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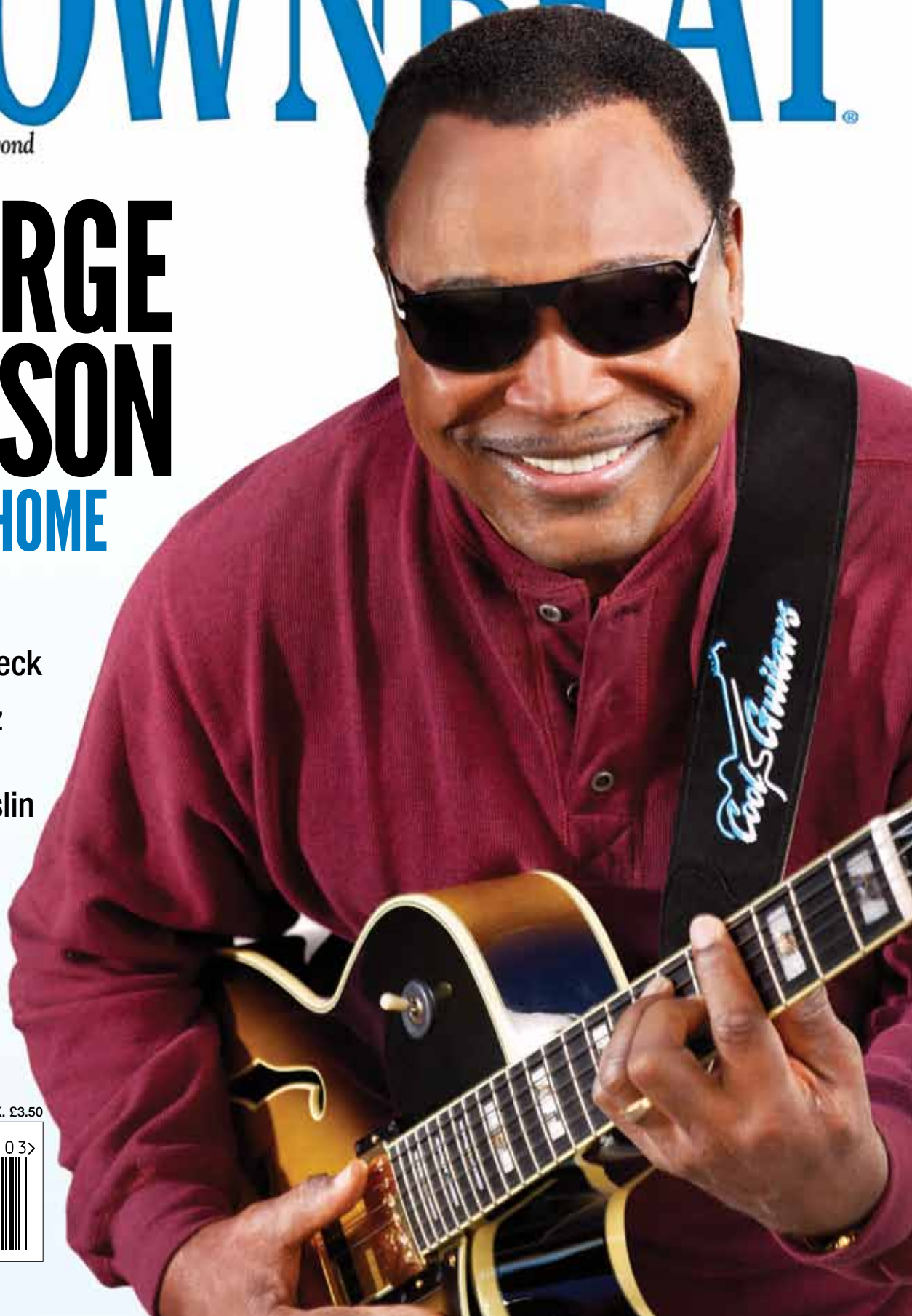
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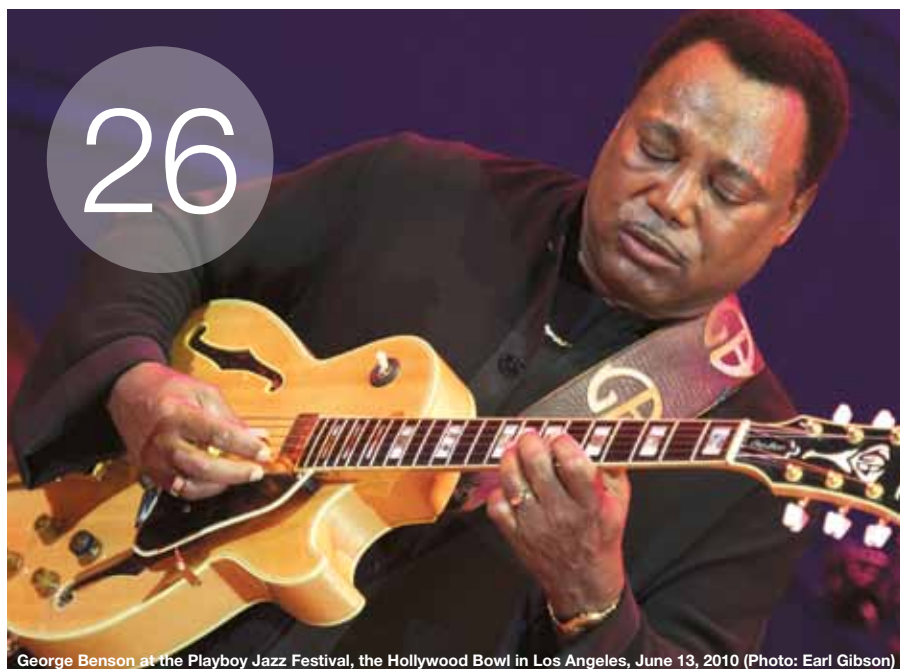
Inside

ON THE COVER

26 **George Benson** *Returns to Jazz*

BY JOSEF WOODARD

While relaxing at home, the stellar guitarist talks about his new, mostly instrumental jazz album, *Guitar Man* (Concord Jazz), and he reflects on the players who influenced him the most.



