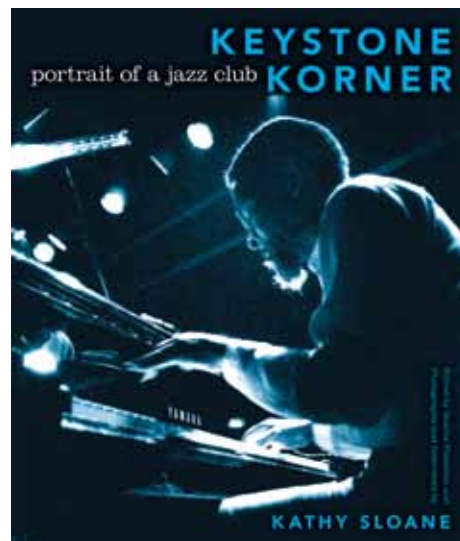
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www.antonioadolfo.info

Keystone Korner: West Coast Jazz Paradise

Nestled in San Francisco's North Beach district, occupied with cumbersome benches and a fog of smoke, Keystone Korner was a jazz lover's paradise where, according to guitarist Carl Burnett, "the comfort was *being* there." Through the testimonies of its employees and a fanfare of West Coast jazz legendry, *Portrait Of A Jazz Club* explores the maturation of owner Todd Barkan's passion project from blues bar founded on bohemian ideals to '70s jazz Shangri-la. Keystone Korner was beloved by the genre's heaviest hitters—McCoy Tyner, Rahsaan Roland Kirk and Freddie Hubbard, to name a few—even after its untimely death. The 224-page oral history of the Bay Area's musical epicenter—narrated by a roundtable of the venue's scotch-and-soda-drinking, instrument-toting regulars and the scene-stalking waitresses that slung them—is set into motion by over 100 intimate black-and-white photos by venerable jazz photographer Kathy Sloane, who humanizes and visualizes the transformation of the "West Coast Jazz Oasis." From the antics of the photo-laden backroom to the underground hype of Ora Harris' Keystone Kitchen, Sloane and fellow editor Sascha Feinstein leave no stone



turned. They examine the backstories of some of Keystone's most lovable characters and how they strove to maintain its welfare, even playing a benefit concert so the club could get a liquor license. Complemented by a CD of club recordings, *Portrait Of A Jazz Club* is a delightful sensory overload definitive of the Keystone experience.

—Hilary Brown

A Picture Is Worth A Thousand Words

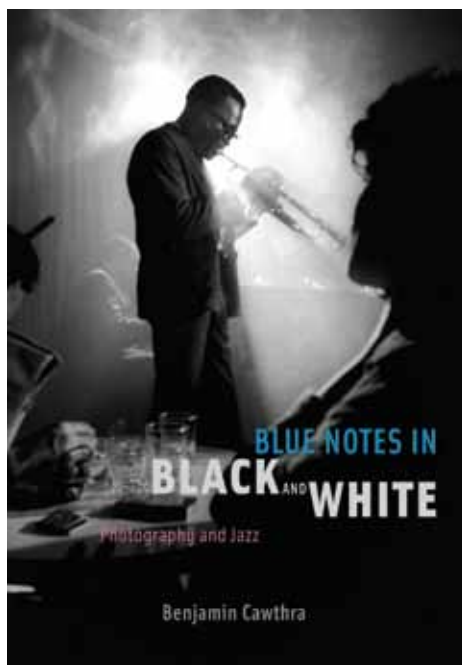
Every picture tells a story, and in 266 pages, Benjamin Cawthra insightfully narrates the vast history of jazz—and its turbulent love-hate relationship with American culture. The

California State University–Fullerton professor's latest endeavor, *Blue Notes In Black And White: Photography And Jazz*, examines a century of jazz photography within political and economic confines. It posits that William Gottlieb's shots of an ordinarily cartoonish Dizzy Gillespie humanize the transition of bebop from ephemeral fad to deified artistic medium. The crowd-pleasing, happy-go-lucky images of swing dancers that plaster the pages of *Life* magazine depict a coming-of-age American culture naive to the social turmoil that infests it. There's also an analysis of Miles Davis, whose chronology of portraits continually redefines the concept of cool.

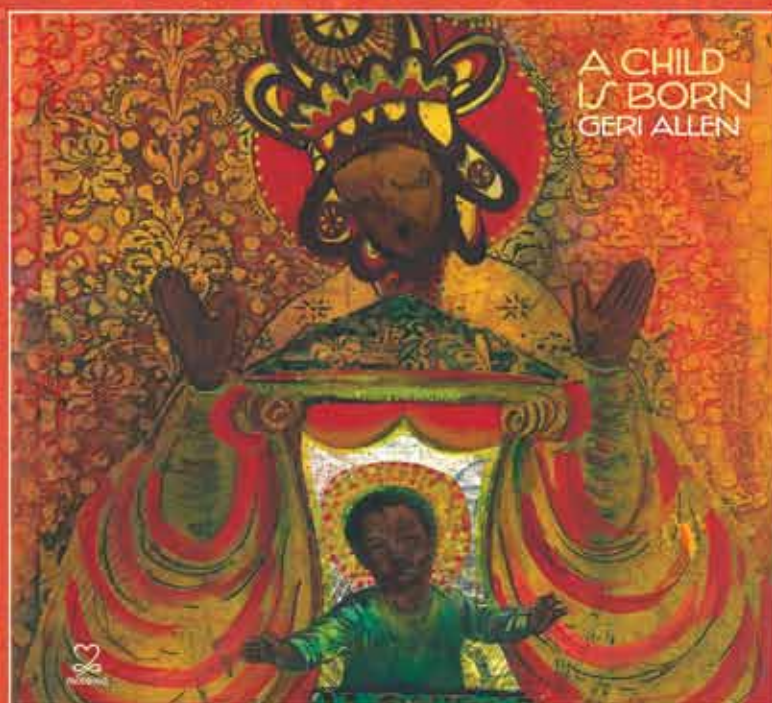
To Cawthra, jazz photography genuinely captures a moment in time—these images are "benchmarks" in the metamorphosis of music. He probes the portfolios of some of jazz photography's well-known operatives—Gjon Mili, Herman Leonard and William Claxton—whose individual styles mirror a musical genre that is just as dynamic.

Blue Notes bats an objective eye toward jazz musicians, depicting them not as romantic symbols of glorified nightclub scenes, but as cultural pioneers championing for acceptance.

—Hilary Brown



GERI ALLEN A CHILD IS BORN



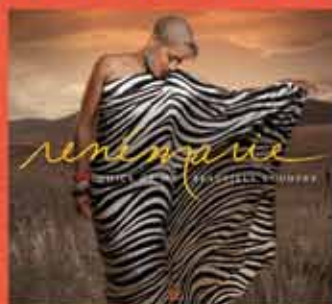
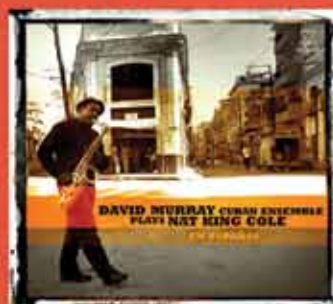
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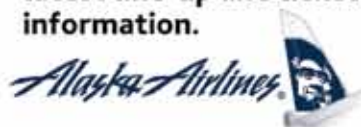
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Stefano Bollani (left) and Chick Corea



Chick Corea/Stefano Bollani

Orvieto

ECM 2222

★★★★★

Piano for two, a tricky format, is not one that usually gets the blood racing. Where other like-instrument pairings may feature axes that have been personalized—a specific horn or mouthpiece or reed or amplifier—the piano duet features two identical instruments, hence, to avoid homogenization, the duplication has to be offset by strong personalities.

No lack of that here. Chick Corea, of course, is part of the grand legacy of piano twosomes, dating back to his beloved late-1970s duets with Herbie Hancock. It's a setting in which he's totally comfortable and at which he excels. He's a hardcore romantic, favoring the turbulent and the radiant,

but avoiding some of solipsistic excesses of other high romantics, instead keeping an avid ear open to what his partner offers. Younger pianist Stefano Bollani brings a beautiful melodic imagination and equally responsive radarscope, as well as clear reverence for Corea. Playing in tandem, for instance on a delightful version of "Jitterbug Waltz," they're astonishingly unified; here the question isn't really who's doing what, but how they're doing it together without getting in each other's way. One offers a phrase, the other picks it up, embellishes it, gives it back. There's very little of the kind of playing-solo-at-the-same-time vibe that one sometimes hears in piano duets.

Things are sunny here—Mediterranean, Iberian, South American. (*Orvieto* marks Corea's return to ECM after a quarter century; nothing Nordic here, purely warm-blooded.) The program has a nice arc, moving from

open—but extremely telepathic—improvisations through standards, originals and a couple of Antonio Carlos Jobim tunes. The aforementioned Fats Waller classic is neatly contrasted with a very different treble-meter piece, "A Valsa Da Paula," by Bollani. The second (of two) free improvisations morphs seamlessly into an extended meditation on Miles Davis' "Nardis," while the traditional flamenco piece "Tirititran" features percussive stomp and interior strut thumping. Precisely recorded in concert at the Umbria Jazz Winter Festival, the two pianists end with a corporeal romp through Corea's chestnut "Armando's Rhumba" and a more analytical blues encore, at once bawdy, bright and thoughtful.

—John Corbett

Orvieto: Orvieto Improvisation No. 1; Retrato Em Branco E Preto; If I Should Lose You; Doralice; Jitterbug Waltz; A Valsa Da Paula; Orvieto Improvisation No. 2; Nardis; Este Seu Olhar; Darn That Dream; Tirititran; Armando's Rhumba; Blues In F. (74:58)
Personnel: Chick Corea, Stefano Bollani, piano.
Ordering info: ecmrecords.com

Pat Martino
Undeniable: Live
At Blues Alley

HIGH NOTE 7231

★★★★½

Sit through enough discs by young players refining high-falluting concepts, and the simple pleasures of an old-fashioned blowing session just might take on a new resonance.

Martino's ace quartet isn't working any convoluted arrangements on this live date. As riff tunes explode and hot licks fly, the band strikes a balance between blues, bounce and bluster. The resulting blend has a feisty eloquence.

Martino thrives onstage, like in the potency of his previous live date from Yoshi's, and the way its interplay stressed a certain kind of collective vigor. Similar energy was in place at the esteemed D.C. night club for the recording of *Undeniable*. The thrust the foursome gives groove tunes like "Double Play" and "Goin' To A Meeting" is just as key to the music's personality as their keenly animated solos. The guitarist's outfit—saxophonist Eric Alexander, organist Tony Monaco and drummer Jeff Watts—packs a punch throughout.

This is clear as soon as "Lean Years" leaps from the speakers. The process of swinging



can take place in a variety of ways, but it's particularly distinct when a band prioritizes coordination. Monaco's foot-pedal work and Watts' signature punch join forces with consummate poise, so Martino and Alexander have plenty of liftoff. The slow swagger of "Double Play" finds them intertwining lines,

and after Martino casts a spell with his solo, he woos the crowd with tantalizing inflections and fleet arpeggios, earning himself a ton of house, including some wolf whistles.

This date is built on the architecting of tension and release. The shuffle march that drives "Midnight Special" does its job by hustling everything along, but Monaco's stormy exposition and Martino's fluid romp play havoc with the groove while steadfastly fanning its flames. It's a cagey move, and it brings heady notions to an otherwise physical stomping ground.

Martino has several high water marks in his discography, and *Undeniable* definitely warrants a place among them. —*Jim Macnie*

Undeniable: Lean Years; Inside Out; Goin' To A Meeting; Double Play; Midnight Special; Round Midnight; Side Effect. (59:02)
Personnel: Pat Martino, guitar; Eric Alexander, tenor saxophone; Tony Monaco, organ; Jeff "Tain" Watts, drums.
Ordering info: jazzdepot.com



Christian McBride Big Band
The Good Feeling

MACK AVENUE 1053

★★★

Christian McBride's maiden voyage on disc as a big band leader showcases his many strengths: exuberance, chops, reverence for precursors, soulfulness and swing. How lovely, too, that he's out front with his resonant, meaty bass, playing lead lines (sometimes with other instruments) soloing often and making no bones about the fact he is leading this project. In his liner notes, McBride extolls the qualities of straightforwardness and simplicity exemplified by Frank Sinatra's Reprise albums, but the bassist doesn't always follow his own best instincts, occasionally falling into turgid, over-written passages or, in one instance—"A Taste Of Honey"—transforming a lovely song into a vocally-impossible-to-scan mess (pace Oliver Nelson, who inspired it). But by and large this album is a swinging, screaming gut-grabber, a joyful album that conveys McBride's exploratory joy in writing for large ensemble.

"Shake'n'Blake," the opener, sets the tone, with fat and splashy textures, punchy brass, a burly baritone saxophone/bass line and smokin' solos by tenor saxophonist (and tune namesake) Ron Blake, trumpeter Nicholas Payton and trombonist Michael Dease. "Broadway" is Bill Basie all the way, in the Quincy Jones mode, with muted trumpets and trombones. "Bluesin' In Alphabet City" may be the best track on the album—unpretentious, explosive swing with a big trombone soli stating the theme over walking bass. "In A Hurry" is a close second, with a macho trombone duel and a big finish that recalls Lionel Hampton's zigzag energy.

—*Paul de Barros*

The Good Feeling: Shake'n'Blake; Broadway; Brother Mister; When I Fall In Love; Science Fiction; The Shade Of The Cedar Tree; The More I See You; I Should Care; A Taste Of Honey; Bluesin' In Alphabet City; In A Hurry. (70:27)

Personnel: Christian McBride, bass; Steve Wilson, Todd Bashore, alto saxophone, flute; Ron Blake, tenor saxophone, soprano saxophone, flute; Todd Williams, tenor saxophone, flute; Loren Schoenberg, tenor saxophone (2, 8); Carl Maraghi, baritone saxophone, bass clarinet; Frank Greene, Freddie Hendrix, Nicholas Payton, Nabate Isles, trumpet; Steve Davis, Michael Dease, James Burton, trombone; Douglas Purviance, bass trombone; Xavier Davis, piano; Ulysses Owens Jr., drums; Melissa Walker, vocals.
Ordering info: mackavenue.com

Ron Carter
Great Big Band

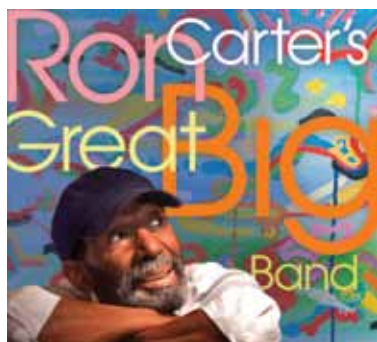
SUNNYSIDE 1293

★★★★½

Bassist Ron Carter notches his 50th anniversary as leader by extending his incredibly prolific recording career into the unexpected realm the classic big band form, his first as leader. Seeking neither transformation nor nostalgia, Carter offers a lot to like in this middle of the road ride.

The main task he and arranger Robert Freedman have set for themselves is to take a sampling of bop standards and a few big band classics and find some unexplored corners to illuminate. Take Sy Oliver's "Opus One," which is a clear invitation to open the throttle and just drive. Modern bands have tackled it from time to time, each trying to out swing the other. Carter cools the jets and use a little ingenuity while still letting it swing politely. So the theme becomes an unexpected and low-key conversation between bass trombone and saxes. Carter's "Opus One" finds style and wit in its gentle reserve.

Few tunes have been around longer or passed through more horns than "The St. Louis Blues" and "Caravan." Each springs to life



here with a brisk fresh glow. The former swings with an easy flow, finding some especially engaging brass-reed section interaction, with the saxes spilling over with bubbling flashes of Carterish phrasing—Benny Carter, that is.

Carter may be the headman, but the music never becomes a soap-

box for the bosses bass chops. His solo helpings are wisely proportional, mostly reserving his own "Opus 1.5" for stepping forward. It's a plaintive, soft-spoken chart that he shares with Charles Pillow's regal English horn. Carter's virtuosity is always felt, though, never more than in the eloquent contrapuntal bass running through Wayne Shorter's "Footprints" or his brief declaratory theme statements that open up to the band's journey through the Modern Jazz Quartet's 1957 "Golden Striker."

—*John McDonough*

Interface: Caravan; The Eternal Triangle; Pork Chop; Opus 1.5; Con Alma; Sail Away; Opus One; Sweet Emma; St. Louis Blues; Line For Lyons; Footprints; The Golden Striker; Loose Change. (53:16)

Personnel: Tony Kadleck, Greg Gilbert, Jon Owens, Alex Norris, trumpets; Jason Jackson, Steve Davis, James Burton III, Douglas Purviance, trombones; Jerry Dodgion, Steve Wilson, Wayne Escoffery, Jay Brandford, saxophones; Charles Pillow, English horn; Mulgrew Miller, piano; Ron Carter, bass; Lewis Nash, drums; Robert Freedman, music director.
Ordering info: sunnysiderecords.com

The Hot Box

CD ▾ Critics ▶ John McDonough John Corbett Jim Macnie Paul de Barros

Chick Corea/Stefano Bollani <i>Orvieto</i>	★★★	★★★★	★★★★	★★★
Ron Carter <i>Great Big Band</i>	★★★½	★★★½	★★★	★★★★
Christian McBride <i>The Good Feeling</i>	★★★★	★★★	★★★	★★★
Pat Martino <i>Undeniable</i>	★★★½	★★★★	★★★½	★★

Critics' Comments

Chick Corea/Stefano Bollani, *Orvieto*

A soft swirl of serious intent surrounds. But like a sandwich, the meat is in the middle. Spontaneity often takes refuge in filler, camouflaged elegantly in portentous chords and wispy arpeggios. But when sustained engagement strikes on "Leave You" and a few more, the lift is playfully palpable. —John McDonough

Can't tell what I like more about the duo's approach: the way they stress gracefulness or the carefree animation of their approach. Both are applied in equal amounts on a delicious glide through "Jitterbug Waltz" that zigs towards Art Tatum and zags towards Cecil Taylor. —Jim Macnie

From rippling, impressionist free improv to a spritely "Jitterbug Waltz," Corea and Bollani are members of a rare league: sparkling, mischievous colorist virtuosos who can turn on a dime while taking in the whole landscape and never getting in each other's way. It's often difficult to tell one from the other, as both draw exquisite timbres from the keyboard. —Paul de Barros

Ron Carter, *Great Big Band*

Arranger/director Robert Freedman's got a feel for tapping all the juicy potential of this straightforward big band, ranging from lush passages where the full bore trombone section makes itself felt, to quirkier contrapuntal devices like the intro to "Con Alma." Carter's got Miller and Nash in the engine room with him, which assures quick pickup and a smooth ride. —John Corbett

Elaborate yet approachable—there's magic to the charts Bob Freedman came up with for this large ensemble bash. To some degree it seems like the esteemed bassist is a sideman on a project under his name, but who cares—the music's whimsy equals its depth and the solos are a blast. —Jim Macnie

Who knew Ron Carter has this cooking? Brilliant writing with a contemporary edge, bristling solos, terrific ensemble feel. Kudos for the cool range of composers, from Dizzy Gillespie and Sonny Stitt to Tom Harrell and Gerry Mulligan, and props to arranger Robert Freedman. Nothing groundbreaking here, but sometimes the ground—like Carter—is fine just the way it is. —Paul de Barros

Christian McBride, *The Good Feeling*

McBride's orchestrations cover a lot of good ground. "Shake" and "Hurry" swell into a couple of wildly swinging, old-school dynamos. In between, he slides confidently from dry to quirky to plush. But it's the flame-throwing trumpet of Payton that makes the brass section burn and shakes the rafters in solo. Blake and Schoenberg also shine. —John McDonough

The parts I like the best here are all small group. They can be fantastic, unbelievably hot, like anything with McBride under them should be. But even though the band is tight like that and stocked with big fish, and though there's a brassy, Basie-esque forthrightness to the concept, McBride's arrangements don't feel especially distinctive. —John Corbett

The bassist keeps his first stab at large ensemble charts on the simple side, and it brings the kind of pleasures that are easy to enjoy. Swagger is everywhere, from horn flourishes to bass solos, and while I don't find the vocals compelling, they help the program set a nice pace. —Jim Macnie

Pat Martino, *Undeniable*

This CD fires off with such a bang, the rest of it barely catches up. From his first notes, Martino's rolling linearity swings with a breathtaking power, precision and clarity. Alexander, Watts and Monaco take their cues. The pace then dials down, and the group's big moments are more shouted than swung. But Martino is worth hearing. —John McDonough

The guitarist sounds top-notch, slinging originals and a personal take on "Round Midnight" live with a super band. Martino and Alexander have a beautiful way of hitting the unison lines, and the saxophonist brings his Coltrane-istic panache to bear on this updated soul jazz, which still has the tang of '60s Prestige bands. —John Corbett

Smokin', funky, virtuoso organ-sax-guitar by some of my favorite musicians—saxophonist Eric Alexander, in particular—but the recording quality of this live album is strictly underwatersville. —Paul de Barros

DAN TEPFER
PIANO



GOLDBERG VARIATIONS / VARIATIONS
SSC 1284 / IN STORES NOVEMBER 8

Dan Tepfer has created a kaleidoscopic experience with his solo album *Goldberg Variations / Variations*, the jazz pianist approaching J.S. Bach's masterpiece—one of the classical canon's most totemic works—as an inspiring font for creativity. Interspersed with his affectionate interpretation of the complete "Goldbergs" are his own improvised variations on Bach's variations. No Jacques Loussier-style swinging of the classics, Tepfer's variations are marked by a ruminative joy, spiced with contemporary dissonances and a deep feel for the source as timeless music beyond category.

 www.sunnysiderecords.com

GREG REITAN



DAYBREAK
SSC 1289 / IN STORES NOW

GREG REITAN - piano
JACK DARO - bass
DEAN KOBA - drums

"Greg Reitan has continued to grow as a pianist with each successive CD for Sunnyside. His third release for the label is once again a trio date with bassist Jack Daro and drummer Dean Koba. The obvious benefit of using a working group is that it is inevitably better prepared when entering the recording studio. One can hear numerous influences in the pianist's playing, but he isn't a clone of any of them, finding his own voice whether playing a timeless ballad or a breezy original. Reitan shows a surprising maturity for an artist still in his thirties, finding new ways to voice familiar songs." —Ken Dryden—AllMusic.com

 www.sunnysiderecords.com



Helen Sung (re)Conception

STEEPLECHASE 31708

★★★★½

In what is likely to be a long, varied career—all the signs are there—Texan native Helen Sung probably won't be remembered for *(re)Conception*. A set of standards, played with two stalwart hired guns in the rhythm section, the album reveals little of the diversity and imagination Sung exhibits elsewhere. It has the feel of a placeholder.

What *(re)Conception* does do is put a spotlight directly on Sung's playing, which is seldom short of exceptional from a technical standpoint. Trained from the age of 5 as a classical pianist, and having scaled the heights of the notoriously rigorous Russian repertoire, she has the dexterity to sound like Oscar Peterson on a rapid take of "Wives And Lovers" and Chick Corea in the intro of "Teo." On her sole original, "Duplicity," there is ample evidence of the kind of power that underlies her playing, and her articulation on a nicely arranged version of "Crazy, He Calls Me" is flawless.

Such highlights run throughout the nine performances, but what is in short supply is any sense of risk taking or drama. Yes, it's inherently risky to record first takes with unfamiliar bandmates, but Peter Washington and Lewis Nash can handle anything that's thrown at them and make it sound like they've rehearsed for a week. And, clearly, Sung has either worked out some parts, like the pretty solo on "Far From Home," or given a lot of thought to her approach. The result is akin to admiring an impeccably dressed model: not a hair is out of place, and not a fold of clothing where it shouldn't be. Of course, perfection can co-exist without excitement in art—some of Peterson's work is evidence of that—but it doesn't make for memorable art, unless all you care to remember is that you heard it.

—James Hale

(re)Conception: (re)Conception; I Believe In You; Far From Home; Duplicity; C Jam Blues; Wives And Lovers; Crazy, He Calls Me; Teo; Everything But You. (57:12)

Personnel: Helen Sung, piano; Peter Washington, bass; Lewis Nash, drums.

Ordering info: steeplechase.dk

Avishai Cohen Seven Seas

SUNNYSIDE 1294

★★★★

In act one of Avishai Cohen's career, he was a virtuosic, driving bassist whose playing, whether on his own or as a sideman, was as remarkable for its melodic audacity as its technical prowess. He entered act two last year with *Aurora*, an album that revealed him as a composer, exploring his Jewish heritage as much through song as improvisation.

Seven Seas is where the plot thickens. Recording mostly with his working band, Cohen has upped the vocal content and placed a greater emphasis on melody. At times, as on the gently gorgeous "Hayo Hata," his themes unfold with such power and drama there's almost no need for improvisation.

That's not to suggest that Cohen has sworn off soloing; check out the fleet-fingered lyricism of his solo midway through "About a Tree" or the rhythmic dynamism of his turn in "Two Roses." But even though his playing remains as jaw-dropping as ever, he takes care to put that flash in service of the composition. On the title tune, his bass elaborates on the piano theme without overshadowing it, the occasional note-flurry seeming more a reaction to Itamar Doari's clattering hand percussion than any desire to take the spotlight.

Because the solos are so carefully folded



into the arrangements, it takes a few listens to fully appreciate how good the band is. Doari is a terrific match for Cohen's bass playing, being so attuned to the pitch of his percussion that his solos are almost hummable, and there's a singing quality to Shai Maestro's piano phrases that neatly matches the vocals. Amos Hoffman's oud seems shortchanged, given the sparkle he adds, but from the sound of things, Cohen has a lot more action planned before drawing the curtain on this act.

—J.D. Considine

Seven Seas: Dreaming; About a Tree; Seven Seas; Halah; Staav; Ani Aff; Worksong; Hayo Hayta; Two Roses; Tres Hermanicas Eran. (47:13)

Personnel: Avishai Cohen, vocals, bass, piano; Karen Malka, vocals; Shai Maestro, piano; Amos Hoffman, oud, electric guitar; Itamar Doari, percussion, vocals; Jenny Nilsson, vocals; Jimmy Greene, soprano, tenor saxophone; Lars Nilsson, flugelhorn; Bjorn Samuelsson, trombone; Bjorn Bohlin, English horn.

Ordering info: avishaicohen.com

Stanley Jordan Friends

MACK AVENUE 1062

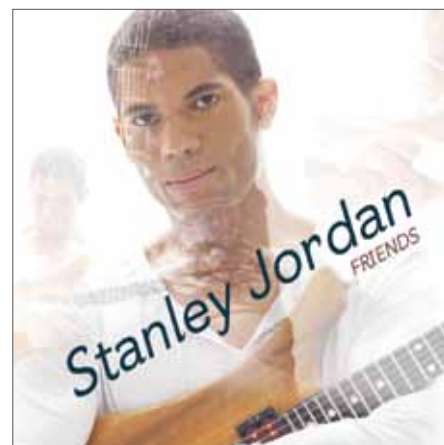
★★★★

Virtuosos don't always play well with others; their visions can be so single-minded that they require supplicants, rather than collaborators. Guitarist Stanley Jordan puts himself squarely in the latter camp with this collection.

Like a carnival wrestler who takes on all comers and adjusts his abilities to various skillets, Jordan seems intent on proving manifold versatility. He's quite successful in that regard. But Jordan also impresses with the vision to arrange the pieces and cast the guest players in their tonal and stylistic roles.

Jordan deals out filigreed lines worthy of a Jimmy Raney or a Barney Kessel to Nicholas Payton and Kenny Garrett's scorching front-line on the bopping "Capital J." He trades tasty strummed chords with Bucky Pizzarelli on "Lil' Darlin'," plays tag-you're-it with Mike Stern on "Giant Steps," engages Pizzarelli and Russell Malone in a swinging three-way on "Seven Come Eleven" and plays light-as-a-feather touch technique on the Vigier Argege guitar on "One For Milton."

Along the way, Jordan throws some change-ups, like recasting Katy Perry's "I



Kissed A Girl" as a swing bounce. A luminescent "Bathed In Light" has drummer Kenwood Dennard brushing in background keyboard colors and a soulful Payton solo; smooth jazz should always sound this good. —Kirk Silsbee

Friends: Capital J; Walkin' The Dog; Lil' Darlin'; Giant Steps; I Kissed A Girl; Samba Delight; Seven Come Eleven; Bathed In Light; Romantic Intermezzo From Bartok's Concerto For Orchestra; Reverie; One For Milton. (62:35)

Personnel: Stanley Jordan, guitar, piano (5, 9); Nicholas Payton, trumpet (1, 8); Regina Carter, violin (6); Kenny Garrett (1, 8), Ronnie Laws (6), soprano saxophone; Charlie Hunter (2, 5), Bucky Pizzarelli (3, 7), Mike Stern (4), Russell Malone (7, 11), guitar; Christian McBride (1, 8), Charnett Moffett (2, 3, 5, 6, 7, 10), bass; Kenwood Dennard, drums.

Ordering info: mackavenue.com

New Twists On Latin Classics

Bons Amigos (Resonance 2010; 63:50 ★★★) The pleasantries of Claudio Roditi's soft-toned Brazilian trumpet playing carries the day, with an easy-listening bossa bounce and gentle romantic gestures. Impressive is the range of composers Roditi covers, including Toninho Horta (the fine title track) and two by Eliane Elias, with special note to her sweet storytelling "Amandamada (Amanda Loved)." Roditi also weighs in with a couple of his own, including the vivacious "Piccolo Samba," which features his swinging stretch on the high-pitched piccolo trumpet. Best band member is guitarist Romero Lubambo, whose acoustic and electric lines texture throughout. Roditi may please his fans by singing in concert, but on disc, his sometimes loungey vocals are a mistake.

Ordering info: resonancerecords.org

Afropean Affair (Chandra 8094; 61:19 ★★★½) Pianist Oscar Perez and his stellar band Nuevo Comienzo stretch out from the Latin jazz touchstone with an album of entertaining tunes that go to the depth of the Latin and jazz traditions—and, as the CD title implies, encompass a wide array of compositional reference points. The arrangements are fresh, and the tempo shifts are sumptuous. The spirited opener, "The Illusive Number," melds Latin esprit with ruminative passages while the beauty of the bunch, "Paths And Streams," has a catchy melody and a wondrous interaction of piano and band, where dialogue trumps showy solos. The three-part composition, "The Afropean Suite," is especially appealing thanks to Charenee Wade's wordless vocals.

Ordering info: chandrarecords.com

Watch Out ¡Ten Cuidao! (Zoho 201110; 45:10/43:44 ★★★) Mambo Legends Orchestra delivers a straight-up Latin jazz dance party, with tight ensemble work, buoyant and call-and-response vocals, and good-times percussive rhythms. Formerly known as the All Stars of the Tito Puente Orchestra, the group keeps the spirit of the timbales ace alive with two CDs worth of "Watch Out!" mambos. A special nod to Puente takes place in the exhilarating "Para Toda El Mundo Rumba," where Jose Madera shines in the timbales spotlight shared by bongo player John "Dandy" Rodriguez. Most of the tunes have solo breaks, but they're incidental to the sizzle at work when the whole band swings. A great ending: a hip, Latin-charged rendition of "Birdland." Two short interludes feature slightly out playing and a scratchy-sonics introduction to the band. More breaks like these out of the dance zone would have been welcomed.

Ordering info: zohomusic.com

Mongorama (Saungu 003; 70:26 ★★★½) Despite a few smooth-ish mis-



Miguel Zenón

steps, this full-tilt Latin jazz collection excites by tapping into the spirit of iconic conguero Mongo Santamaria thanks to the all-star cast assembled by bandleader and Latin jazz DJ José Rizo. The music is raucous and lovingly inspired, with several star guests sitting in with the ensembles, some of them former Mongo sidemen, including Hubert Laws, who opens the proceedings with a flute solo that floats above the descarga rhythm on "Bacoso." Conga ace Poncho Sanchez also joins the dancing fray with lively solos on "Así Es La Vida" and "Guajira At The Blackhawk."

Ordering info: jazzonthelatinideallstars.com

Alma Adentro: The Puerto Rican Songbook (Marsalis Music 0016; 71:09 ★★★) Beyond the MacArthur Foundation recognition saxophonist Miguel Zenón received in 2008, he's one of the busiest and most plugged in musicians of the day, with a keen instinct for digging deep into his cultural heritage. After journeys into exploring Puerto Rican traditional music (jibaro and plena), Zenón brings to straightforward jazz life a collection of standard songs from the island. This is top-notch jazz improvisation territory. With the talented arranger/pianist Guillermo Klein conducting the large ensemble numbers, the saxophonist delivers rousing tunes like Bobby Capó's "Juguete" and slow lyrical gems such as Sylvia Rexach's "Alma Adentro."

Ordering info: marsalismusic.com

Jerry Gonzalez Y El Comando De La Clave (Sunnyside 1228; 67:59 ★★★) Trumpeter Jerry Gonzalez has not lost his knack for wonderfully and playfully breaking rules. Case in point: The Fort Apache renegade opens his new CD with a take on a classic, renamed "Some Day My Prints Will Come (Back From The F.B.I.)" which he opens quietly and slowly on his horn, then morphs it into an exciting cooker with rhythmic rushes, vocals chants and bass runs. There's a rowdy take on "Love For Sale," a hushed-with-brushes rendering of "Tenderly" and the exuberant close, "Avisale A Mi Contrario," featuring the great Romani flamenco singer Diego "El Cigala."

Ordering info: sunnysiderecords.com

MICHAEL BATES ACROBAT

MUSIC FOR, AND BY, DMITRI SHOSTAKOVICH

SC 1291 / IN STORES NOVEMBER 22

Few can listen to the musical spectacle of composer Dmitri Shostakovich and expect to forget it. Everything is a paradox in his world. The grotesque mixing with elegance and dissonance, anger and humor, serenity and sarcasm. It is often vicious or quietly raging music that contains beauty, poise and compassion as if there was some insight into the listener's deepest thoughts. The same and more can be said about double bassist/composer Michael Bates' new CD *Acrobat: Music for, and by, Dmitri Shostakovich*. This new release finds Bates with a quintet featuring some New York's finest and most creative artists (Chris Speed on saxophone/clarinet, Russ Johnson on trumpet, Russ Lossing on piano/fender rhodes, and Tom Rainey on drums).

www.sunnysiderecords.com

ERIK CHARLSTON JAZZBRASIL

ESSENTIALLY HERMETO

SSC 1268 / IN STORES NOVEMBER 8

Essentially Hermeto — is a compelling celebration of the great Brazilian composer Hermeto Pascoal — is the debut album from **Erik Charlston JazzBrasil**. Hermeto's music combines powerfully earthy, traditional Brazilian rhythms with highly sophisticated jazz harmonies. Embodying this rich duality, **JazzBrasil**, led by Erik Charlston on vibraphone and marimba, combines the Brazilian percussion team of Rogério Boccato and the legendary Café with the elite of New York's jazz scene: Ted Nash on sax, flute and clarinet, Mark Soskin on piano and Jay Anderson on bass. Hermeto's music is passionate, humorous, grooving and demanding — yet can be achingly beautiful. This group lives to bring out all these characteristics, while creating its own sound world.

www.sunnysiderecords.com

Lee Konitz *Insight*

JAZZWERKSTATT 116

★★★★½

Culled from five German live dates that happened between 1989–1995, and previously available on three out-of-print albums released by West Wind, the performances on *Insight* offer yet another strong reinforcement of the unique genius of Lee Konitz. Most of the tracks here were made with German pianist Frank Wunsch, an able foil for the saxophonist, but not a particularly striking voice on his own. Luckily, that doesn't matter when he's got a musician like Konitz beside him.

The collection opens with three fantastic solo sax pieces (although the title track is just over a minute in length), with Konitz characteristically digging deep into those original themes with a mix of tart humor and renewably fresh phrasing; his beautifully serene tone articulates high-modernist ideas, forever sprung from bebop but always seeking new ways to shape each improvisation. When writing about Konitz it's practically become a cliché to say that his playing meticulously avoids clichés, but a fact is a fact. The reedist adapts perfectly to the moody tone and melody of Wunsch's "Echoes D'Eric Satie," but elsewhere he's clearly dictating things, kicking off many of the pieces with probing solo intros. Whether dealing with a few standards or his own original workhorses, Konitz continually finds something new to say.

—Peter Margasak

Insight: Thingin'; Three Of Four; Insight; Frankly Speaking; Fortune Part I & II; It's You; Echoes D'Eric Satie; I Love You; Starlight Variation. (41:47)

Personnel: Lee Konitz, alto saxophone, Frank Wunsch, piano.

Ordering info: jazzwerkstatt.eu



The Claudia Quintet +1 *What Is The Beautiful?*

CUNEIFORM 327

★★★★½

John Hollenbeck continues to astound as a composer, prone to value accessibility as much he does adventure, on the fascinating *What Is The Beautiful?* As on the previous Claudia Quintet

disc, *Royal Toast*, Hollenbeck extends the lineup with a "+1." But it's sort of misleading; it should read "+3," because in addition to Matt Mitchell, who takes over the piano chair left by Gary Versace, vocalists Theo Bleckmann and Kurt Elling contribute invaluable.