George Benson at the Playboy Jazz Festival, the Hollywood Bowl in Los Angeles, June 13, 2010 (Photo: Earl Gibson)

Cover photography of George Benson by Brandon Sullivan.

FEATURES

32 **Anthony Braxton** *Music as Spiritual Commitment*

BY JOSEF WOODARD

38 **Enrico Rava** *Cosmic Balance*

BY TED PANKEN

44 **John Hollenbeck** *The Right Chemistry*

BY JOHN EPHLAND

48 **Indie Life**

79 **DownBeat's 2012 International Jazz Camp Guide**



60 Aki Takase & Han Bennink



62 Marilyn Mazur



72 Jason Palmer



74 Tigran

DEPARTMENTS

8 **First Take**

10 **Chords & Discords**

13 **The Beat**

18 **The Insider**

20 **Vinyl Freak**

22 **Players**

Helen Sung
Colin Stetson
Otis Brown III
John Taylor

55 **Reviews**

110 **Master Class**
Ignacio Berroa

112 **Transcription**

114 **Toolshed**

118 **Jazz On Campus**

122 **Blindfold Test**
Donny McCaslin



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First Take | BY BOBBY REED

Sharing Opinions on Music and Life

Where will an artist pop up next? One of the joys of reading (and editing) an issue of *DownBeat* from cover to cover lies in noticing the unexpected coincidences. An artist's name will pop up repeatedly in an issue. Sometimes that is part of a grand plan, and other times it's serendipitous.

One of the *Players* profiles in this issue is of British pianist John Taylor. When I made that particular assignment, I had no idea that Taylor would also pop up in the *Reviews* section (via his participation in percussionist Marilyn Mazur's album *Celestial Circle*) or that he'd be mentioned in the *Blindfold/Winefold Test* with trumpeter Enrico Rava (via Taylor's collaboration with trumpet and flugelhorn player Kenny Wheeler on the track "The Lover



Chase shares space with Roy Eldridge

Mourns"). Rava, in fact, singles out Taylor for praise in his comments. These coincidences, wherein an artist's name pops up a few places in the same issue, always make me smile. They usually prompt me to track down more of an artist's recordings, and they also spark conversations with friends ("Hey, have you heard this album?").

Much of my life has been spent tracking down recordings of artists whom I've seen in concert, or who have been recommended to me by friends or family members. Sometimes, my emotional connection to a piece of music gets intertwined with my feelings about the person who recommended it. I can thank my late father (who played saxophone as a teenager) for introducing me to the world of jazz, particularly the work of Stan Kenton. My high school buddy John, who is now a professional musician, not only road-tripped with me to see B.B. King in North Carolina, he also turned me on to trumpeter Maynard Ferguson, as well as the largely forgotten band Chase. Does anyone out there remember Chase? The band landed on the cover of *DownBeat* 40 years ago, along with Roy Eldridge (Feb. 4, 1971).

When I was employed full-time in a record shop 20 years ago, my coworker Bill and I hosted "Jazz Sundays," spinning nothing but jazz all day. While I leaned toward Miles Davis and Dizzy Gillespie, Bill reached for Ornette Coleman, Rahsaan Roland Kirk and Sun Ra.

Colleagues have influenced me, too. *DownBeat* contributor Bob Doerschuk's book *88: The Giants Of Jazz Piano* (Backbeat Books) has been a great resource, and several years ago, Bob gave me his extra ticket to a Herbie Hancock concert—a show I'll never forget.

The music of all of the aforementioned artists stirs up memories of quality time that I spent with people who have expanded my horizons. I'm deeply thankful that music (especially jazz) can enrich my mind and nurture my soul in such a powerful way.

What are your stories about music and friendship? We'd love to hear them. But more importantly, we want to read your comments about the content of *DownBeat*, as well as the current state of jazz, blues and Beyond music. Send an email to editor@downbeat.com, and please put the word *Chords* in the subject line. Thanks for interacting with us, and please keep on reading.

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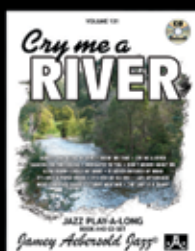


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Chords & Discords ▶



Lots of Love for Longo

These days it is very rare to hear a new, straightahead jazz CD that swings hard and has soulful depth. Such is the case with the Mike Longo Trio + 2 album *To My Surprise*, which garnered an Editors' Pick review in the December edition of the DownBeat online newsletter. It is one of the most enjoyable jazz CDs of the year, and one that has me discovering more nuances with each listen. It has been on the charts for months, and it received rave reviews from critics, fans and musicians alike. Most feel it's a jazz masterpiece, played by a quintet made up of five true jazz masters (including Jimmy Owens, who received an NEA Jazz Masters Award for 2012). To my dismay, your February issue contains a mean-spirited, totally off-the-mark, 2½-star review of it by one Bob Doerschuk, who apparently feels threatened by Longo and the quality of music he makes with his superlative cohorts. It amounts to an attack on Longo as a musician by dissecting small and out-of-context elements of his playing. Doerschuk insults and seeks to diminish every member of the quintet, all of whom are recognized as accomplished musicians. Doerschuk, himself an undistinguished pianist, makes comments that appear to be rooted in professional jealousy and envy. He is incapable of reviewing the real stuff. Doerschuk appears to have his head in the sand and is hoping we will not notice his ignorance behind sticking up in plain view.

DYLAN SANDY WAYNE, N.J.

Editor's note: We value Bob Doerschuk's contributions to DownBeat. We equally value our readers' opinions. Presenting a variety of views is an important part of our job. The letter writer below also disliked the Longo review.

Noting Longo's Notes

In these times when jazz venues are closing at an alarming rate, and "jazz" festivals are no longer playing jazz, one has to wonder what

led to this. Look no further than Bob Doerschuk's review of the Mike Longo CD *To My Surprise* in the February issue. The attitudes expressed by Doerschuk (and his ilk) have led to music that has all but destroyed the audience for jazz. His main criticism is centered on the notes played, as evidenced by his reference to Longo's use of "augmented chords" and "turnarounds," etc. The beauty of Longo's playing lies in where he places the notes in the time, and in his rhythmic conception that produced the deep groove that is present on this recording. It ain't about the notes, folks; it's about where you put them! Apparently Doerschuk wants Longo to play by the rules of the inadequate, which this critic surely is.