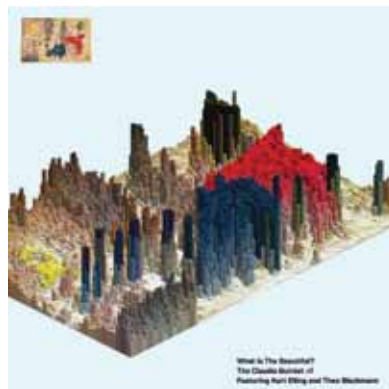
The singers play a crucial role on this album, because it's Kenneth Patchen's pioneering poetry that serves as its launching pad. Patchen's legacy adds another level of intrigue, given his relative obscurity. But his prescient works paved the way for the Beat generation and of the fusion of jazz and poetry. Commissioned by the University of Rochester as part of an exhibition commemorating what would have been Patchen's 100th birthday, Hollenbeck recruited Elling to read some of Patchen's work before he composed the music. Hints of overdubs are remarkably absent, because the ensemble couches Elling's recitations beautifully—as on the opening "Showtime/23rd Street Runs Into Heaven," on which Drew Gress' emphatic bass shadow dances in perfect unison to Elling's effective reading. As Gress' bass lines develop into a bouncy swing alongside Hollenbeck's streamlined yet propulsive drumming, Mitchell and vibraphonist coalesce intertwining lines underneath the voice before saxophonist Speed then later accordionist Ted Reichman comes in to reprise the parallel dance as Gress, Mitchell and Moran did prior. The overall effect is mesmerizing.

Elling's gift for interpreting spoken word is made all the more apparent in his ability to affect different characters. On "Showtime," he genuinely sounds like an old-school television voiceover talent and on "Opening the Window," his deliberate, slightly slurred delivery deftly evokes the craggy, inebriated shut in of the poem's protagonist. His most gripping performance is on "The Bloodhounds" (originally titled "Nice Day For A Lynching") on which he expresses the horrors of watching a black man being lynched amongst a gaggle of laughing white men.

On other occasions, Patchen's prose comes to life via Bleckmann's ethereal singing. Bleckmann is particularly bewitching on "The Snow Is Deep On The Ground" on which his otherworldly crooning is swept afloat by the rolling, counterpointing melodies and rhythms of piano, vibraphone, accordion and bass. Bleckmann finds an emotional gateway on "Do Me That Love" and on "Limpidity Of Silences," Bleckmann shows his flair for extreme dynamics as he whispers the words at an excruciating pianissimo without losing its rhythmic vitality.

While Hollenbeck employs virtuoso drumming in full service of his compositions, a closer listen reveals him to be a sparkling rhythmic engine, capable of driving the ensemble with supple grace. His drumming gets plenty spotlight however on "Mates For Life," on which his shuffling brush work duets magically with Moran's prancing improvisational lines.

—John Murph



What Is The Beautiful?: Showtime/23rd Street Runs Into Heaven; The Snow Is Deep On The Ground; Mates For Life; Job; Do Me That Love; Flock; What Is the Beautiful?; Beautiful You Are; Peace Of Green; The Bloodhounds; Limpidity Of Silences; Opening The Window. (66:17)

Personnel: John Hollenbeck, drums, percussion, keyboards; Ted Reichman, accordion; Chris Speed, clarinet and tenor saxophone; Matt Moran, vibraphone; Drew Gress, acoustic bass; Matt Mitchell, piano; Kurt Elling, voice (1, 4, 7, 10, 12); Theo Bleckmann, voice (2, 5, 8, 11).

Ordering info: cuneiformrecords.com

Tony Bennett *Duets II*

COLUMBIA 0052

★★★★

Tony Bennett's *Duets II* seems to pick it up where its predecessor left off. While it's no surprise that he moves easily along the musical high road, what's this? Lady Gaga, famous for playing peek-a-boo behind a shell game of identities, can actually sell a song and more than hold her own in the major leagues. Their pairing captures the best of the genre: the jaunty back-and-forth between song and patter, the sense that each is speaking and reacting to the other, even when tossing each other scat lines.

They can bend to style, too. Bennett's partners come from the far corners of a musical world that no longer has an anchoring center. But it turns out that nothing is more welcoming or compliant than a well-crafted song. Bennett never performed with Billie Holiday, but his pairing on "Body And Soul" with the late Amy Winehouse boils with the troubled emotions that might have attended an encounter with late-stage Holiday. Winehouse phrases with the parched cackle of a much older and experienced voice. She is stark, astringent and powerful.

While (the first) *Duets* stayed mostly inside the Bennett songbook of hits, the sequel ventures into somewhat wider territory. Carryovers are Michael Bublé and k.d. lang, Bennett's most reliable studio companion, who joins him again for a beautiful "Blue Velvet." Another carryover, less easily explained, is a second run at "How Do You Keep The Music Playing," done earlier with George Michael and here a bit awkwardly with Aretha Franklin. It's not her material.

The romping promise struck by Bennett and Lady Gaga at the top is cut short as the light darkens and the music turns softly solemn and torchy, a mood broken only by a very lightly swinging "Speak Low" with Norah Jones, "Watch What Happens" with Natalie Cole and a pleasantly ambling "On The Sunny Side Of The Street" with fellow old-pro Willie Nelson. The procession of ballads relies less on charm and wit, more on warm vocal blends that carefully build to the stately finish. A few more pockets of energy would have complemented the variety of the talents and permitted more of the relaxed give-and-take of a chatty duet.

Sheryl Crow is an elegant partner on "The Man I Love," though the shifts between first and third person to adjust for gender might not sit well with lyricist Ira Gershwin. As for Cole, Faith Hill, Queen Latifah and Carrie Underwood, there's enough of the saloon singer in each of these ladies to make the grade with the master. The only points where you may sense a clash of basic sensibility are with Josh Groban and Andrea Bocelli, two great theater singers whose imperial presence is oversized in the more intimate jazz club ambiance that is Bennett's natural home.

Bennett's unique career arc may well be remembered as the only one whose encore outshined, and maybe outlasted, its first two acts.

—John McDonough



DownBeat – To have the details and the sweep of his artistry captured this vividly is a great gift both to him and to us. ... This is thrilling stuff, make no mistake. Hard though it seems to hold the late Sir Roland Hanna in higher regard than he already is, these performances can only enhance his legacy. **JazzTimes** – These selections showcase pianist Sir Roland Hanna at the height of his powers. Hanna's playing resonates with an authoritative, almost regal forcefulness yet it's also graceful ... and there's a sense of joy and discovery at every turn, life-affirming melodic and harmonic richness, deep emotion without bathos. **Jazz Hot (France)** – A miraculous issue of previously unreleased material the beauty and originality of which are the measure of the pianist himself, truly breathtaking. **JSO Jazz Scene** – On this stunning album, Hanna demonstrates his very orchestral sounding solo piano on a perfectly balanced menu of original compositions, etched in marble standards, and one or two surprises. ... Some might say that Hanna remains an under-appreciated giant. This CD, one would hope, will open the eyes of those who should have stood in long lines to hear him. **Step Tempest** – A lovely reminder what a supremely talented pianist Sir Roland Hanna was throughout his long career. ... Intimate, heart-felt, and quite classy, this CD is a gem. **Jazz Inside** – There's virtuosity galore, and impressive color and texture, bringing one at times to forget this is only one person, playing one piano. Hanna knew his piano, and he knew his music. Most of all he knew himself and offers us an inspirational insight into musical genius and virtuosity, colors from a giant. **Jersey Jazz** – It is a treat to have previously unreleased material newly available from a player of Hanna's stature, and this disc is sure to add to the accolades that he received when he was one of the true giants of jazz piano. **All About Jazz, August 2, 2011** – Hanna's technical mastery and sweep of the keyboard is rarely matched, his musicality is sublime and his sense of timing is as perfect as his indomitable swing. Hanna always played with a certain sense of joy that came from a deep association with the blues, and like his one-time employer, Coleman Hawkins, his music was infused with sentiment and emotion, yet he was always in command of where he wanted to go musically. This he did with so little fuss that his virtuosity is often forgotten. ... this album might figure as a constant reminder of Hanna's all-but-forgotten contributions to the literature of the piano. **All About Jazz August 23, 2011** – The colors from this piano giant's kit cover the entire spectrum, from bold to bright, and this album continues to paint Hanna as the true genius that he was.



IPO Recordings

www.iporecordings.com

www.rahannamusic.com

www.allegro-music.com

Painting by Ivan Kustura

Duets II: Lady Is A Tramp; One For My Baby; Body And Soul; Don't Get Around Much Anymore; Blue Velvet; How Do You Keep The Music Playing; The Man I Love; Sunny Side Of The Street; Who Can I Turn To; Speak Low; This Is All I Ask; Watch What Happens; Stranger In Paradise; The Way You Look Tonight; Yesterday I Heard The Rain; It Had To Be You; When Do The Bells Ring For Me. (63:18)

Personnel: Tony Bennett, Lady Gaga (1), John Mayer (2), Amy Winehouse (3), Michael Bublé (4), k.d. lang (5), Aretha Franklin (6), Sheryl Crow (7), Willie Nelson (8), Queen Latifah (9), Norah Jones (10), Josh Groban (11), Natalie Cole (12), Andrea Bocelli (13), Faith Hill (14), Alejandro Sanz (15), Carrie Underwood (16), Mariah Carey (17), vocals; Lee Musiker, piano; Gray Sergent, guitar; Marshall Wood, bass; Harold Jones, drums; Marion Evans (1, 2, 4, 8, 12), Jorge Calandrelli (3, 5-7, 9-11, 13-17), conductor.

Ordering info: columbiarecords.com

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The Guardian (UK) ★★★★★ The good-humoured quintet sounded, on its vivacious London visit, like a contemporary jazz band to its fingertips. Some of it suggested what a Charles Mingus group might have become, but there was nothing retro about this show. (John Fordham)

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Tierney Sutton Band *American Road*

BFM JAZZ 302062408

★★★★★

This signals a new maturity for Tierney Sutton, a gifted singer. She achieves a new level of interpretation and conceptualization that, up to now, she has only visited. A range of musical Americana—from 19th Century folk songs to George Gershwin to Harold Arlen & Yip Harburg to Leonard Bernstein & Stephen Sondheim to Jerry Leiber & Mike Stoller—is well chosen. Singer and band work hand-in-glove: the rhythm section gives her room but also support, an arrangement that works both ways.

Sutton's luminous alto has seldom sounded so pure. The wordless introduction to "The Water Is Wide" has a little surface sheen, via engineer Andy Waterman's discreet echo. Her held notes, with an equally subtle vibrato, hang in the air like suspended globes. The final note of the lyric ("...like morning deew-ww...") stretches beyond what sounds possible. It's a technical feat, overshadowed by the heartfelt reading. Throughout, Sutton lets the songs shine.

Voice and instruments redesign the tunes. "On Broadway" uses a spare, rhythmic vamp, with Christian Jacob's piano gently playing



against her or fleshing out her reharmonizations. The group changes the rhythm under the steadfast voice on "My Man's Gone." An ominous vamp on "Ain't Necessarily So" offsets Sutton at her worldly best, channeling the song's originator—John Bubbles—in a clever way. She unleashes a scat section, mercifully short, and therefore effective.

The breathtaking note manipulation at the close of "Summertime" is a brief surprise that, in lesser hands, could have been a gimmick.

Like the Judy Collins' late-'60s recordings for Elektra, Sutton makes folk songs into art songs. "Amazing Grace" is a masterpiece, sidestepping predictable crescendos for low-key sincerity. Jacob's tangy piano solo over her wordless melody is a gem.

All band members share arranging credit, speaking of a unity of purpose. The meditative "America The Beautiful" brings a lump to the throat, with Sutton and Jacob melding to the greater vision of the song. It's a quiet but powerful way to end a very special collection.

—Kirk Silsbee

American Road: Wayfaring Stranger; Oh Shenandoah/The Water is Wide; On Broadway; Amazing Grace; It Ain't Necessarily So; Summertime; My Man's Gone Now; Tenderly; The Eagle and Me; Somewhere; Something's Coming/Cool; America the Beautiful. (64:01)

Personnel: Tierney Sutton, vcl; Christian Jacob, piano; Kevin Axt, contrabass, electric bass; Trey Henry, contrabass, electric bass; Ray Brinker, drums, percussion.

Ordering info: bfmjazz.com

Wolfert Brederode Quartet *Post Scriptum*

ECM 2184

★★★★½

There's an attractive rain-on-windowpane quality to Dutch pianist Wolfert Brederode's international band, a sense of grey chill gazed upon from a warmer vantage. The quartet's second release, following 2006's *Currents*, builds on their debut's fragile elegance but with a more fluid grace.

Brederode enters "Meander," the opening track, cautiously, as if stepping out onto a frozen river before gaining the confidence to glide across it. It's clarinetist Claudio Puntin who provides the figure eights, however, spiraling his way through the leader's rich harmonies. "Angelico" follows with bassist Mats Eilertsen bowing delicate channels through the pianist's tidally pulsing eighth-notes.

The two versions of Brederode's title track, originally penned for a theatrical production, demonstrate the quartet's sonic breadth. The first seems to insinuate itself into the ear with a held-breath stealth, constantly threatening



to dissipate before gathering into shape once again. "Post Scriptum, var." draws its nervous energy from Eilertsen's ominous opening bass line, maintaining an unnerving suspense throughout with Samuel Rohrer's skittering percussion.

Despite the gauzy beauty of the album, the

quartet maintains a steely backbone that keeps the music's edges from fading out of focus. That tension comes from a pervasive feeling of ascetic restraint, as if each gesture and impulse is held back until absolutely necessary. Rohrer's "Hybrids" abstracts that notion into isolated shards, making Puntin's delayed entrance a welcome relief in the contrast of his clarinet's smooth contours. Throughout the band demonstrates that deep interaction and bold austerity are not mutually exclusive.

—Shaun Brady

Post Scriptum: Meander; Angelico; November; Post Scriptum; Hybrids; Inner Dance; Aceh; Post Scriptum, var.; Brun; Sofia; Augenblick in der Garderobe des Sommers; Silver Cloud; Wall View; Silver Cloud, var. (66:28)

Personnel: Wolfert Brederode, piano; Claudio Puntin, clarinets; Mats Eilertsen, bass; Samuel Rohrer, drums.

Ordering info: ecmrecords.com

Rudresh Mahanappa *Samdhi*

ACT 9513

★★★★

Labels can be such a pain. For instance, although it would be entirely accurate to describe *Samdhi* as saxophonist Rudresh Mahanappa's fusion album, it would also be totally misleading. Even though his liner notes admit that his early inspirations included Grover Washington, David Sanborn, and the Brecker Brothers, *Samdhi* just isn't that kind of fusion album.

That is, the kind with a backbeat.

Instead, Mahanappa has taken aspects of South Indian classical and folded in elements of jazz, rock, and electronica to create something that doesn't sound like any of the above. There are loops but no dance beats, virtuosity but no flash, swing but no blues.

And while the electric instruments and hyper-percussive interplay will put some listeners in mind of the early Mahavishnu Orchestra, Mahanappa swaps the thundering dynamics of McLaughlin's band for a modest, almost under-amplified soundscape.

In fact, the loudest thing on the album tends to be Mahanappa's alto, especially when fed through a multiphonic processor.



Guitarist David Gilmore keeps his tone lean and focused, which suits his nimbly articulated runs, while bassist Rich Brown (from Toronto's multi-culti Autorickshaw) maintains a similarly restrained sound, and at times functions almost like a second guitarist.

Drummer Damion Reid, a Mahanappa stalwart, has plenty of opportunity to strut his stuff, but reins in the volume so as not to overpower percussionist Anantha Krishnan.

Although many of the tunes take a straightforward raga-rock approach, with scalar melodies in compound time and improvisation based as much on rhythmic as melodic ideas, the band doesn't stop there. "Parakram #2," one of two workouts with the laptop, takes an almost symphonic approach to soft-synths, and nicely syncs the echoed alto lines with drum loops, while the full-band "Breakfastlunchanddinner" seamlessly bounces between fusion and straightahead playing without any loss in intensity. —J.D. Considine

Samdhi: Parakram #1; Killer; Richard's Game; Playing With Stones; Rune; Breakfastlunchanddinner; Parakram #2; Ahhh; Meeting Of The Skins; Still-Gas; For My Lady; For All The Ladies. (65:21)

Personnel: Rudresh Mahanappa, alto saxophone, laptop; David Gilmore, electric guitar; Rich Brown, electric bass; Damion Reid, drums; Anantha Krishnan, mridangam, kanjira.

Ordering info: actmusic.com

Donald Harrison *This Is Jazz*

HALF NOTE 4550

★★★★

Six tunes. Three players. A live gig at New York's Blue Note club, *This Is Jazz* is the fourth record date between alto player Donald Harrison, bassist Ron Carter and drummer Billy Cobham, the first going back to 2002, a quartet session. This one is their third as a trio (under Harrison's name), and it makes sense that they'd do a live one, given the talent and looseness of their playing and the repertoire.

Starting off with two blues, both by Carter, "Cut & Paste" and "MSRP," the mood is set. And right off it becomes apparent that the uptempo swing of "Cut & Paste" doesn't serve the band well, "MSRP"'s slower gait more satisfying. And yet, even here, the swing thing just doesn't seem to gel, the trio's sense of time a bit off. Consequently, the highlights tend to come with solos from Carter and Cobham (holding his stealthy tendencies in check but not without some familiar signatures here and there), especially during the trading fours with between the two on "MSRP," with Cobham's delectable solo work on "Seven Steps To Heaven" and especially with Carter's solo turn all alone for



the standard "You Are My Sunshine," where the bassist's musical temperament shines through laconic lines and idiosyncratic idylls.

Harrison's best moments come toward the end, with two tunes that could've been the template here: the ballad "I Can't Get Started" and Harrison's funky, Crescent City nod, "Treme Swagger."

Playing a ballad takes the heat off the tempo, allowing the altoist's light and lyrical lights to shine. He is a good interpreter of a song like "I Can't Get Started," the rest of the band playing the perfect complementary roles. The set ends on a high note, with a backbeat and an attitude, or swagger, if you will. Here, all three join in with a pulse, with more soul and, rhythmically, a groove that brings it all together.

Sonically, the production gives listeners the feel of being there, the appreciative audience heard but not crowding out the music. The pan has Harrison and Carter somewhat off to left and right, respectively, with Cobham in the middle. Kind of like the playing.

—John Ephland

This Is Jazz: Cut & Paste; MSRP; You Are My Sunshine; Seven Steps To Heaven; I Can't Get Started; Treme Swagger. (56:33)

Personnel: Donald Harrison, alto saxophone; Ron Carter, bass; Billy Cobham, drums.