IZZY FELDMAN IZADORE93@AOL.COM

Motian's Mastery

I saw one of those Paul Motian-Bill Frisell-Joe Lovano shows referenced in your article "The Music in Motian" (February), and what I remember is the tension Motian created, the refusal to let his fellow musicians get comfortable with what they were playing. I think of that show a lot now, and your article brought back fine memories.

MARK R. LEBOW MARKLEBOW@GMAIL.COM



Remembering Sam Rivers

Those of us who loved Sam Rivers and his music are in a sad mood due to his passing in December. I have a friend in Orlando, Fla., who knew Rivers well. Rivers told him that he felt bad that DownBeat had

never done a cover story on him. Think about how much Rivers (who lived to be 88) did for progressive music. The wealth of Sam Rivers and Studio Rivbea needs to be gathered up by you and celebrated. Dig in, DownBeat!

TOM PRIOR HAIKU, MAUI, HAWAII

Correction

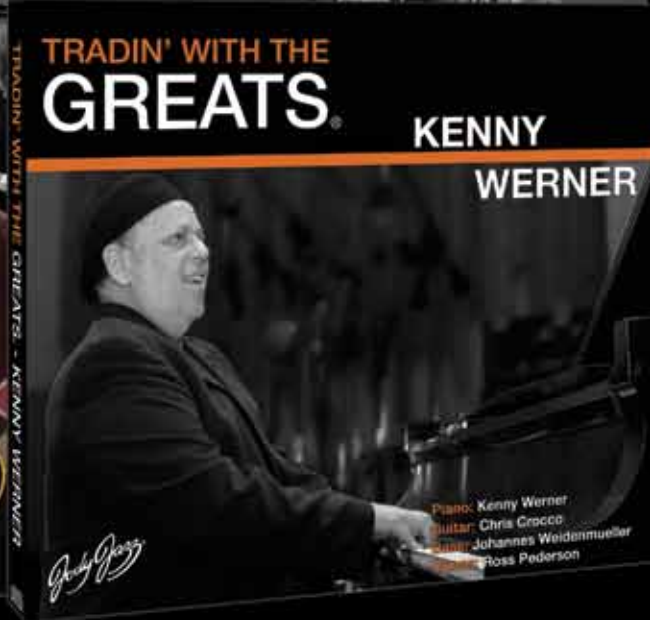
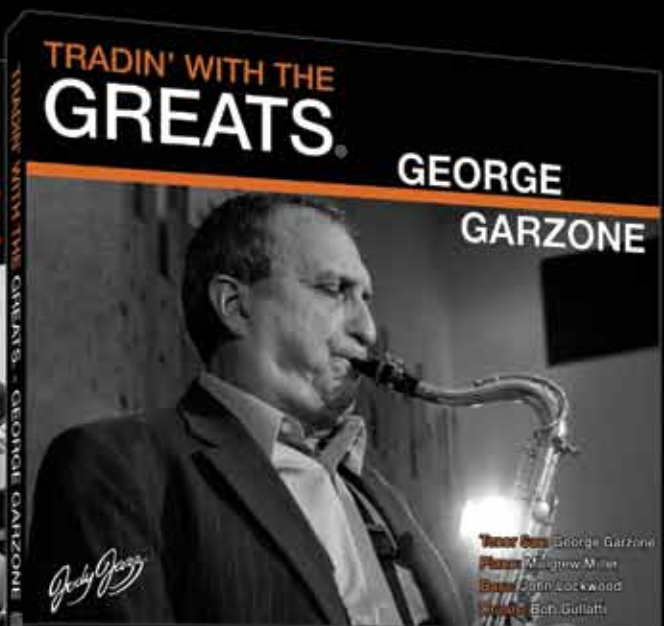
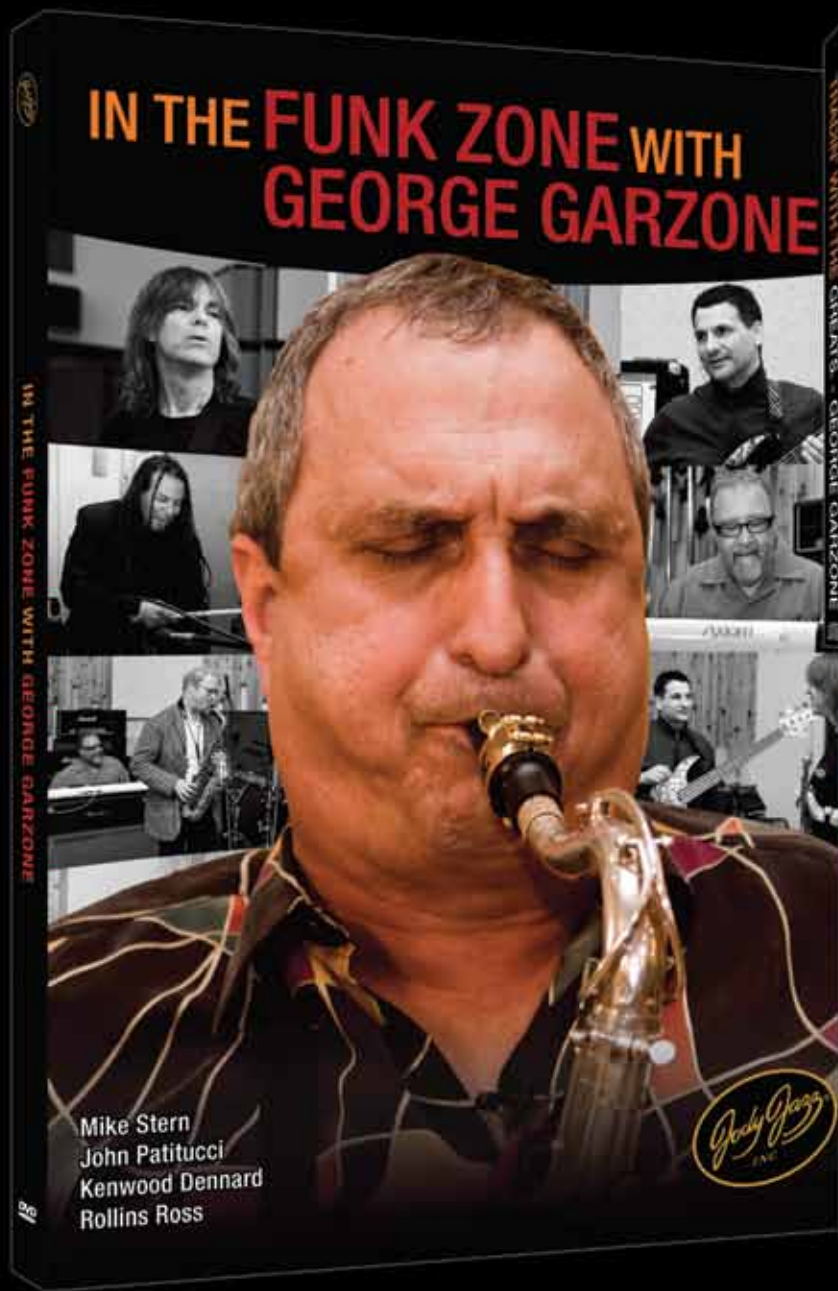
■ A credit in the Beyond column of our February issue misspelled the name of photographer Emily Gabel.