Ordering info: donaldharrison.com

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Eric Reed *Something Beautiful*

WJ3 1009

★★★★

On perhaps the most aptly titled album of the season, Eric Reed, Reuben Rogers and Rodney Green deliver an almost impeccable trio performance. *Something Beautiful* is a little short on fireworks—no thrilling crescendos or fiery swing. But that was never Reed's intention. What he strove for was something more elusive: a synthesis of intelligence, imagination, sophistication and above all taste. He attains that goal and in that accomplishment presents a different and more lasting kind satisfaction.

Let's clarify a bit. These performances are thrilling, in their understatement and elegance. When swing is the thing, they swing but also fascinate in how they do so. We don't get steady backbeats from Green; rather, his drumming connects to the spirit of the material. On "Black Tables," he turns off his snare and plays very sparsely on it and the toms, adding an occasional cymbal whisper, all played with a soft mallet. There is rhythm here, a stately and dignified movement that adds to the hypnotic effect of the simple E-F# minor motif of the verses.

Rogers similarly gets maximum effect from minimal gestures. His bass on "How Deep Is The Ocean?" does walk as Reed stretches out, though his placement of short linear sequences, isolated notes and silences on the opening verses swings just as much, if more abstractly.



This track demonstrates another interesting detail, in how Green approaches standards. The tune kicks off on the first beat of bar one, with no intro and no statement of the theme. Instead, the piano improvises from the start, letting the identity of the tune surface gradually,

more through the chord sequence as the melody. This being a familiar title, there's no reason to spell it out until the very end.

Here, and everywhere on *Something Beautiful*, Reed is enormously rewarding, certainly as a player and just as much in his arrangements. His left-hand inversions on "Lift Up Your Hand To The Lord" lay a solid foundation for the billowing dynamics and his simple yet exultant right-hand articulations. "In Your Own Sweet Way" is a lovely tribute to Dave Brubeck, played of course in 5/4. And Noel Coward's "Mad About The Boy" edges playfully on camp, with a tea-dance beat, impish commentaries on the bass and Reed's slinky, blues-tinged piano adding a seductive element. A cha-cha-cha cadence feels inevitable as we near the end, so when the band finishes instead on a single short chord, it satisfies like hearing and getting an inside joke.

—Bob Doerschuk

Something Beautiful: Sun Out; In Your Own Sweet Way; Black Tables; How Deep Is The Ocean?; I Still Believe In You; Lift Up Your Hands To The Lord; Mad About The Boy; Citadel; Honesty; Something Beautiful; If I Knew You. (54:31)

Personnel: Eric Reed, piano; Reuben Rogers, bass; Rodney Green, drums.

Ordering info: ericreed.net

Rahsaan Barber *Everyday Magic*

JAZZ MUSIC CITY 001

★★★★

A friend once told me: "When I see a guitarist with a Gibson Flying-V, I think, 'You'd better be able to play that thing.'" The same thing holds if you're a saxophonist named Rahsaan. Fortunately, Rahsaan Barber lives up to the hope his father had for him at birth (his twin brother Roland appears on trombone on two tracks here). Although more influenced by John Coltrane than Rahsaan Roland Kirk, the 31-year-old Barber is a versatile reed player and an ambitious composer who covers a lot of stylistic ground.

Like a lot of young musicians, Barber is eager to show as much of his range as possible, and that makes for a recording that meanders when it might be homing in on a single target.

Everyday Magic kicks off hard and fast with "Jubilee," driven by drummer Nioshi Jackson, and then shifts into two Coltrane-influenced pieces with rolling tempos and a deep groove.

A heartfelt "Manhattan Grace" serves as a pivotal point on the recording, carrying Barber back to his gospel past, and highlighting Adam Agati's tart guitar. From there, it's almost as if



a different mindset takes over. "Why So Blue?" is a feature for brother Roland, whose attack and tone are more rooted in mainstream tradition, and the four pieces that round out the disc have all their rough edges buffed off, with the notable exception of the closing moments of "Redemption."

—James Hale

Everyday Magic: Jubilee; Lost And Found; Floodsong; Manhattan Grace; Why So Blue?; Innocence; Adagio; Memphis Soul; Redemption. (59:03)

Personnel: Rahsaan Barber, soprano saxophone, alto saxophone, tenor saxophone, flute; Roland Barber, trombone (5, 8); Adam Agati, guitar; Jody Nardone, piano; Jerry Navarro, bass; Nioshi Jackson, drums; Giovanni Rodriguez, percussion (3, 8).

Ordering info: rahsaanbarber.com



Tinariwen *Tassili*

ANTI- 87148

★★★★½

If there's such a thing as a breakout desert-rock album, it's Tinariwen's superb 2004 effort *Amassakoul*. The Saharan band—founded by Tuareg nomads driven from their lands by the Malian government—gained the public's attention after European performances caught the ear of luminaries such as Robert Plant, who largely modeled his *Mighty ReArranger* after the collective's African modalism.

On the acoustic *Tassili*, Tinariwen retains its trademark hypnotic rhythms and wanderer themes yet drops the amplified, distortion-stacked approach that broadcast its maverick restlessness and indefatigable ethos. The collective also welcomes Western influences in the guises of TV On The Radio members Tunde Adebimpe and Kyp Malone, Wilco guitarist Nels Cline and New Orleans jazzers Dirty Dozen Brass Band. Not a crossover attempt as much as a return to roots with fresh ripples, the mellow-minded set engages by way of understated grooves and emotional longing.

Flickering like the tip of a campfire flame nipping at cool night air, nuanced guitar notes coalesce into spring-loaded foundations against which lead vocals moan in prayerful communion. Group chants and soulful call-and-response rejoinders buttress such spirituality, whose calmness is betrayed by overwhelming feelings of loss, agony and sadness. Moaned and ululated in the Tamashek language, lyrics lamenting abandonment, struggle, anxiety and challenges posed by desert existence are treated as hymns—pleas for deliverance, cries for patience, wishes for freedom.

—Bob Gendron

Tassili: Imidiwan Ma Tenam; Asuf D Alwa; Tenere Taqhim Tossam; Ya Messinagh; Walla Illa; Tameyawt; Imidiwan Win Sahara; Tamiditin Tan Ufrawan; Tiliaden Osannat; Djeredjere; Iswegh Attay; Takest Tamidaret (53:51)

Personnel: Ibrahim Ag Alhabib, guitars, vocals; Ahassane Ag Touhami, vocals; Eyadou Ag Leche, guitars, bass, percussion, vocals; Elaga Ag Hamid, guitars, vocals; Said Ad Ayad, percussion, vocals; Mohamad Ag Tahada, percussion, vocals; Mustapha Ag Ahmed, vocals; Aroune Ag Alhabib, guitars, vocals; Abdallah Ag Alhousseini, guitar, vocals (12); Kyp Malone, guitars, vocals (2, 3, 5, 11); Tunde Adebimpe, vocals (3, 5, 7); Nels Cline, guitars (1); Gregory Davis, trumpet (4); Roger Lewis, baritone and soprano saxophone (4).

Ordering info: anti.com

Searchers and Finders

Neil Haverstick: *Hide & Seek* (Microstick 10; 43:59 ★★★★★) Haverstick, alias Stickman, follows his own blues path, willfully tramping on the third rails of microtones. His solo oud on "Goin' to Memphis" and banjo on "Big Ol' Train" confound conventionality, but his spirit of adventure soars when exploring fretless 7-string and 12-, 19- and 36-tone guitars—related basses, too. For a dozen tracks, some with muscular drummer Ernie Crews, the Colorado-based adventurer seems to dip into a supernatural source of variations in the blues scale. Stickman tweaks the tuning of the notes with amazing assurance, with his elliptic musical curiosity extending from African drum patterns to Robert Johnson rhythms to childhood verse. He's a decent singer though the most gripping vocal turn comes from guest Jack Hadley on the Willie Dixon-inspired rave-up called "Blues Ain't Nothin'."

Ordering info: microstick.net

Pokey LaFarge & The South City Three: *Middle Of Everywhere* (Free Dirt 0065; 41:01 ★★★½) A 27-year-old from St. Louis, LaFarge worships at the altar of pre-World War II country blues, jazz and vaudeville with a casual but organized sincerity. He has an appealing if quirky singing voice of soft power, elevating his old-timey, fun original tunes far from the trap of musty parody. Adam Hoskins stands out for the sparkle and depth of his contributions on classic guitars as the rest of the acoustic band plus hired horns show their mettle in musical entertainment just perfect for a Mississippi steamboat cruise.

Ordering info: pokeylafarge.net

Bill Bourne & The Free Radio Band: *Bluesland* (Linus 270136; 35:29 ★★★★★½) Talented singer and songwriter Bourne, usually found in Western Canada, is something of an eclectic—and he's all the better for it. "Deep Dark Woods" grooves on the axis of Jimi Hendrix's makeover of Bob Dylan's "All Along The Watchtower" while "Forever Truly Bound" drives with Chuck Berry-like spirit and "On The Sunny Side" dreamily explores the poetic connection between nature and romance. The fifty-something Juno award-winner and his band bring skill and awareness to their cross-pollinations of blues, rock, country and jazz.

Ordering info: billbourne.com

Moreland & Arbuckle: *Just A Dream* (Telarc 33015; 48:21 ★★★★★) Combining the raw vigor of Mississippi hill country trance-inducers with a cleverly calculated sonic blues mania of their own, this trio out of Kansas should never be taken lightly. They think about



Neil Haverstick

the blues in a bold, uncompromised manner that bodes well for their place in the music's future. Sorry, no great shakes: Steve Cropper plays on "White Lightnin'."

Ordering info: telarc.com

Candye Kane: *Sister Vagabond* (Delta Groove 148; 49:37 ★★★★★) With her urgent and direct phrasing, Kane has been a striking singer since the 1980s, evidenced by a dozen albums. On her latest, she continues with her tough, tell-it-like-it-is manner as several original songs land roundhouse punches square on the jaw of ex-lovers. Above all, Kane is a humane, caring person who has weathered lots of adversity; "I Deserve Love" is the enduring track here. Her protégée, guitarist Laura Chavez, continues to make good progress.

Ordering info: deltagrooveproductions.com

Johnny Nicholas: *Future Blues* (The People's Label; 52:08 ★★★★★) Nicholas' shining moment in the studio was alongside Shakey Horton and Johnny Shines in 1978. Since then, he's released an enjoyable album every few years. Today, the Texan crosses blues into rootsy rock and country without a hitch, remaining steady as a deep-throated singer, guitarist and songwriter bound to the blues past (though the album title suggests otherwise).

Ordering info: guitarjohnnynicholas.com



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**Steven Bernstein's
Millennial
Territory Orchestra**
MTO Plays Sly
THE ROYAL POTATO FAMILY 1110
★★★★½

With the occasional spate of Sly Stone tribute discs that pops up, few command repeated investigations, mostly because Stone's originals continue to cast such a towering presence. Steven Bernstein cuts the rut though with the help of his Millennial Territory Orchestra on the splendid, *MTO Plays Sly*.

The disc excels at illustrating not only Bernstein's deep love for the repertoire but also his deep understanding of the material. While he's able to retain the emotional vibe of some of the originals, the ensemble's unique characteristics don't get lost. The orchestra's hypnotic, Middle Eastern take on "Everyday People" is one of the most transcendental versions of the song, made even more powerful by Shilpa Ray's impassioned yet ghostly vocals. With the help of Antony Hegarty's quivering voice and Bernie Worrell's somber organ, Bernstein and the crew uncork all the weary melancholy out of "Family Affair" that brewed underneath the original's funkier arrangement. Martha Wainwright lends her spellbinding soprano on "Que Sera, Sera," giving it an



Doug Weiseman get to show off their bluesy flair on banjo and clarinet, respectively, on the delightful original "Sly Notions," driving with gutbucket swagger by bassist Ben Allison, drummer Ben Perowsky and the horn section. On the twin song "Sly Notions 2/Fun," Bowman joins in, yelping a delightful yodel that recalls Leon Thomas. It makes a fantastic segue into the sauntering "Time," which again features Bowman's poignant crooning and a sizzling guitar solo from Vernon Reid.

—John Murphy

MTO Plays Sly: Stand, Family Affair, Sly Notions, Que Sera, Sera, M'Lady, You Can Make It If You Try, Everyday People, Bernie's Interlude, Skin I'm In, Sly Notions 2/Fun, Time, Thank You For Talkin' To Me Africa, Life. (63:20)

Personnel: Steven Bernstein, trumpet and slide trumpet; Curtis Fowlkes, trombone; Charlie Burnham, violin; Doug Weiseman, clarinet and tenor saxophone; Peter Apfelbaum, tenor and soprano saxophones; Erik Lawrence, baritone and soprano saxophones; Matt Munisteri, guitar and banjo; Ben Allison, bass; Ben Perowsky, drums; Bernie Worrell, Hammond organ; Vernon Reid, guitar (1, 11); Antony Hegarty, vocals (2); Martha Wainwright, vocals (4); Dean Bowman, vocals (5, 10, 11); Sandra St. Victor, vocals (1, 9); Shilpa Ray, vocals (7).

Ordering info: royalpotatofamily.com

**New West
Guitar Group**
Round-Trip Ticket
SUMMIT 575
★★½

Across the span of four records, the New West Guitar Group has experienced some growing pains. The current lineup of guitarists Jeff Stein, John Storie and Perry Smith has only recently been solidified, a point underscored by founding father Brady Cohen's presence on a few of *Round-Trip Ticket's* 10 tunes. Though the lineup has changed, the trio's aesthetic has remained constant. Their musical idea is simple enough to break down: an acoustic guitar—strummed slowly, fingerpicked lightly, aggressively chopped—backing up two electric guitars spewing nimble runs of 16th notes. The result lies somewhere between contemporary folk-rock and modern jazz.

Round-Trip Ticket is the most polished of the group's four records, and while previous attempts have toyed with deviations of the current sonic format—such as the cloying, all-acoustic ballad reading of "When The Saints Go Marching In"—each tune on the new album stays fairly close to the group's established musical hierarchy. It's an open-spaces,



sunlight-dappled record that feels like it was recorded en plein air, with the three musicians surrounded by Redwoods. In other words, the music has a West Coast, laid-back vibe. That the disc was actually recorded across two years with two different lineups does nothing to sully this illusion.

A few tunes on the album are reshaped from previous attempts, keeping a lifeline open with the band's previous iterations. Of the new tunes, Stein's lone composition, "Waiting For You," is the most surprising; an ethereal piece, it brings a needed ballad presence to the proceedings.

The band's language is jazz-based—blue notes and extended chordal harmonies—but the songwriting seems to sometimes exist only as a base for solos. Jam band is a dirty phrase to musicians who don't playing up this association, but on "Rivercrest" and other raucous tunes, the lead guitarists could have used an editor and sometimes veer dangerously close to self-indulgent finger waggling. —Jon Ross

Round-Trip Ticket: Arrowhead; Rivercrest; Waiting For You; Crooked Railroad; Shadow Play; Dear Friend; All My Belongings; U-Haul Breakdown; Wandering On A Trail; Wake Up Call. (49:26)

Personnel: Jeff Stein, John Storie, Perry Smith, Brady Cohen guitars.

Ordering info: summitrecords.com



**Martin Wind & The
JazzBaltica Jubilee Ensemble**
Theresia
LAIKA 3510273
★★★★½

Martin Wind, a fine bassist and composer, has created a substantial and satisfying piece of unconventional big band jazz writing with *Theresia*. But an undeniable poignancy runs through it—having less to do with the emotional palette of the writing than the fact of this work's dedicatee, JazzBaltica festival director Rainer Haarman's wife, Theresia Haarmann, who passed away in 2009. A spirit of respect and emotional commitment shines through on this album, beautifully realized by a group which took as its name the JazzBaltica Jubilee Ensemble, and recorded live at the 2010 JazzBaltica festival with a crisp sonic presence.

With Michael Wollny's yearning piano part opening the album's introductory "Overture," we get a taste of Wind's harmonic palette, which can range from shades of contemporary classical notions to blasts of old-school big band brassiness. The centerpiece, the lovely piece "Theresia," comes towards the end of the program and encompasses a variety of texture, including the chamber-esque timbres of Lars Danielsson's cello.

Donny McCaslin, the dynamic and inventive tenor saxophonist always deserving wider recognition, has a strong presence as a soloist here, bringing passion and his impressive stylistic stamp to the opening "Overture," an inspired solo at the end of "Theresia" and then in a heated, tête-à-tête dialogue with tenor player Johannes Enders on the final "Get It?"

Theresia belongs to the catalog of recordings documenting the riches of thought, and musical deed, in the ever-expanding world of European big band culture. —Josef Woodard

Theresia: Overture; Our In Pa; The Cruise Blues; Remember October 13; Theresia; Get It? (70:29)

Personnel: Martin Wind, bass; Niels Lynne Løkkegaard, alto saxophone, clarinet, flute; Johannes Enders, tenor saxophone, flute; Donny McCaslin, tenor saxophone, flute; Axel Schlosser, trumpet, flugelhorn; Nils Wülker, trumpet, flugelhorn; Karin Hammar, trombone; Øyvind Braekke, trombone; Christopher Dell, vibraphone; Michael Wollny, piano; Andi Haberl, drums; Nils Landgren, trombone; Lars Danielsson, cello; Wolfgang Haffner, drums.

Ordering info: laika-records.com

Brad Mehldau & Kevin Hays *Modern Music*

NONESUCH 528371

★★★★

There's no doubt that *Modern Music* is a major accomplishment, reflecting not only the virtuosity of Brad Mehldau and Kevin Hays but also the skills of Patrick Zimmerli, a longtime friend of Mehldau. As author of most of these tracks and arranger of them all, Zimmerli operates at a level as lofty as the pianists who interpret his works.

The repertoire is varied but bound by the common fact of its difficulty. Except for "Celtic Folk Melody," a free-tempo piece presented mostly in one or two voices, each work is formidably complex. In general, they adhere to Zimmerli's apparent aesthetic, not only in his minimalist technique but also in his adaptations for two pianos of works by Philip Glass ("Excerpt From String Quartet No. 5") and Steve Reich ("Excerpt From Music For 18 Musicians").

The latter track is the most stunning achievement among these challenging works. Mehldau and Hays pay great attention to dynamics and pedaling, with the insistent eighth-note pulse shifting constantly from massive chords to simple intervals, often mirrored by a variant elsewhere or elaborated upon by complex sub-rhythms.

Like everything else on *Modern Music* except for stretches of Ornette Coleman's "Lonely Woman" and perhaps some of the heavily pedaled, massive clusters blanketing some of the chord movement on Mehldau's "Unrequited," it is also texturally literal. There may be improvisation underway elsewhere, but given the density of Zimmerli's writing, it is hard to hear where there's any room for it. In the same sense, there's no clear separation between the pianists, when both are playing the written score and adhering to generally unchanging tempos.

The focus shifts, then, from their performances to Zimmerli's imagination as the music transpires. As breathtaking as the performances are, they are about bringing to life Zimmerli's original and interpretive ideas. It's not jazz—but that doesn't matter.

—Bob Doerschuk

Modern Music: Crazy Quilt; Unrequited; Generatrix; Celtic Folk Melody; Excerpt From Music for 18 Musicians; Lonely Woman; Modern Music; Elegia; Excerpt from String Quartet No. 5. (64:11)

Personnel: Brad Mehldau, Kevin Hays, pianos.

Ordering info: nonesuch.com



Corey Wilkes *Kind Of Miles*

KATALYST ENTERTAINMENT

★★★★½

Trumpeter Corey Wilkes knows how to bring the party. The concept of this live recording isn't ostensibly exciting as further exhumation of the Miles Davis legacy, but it shows Wilkes' honesty in tipping his hat and makes candid stylistic points he has borrowed from Davis.

Keyboardist Greg Spero is a centered personality, less interested in flash than the role of mood architect. Junius Paul's transposition of the bass riff to "So What" amidst the trippy simplicity of the chords to Radiohead's "In It's Right Place" sets up a half-hour jam that begins with Wilkes in matador mode. Gritty, willfully obtuse saxophonist Kevin Nabors is cast adrift but granted enough elbow room to fight through the mounting thicket of percussion. Thermodynamic responses suggest this set plays out differently every night but regularly wins over.

—Michael Jackson



Kind Of Miles: Yesterdays; It's About that Time; Tutu; So What/In It's Right Place. (77:04)

Personnel: Corey Wilkes, trumpet; Kevin Nabors, tenor sax; Greg Spero, keys; Junius Paul, bass; Xavier Breaker, drums; Kahil El Zabar, percussion.

Ordering info: katalystentertainment.com

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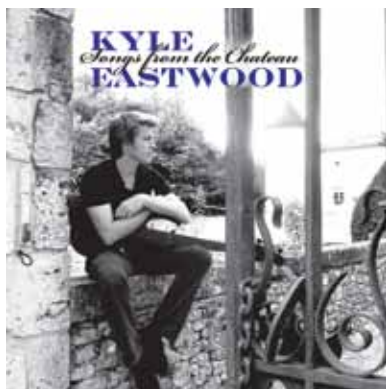
Kyle Eastwood *Songs From The Chateau*

RENDEZVOUS MUSIC 5146

★★★

Recorded in a 15th century chateau in the Bordeaux region of France, bassist Kyle Eastwood's *Songs From The Chateau* is a tidy, concise and focused album that showcases his working band well. Eastwood, who is a formidable soloist and section player, plays both electric and upright basses. His measured and forward moving upright solo on "Andalucía" is right in the pocket and locks in with pianist Andrew McCormack and drummer Martyn Kaine immediately; one can tell this is a working band. On the upbeat "Over The Line," his solo on electric is nimble and buoyant. The cuts on which Eastwood uses upright sound fresher and more contemporary than some of those where he plays electric.

Eastwood's band is solid. On tenor, Graeme Blevins strongly recalls Chris Potter, and his solos on "Marcia" and "Tonic" are two of the album's highlights. There is an urgency and



intensity in his playing that propels the music. Trumpeter Graeme Flowers, who has a robust trumpet sound and a soft, sensitive flugel approach, brings a similar intensity and is a nice counterpart to Blevins.

The most memorable and effective compositions are those with slower, elongated

lines. Blevins and Flowers' blend on soprano and flugel is perfect on the relaxing and calming "Moon Over Couronneau," which includes a lovely and melodic solo by McCormack. The ethereal and understated "Aperitif" is the album's high point, and it features an excellent solo by Eastwood on which his bass has an almost talking quality. Although they are well done, the tunes based on shorter and more motivic phrases, such as the funky "Down At Ronnie's," are less effective. —Chris Robinson

Songs From The Chateau: Marcia; Moon Over Couronneau; Café Calypso; Soul Captain; Andalucía; Over The Line; Tonic; Aperitif; Down At Ronnie's. (50:27)

Personnel: Kyle Eastwood, bass; Graeme Flowers, trumpet, flugelhorn; Graeme Blevins, tenor saxophone, soprano saxophone; Andrew McCormack, pianos, keyboards; Martyn Kaine, drums.

Ordering info: mackavenue.com

Ray Anderson/Han Bennink/ Frank Möbus/Ernst Glerum/ Paul Van Kemenade *Who Is In Charge?*

KEMO 10

★★½

This disc's moniker does not come out of thin air. There is a deliberate attempt at appearing as democratic or communal as possible, even though saxophonist Paul van Kemenade should be considered the leader of the quintet. But the plot might become handy when one tries to find who is to blame for the shortcomings of this recording.

The program is well balanced and sequenced with the ensemble treading various territories and moving from bop-infused tunes to mysterious numbers not to mention a rendition of "For Ché," Charlie Haden's hymn to the Cuban revolutionary leader. Moreover, there is no shortage of skills. In particular, drummer Han Bennink, who strips down his kit to the bare minimum (a snare), is impressively inventive and efficient. The band is good-natured and seems to have great time, but the relaxed atmosphere soon becomes a pitfall. None of the musicians seems to be challenged, and when the band ventures into Afro-Cuban rhythms ("Close Enough"), the too-relaxed atmosphere produces flat results.

The role played by German guitarist Frank Möbus is also quite puzzling. He does contrib-



ute "Pet Shop," a lush and rustling tone poem that is arguably the best piece featured on *Who Is In Charge?* But as an instrumentalist, he is kept in the background and his playing is at times hardly perceptible.

Considering the caliber of the artists involved—trombonist Ray Anderson and bassist Ernst Glerum round out the combo—there are reasons to be disappointed. In recent memory, those musicians have produced work that will undoubtedly outlast this fairly enjoyable but minor outing.

—Alain Drouot

Who Is In Charge?: Who Is In Charge?; Pet Shop; As Yet; Close Enough; Silver Nichols; Song For Ché; A Tune For N. (43:01)

Personnel: Paul Van Kemenade, alto sax; Ray Anderson, trombone; Frank Möbus, electric guitar; Ernst Glerum, bass; Han Bennink, snare.

Ordering info: paulvankemenade.com



James Carter Organ Trio *At The Crossroads*

EMARCY 16081

★★★★

Calling multi-reedist James Carter's latest record with his organ group a trio date is a bit disingenuous; sure, *At The Crossroads* contains trio settings of a few tunes, but most of the songs are fleshed out by guest artists.

"Walk Right In" is beefed up with a range of players and Miche Braden on vocals. Carter plays in the background, blending his sound as part of an ensemble. Pretty much every other tune on the album showcases a Carter in full form. Multiphonics morph into harmonic primal screams, leading to a flurry of 16th notes that devolve into a scribble of sound.

His supporting cast takes this in stride, with Gerard Gibbs throwing spiky hits from his organ or laying on a sforzando chord and letting the reverb create a bed for Carter's improvisation. On *At The Crossroads*, Carter works to display how far he's come as a musician. Of course, all his famous phrasing and instrumental tricks are present, but they've been enhanced by time. "JC Off The Set" is a direct reaction to the out-of-the-gate-swinging personality he displayed on his first record, 1993's *JC On The Set*. The title track on the disc ran through his many tools in an impressive, if showy, manner. "JC Off The Set" is more introspective and creative, and Carter works to mold a concept instead of simply playing to play.

At The Crossroads is the recording of a man who has grown up a lot since *JC On The Set* propelled him to the top of the scene in his early 20s. He's learned from his experiences—as varied as blitzing through a saxophone concerto, performing with the World Saxophone Quartet or re-imagining Pavement songs—and *At The Crossroads* is better for it. —Jon Ross

At The Crossroads: Oh Gee; JC Off The Set; Aged Pain; Walkin' Blues; My Whole Life Through; Walking The Dog; Lettuce Toss Yo Salad; Misterio; Ramblin' Blues; Come Sunday; Tis The Old Ship Of Zion; The Hard Blues. (74:39)

Personnel: James Carter, saxophones, flute; Gerard Gibbs, organ; Leonard King Jr., drums, vocals; Brandon Ross, guitar; Bruce Edwards, guitar; Miche Braden, vocals; Keyon Harrold, trumpet; Vincent Chandler, trombone; Eli Fountain, percussion.

Ordering info: emarcy.com



Fahey Collection Offers Early Picture Of American Original

John Fahey, who originated the folk-rooted American Primitive style of guitar playing during the '50s and enjoyed a late-career renaissance as a founding father of a pan-stylistic American underground, said that he didn't want his earliest recordings for the Fonotone label to be released while he was alive. Those recordings, which are finally seeing release a decade after Fahey's death in February 2001 on *Your Past Comes Back To Haunt You (The Fonotone Years 1958-'65)* (Dust-To-Digital 21; 73:46/67:32/62:13/59:38/67:07 ★★★★★), almost didn't come out at all. The project was repeatedly derailed by business and technical disasters. But this set, which includes 115 tracks on five CDs and a superb hardcover book with early photographs, a 1967 interview with Fahey, reminiscences by old acquaintances and a studious evaluation of his techniques, is more than a trove of juvenilia for Fahey fanatics. It delineates the evolution of a unique artistic consciousness that has exerted an ongoing influence creative American music for more than half a century.

When the teen-age John Fahey first picked up a guitar in the '50s, America's vast trove of country blues, old-time music and older jazz recorded between the world wars was nearly invisible. That music was poorly represented on the new LP format and was found mainly canvassing door-to-door in poor neighborhoods for 78 rpm records, or by trading with other enthusiasts. While record-hunting Fahey fell in with Joe Bussard, who not only bought and sold used 78s but cut new ones into acetate with a lathe in his basement and sold them on his Fonotone label. He repeatedly coaxed the young Fahey into that basement and released about two thirds of the box's tracks on on 45s, 78s and cassettes that he made one at a time between 1958 and the early '80s.

Some of the performances on *Your Past Comes Back To Haunt You* are revelatory, others simply delightful, but a few are hard to take. Fahey spent most of his career playing solo instrumentals, but Bussard encouraged

him to sing like an old bluesman and then spoofed his catalog customers by claiming they were authentic race records by a previously unknown blues singer. It's not hard to see why Fahey gave up singing, or why he didn't want anyone to hear this stuff. His delivery of Charley Patton's "Mississippi Boweavil Blues" apes the Mississippi bluesman's tone, but comes nowhere near his agile phrasing. At some point Fahey figured out that his playing, which merged blues and hillbilly licks learned from 78s with the dissonance and tonal colors of classical music, was far superior to his singing; after that, he let his fingers do the singing. But before he did so, Fahey made the four-part "Blind Thomas Blues," a hilarious, take-no-prisoners parody of a talking blues in which Fahey boasts about his tuning and his ability to give everyone in sight the blues. He hoots lines like "Here comes Big Jean-Paul Sartre, and he's got the blues, too" over Robert Johnson-like slide figures. This isn't just a sophomore prank, it's a shameless appropriation of the blues and wholesale re-imagining of their potential. And isn't theft what great composers do?

As preposterous as it might have seemed for a teenager recording off-kilter send-ups of obscure folk artifacts to conceive of himself as a composer, that's exactly what Fahey became, and *Your Past Comes Back To Haunt You* is all about him figuring out what kind of a composer he would be. It shows him trying and discarding alliances with other singers, then working through the influences of figures like Blind Willie Johnson, Sam McGee, W.C. Handy and Blind Blake, and ultimately applying their techniques to deeply emotional, pungently humorous, and often surreal instrumentals that he would revisit throughout his career. Fahey may have entered Bussard's basement a prankster, but he left it a singular, syncretic composer capable of pulling influences from disparate aesthetic, social, and racial spheres into deeply personal yet universal music. **DB**

Ordering info: dust-digital.com

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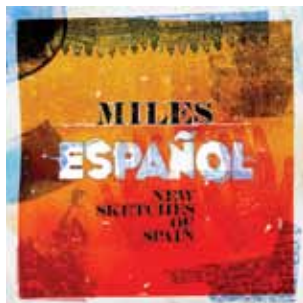
Bob Belden *Miles Español*

ENTERTAINMENT ONE MUSIC 2104

★★★

Miles Español is producer Bob Belden's sprawling two-disc followup to 2008's *Miles From India*. Belden, who brought in more than 30 musicians for this project, sees the album as an examination of the Spanish music that influenced Miles Davis. The album's title is a bit misleading, however, as less than one-third of the album's tracks directly relate to Davis' output. These tracks aren't so much examinations of the Spanish influences on Miles as they are new interpretations of five of his classic recordings by players who come from jazz and musical traditions from Spain, North Africa and Latin America.

Belden's version of "Concierto De Aranjuez" is more fluid and improvisational than Gil Evans' and features wafting and drifting lines from harpist Edmar Castañeda and Rabi Abou-Khalil on oud. "Flamenco Sketches," played by a sextet, is laid on top of scintillating Latin percussion by Alex Acuña and Sammy Figueroa. "Saeta/Pan Pipe" is a feature for bagpiper Cristina Pato, who wails over grooving strings, churning percussion and horn voicings that are highly reminiscent of Evans. The Spanish connection disappears, however, on the straightahead piano trio treat-



ment of Davis' "Teo/Neo."

Most of the album is a stylistically varied collection of mostly original compositions, which are meant to display contemporary jazz's multiculturalism. "Duende," by flautist Jorge Pardo and Flamenco guitarist Niño Joseles, is a treat, as is the driving and hyp-

notic "Broto Y Cayo," which features Joseles, Acuña and Adam Rudolph on the bass-like sintir. Occasionally the audible connection to Spain is tenuous. Some tracks, such as Chick Corea's "Trampolin," Gonzalo Rubalcaba's "Fantasia Por Miles Y Gil" and John Scofield's "El Swing," sound as if they could be on just about any recent jazz album. With fewer tracks and a clearer concept, *Miles Español* might have been a more focused and stronger album.

—Chris Robinson

Miles Español: Disc One: Concierto de Aranjuez; Trampolin; Just Three Miles; Duende; Momento; Broto y Cayo; Paisaje; Saeta/Pan Pipe (55:34). Disc Two: Spantango; Flamenco Sketches; Tirilitran; El Swing; Fantasia por Miles y Gil; Teo/Neo; Beautiful Love; Solea (58:53).

Personnel: Bob Belden, producer, composer, percussion; Mike Williams, Tim Hagans, Dominic Farinacci, trumpet; Lou Marini, Jorge Pardo, Sonny Fortune, flute; Charles Pillow, oboe, English horn; John Clark, French horn; Michael Rabinowitz, bassoon; Cristina Pato, bagpipe; Rabi Abou-Khalil, oud; Niño Joseles, John Scofield, Jaco Abel, guitar; Edmar Castañeda, harp; Victor Prieto, accordion; Chano Dominguez, Chick Corea, Gonzalo Rubalcaba, Edsel Gomez, piano; Scott Kinsey, synthesizer; Ron Carter, Eddie Gomez, Carlos Benevent, John Benitez, bass; Vince Wilburn Jr., Antonio Sanchez, Jack DeJohnette, drums; Alex Acuña, Ibrahim Fribgame, Sammy Figueroa, Liusito Quintero, percussion; Adam Rudolph, percussion, sintir; Jerry Gonzalez, flugelhorn, percussion; John Riley, timpani.

Ordering info: eonemusic.com

Oscar Peterson *Unmistakable*

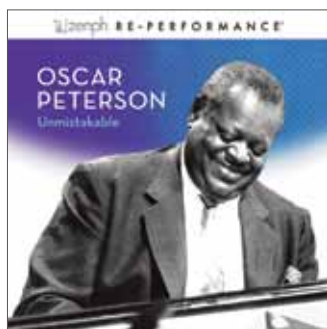
SONY MASTERWORKS

88697743512

★★½

A couple of years ago, Sony Classics brought out, under Art Tatum's name, *Piano Starts Here: Live At The Shrine*. Long a staple in the Columbia catalog, the original *Piano Starts Here* LP contained Tatum's first recordings (from 1933) and a 1949 concert performance. Zenph Sound Innovations used high-tech ears to reverse-engineer those records into digital codes, then feed them back into a specially equipped piano reproducing every performance nuance. Now comes Oscar Peterson, modern master and commander of the keyboard. Using digital blueprints taken from 13 songs privately recorded in the '70s and '80s—sources and dates are not specified—the pianist is channeled solo on a Bosendorfer Imperial Grand.

If I had come to this CD without any knowledge of how it was made, I would be fooled but impressed. Purely as a piece of Oscarama, the music is a crowded roller-coaster of arpeggios, as dizzying as they are



athletic, though sometimes diving a bit too close to schmaltz. Swarming stroboscopic swirls encircle and fill the thematic content in dense layers, then withdraw, give it space and let it breathe, or break into a striding abandon ("Indiana"). The sudden rebalances between intensity and repose deliver an organic tension no less spectacular for its familiarity.

But it is all Peterson once removed. The Zenph website says, "It is now possible to hear this legend play again live." This is patently absurd. To have heard a musician of Peterson's class perform live was to witness the speed of his thinking as well as his playing. It was to experience the adventure of risk that comes from intuitive decisions made on the fly, not ineluctably programmed into zeros and ones. Here there is no risk. The sound may be "live," but the music is reproduced, not "re-performed."

—John McDonough

Unmistakable: Body And Soul; Indiana; The Man I Love; Who Can I Turn To; When I Fall In Love; Ellington Medley; Take The "A" Train; In A Sentimental Mood; C-Jam Blues; Lady Of The Lavender Mist; Satin Doll; Caravan; Con Alma; Goodbye. (All tracks repeated in an alternate mix). (78:24)

Personnel: Oscar Peterson, digitally reconstituted piano.

Ordering info: sonymasterworks.com



Jeremiah Cymerman *Fire Sign*

TZADIK 8082

★★★★

In his liner notes to his astonishing new album, clarinetist Jeremiah Cymerman refers to his process here as "making art out of garbage." There is a grain of truth to that assessment: with the exception of "Touched With Fire," a duo piece featuring cellist Christopher Hoffman and drummer Brian Chase, none of the source sounds present were intended for this recording. But calling the largely improvised material, or "recycled sounds," he constructed each piece from "garbage" is more than erroneous. Each speaker channel in "Collapsed Eustachian" is filled with noises blown, on separate occasions, by two of improvised music's most dynamic and talented trumpeters: Nate Wooley and Peter Evans. Par for the course, Cymerman meticulously chops up, arranges, layers and electronically manipulates their source recordings—tapes at concerts organized by the composer. The piece is not only a tribute to the stunning extended technique of each horn player, but also a meticulously crafted celebration of pure sound and texture, as brassy smears dissolve into digital screams.