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Inside ▶

- 14 | Riffs
- 15 | Landslide
- 16 | Chick Corea
- 18 | Insider
- 20 | Vinyl Freak
- 22 | Players

Beat

Award of a Lifetime

Sonny Rollins Receives Kennedy Center Honor

Saxophone virtuoso Sonny Rollins is among the artists in the 2011 class of Kennedy Center Honorees. Each honoree in the group, which also includes singer Barbara Cook, singer-songwriter Neil Diamond, cellist Yo-Yo Ma and actress Meryl Streep, was the subject of a star-studded tribute on Dec. 4 at the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts in Washington, D.C.

Bassist Christian McBride served as the musical director for a four-song tribute to Rollins, as various combinations of 10 musicians performed “Just In Time,” “In A Sentimental Mood,” “Sonnymoon For Two” and “St. Thomas.”

McBride described the assembled players as an “A Team.” They were Benny Golson, Jimmy Heath, Ravi Coltrane, Joe Lovano, Roy Hargrove, Jim Hall, Herbie Hancock, Billy Drummond and Jack DeJohnette.

At the conclusion of a rousing rendition of “St. Thomas,” all the musicians walked to the front of the stage and waved enthusiastically at Rollins, who was seated in a balcony box with President Barack Obama, First Lady Michelle Obama and the other Kennedy Center Honorees.

The history of DownBeat and Rollins’ personal history are deeply intertwined. In the 1957 DownBeat Critics Poll (published on Aug. 22, 1957), Rollins was voted the winner in the category Tenor Sax—New Star.

On the red carpet prior to the Kennedy Center gala, when I informed Rollins that he had appeared on the cover of DownBeat 15 times, he smiled broadly and exclaimed, “Oh, wow!” I asked him how he felt about the Kennedy Center salute, and he replied with typically poetic comments: “It feels great. I’m representing jazz. It’s not so much Sonny Rollins. I think it’s a wonderful thing for our country. We’ve had other jazz people receive this award, but never enough, because jazz is so important to America. And a lot of people don’t realize that. People should realize that, it’s very important, especially in these times, the way the world is going now. America needs to show its beauty. People love jazz. They love jazz all over.”

Rollins is one of the few remaining artists who posed for Art Kane’s famous group photograph of jazz musicians in Harlem, taken for Esquire magazine in 1958. Golson, who is also in the photo, said of Rollins, “I’ve known him for 60 years. The man is iconic. He’s headed for outer space.”

Other artists on the red carpet shared their feelings about Rollins, including McBride, who praised the “Saxophone Colossus” for constant-



Sonny Rollins (left) with fellow Kennedy Center Honorees Barbara Cook and Neil Diamond

JOHN PAUL FELICES © 2011 CBS BROADCASTING INC.

ly evolving. “He lets you know that you can always learn,” McBride said. “The fact that he’s in his early 80s now and he’s still striving for this freshness every night is a real inspiration.”

Pianist Jason Moran, the Kennedy Center’s artistic adviser for jazz, echoed that sentiment. “Rare American excellence is what [Rollins] represents,” Moran said. “He’s at the pinnacle. He’s a tireless contributor and re-worker and re-thinker. He’s not complacent. He [represents] what America is supposed to be great at.”

The Kennedy Center Honorees were presented with medallions on Dec. 3 at a State Department dinner hosted by Secretary of State Hillary Clinton. Each artist was toasted by a dignitary. Here are excerpts from comments that former President Bill Clinton (who plays the saxophone) made about Rollins: “There are many people in this room who could do this better than me: Jimmy Heath, Joe Lovano, Ravi Coltrane, Jim Hall. But it’s appropriate because I’m just a fan. I discovered Sonny Rollins when I was about 15, 16—about 50 years ago. I loved jazz, and I fancied that someday I might be good enough to do it. And I bought my first Sonny Rollins LP. I listened and listened, I listened the grooves off of it. I subscribed to DownBeat magazine and I kept thinking: If I read every edition, sooner or later I will find one article that will explain to me what in the hell I just heard....Decade after decade after decade, this man explores the far reaches of the possibilities of what has lovingly been called the devil’s horn. His music can bend your mind, it can break your heart, and it can make you laugh out loud.”

A two-hour special on the Kennedy Center Honors gala was broadcast on CBS on Dec. 27.

—Bobby Reed



Bob Brookmeyer

Masterful Farewell: NEA Jazz Master Bob Brookmeyer, whose many talents in modern jazz ranged from valve trombonist to composer, arranger and educator, died Dec. 15 of congestive heart failure in Grantham, N.H. He was 81. Brookmeyer remained active as an artist and teacher late in life, writing for and performing with his New Art Orchestra as well as mentoring young composers and performers at the New England Conservatory of Music, where he served as chairman of the school's jazz composition department.

Pocono Jazz: Debbie Burke, former editor of the Pocono Business Journal of northeast Pennsylvania, published a book about the jazz culture of the Pocono Mountains. *The Poconos In B Flat* discusses the culture of the Pocono jazz community, which was established in the 1950s and '60s. It features interviews with many area residents, including NEA Jazz Masters Dave Liebman and Phil Woods.