Cymerman brings a similar logic to "I Woke Up Early The Day That I Died," transforming the fat, percussive thwacks and striated arco tones of bassist Tom Blacarte into a violently writhing symphony of dissonance and furnace roars that sounds like some kind of experimental heavy metal track. On "Burned Across The Sky," Cymerman makes the most of very little, manipulating, extending and transforming a sorrowful six-bar phrase in a piece he wrote for a sextet into a 16-minute foundation for a wild, electronically treated clarinet improvisation. Cymerman has not only created a super use of his recycled sounds, but he's signaling exciting new avenues for improvisation in service of composed work.

—Peter Margasak

Fire Sign: Opening; Collapsed Eustachian; I Woke Up Early The Day That I Died; Touched With Fire; Burned Across The Sky. (53:14)

Personnel: Jeremiah Cymerman, clarinet, electronics; Nate Wooley, trumpet; Peter Evans, trumpet; Tom Blacarte, bass; Christopher Hoffman, cello; Brian Chase, drums; Sam Kulik, trombone; Harris Eisenstadt, percussion.

Ordering info: tzadik.com



Tá Lam 11 *Mingus!*

JAZZWERKSTATT 105

★★★★★

Bass clarinetist/soprano saxophonist Gebhard Ullmann and his mostly reed-based aggregate present a portrait of Charles Mingus in a variety of colors: some, but not all of them, bold.

Add to that palette more than a bit of impressionism, as these expertly arranged deliveries (most by Ullmann) contribute a new understanding and viewpoint on Mingus' incredible corpus. In other words, it ain't all straight up and down as we journey forth through eight reinterpreted songs, from titles like the earthy, soulful "Wednesday Night Prayer Meeting" (ingeniously medley-d with the more rowdy "Boogie Stop Shuffle") to a mind-shuffling alternate universe of colors with "Reincarnation Of A Lovebird," the theme only hinted at toward the very end.

Listening to Tá Lam 11's *Mingus!* does not require that one be a Mingus fan, or even a fan of instrument-based music. In fact, listening to their haunting re-imagining of "Reincarnation Of A Lovebird," one might surmise that this music is just as much about this group as it is about Mingus, the unified field of this saxophonic blend over one chord pointing toward the integration of sounds, the musical connections the 11 musicians must have with each other.

Mingus! reminds listeners that Mingus' music was heavily saxophone-based. So it was just a short walk for this band to jump in and explore. In each case, apart from sandwiching theme statements, there are rumination, fantasias and reveries. And the occasional hiccup of Hans Hassler's accordion, which opens the whole shebang with the solemn, almost classical "Canon."

Clearly, this band is in love with this music, which, in case anyone was wondering, is also played with resonant ferocity. —John Ephland

Mingus! Canon; Wednesday Night Prayer Meeting/Boogie Stop Shuffle; Fables Of Faubus; Eclipse; Jelly Roll; Self-Portrait In Three Colors; Nostalgia In Times Square; Reincarnation Of A Lovebird. (61:33)

Personnel: Gebhard Ullmann, bass clarinet, soprano saxophone; Hinrich Beermann, baritone saxophone; Daniel Erdmann, Vladimir Karparov, tenor saxophone; Juergen Kupke, clarinet; Joachim Litt, Heiner Reinhardt, bass clarinet; Volker Schlott, alto, soprano saxophones; Michael Thieke, clarinet, alto clarinet; Benjamin Weidekamp, alto saxophone, clarinet; Hans Hassler, accordion.

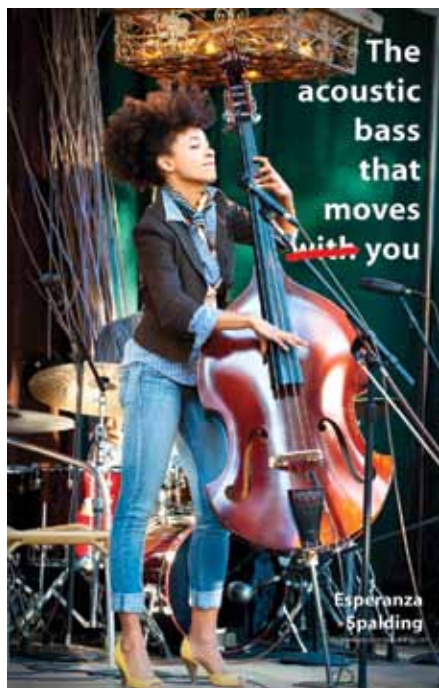
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Tim Hagans
The Moon Is Waiting

PALMETTO 21512

★★★½

Trumpeter Tim Hagans has been around the corner. His playing has been associated state-side most often with saxophonist Bob Belden, beginning with Belden's large aggregate ensemble and continuing on with their co-op, trip-hop jazz band Animation. He's also served as artistic director and featured soloist for Sweden's Norrbotten Big Band.

Now comes *The Moon Is Waiting*, featuring cohorts Rufus Reid on bass, guitarist Vic Juris and drummer Jukka Uotila. The program of all-Hagans tunes plays like a live set, and for fans of Hagans' trumpet playing, the disc does not disappoint. The intricate arrangement of "Ornette's Waking Dream Of A Woman" may seem clogged as a CD starter, but it still manages to set the mood for what's to follow, Hagans' horn blaring from the start. Likewise the title track, where the rubato outside feel takes over as if the band were in a fever dream, Reid's playing surprisingly unconventional, Juris not far behind with his effects. And Hagans sounds outlandish, blaring, exposed.

But what makes this new "focus on small group performing and recording" unique for Hagans is the way the CD tracks from song to song, unpredictable, the band seemingly trusting that the audience will be there every step of the way. In that sense, *The Moon Is Waiting* is an artistic success, not settling for anything other than a personal statement from its leader. Roughhewn more often than not, the music does lack a certain staying power overall. Still, "Get Outside" finds Hagans on mute trumpet, surrounded by a subdued, simple 10-note pattern just waiting to go outside, as if Hagans would eventually throw down his mute to blare and scare. "What I'll Tell Her Tonight" and "Boo," alternately, are a smooth ballad and a backbeat bounce, filling out the profile. The album is filled with moments like these.

—John Ephland

The Moon Is Waiting: Ornette's Waking Dream Of A Woman; The Moon Is Waiting; Get Outside; First Jazz; Boo; What I'll Tell Her Tonight; Wailing Trees; Things Happen In A Convertible. (61:36)
Personnel: Tim Hagans, trumpet; Vic Juris, guitar; Rufus Reid, bass; Jukka Uotila, drums.
Ordering info: palmetto-records.com

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'Bootleg' Series Unearths Classic Miles Davis

They were in their prime. All of the material from *Miles Davis Quintet Live In Europe 1967: The Bootleg Series Vol. 1* (Columbia/Legacy 8869794053; 62:09/64:26/72:00/65:18 ★★★★★) is from European concerts in October and November of 1967, when Davis and his "second great quintet" were touring as part of George Wein's Newport Jazz Festival in Europe. As it turns out, the Plugged Nickel material from Chicago in December 1965 was the last live music of this band officially recorded by Columbia. Starting with the only other officially released live recording, *Miles In Berlin* (September 1964), the trajectory this band took in concert was exponential in terms of group interplay, musical telepathy and unfiltered dialog. From covering songs that reflected Davis' past (e.g., "Milestones," "So What") to the carryovers here from years gone by, including "On Green Dolphin Street," "Walkin'" and "The Theme," this new band had it all. Along with new stuff, too.

What is significant is the way this Miles Davis Quintet—the greatest band ever in or out of the studio—took the old and the new and made the material a consistent launching pad for symphonic improvisation and "the sound of surprise." Herbie Hancock, Wayne Shorter, Ron Carter and, especially, Tony Williams helped catapult the recently once-searching, temporarily musically dormant Davis, inspiring him toward a new, more elevated plane of artistic expression. In turn, the youngsters took their inspiration from this master. But it was the master who, for the first time, discovered in a younger generation of musicians the spark he was looking for.

That spark is well documented here, through the constant reinvention of those "carryovers" cited above but especially through the unleashing of compositions that were unique to this group. Davis himself contributed to the book with his fiery, explosive "Agitation," the tune that would start most of these concerts. Originally recorded with an introductory drum solo from Williams both eloquent and fearsome, "Agitation" was a great scene-setter. Davis' originally muted trumpet (in the studio) gives way to volume across four versions, the speed-demon tempo maintained throughout. Except when it isn't. It was a tune open to re-interpretation, it's catlike overture a welcome mat for extemporaneous exploration, heard here with blasting, over-the-top-solos here and there and quiet, almost intermission-like solos somewhere else.

Another one of the treats to this four-disc set of three CDs and one DVD is being able to hear and witness the variety within the same-



ness, the stage presentation (as opposed to club) varying slightly in terms of song selection, but played mostly as one long medley, with variations on essentially the same material, over and over again. And while some may bark because of this limited format this set is really only for completists, it could be argued that these "bootlegs" (a slight misnomer of the term since all these concerts were authorized recordings) are designed for music lovers, period.

These CDs are well recorded, and the DVD also has good sound. Listeners have state-owned European radio and television to thank for all of it, a testament to their known appreciation for jazz and a black-eye for the more superficial American media that has little or no record of this band apart from the official recordings. The three CDs were from concerts in Antwerp, Paris and Copenhagen (Copenhagen never available until this release).

The DVD was originally available in the *Complete Miles Davis Columbia Albums Collection* from 2009. From television concerts recorded in Stockholm and Germany, the Stockholm set is complete while the Germany show has a blistering "Walkin'," deleted due to money issues. These two shows become vital documents of how this band's musical process, how they interacted and responded to one another. Whether it was Carter steering the ship's pacing on the different versions of "Agitation" or "Footprints"; the way a frenetic "Footprints" from Germany suddenly gives way to the quiet intro duet between Davis and Hancock with "I Fall In Love Too Easily"; a more modulated, perhaps TV-sensitive Shorter (when compared to his more incendiary work heard on the CDs) breaking up "Agitation"'s hell-bent fire or slowing the swing down in the midst of "Gingerbread Boy" in Stockholm; or getting the best seat in the house as Williams' ground-shattering drumwork drives and upends and unifies this band.

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Darius Jones Trio *Big Gurl (Smell My Dream)*

AUM FIDELITY 069

★★★★

The jazz world took notice of Darius Jones in 2009 with the release of his debut *Man'ish Boy* (Dig). The unassuming alto saxophonist has since patiently but steadily started to build a solid body of work and this new trio featuring Adam Lane on bass and Jason Nazary on drums (Jones and Nazary are one half of the incendiary quartet Little Women) shows a lot of promises. Through his association with pianists Cooper-Moore or Matthew Shipp, Jones had established his free-jazz credentials. Today, he demonstrates that his musical persona will not be that easily pigeonholed.

Jones strikes hard from the onset and eschews conventions by developing over an insistent groove multifaceted choruses articulated around probing lines that open many avenues. Elsewhere, Lane and Nazary can lay



a composer. He is in full control of his powers and adeptly negotiate pitch changes. When not exploring the inner depth of the human soul, Jones can turn out some uplifting performances and his effusive alto often cuts through with aplomb and purpose.

The biggest challenge for a rising star is to maintain staying power. Jones seems to understand that part of the equation and with accomplishments such as *Big Gurl*, he should be building up from under the radar. —Alain Drouot

Big Gurl (Smell My Dream): E-Gaz; Michele Loves Willie; A Train; I Wish I Had A Choice; My Special "D"; Chasing The Ghost; Ol' Metal-Faced Bastard. (45:56)

Personnel: Darius Jones, alto sax; Adam Lane, bass; Jason Nazary, drums.

Ordering info: aumfidelity.com

out intricate backdrops that spur the saxophonist and encourage him to constantly look for ways to add a new dimension to his playing.

But it is on slow tempos that Jones is even more convincing. "Michele Loves Willie" is a heart wrenching ballad/pop song that could help establish Jones both as a performer and as

Junior Mance *Letter From Home*

JUN GLO 103

★★½

Junior Mance and his group start strong on the opener, "Holy Mama," with a driving 6/8 groove. Bassist Hidé Tanaka kicks it off right in the pocket, and when the band jumps on board, Ryan Anselmi's tenor and Andrew Hadro's baritone sax attack the head with a tight, muscular articulation. When the horns solo, the intensity builds through their interactions with drummer Kim Garey. Anselmi turns in a by-the-book hard-bop performance whose gradual escalation into inevitable upper-register squeaks nonetheless excites, thanks in large part to how Garey shadows it. When, for example, Anselmi pumps out a short string of repeated eighth-notes, she jumps right on it with matching snare hits.

And then the recording descends from that high point. It's slow at first, with "Home On The Range" as track two. After a piano meditation on the theme that briefly stops for no evident reason, the group settles into a very slow waltz. Once again Anselmi delivers a solid solo. Mance takes a turn as well but at less than the summit of his technique; two runs up the keyboard more or less fizzle out, and some of his chording isn't very precise.

After another churchy workout on "Jubilation," two puzzling tracks follow. The first, "Letter From Home," is little more than



a riff over the I chord. Once again Garey tries to make things interesting on drums, but her free-wheeling rolls and crashes are disruptive this time. After a few minutes, the band begins to lose its precision, and nearly two minutes into the tune the tempo seems to start dragging. Mance's solo never

leaves the blues scale and builds unevenly to an aug-ninth chord that repeats somewhat out of rhythm and then simply stops, signaling a sudden, somewhat odd finish. "The Uptown" is next, a riff-based blues that starts with a Monk-like feel but disjoints into a stumbling 6/8. The central figure, played one-two-and-one-two (rest), conjures images of a beginner's dance class, and despite or because of Garey's ongoing attempts to stir it up, everyone is noticeably out of sync by the time they recap the intro.

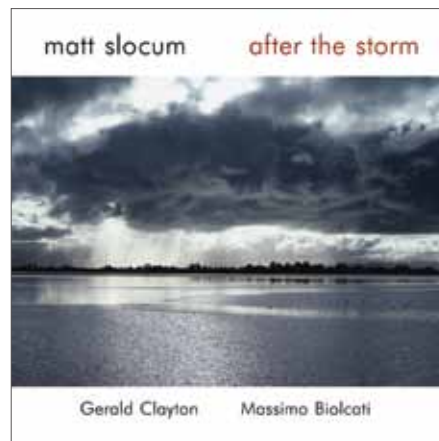
Still, nobody in the audience of New York's Café Loup on the night this was recorded should've walked out before the final number, a medley of "Sunset And The Mocking Bird" and "A Flower Is A Lovesome Thing." Here, everyone lets Anselmi blow from start to finish, this time with subtle tonal shadings that reveal the player's grace and insight into the composition. The bookend tracks are what redeem this set.

—Bob Doerschuk

Letter From Home: Holy Mama; Home On The Range; Jubilation; Letter From Home; The Uptown; Medley; Sunset And The Mocking Bird/A Flower Is A Lovesome Thing. (64:11)

Personnel: Junior Mance, piano; Ryan Anselmi, tenor sax; Andrew Hadro, baritone sax; Hidé Tanaka, bass; Kim Garey, drums.

Ordering info: juniormanca.com



Matt Slocum *After The Storm*

CHANDRA 8095

★★★½

On *After The Storm*, drummer Matt Slocum has embraced the quiet, relatively calm spaces that follow great turbulence. He derives energy from subtlety on his sophomore release, proving that intensity and thrill do not require an artillery of musicians or an outlandish playing style. Most of his music is compact and tightly wound, but he also knows how to cut loose and bang out an aggressive swing beat.

It's this contrast that gives *After The Storm* depth. Relegated to a supporting role, Slocum's drum breaks fit with the music and help shape an aesthetic; he doesn't get outside of himself, carried away by the need to be showy. The solid interaction of the trio—pianist Gerald Clayton and bassist Massimo Biolcati round out the group—and the versatility of each musician fill the tracks with life.

Layered richness is at the heart of the music. Slocum's bouncy, shifting playing on "The Catalyst," where he switches between a swing beat on the ride to a clicking shuffle played on the edge of his toms, gives the tune a flowing movement. "When Love Is New" and "After The Storm" are built around fragmented melodies that drift along on top of Slocum's brushwork.

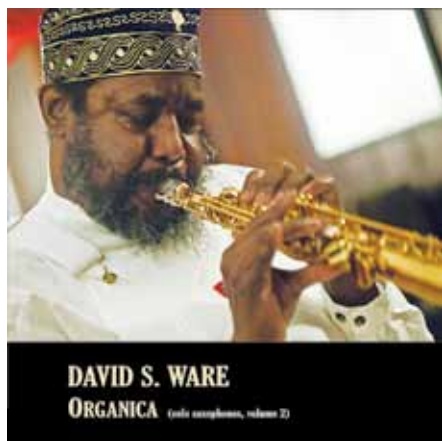
The centerpiece of the album, however, is Slocum's rendering of "La Vallée Des Cloches," the final movement of Maurice Ravel's *Miroirs* solo piano suite. Slocum prods Clayton with easy drum hits, adding depth to the piece. Clayton makes the composition feel a bit like an improvisation, conversing with Slocum's rolling mallets and Biolcati's subdued bass.

Slocum has created eight tracks that highlight his compositional intimacy. While his drumming is a key component to the trio's sound and Slocum's name is on the marquee, he's content to let others carry his ideas and simply provide an undercurrent to the music. —Jon Ross

After The Storm: Jacaranda; The Catalyst; It's Easy To Remember; Passaic; After The Storm; La Vallée Des Cloches; Everything I Love; When Love Is New; Pete's Place. (66:02)

Personnel: Matt Slocum, drums; Gerald Clayton, piano; Massimo Biolcati, bass.

Ordering info: mattslocumjazz.com



David S. Ware
Organica
(Solo Saxophones, Volume 2)

AUM FIDELITY 070

★★★★

The second in a series documenting David S. Ware's return to live performance following a kidney transplant, *Organica* finds the saxophonist fiercely rebuffing any questions of frailty through a pair of mesmerizing 2010 solo appearances. While the disc is split evenly between a pair of lengthy improvisations on Ware's typically robust tenor ("Organica") and the public debut of his lithesome soprano ("Minus Gravity"), the differences are more marked between the two separate concerts, recorded eight months apart.

The opening tracks are culled from Ware's March 2010 performance at the Bourbon Room in Brooklyn, and the second pair consist of the saxophonist's set from Chicago's Umbrella Music Festival last November. While it would be missing the mark to suggest that any of his famously forceful playing is in the least bit tenuous, the earlier pieces have a more exploratory, searching quality.

The first tenor excursion, the album's longest track, begins with a series of dusky, introspective moans before quickly gaining in force as Ware finds myriad pathways to leap between the extremes of his instrument. In its last third, however, the piece takes a turn towards the meditative, in the sense that the short bursts seem to pulse in time with the saxophonist's natural rhythms.