Fine Fellow: Composer and trombonist George Lewis received a \$50,000 Walker Fellowship from the national artist's advocacy organization United States Artists (USA). Lewis and six other musicians were honored during a celebratory performance in Santa Monica, Calif., on Dec. 5.

Marsalis News: Wynton Marsalis has been named cultural correspondent for CBS News, making his first appearance on the program on Jan. 16. In his new role, Marsalis will provide insight on cultural and educational developments in the artistic community for "CBS This Morning" and "CBS Sunday Morning."

Mass Transmit: The New York and New Jersey metropolitan area's only full-time jazz station, WBGO-FM 88.3, upgraded its transmitter and antenna system on Dec. 30 at 1 p.m. Both were erected atop 4 Times Square in New York City. WBGO's broadcast studios and administrative offices remain in Newark, N.J.

Otis Taylor (front right) with violinist Anne Harris and others



Caught

Otis Taylor Pairs Pros with Amateurs at Boulder Fest

In a small conference room at a Colorado hotel, 17-year-old Madi Stratford moaned and wailed, her voice rising in strength and confidence as she found her place above a hypnotic one-chord groove. For the next 10 minutes, more than 50 musicians playing an array of acoustic and electric guitars, banjos, harmonicas, bass, percussion, keyboards and woodwinds—even a bassoon—found common ground as they explored the textures of a simple riff as old as time. Welcome to Otis Taylor's Trance Blues Jam Festival, which took place from Nov. 25–27.

The fest began in 2010 as a one-off event for Taylor to occupy his time during a long break from touring around the Thanksgiving holiday, and it's gained more traction in its second year. This time, the Boulder-based musician expanded the scope of the event and invited some world-class musician friends to help him teach classes and perform in all-star jams.

Taylor and other artists, including guitarist Bob Margolin, banjo player Don Vappie and members of Taylor's band, led participants at the Boulder Outlook Hotel in extended jams and rap sessions, during which Taylor talked about his approach to the blues and offered instructional tips.

"You can do it with any voice. Her voice was really haunting," Taylor said to the workshop class after Stratford's performance. "With the cello, it created this totally different mood compared to the other grooves we were doing. We have a larger variety of moods than you might think we do. If anything, trance blues offers an open door for experimentation with any instrument imaginable. It's all about finding the groove and changing the dynamics.

"We had a lot of different textures,"

Taylor explained. "With trance blues, you can play with an accordion player, a tuba player, a bassoon player. It's the way that you layer it."

The three-day festival kicked off with an informal acoustic jam Friday night at iconic University Hill bar The Sink and peaked on Saturday night when Taylor was joined by a dozen musicians, including guitarist Mato Nanji, violin player Anne Harris, banjo player Tony Trischka and bass player George Porter Jr.

The evening jam began with Taylor and company onstage as workshop participants performed in unison from the audience. Many of the workshopers' amps competed for dominance with those emanating from the stage. Taylor wove through the crowd with a wireless microphone during one extended jam, offering the solo spotlight to the amateur players and singers.

After a brief intermission, during which the players in the audience packed up their instruments, Taylor and his professional sparring partners treated onlookers to a jam that offered all the players onstage the chance to display their chops. The set included Taylor originals like "Hands On Your Stomach" and longtime staples of his sets, such as guitar warhorse "Hey Joe" and the harmonica audience-pleaser "Hambone."

The Sunday workshop sessions were capped by a more informal jam session at the Boulder Outlook, where a few of the amateur participants shared the stage with Porter and members of Taylor's band. A slightly dogged Taylor, ready for a break after a few long days and nights, briefly took the stage at Porter's beckoning to play a harmonica instrumental and sing Bo Diddley's "I'm A Man."

—Mike Cote

Landslide Moves, Shakes with Out-of-print Reissues

The music business can be like a boomerang: Throw it away, and it comes back to you. Take it from Michael Rothschild, whose Fernandina Beach, Fla.-based Landslide Records is moving mountains with a bevy of re-releases that have been out of print until now.

The idea started when Rothschild moved to Atlanta in 1973. He gave up working as a rack jobber for Transcontinental Music to become a partner in an independent motion picture distribution company. While there, he befriended several area musicians, one of whom, Col. Bruce Hampton, shared Rothschild's eclectic tastes in jazz, blues, r&b and roots rock.

"He had formed a new band with multi-instrumentalist Billy McPherson called The Late Bronze Age, and I found their gigs to be interesting and different," Rothschild said. "I believed they could attract a following and decided to record them in the hope that some label might be inclined to release their music. The music was beyond classification and elicited no interest, so we put it out ourselves."

That was Landslide 1001, *Outside Looking Out*, which received rave reviews but sold, according to Rothschild, "maybe two copies



in every state. Nevertheless, by that time we'd recorded original material by Dan Wall with Steve Grossman, and the subsequent LP release helped establish our distribution network."

While Hampton's nose for musicianship helped guide Landslide's early release schedule, Rothschild found that invoking his name was a chancy proposition. "I attended an Arista Records release party and met Clive Davis, Columbia's CEO when (Hampton's) *Music To Eat* came out," Rothschild said. "He was very affable until I mentioned that I had just released a record featuring Bruce Hampton. His expression changed from cordiality to hostility. Overall, though, Bruce is a very entertaining guy, and his association with Landslide influenced the signing of certain acts headed for bigger things,

like Widespread Panic and Derek Trucks."

Wall's *Song For The Night* blended the surging melodicism of McCoy Tyner with the flashy electronics of late-'70s fusion. It and *Route Two*, a record by another Hampton sideman, percussionist David Earle Johnson, established Landslide's association with jazz, and those LPs have been in the label's catalog ever

since. The label had released other jazz albums, including the first effort by saxophonist George Cartwright's *Curlew*, but found greater commercial success with rootsy performers like Webb Wilder. The label never released those early jazz efforts on CD, but now it is bringing them to the digital arena by re-releasing them as downloads. "I'd been getting requests for [those] records over the years and thought it worthy to make the material easier to purchase," Rothschild said.

New jazz doesn't figure prominently in Landslide's release schedule, but Rothschild is open to recording more of it. "I am on the board of directors of the Amelia Island Jazz Festival and have worked with several of northeast Florida's finest players. So, who knows where that might lead?"

—Bill Meyer



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Chick Corea at 70

Monthlong Blue Note Birthday Party Spans Pianist's Wide Range

The game plan was two sets per night, with 10 different ensembles, six nights a week, all for one month. Chick Corea was celebrating his 70th birthday in style at New York's Blue Note club last November, in shows that seemed to encapsulate not only his incredible range as a keyboardist/composer but, perhaps more to the point, his collaborative skills and his affinity with serendipity.

To classify Corea (born June 12, 1941) as the playful, eclectic sort would be an understatement: During one set he stood up, grabbed the mic and announced with a sly grin, "If you wanna talk to one another while we play, that's OK." A handful of shows was all it took to be impressed by the simple fact that this was the same artist, from night to night, going in another completely different direction from the night before, yet still sounding every bit himself. If someone were to shriek during one of the few moments of silence, would they exclaim, "Will the real Chick Corea please stand up!?" Probably not.

A sampling of Corea's range included shows with vibraphonist Gary Burton and the Harlem String Quartet; a "From Miles" tribute band that played mostly '50s- and '60s-era acoustic jazz from Miles Davis with saxophonist Gary Bartz, bassist Eddie Gomez, drummer Jack DeJohnette (who celebrated turning 70 at the same club in January) and trumpeter Wallace Roney; and a program called "Chick's

Flamenco Heart," featuring flautist Jorge Pardo, guitarist Niño Josele, bassist Carles Benavent, singer Concha Buika, drummer Jeff Ballard, flamenco dancer Auxi Fernandez and wife Gayle Moran (singing on Corea's intricate "You're Everything").

The Burton/Harlem String Quartet shows featured reworked standards from the Corea/Burton duet CD *Hot House* (e.g., "Can't We Be Friends," "Round Midnight") along with selections from their *Lyric Suite For Sextet* album and the original "Dancing With Mozart," the one piece with the quartet heard on *Hot House*. For Burton, their uncanny connection continues to amaze: "The rapport thing we have," Burton said between sets, "it still mystifies both of us. It was there the first time we played." Commenting on two of the program's more familiar songs, Burton added, "We've been opening our concerts with 'Love Castle' [from Corea's *My Spanish Heart*] for 15 years, and [the encore] 'La Fiesta' is the first song Chick taught me 40 years ago, the

first time we tried to play as a duet, a spur-of-the-moment thing at a concert in Germany.”

The engagement—like Corea’s previous 60th-birthday residency at the Blue Note, *Rendezvous In New York*—was recorded (both for DVD as well as CD release) for possible future release. As for the other shows, they included a trio with bassist Gary Peacock and drummer Brian Blade; a regathering of the Five Peace Band with Blade, guitarist John McLaughlin, saxist Kenny Garrett and bassist (and former Elektric Band member) John Patitucci; duet engagements with singer Bobby McFerrin and pianists Marcus Roberts and Herbie Hancock; and Elektric and Return To Forever (the latter “unplugged”) band reunions.

“These kinds of projects can sometimes be a little tricky, because

everyone has to check their egos at the door,” Eddie Gomez said later about playing with the “From Miles” band. “With Chick, that’s generally the case; everyone is very professional. In the end, the Blue Note gets to make money, and Chick gets to celebrate his birthday and put all these groups together, which he loves. And not to travel and stay in New York for a month was satisfying, and very attractive.”

“I came to New York from Madrid to celebrate Chick’s birthday,” longtime friend and collaborator Jorge Pardo reflected about his “Flamenco Heart” engagement with Corea. “But I’m afraid he celebrates any day, any hour sitting in front of a piano! And I see Chick’s face on the Blue Note stage ... he’s like a seven-, not 70-, year-old boy, blowing out the candles on his birthday cake at his birthday party.”

—John Ephland

Dreamlike Musings on a Milestone Event

Corea reflects on the conception and execution of his birthday celebration

Please discuss the origins of the idea of doing this monthlong Blue Note residency for your 70th birthday.

The event I did in 2001 for my 60th birthday celebration at the Blue Note went so well that the management of the Blue Note suggested we do it again for my 70th—and this time four weeks long instead of the three weeks we did in ’01.

At first I thought it would be quite a stretch to try to fill four consecutive weeks, so we tossed the idea around for a while until deciding to start with a wish list that might fill it up.

How did you go about deciding which artists to recruit?

I had to approach the idea as a birthday party rather than a four-week “gig.” So I made a list of friends who I thought might like to come and join me. The idea was to try to have two different groups each week, three nights each. So I quickly found out that even four weeks would be too short to include all the friends I’d like to come and play. But we figured that, schedule-wise, of course not everyone I invited would be free to make it.

Happily, most everyone who I wanted to come and participate was able to make it. It was pretty magical, in fact.

How did you decide what selections to play?

When everyone’s schedules were secured, and I knew who would be coming and when, I began to write and call everyone to get their input on what they’d like to do. I also made up suggested set lists of songs and sent them to everyone for response. In this way, set lists came together and I began to find the sheet music that would be needed to prepare each group. That was the most time-consuming thing, really, the



whole librarian function. Because I knew once we all knew what the program would be, everyone would come super-prepared. And that’s what happened.

I was blown away by how prepared everyone was with the suggested sets. I was barely keeping up with each new configuration. But the amazing musicians who came to play pulled me through each time.

Was there any music written especially for this residency?

There weren’t any brand new compositions written especially for the event. I had just come off the road having played 70 shows around the world with RTF IV [the fourth edition of a Return To Forever reunion tour], and so had just enough time to put these preliminary set lists together. There were lots of new combinations and a lot of improvisation that was fresh and exciting to me.

Were there any favorite moments?

There were just too many highlights to single any out ... unless I ran through the whole 10 groups one by one. I feel so lucky and rich to have friends who are such genius artists and who continue to inspire me.

I have long and wonderful music-making associations, of course, with Stanley Clarke, Lenny White, John McLaughlin, Jack DeJohnette, Eddie Gomez, Gary Burton, Gary Peacock, Gary Bartz, Bobby McFerrin and my wife, Gayle [Moran]. Also, Herbie Hancock and I go back to the mid-’60s and then our duet in the ’70s. This was the first time we played duet together since that time.