Taking the stage in Chicago for the first time in more than a decade, Ware begins the second set by coaxing sinuous tendrils from his soprano, evoking exotic melodies from some mythical Far East. That set's tenor piece seems to erupt forth from Ware's horn, coming in rapid, molten bursts. Longtime listeners can rest assured that not only has Ware not been weakened by his recent illness, he has reached new heights of invention. —Shaun Brady

Organica (Solo Saxophones, Volume 2): Minus Gravity 1; Organica 1; Minus Gravity 2; Organica 2. (77:30)
Personnel: David S. Ware, soprano and tenor saxophone.
Ordering info: aumfidelity.com

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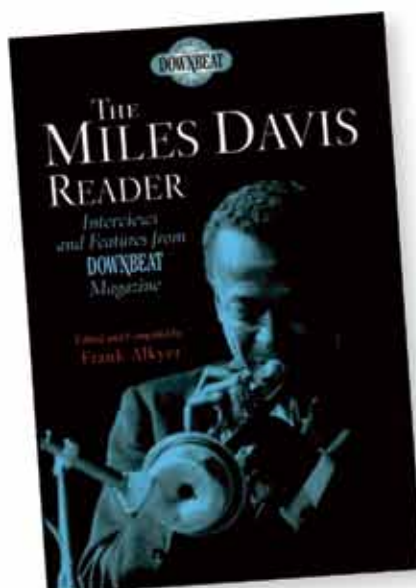
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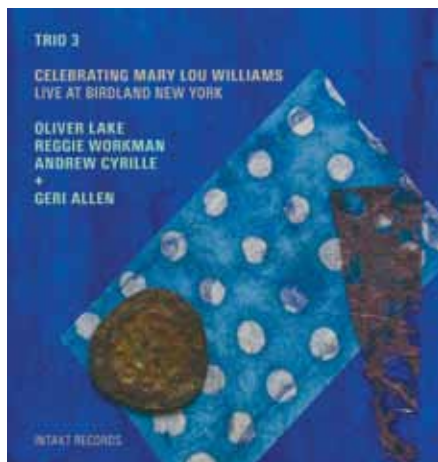
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Trio 3 + Geri Allen *Celebrating Mary Lou Williams*

INTAKT 187

★★★★

In the past few years, alto saxophonist Oliver Lake, bass player Reggie Workman and drummer Andrew Cyrille, who together are known as Trio 3, have taken to the habit of inviting pianists to perform with them. Their initial collaboration with Geri Allen, 2009's *At This Time*, did not fully deliver on the promises, but on this new occasion the quartet realizes the full extent of its potential. Perhaps, the idea of honoring great pianist and composer Mary Lou Williams gets the creative juices flowing. Not only do they pay tribute to her music, they also embody her spirit because Williams was never afraid of innovation as witnessed by her famous duel with Cecil Taylor.

While the band does not embrace such radicalism, it takes a wide range of approaches and appropriates the material—Lake actually makes “Intermission” his own. The compositions the musicians cover are for the most part deeply steeped in the blues, but the new life they are given helps prevent the mood from getting too somber.

In this context, Allen really shines and confirms that she is currently going through one of the most creative periods of her career. She gives the whole range of her talents. Her main attributes and talents are condensed on her solo on “Blues For Peter.” Her performance is so strong that Lake cannot help but chiming in for some commentaries.

Ultimately, this live date does not simply make a case for how inspired Allen is or how tight a unit Trio 3 is. To the musicians’ credit, it underlines if it was necessary how modern and relevant the music of Mary Lou Williams was and still is.

—Alain Drouot

Celebrating Mary Lou Williams—Live At Birdland New York: Birdland; Blues For Peter; Ghost Of Love; New Musical Express; Intermission; What's Your Story; Morning Glory; Libra; Roll'Em. (67:17)

Personnel: Oliver Lake, alto sax; Geri Allen, piano; Reggie Workman, bass; Andrew Cyrille, drums.

Ordering info: intaktrec.ch

Books | BY TED PANKEN

Terry Memoir Reveals In Humor, Passion

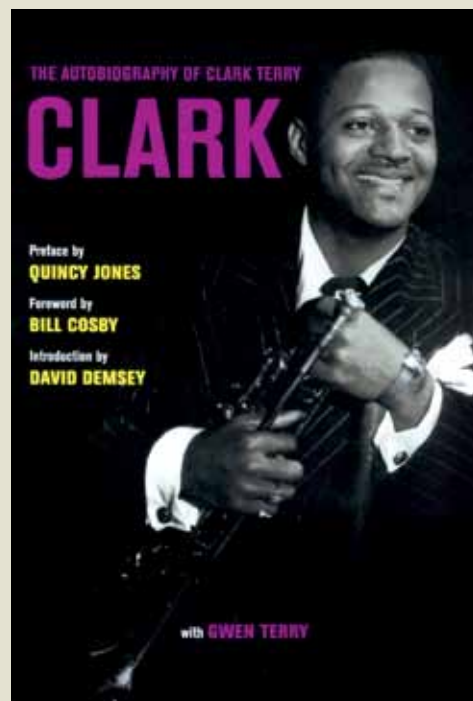
Midway through his sparkling memoir, *Clark: The Autobiography of Clark Terry* (University of California Press), the author brings readers backstage at Washington D.C.'s Howard Theater, circa 1948. Count Basie, his most recent employer, is informing his “Old Testament” band that the end had come. As he does throughout the book's 58 chapters (co-authored with Gwen Terry, his wife), the trumpet grandmaster, who turned 90 this year, addresses the scene with emotion, humor, concision, acuity and analytical discernment.

“We all knew about Basie's monumental debts from losing on those damn ponies,” he writes. “And since we'd also been bitten with the sweet and sour sting of gambling, nobody said a word.”

Terry then encapsulates the salient qualities of his bandmates, not one of them “a copycat of anyone in the world,” each having “mastered a sound that reflected his unique personality.” Dickey Wells, he writes, “was older than most of us, and I admired his neatly trimmed moustache. He was a master of the slide trombone, with his octave jumps, slurs, slurps, and bends that sent notes swirling. His sound was gut-bucket raw and soul-stirring. One of his features was using a tin straight-mute. He'd hammered lots of nail holes in it. He held it reversed in the bell of his horn, and it made a very signature kazoo-like sound, like a magnified version of an old comb covered with tissue paper.”

A host of similarly pithy, eloquent evocations of the picturesque cast of characters with whom Terry has crossed paths during his brilliant career appear as the narrative unfolds. We meet Duke Ellington and his band members. Quincy Jones and Miles Davis appear at different stages of their lives. Terry paints a vivid portrait of his impoverished childhood in St. Louis—early adventures with colorfully nicknamed friends, constructing his first trumpet from scavenged junk, learning to box proficiently, navigating an ambivalent relationship and eventually falling out with an exceedingly strict father, receiving the loving kindness of his older sister. His journey takes him on the ballyhoo with a carnival band and Depression-era Mississippi Valley juke joints. He also observes the gangsters who ran big venues in St. Louis and idiosyncrasies of the musicians who played for them.

Terry writes matter-of-factly about race, spinning no small number of stories that illuminate the challenges black troubadours faced on the road during Jim Crow days. Humor is



never far away, though—read Terry's account of sharing an upstairs room with Basie in a private home in Wilkes-Barre, Pa., and try not to laugh. He reveals unabashed pride at his World War II service at Great Lakes Naval Training Center, where he helped whip into shape a host of all-black bands. He picks apart the pros and cons of integrating Charlie Ventura's first-rate swing band and, 15 years later, the “Tonight Show” orchestra, a gig that granted Terry first-call status on New York's peripatetic “Mad Men”-era studio scene.

He offers equal time to the sensuous, profane, erotic components of his character. Terry drinks, cusses, devours tripe sandwiches, attends to bodily functions, gambles without much skill, is expelled two months before graduation for impregnating a girl with whom he enters unhappy matrimony. As he moves into and through his 20s, he liaisons with shapely women of dubious virtue, neglects his son and eventually settles into love and a stable, mature marriage.

Nothing if not a blues epic, the narrative is also a true-grit portrait of a diligent, inspired artist. From the end of his first decade through his ninth, Terry focuses on his craft, and evolves into one of the great virtuosos on the trumpet timeline, a disciplined master of the art of section playing and a formidable improviser. At the cusp of the '70s, he transitions from the studio assembly line to a freelance career revolving in equal measure around jazz education—he plunged into it with the same fierce passion that marked all his prior activity—and leading ensembles of various sizes.

Ordering info: ucpress.edu

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 S CLAYPOOL (Fancy Band) GUY PRATT (Pink

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BY MATT SHEVITZ

Using Augmented/Major Triad Pairs In Improvisation

There are two types of “licks” used in jazz: melodic and harmonic. A specific phrase that is learned and then applied to a solo is a melodic lick. On the other hand, an approach that uses a particular progression or scale is a harmonic lick.

A harmonic approach provides an improviser with musical vocabulary in a more customizable way than a melodic approach. The progression or scale dictates which notes to use, but not how to use them. That’s up to you.

In traditional jazz education, triad pairs (which are harmonic licks) are a more advanced concept. Triad pairs are exactly what the name implies: two triads that are paired together. We will focus on triads that are a whole step apart, although other intervals can be used. Ours will consist of an augmented triad and a major triad a whole step above it. We’ll focus on a C augmented/D major triad pair.

What makes augmented triads so interesting is the fact that there are really only four kinds. For instance, if we spell the C augmented triad in root position, the notes are C–E–G#. Now think of the triad in first inversion (with E on the bottom). The order of the notes will be E–G#–C. The enharmonic equivalent to C is B#, and if we use that name for that pitch we have an E augmented triad in root position. The same goes for spelling the C augmented triad in second inversion (G#–C–E). If you change the G# to an A♭, you have an A♭ augmented triad in root position.

Let’s revisit the C augmented/D major triad pair we were discussing. Since an E augmented triad would be paired with an F# major triad and an A♭ augmented triad with a B♭ major triad, we now have three triad pairs for the C augmented triad. This greatly expands the chords and progressions that are possible and makes it easier to move from one triad pair to another. If you are using a C augmented/D major triad pair and want to switch to an E augmented/F# major triad pair, all you have to do is change the major triad you are playing; the augmented triad can remain the same.

In terms of chord possibilities, it is up to



you to decide which chords you want to implement this approach over. If you stay with conventional alterations, then you have a fair amount of choices. However, if you want to break some of the traditional rules of jazz education, your options expand greatly.

You may choose to use the pairing only over chords where both triads work well, or just one. For example, a C augmented/D major triad pair will work over a D7. The C triad highlights the ♭7, 9 and #11, and the D triad outlines the basic triad for the chord.

The D major triad will not work well (according to traditional jazz education rules) over an Emaj7, while the C augmented triad definitely will (it will provide a #5—again, think enharmonically—which is acceptable). If you are open to it, however, you can still use the pair, as the notes in the D major triad will most likely not be sustained long enough for the clash to really be heard. As long as you resolve it (say, from D up to D# or A down to G#), it will sound fine.

If you open yourself to making alterations freely, you can use the three pairs over 21 different chords and six basic chord progression types. Figure 1 shows the three different triad pairs and the chords they can be used over. When you consider that you can change from one pair to another, you can find many different progressions that the pairs will work over.

For example, the second triad pair will work over an E♭m7, while any of the pairs will

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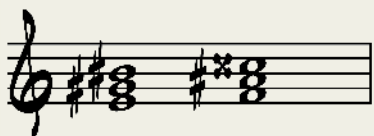
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Figure 1



Chords: C, C7, D7, E7, G#7, B7,
Am(maj)7, Bm7, F#m7(b5)

Figure 2



Chords: E, E7, F#7, G#7, C7, E(b)7,
C#m(maj)7, E(b)m7, B(b)m7(b5)

Figure 3



Chords: A(b), A(b)7, B(b)7, C7, E7,
G7, Fm(maj)7, Gm7, Dm7(b5)

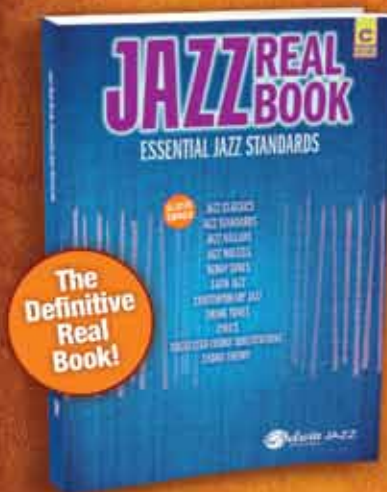
work over an A(b)7. This means that over an E(b)m7-A(b)7 progression, you could use the second triad pair at first and then switch to any of the other ones. In addition, these pairs will work over the infamous Coltrane progression. In the key of C, the chord progression is C-E(b)7-A(b)-B7-E-G7-C. There are a number of combinations of triad pairs for this progression. One of the simplest is to think of the second triad pair for the first two chords, the first triad pair for the next two and the third triad pair for the last three.

As you can see, there are a lot of possibilities with this one approach. I strongly recommend that you find a couple of progressions that you would like to use this over and focus on them. As with any approach, keep practicing it until it comes out naturally in performance. A forced idea is rarely an effective one.

DB

MATT SHEVITZ IS A SAXOPHONIST AND EDUCATOR BASED IN CHICAGO. HE TEACHES AT HAROLD WASHINGTON COLLEGE, WHERE HE IS ALSO THE MUSIC PROGRAM COORDINATOR. VISIT HIM ONLINE AT MATTSHEVITZ.COM.

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Peter Bernstein

Peter Bernstein's Motivic Guitar Solo On 'Means And Ends'

The ability to “tell a story” during an improvised solo is perhaps the superlative goal for every jazz musician. It is common to hear improvisers construct solos by stringing together their hippest patterns and licks, but the larger challenge facing the jazz improviser is the development of these ideas to craft a cohesive musical statement. Jazz guitarist Peter Bernstein has mastered this art. Through the use of melodic and rhythmic repetition and development, Bernstein consistently improvises solos that are motivically unified and compositional in nature.

“Means And Ends” is an up-tempo minor blues recorded on Bernstein’s 1997 album *Brain Dance* (Criss Cross). The guitarist’s relaxed and swinging solo on “Means And Ends” exemplifies his adroit ability to develop small amounts of melodic and rhythmic information, producing a powerful musical statement over this often-played form.

The key to any story is a strong introduction. Bernstein grabs the listener’s attention in measures 1 and 2 by playing a line spanning nearly three octaves in less than two measures. He achieves this large intervallic range through the use of 7th chord and triadic arpeggios over the underlying harmony. In this example, Bernstein uses ascending Bm7 and Bm triad arpeggios over F#m7 (♭5), finishing with a descending B augmented triad over B7 (#5).

The first example of motivic development

occurs in measure 4. Bernstein plays a line based out of E Dorian, and develops this melodic idea throughout the entire solo. In measure 40, he plays this motive again, creating a slight rhythmic variation by dropping the first note of the original motive. The measure 40 motive is played again in measure 62, however it is rhythmically displaced by one beat. In measure 72, Bernstein plays this motive again, now with a rhythmic displacement of two beats. The last example of this motive occurs in measure 81. Bernstein starts the line on the upbeat of beat 1, as in measure 40, but in this example he varies the end of the melodic line.

Bernstein sets up a recurring harmonic motive by resolving to the natural-six scale degree on the Em7 in measure 13, at the end of the first chorus. He resolves to this scale degree at the end of the second, third and sixth choruses, as shown in measures 25, 37 and 73. The recurring resolution to this colorful scale degree also adds to the highly motivic quality of the solo. Furthermore, Bernstein employs the E minor pentatonic scale almost exclusively over the entire first chorus, creating a strong bluesy flavor.

An example of motivic repetition, specifically melodic sequencing, occurs in the third chorus. Bernstein opens this chorus with a four-measure phrase (measures 27–30), then transposes this idea up a perfect fourth in measures 31–33, employing a slight rhythmic vari-

[illegible]

ation at the conclusion of the idea.

Rhythmic repetition is also incorporated throughout “Means And Ends.” One example occurs in measure 22 with a syncopated rhythmic motive that lends to the swinging sound of this solo. Bernstein employs this exact motive several times, in measures 29, 49 and 85. In measure 27, he displaces this rhythmic motive by two beats, starting on beat 3, giving the line

an across-the-bar feel.

I encourage jazz students to seek out and investigate these elements in additional Bernstein solos, in order to develop the skills needed to “tell their own story.” DB

SHAWN PURCELL IS A GUITARIST, ARRANGER AND EDUCATOR IN THE CENTRAL ILLINOIS REGION. VISIT HIM ONLINE AT SHAWNPURCELL.COM.

Yamaha SLB-200LTD Silent Bass *Impressive Electric Upright*

Over the years I have played many electric upright basses (EUBs). I've reviewed some very nice ones, and I've owned and toured with a couple. There are some good choices out there, but they always seem to be missing something. The SLB-200LTD Silent Bass is Yamaha's third entry into the EUB market and is the most impressive of any model I have ever played.

What makes it different? Quite simply, feel and sound. Materials and construction are the key. The curly maple neck with oil finish and ebony fingerboard feels just like the real thing. Ebony is also used in the clever reverse tailpiece, nut and saddle. The string tension is just right. The easily attachable frame feels terrific. A maple adjustable bridge is top-notch, and preamp/pickup have simple but effective bass, treble and volume controls. The Silent Bass' chambered body is gorgeous, made from spruce and mahogany. It has been designed to move some air and give it a more "woody" tone. Amplified, the Silent Bass sounds very close to a double bass equipped with a piezo pickup. In fact, when compared to my own double bass with pickup through the same rig, the Yamaha compared quite favorably. It sounds great with a bow as well.

I had the good fortune of getting to use the test model at a 1,000-seat theater. The Silent Bass produced plenty of sound, both pizzicato and arco, cutting through the mix easily. Fellow musicians and soundmen alike had nothing but praise for its sound and good looks. One recommendation: Get the optional stand.

Many high-quality EUBs seem closer to a fretless bass guitar than a double bass. Not the SLB-200LTD. Ten years and continuous live-tests and tweaking have resulted in a real winner from Yamaha. At \$3,895 it's not inexpensive, but if you're in the market for an EUB, you owe it to yourself to check one out. —Jonathan Paul

Ordering info: yamaha.com



Bosphorus Hammer Series *Exceptional Range of Cymbals*

Veteran jazz drummer Jeff Hamilton has added four new cymbal models to the Bosphorus Hammer Series, a line that he developed. The Hammer Series now includes 21-, 19- and 24-inch rides and a 20-inch china to complement the company's existing line of 22- and 20-inch rides, 14-inch hats and 22-inch china. Continuing the Bosphorus tradition of laboriously casting, shaping, hammering and lathing each cymbal by hand, the new additions contain characteristics of complex overtones while retaining a crisp attack.

I play-tested a full set of Hammer cymbals. Up to this point in my multi-decade drumming career, I have always held an allegiance to a different major brand of cymbals. Well, after receiving the eight shiny Bosphorus cymbals and getting the chance to try them out in various situations, I immediately knew I had found a new object of my desire.

While I have played Bosphorus cymbals before, this was my first time having them exclusively on every cymbal stand on my kit. The first gig that I used them was my monthly big band reading gig, and I was nothing short of astonished by the collective sound that was produced by having only Bosphorus cymbals within striking distance. I started the night with the 14-inch hats, 19-inch ride to the left, 24-inch ride and the 22-inch Hammer china. I fully expected the 24-inch ride to be a touch on the overbearing side due to its sheer size, but I found it to have an amazing presence without ever being overly dominating, even during the quieter passages. In fact, after getting a chance to play them all in various situations, I decided the 24-inch was actually my favorite. It had more character than a Chuck Jones/Friz Freleng production but was easy to contain. Throughout the night, I made my way through the various sizes and combinations. The 21-inch ride was a bit brighter and sat within the mix very well. I kept the 19-inch to my left, and it was a nice mix of ride with enough crash in it when needed.

I used the 20-inch china for a recording session, and it sounded fantastic in the final mix. The china opens and delays quickly. Most important with any great china is that it never gets to be "too much." I have owned different chinas from many manufacturers, and the common thread is that you have to be very careful when playing them so they don't overpower the music, which makes them difficult to navigate in a musical setting. With the Bosphorus chinas, they spoke clearly at low volumes with plenty of character and never overpowered the band at higher stick velocities.

After getting to play the whole set of cymbals and listening back to the multiple live and studio recordings I made with them, the thing that stood out the most was how well they sat in the mix. With their dark low undertones and sufficient definition in the attacks for the band to lock onto, the Hammers proved to be perfectly suited for a diverse range of musical environments.

—Matt Kern

Ordering info: bosphoruscymbals.com





Hammond SK-1 *Ultra-Portable Combo Organ*

Hammond-Suzuki USA has released its first ultra-portable stage keyboard: the SK-1. At 15 pounds, it's a mere wisp compared to the company's 400-pound B3 organ.

Hammond's goal in designing the SK-1 was to offer a comprehensive keyboard that would feature a range of organ and piano voices. All of the classic Hammond organ tones are here, supplemented by an Extra Voice division consisting of acoustic pianos, electric pianos, clavs, harpsichords, string synths, accordions and a complete selection of woodwind and brasswind voices. Electronic organs like Vox and Farfisa are also represented, along with some very nice pipe organ sounds. Additional voices can be

downloaded via the unit's USB port.

The SK-1 has 61 waterfall-style, velocity-sensitive keys that feel just like those on a regular B3. It can easily be expanded to a dual-manual organ by connecting it to another keyboard via MIDI. Pedalboard connection is also an easy option.

Beyond all the great sounds on the SK-1, one of its coolest features is the Prochord function that's available with some of the Extra Voice instruments. This allows you to create a fully harmonized sax section or brass ensemble by holding down a chord with your left hand and playing a melody with your right.

—Ed Enright

Ordering info: hammondorganco.com

Casio WK-7500 *Strong Entry-Level Solution*

Casio is no stranger to the entry-level keyboard market, and the WK-7500 may be its strongest entry yet. It comes loaded with more than 800 sounds, including a drawbar organ that you can tweak with a real set of dedicated hardware drawbar controls—a nice touch, and unheard of in this category.

All of the workstation sounds you expect are here. The pianos are realistic, the electric pianos have some grit, the strings are full, and there are enough synth sounds to represent everything from vintage to house. Casio has provided facility to tweak these tones, too, although in a rudimentary way. The DSP section offers a wide array of nice effects.

A serious level of auto-accompaniment is available, with 250 rhythms—including chord accompaniment and a nice auto-harmonize function. Add a 17-track sequencer to this, and you've got a pretty complete solution for those who want quick ways to get inspired.

Casio has also included inputs for both



mic (only 1/4-inch here, not XLR) and instruments, which can be routed and mixed through the internal 32-channel mixer and recorded along with the internal sequencer tracks in the WK-7500's own audio recorder, mixed down internally and dumped off onto an SD card—all onboard the keyboard itself.

It's clear that Casio has decided to up the ante in the entry-level market. The sounds are definitely better than I expected. The lightweight instrument has a 76-note keyboard that is unweighted and takes a little getting used to, but is very playable. At a street price of around \$500, this board should be making its way under a lot of trees this holiday season.

—Chris Neville

Ordering info: casio.com

Godin MultiOud *Modern Take On An Ancient Axe*

For more than 20 years, Godin has made innovation a top priority. Recently, the company set its sights on a Middle Eastern instrument known as the oud, giving this ancient icon a complete facelift. The new MultiOud solves many of the problems faced by oud players who struggle with amplification issues and tuning problems.

In creating the MultiOud, Godin set out to build an instrument that would not only retain many of the characteristics of a traditional oud, but also include enhancements that would allow the instrument to be played in live situations where high volume is needed. Godin achieves this goal by straying from the basic acoustic oud construction in two areas: overall body design and built-in electronics. The MultiOud features a flat back constructed from chambered mahogany as opposed to the rounded back of the standard oud.

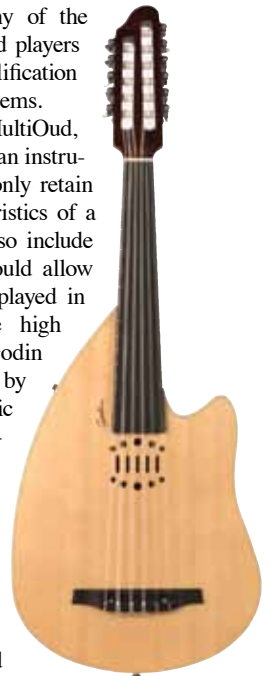
The top is made from solid spruce, and the pear-shaped body features a cutaway for easy access to the higher register. The MultiOud contains the standard 11-string setup with a fretless mahogany neck and ebony fingerboard. It has an adjustable truss rod and can handle nylon or steel strings.

The MultiOud's chambered body allows the instrument to be played acoustically, and although not as loud or rich as a traditional oud, it does produce a decent acoustic sound. The active electronics on the MultiOud are easily accessible via a small control panel built right into the body. Godin uses a piezo pickup for amplification and also includes the Fishman Aura system with four custom-designed microphone model images that can be blended in along with the piezo signal. There is also a three-band EQ, an anti-feedback filter and even a built-in chromatic tuner. Overall, the MultiOud is extremely easy to play.

This modern adaptation of an ancient design is perfect for those looking for a solid and affordable gigging instrument.

—Keith Baumann

Ordering info: godinguitars.com



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SKB has raised the bar on the Gig Rig line with its fourth-generation model. Based on the 1SKB19-R1406 Mighty Gig Rig design, the new 1SKB19-R1208 Gig Rig provides more versatility than previous versions. Roto-molded of linear low-density polyethylene, it has a unibody construction that's extremely durable. The lid provides enough space for cables to stay connected and for an optional retractable shelf. **More info:** skbcases.com

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Sensaphonics has introduced Dry & Store Zephyr, an electronic desiccant system that deodorizes while it dries IEM (in-ear monitor) earphones. The Zephyr combines gentle heat, moving air and Dry-Brik II desiccant to extract moisture and body oils while drying earwax for easy removal. Just place the earphones in the drying compartment, snap the lid shut, and turn the unit on. After the eight-hour drying cycle, the IEMs are totally dry and ready for use. MSRP: \$75. Three-packs of replacement Dry-Brick II desiccant cost \$10. **More info:** sensaphonics.com





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Vox has added the AC15C2 Twin combo amp—an enhanced version of its AC15C1 with a second speaker—to the AC Custom series of tube amplifiers. The AC15C2 Twin offers normal and top boost channels, tremolo, spring reverb, an effects loop and footswitching capabilities. **More info:** voxamps.com



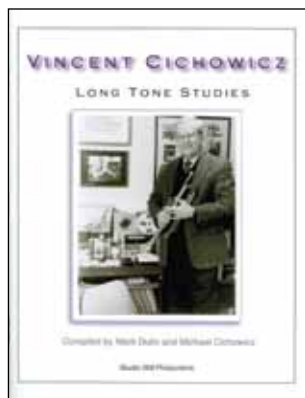
RED-HOT APP

Avid has released its first app for the iPad: Avid Scorch. Powered by Avid's Sibelius music notation software engine, Avid Scorch lets users practice, perform and purchase sheet music on the go by transforming an iPad into an interactive score library, music stand and sheet music score.

More info: avid.com/scorch

TRUMPET TONE

Studio 259 Productions has published *Vincent Cichowicz: Long Tone Studies*, compiled by Mark Dulin and Michael Cichowicz. A legendary educator and famous classical trumpet performer, Cichowicz was a caring mentor who devised simple long-tone slur exercises to help his students develop a solid tonal foundation. The book also includes commentaries from many of Cichowicz's former students, as well as an article on teaching concepts of trumpet playing that Cichowicz wrote for *The Instrumentalist* magazine in the mid-1990s. **More info:** balquhiddermusic.com



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Humber College Director of Music Denny Christianson instructs students in the school's recording studio

Humber College Gets Down to Business

Soren Nissen always wanted to become a professional jazz bassist but never considered how he'd ultimately achieve his goal—until he got to college. Nissen devoted his energy to learning new tunes, improving improvisation technique and developing a compositional voice. At Humber College in Toronto, he learned about a side of jazz he'd been neglecting—the music business.

"It's the last thing musicians want to think about because the music always comes first," said Nissen, who will graduate next year with a bachelor's degree in contemporary music. Nissen said he finally realized the realities of being a working artist during a third-year course at Humber. "Before I took that class, I was just focusing on the musical side of things."

The contemporary music degree at Humber College is based in practicality. Initially, undergraduates study material commonly found in most jazz studies programs, but the curriculum delves into production and marketing during their third and fourth years at school. The highlight of the final year of study is an intensive recording project. Students emerge ready for graduation with 15 minutes of professionally recorded original music, which is laid down and mastered during a series of four-hour sessions in the school's studio.

Jazz at Humber began with a three-year diploma in the 1970s, but the diploma wasn't recognized by other universities. Professors realized that musicians simply studied at the school for a bit and then went off to other pursuits. In order to graduate more musicians, the Humber faculty gathered in the early 2000s to create the articulated contemporary music bachelor's degree. They asked themselves what tools students needed to compete in today's music landscape.

"What it comes down to is the top working professionals saying it's not enough just to be able

to play or even write," said Denny Christianson, Humber's director of music. "You've got to understand what the music business is about and what challenges you're facing."

The approach seems to be gaining popularity. According to Christianson, there are 360 students in the program, and around 1,200 musicians apply each year for 100 openings. The vast majority of the musicians—about 60 percent—hail from Canada. Ten percent arrive in Toronto from other countries.

Students are encouraged to explore not only jazz, but all types of music. Required ensembles can even be tailored to students' interests. During his time at the school, Nissen has seen a bluegrass ensemble, a Greek music group and a Gypsy band all operate under faculty approval.

"It's pretty cool how flexible the program is," Nissen said. "It's set up for the students to get what they want out of the program, and it's very real-world applicable."

Saxophonist Eli Bennett, who chose a strict jazz path for his studies, graduated from Humber last May and will use the base of his recording project for his debut release. He returned to his hometown of Vancouver to write additional material but will head back to Toronto in the spring, when he intends to get his band back in the studio.

Bennett, who is already a much-heralded artist, said he knows the skills he developed at Humber will help him navigate what has become an increasingly tough road for nearly every independent jazz musician.

"Gone are the days where you have a managing team that books your tours and helps you get your recording together. Even a lot of the big-name people do a lot of their own details," he said. "It's great of Humber to see what's happening in the real world and adapt to that and change their curriculum." —Jon Ross



Donald Harrison

Piano Partners: Hailun USA has launched its Piano Partnerships initiative, presenting saxophonist Donald Harrison with two upright pianos on Nov. 15 for his two free jazz education programs. Harrison presented a concert at the Tipitina's Foundation the following day to celebrate the installment of the pianos. **Details:** hailun-pianos.com

Camp Orleans: The dates for the New Orleans Traditional Jazz Camp for adults have been scheduled for June 10–15, 2012. Situated in the heart of historic Big Easy, the six-day instructional camp offers students a broad education in regional jazz, culminating in a series of such Orleans-style performances as a traditional second line and an evening at the famous Preservation Hall.

Details: neworleansradjazzcamp.com

China Rhythms: KoSa percussion workshop co-founders Aldo Mazza and Jolán Kovács-Mazza established an annual KoSa China workshop in August. The workshop, a collaboration between KoSa and China's 9 Beats 65-school music education program, offered instruction from over 100 teachers to more than 300 mainland students. During his third Chinese tour, Mazza also participated in the National Drum Competition and performed with numerous Chinese master musicians. **Details:** kosamusic.com

Jazz Lives: On Oct. 24, saxophonist and educator Bruce Williams will headline the University of the District of Columbia's Jazz Studies showcase. The concert, which is part of JAZZAlive's scholarship benefit series, highlights UDC's jazz ensembles and features such guests as director Allyn Johnson, Steve Novosel and Howard "Kingfish" Franklin. **Details:** udc.edu

Critical Mass: Oberlin Conservatory will kick off the Stephen and Cynthia Rubin Institute for Music Criticism with a series of inaugural sessions from Jan. 18–22, 2012. The weeklong series of public events will include performances and discussion panels as well as four public concerts.

Details: oberlin.edu

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Rudresh Mahanthappa

For his first DownBeat Blindfold Test, alto saxophonist Rudresh Mahanthappa sat before a live audience at this summer's North Sea Jazz Festival in Rotterdam, Netherlands. Mahanthappa was a "Carte Blanche" artist at the festival, performing in his Apex quintet with Bunky Green, his trio Indo-Pak Coalition with Rez Abbasi and Dan Weiss, and his new South Indian-jazz fusion band Samdhi.

Greg Osby

"Six Of One" (from *Further Ado*, Blue Note, 1997) Osby, alto saxophone; Jason Moran, piano; Lonnie Plaxico, Calvin Jones, bass; Eric Harland, drums.

It's Greg Osby. It might be *Art Forum*, or it might be later because it sounds like Jason Moran on piano. This is very cool. I knew it was Greg right away. He has a unique sound, and something he played close to the beginning was trademark Greg. They're doing interesting things with the time. It's really flexible, but it has this tipping, modern swing feel.

Phil Woods & Bill Mays

"All This And Heaven Too" (from *Phil & Bill*, Palmetto, 2011) Woods, alto saxophone; Mays, piano.

I have no idea who this is. But it's someone who listened to a lot of Bird with a stylized bebop language. It's interesting how when a fresh voice comes on the scene, their vocabulary becomes codified. I think of someone like Sonny Stitt, who in a sense cleaned up Bird. He codified his way of playing. Then after Coltrane, there were a slew of players who did the same thing. This tune is cool. I dug it. It was fun. It's interesting to listen to how people approach a sax-piano duo. There are just two of you, so there's a lot of room for interaction. [after] It's Phil Woods? OK, yes, there's that Bird thing.

Henry Threadgill Zooid

"It Never Moved" (from *This Brings Us To, Volume II*, Pi, 2010) Threadgill, alto saxophone; Liberty Ellman, guitar; Jose Davila, trombone, tuba; Stomu Takeishi, bass guitar; Elliot Humberto Kavee, drums.

I knew who this was before the alto sax came in. With that instrumentation, it could only be one person: Henry Threadgill. Henry is a gifted conceptualist and an interesting composer. He has a great way of putting together music and rearranging ideas—turning standard musical concepts on their side and re-examining them, then deconstructing and restructuring them and bringing into question what the melody and harmony can actually mean. It's quite brilliant. Henry's saxophone style is very deliberate, and he knows exactly what he's doing. He never plays a line in a traditional way. It's like an interjection.

Charlie Parker

"Light Green" (from *The Washington Concerts*, Blue Note, 2001, rec'd 1953) Parker, alto saxophone; Joe Timer's Orchestra.

That's Charlie Parker. I'm trying to figure out what period this is by what he's playing, how well he's playing, how flexible his chops are, how spontaneous he's playing. There are times when you hear Charlie Parker where you feel like he might be relying on what he knows, and then you hear other recordings where you hear him taking chances. He's playing double-time and substituting chords and doing it all on a gut level. It's interesting on this piece that is arranged for a big band where the group comes back in, and there's a key change. It sounds like it takes Bird by surprise just for a measure and then he's right on top of it. He was the king of playing in any key.



Kenny Garrett

"Giant Steps" (from *Pursuance: The Music Of John Coltrane*, Warner Bros., 1996) Garrett, alto saxophone; Pat Metheny, guitar; Rodney Whitaker, bass; Brian Blade, drums.

It's Kenny Garrett. I don't remember what album this is from. At Berklee, me and my friends worked up an arrangement of "Giant Steps" kind of like this, but then a year later we heard Kenny do this. It's nice to hear him this loose with the rhythm section laying it down for him. Kenny was probably the most imitated alto player from the late '80s on.

Paul Desmond

"Wave" (from *Pure Desmond*, CTI/Masterworks 2011, rec'd 1974) Desmond, alto saxophone; Ed Bickert, guitar; Ron Carter, bass; Connie Kay, drums.

I don't know this album, but you know it's Paul Desmond from the first note, whether you like him or not. I didn't particularly like this. I thought it was cheesy. I was never a Paul Desmond fan. Maybe that's blasphemy, but now that I've turned 40, I can say this. I never gravitated to his sound. I like music that's more in your face and aggressive. But I'm a fan of anyone who has his own personal approach and style.

Steve Coleman and Five Elements

"Attila 04 (Closing Ritual)" (from *Harvesting Semblances And Affinities*, Pi, 2010) Coleman, alto saxophone; Jonathan Finlayson, trumpet; Tim Albright, trombone; Thomas Morgan, bass; Tyshawn Sorey, drums; Jen Shyu, vocals.

Obviously, Steve Coleman. I'm a huge fan, beginning with *Tao Of Mad Phat* back in the early '90s. Steve has been a great inspiration and influence on me. One of the great sources of confusion for me was approaching the music of my ancestry, to find a way to do it without selling my culture short. I didn't want to just have a jazz quartet with a tabla player, and then call it Indian. That's exoticism, not merging cultures or expressing bicultural identity, which is what I am, Indian American. Steve had taken wonderful concepts for West African music and put them in a setting that had nothing to do with African music. It was very inspirational to see how he engaged on a cultural level where he was breaking things down to their fundamental building blocks and then building them back up. Steve is always thinking of the next thing. He's committed to seeking information. I would like to be Steve Coleman when I grow up. **DB**

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