Of course, all the members of the original Elektric Band—with Dave Weckl, John Patitucci, Frank Gambale and Eric Marienthal—and I traveled a lot of road and made many recordings together. Wallace Roney, Kenny Garrett, Brian Blade, Jeff Ballard and myself also covered a lot of road together with various projects. I made music newly for the first time with Concha Buika and Marcus Roberts. And it was the first time that Gary [Burton] and I performed live with the Harlem String Quartet. And the three members of the “Flamenco Heart” band—Jorge Pardo, Carles Benavent and Nino Josele—came all the way from Spain!

The four weeks were dreamlike. Magically, every show rolled off without a hitch. I’m still floating from the esthetics and exhilaration of the experience.

—John Ephland

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The Insider | BY SHEILA JORDAN

Bird Lives

Excerpts from the memoir Jazz Child: The Story of Sheila Jordan

Prologue

I first heard Charlie Parker when I was a teenager in Detroit. I saw this record on the jukebox near my high school. It said "Charlie Parker and his Re-Boppers." I put my money in and after the first four notes I was hooked. It was at this moment I decided that I would dedicate myself to Bird's music. It has become my life's mission to keep the name and music of Charlie Parker alive, which is why I always include a Bird tune at every performance and vocal workshop. I would like to share some humorous and poignant excerpts about Bird that are part of an upcoming biography of my life. I want everyone to remember that for me, Bird lives.

The Bird Meets the Bird

I had a little parakeet that I called Tori. I named him Tori because one of my artist friends, Harvey Cropper, said that Tori means bird in Japanese. I never let the bird out of his cage when anybody came over because he was a real pain in the ass and would land on your face if you were lying down. I taught him to say, "Hello, Bird, hello, sweetheart," but I would always put him in the cage when anybody came because he wouldn't talk much when he was in his cage.

So, this one time, Charlie came up to my loft during the daytime. He knocked on my door and said, "Hey, are you home?"

I said, "Yeah, who is it?"

He said, "It's Bird."

I said, "Oh yeah, cool. Just a minute, though, I have to get the bird in the cage because otherwise he'll be jumping all over you."

Bird said, "No, that's OK. I don't really care."

So I couldn't get Tori in the cage, but I let Bird in anyway. Bird said, "Can I just rest for a few minutes?"

I said, "Of course." There was a couch that I called "Bird's bed," and I said, "You know where your bed is."

So Bird goes over to his bed and lies down, and all of a sudden my bird, Tori, flies over to him. I said, "Oh no, look, the bird's on him."

Bird was almost asleep, and my bird, Tori, says, "Hello, Bird."

Bird jumped up because it shocked him. He says to me, "What are you, a ventriloquist?" I said, "No, I didn't say that. Tori said that." He says, "Oh, get out of here, of course



Sheila Jordan, 1953

that was you."

I said, "No, that was Tori."

He says, "Oh yeah, right." So he lies back down again, but this time he's a little bit more awake. Tori lands right on the side of his shoulder and looks right up in his mouth and says, "Hello, Bird."

Bird leaps up and says, "Goddamn, that bird does talk."

I said, "I told you."

He loved that, because my bird was very clear when he spoke. Tori kept jumping around and saying, "Hello, Bird, hello, sweetheart."

Bird, needless to say, didn't get any rest that day. He laughed, gave me a kiss on my cheek, and said, "I'll see you later." And he left.

Birdland Refuses the Bird

I was with Charlie one of the times that they refused to let him into the club that was named for him, Birdland. That evening we were just walking and enjoying each other's company, while headed in the direction of Broadway. Bird suggested that we go to Birdland, and I agreed.

So we went to Birdland, and the guy at the door said, "You can't come in here, Bird. You're not dressed properly."

I'll never forget the look on Bird's face. He turned to me and said, "Can you believe this? They name a club after me and they won't even let me in." And I said, "Yeah, I can believe it. Come on, Bird, let's go."

They refused him because he had a T-shirt on instead of a shirt and tie. I was quite upset, but I didn't show it. It was unbelievable to me that they wouldn't let Bird into his own place. I think people should know this happened.

DB

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Lee "Scratch" Perry *Double-7*

BLACK HEART, 1974

About 20 years ago, I hit a goldmine of reggae and African records in an otherwise crummy second-hand store. Among notable finds were some incredible Nigerian Afro-pop LPs, Prince Far I records I'd never seen and a little slab of wax packed in a nearly blank white sleeve, hand-stamped with a title on the front: *Double-7, Scratch the Upsetter*. "A vintage Lee Perry side. Holy smokes," I mused. With a giddy feeling in my stomach, I bought it and quickly brought it home to decant.

I was already familiar with an LP by the same name, released as part of a three-LP (later two-CD) set on the British Trojan label, titled *The Upsetter Compact Set*. Since then, Trojan has reissued *Double-7* as a stand-alone LP with the original U.K. cover. It sports a '70s photo of the great producer, clad in a knit cap and replete with headphones, singing in the studio. As a dedicated Perry-phile, I had studied the music on the record carefully; it's both devilishly soulful and representative of his wacko masterpieces. With outstanding toasting by both U-Roy and I-Roy, as well as instrumental tracks featuring the Upsetters and some inimitable vocals by Scratch himself, it stands as one of the best of the early Black Ark-era recordings in Perry's hilariously extensive discography. Buying the record was foolproof—it's a classic.

What I hadn't expected was that this version of *Double-7* would sound completely different. I had always noted that Trojan's Upsetters material had a slightly muffled quality, particularly when compared with similar work released on Jamaican labels or licensed through other channels. I'd read about the nefarious deals that Perry had made with Trojan, selling them Bob Marley's early work and pocketing the cash. With the Upsetters material, I wondered if he might have provided the Brits with masters that were multi-generation dubs, maybe purposefully saving the spiffier versions for himself. I'd had a similar shock listening to *Blackboard Jungle Dub*, a spectacularly important LP from a year before *Double-7*, which had widespread release in



the United States on Clocktower but was issued from an inferior master. When a version taken from a cleaner master was released a few years ago, it was like dust being blown off a Rembrandt.

In the case of this *Double-7*, released on the U.S. label Black Heart (some sort of Black Ark partnership), the bass is significantly enhanced, and the separation and basic pressing quality are far superior. This means a better picture of Perry's warped humor on "Cold Weather," which features the maestro speaking over a sinister backing, with a tape of running water overlaid on top. "Are you cold?," Scratch asks as the water runs out and needs to be rewound—while the song is running!—and started up again. Toward the end of the cut, Perry begins to pot the water track up and down, distinctly evoking the sound of a man relieving himself. On "Waa You Waa," one of the most incredible moments in the Scratch oeuvre, a soul song is treated to extreme manual manipulation, a potentiometer workout, the backing band audibly raised and lowered, like a hand is reaching into the music and reconfiguring it. It foreshadowed Public Enemy's "Terminator X To The Edge Of Panic" by 21 years. "OK, OK, let's take it from here," Perry leads off "Kentucky Skank," the first song, and from there on *Double-7* is a revelation. The cherry on top, in this case, was discovering something I had missed when I bought the LP. On the reverse, the cover bears handwritten titles for all the songs, sketched out in Lee Perry's familiar hand. Scratch scratch, in other words. **DB**

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

Caught

Intense Hiromi Brings Dramatics to Chicago's Harris Theater Stage

Pianist Hiromi Uehara looked stunningly petite as she took command of Chicago's Harris Theater on Nov. 15. A smaller venue might have served her trio better. The seven-story concrete and steel chamber resembles an industrial warehouse more than a theater and desperately needs people present to dampen its tendency to act as an echo chamber. The 400 or so in attendance made only a modest dent in its 1,525 seats.

Nonetheless, wearing a red top flecked with black over a black leotard with red running shoes, Hiromi had no difficulty flooding the cavernous space with notes and making it shake to her percussive mayhem. She more than held her own with drummer Simon Phillips, whose massive arsenal of gear seemed more befitting of a concert by Judas Priest or The Who (two acts with whom he has played). Completing the trio was Anthony Jackson, whose six-string bass put a nice spring under the floor, though he soloed sparingly.

Hiromi's main business on the present tour is to support her trio's new CD, *Voice* (Concord). Accordingly, six of the seven selections over the 75-minute set came from the album, and all



except "Sonata No. 8" were her own compositions. The evening opened with "Voice," which began in a series of ominous but emotionally ambiguous chords. They proved to be something of a red herring, though, when Hiromi broke the mood with a nonsequitur single-note whirr, pounding out rapid-fire what seemed like three or four fingers hammering the same key with rolling, unbroken precision. Phillips' drums started to rumble like a primal force.

Much of the music that followed functioned at a remarkably high level of intense-but-controlled energy. One might say it was

contrived energy, given the ensemble's scrupulous attention to detail at such high velocities. There was nothing loose or laid-back about this trio. It knew where it was every step of the way. Wherever Hiromi went, Phillips was right alongside her with a lightening procession of synchronous grand gestures—a punch, an accent, a crash, a cluster of rim shots, a flourish or fanfare that swept out across every beatable surface like a Kansas twister. The music quickly climbed to a level of fury and crowdedness that left no space for growth. But pacing was not important. The audience applauded, reveling in the sheer joy of the pandemonium, sustained largely by Phillips' churning-but-impressive tubsmanship. The piece finally decompressed and coasted slowly to a stop.

Hiromi performed as if she were having an almost sensual relationship with her shiny black Yamaha—sometimes loving, sometimes adversarial. She would hit the keyboard with great force and then draw back, as if it might hit her back. She cocked her head and leaned closely into the keys. Then she flashed a big open grin, as if the instrument had brought her great news. —John McDonough

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AVAILABLE IN STORES AND ONLINE FEBRUARY 13, 2012

Helen Sung

Artistic Immersion

Helen Sung is an artist brimming with contrasts. She's a native of Houston, Texas, with a musical life formed around studies in classical piano and violin that eventually went deep and wide at Houston's High School for the Performing and Visual Arts. Sung went on to receive undergraduate and master's degrees in classical piano performance at the University of Texas at Austin.

It wasn't until she arrived in Austin that the pianist, then age 21, first heard jazz. This is a shocker, given her facility with the keys, her relaxed ways with tempos and her inventive creations as a composer and improviser. You'd never guess Sung, now 40, was all dressed up and ready to go symphonic, so to speak. Her new CD, *(re)Conception*—a standards-oriented trio date with bassist Peter Washington and drummer Lewis Nash for Steeplechase—and last year's live quartet CD *Going Express* (Sunnyside), with bassist Lonnie Plaxico, drummer Eric Harland and saxophonist Seamus Blake, are the latest examples of what all the fuss it about.

In 1995, Sung was accepted into the inaugural class of the Thelonious Monk Institute of Jazz Performance, where she graduated two years later. And the rest, as they always say, is history.

For Sung, the road from the Monk Institute (then located at Boston's New England Conservatory of Music) to her current home in the Big Apple (since '99) has been filled with opportunities to reintegrate her original love of classical music with jazz, in this case melding the potential musical contrasts with her 2007 project *Sungbird After Albeniz* (Sunnyside). Her backing band included bass guitarist Reuben Rogers, saxophonist Marcus Strickland, drummer Nasheet Waits and percussionist Samuel Torres.

"After moving into jazz," she says, "I still retained the desire to improvise and write with the variety of texture and techniques seen in the classical music I played. *Sungbird After Albeniz* was my first overt attempt to begin integrating the different parts of my musical experience. I had taken the band on the *Sungbird After Albeniz* CD [minus Torres] on a short tour in Spain and Andorra. One of the gigs was a concert that was part of an annual classical-arts festival.

"As I prepared music for the tour," she continues, "it struck me: Why not arrange for jazz quartet a classical piece by a Spanish composer? I came across Isaac Albéniz's *España*, Op. 165, a suite of six pieces for solo piano. It was an ideal subject—beautifully written pieces that were distinctive, simple yet profound, concise yet they had room for adaptation. The resulting jazz pieces range from simple orchestrations to complete transformation, and I [recorded] the music after the tour."

Sung has immersed herself in other art forms, including the written/spoken and visual. "I call *Sung With Words* a poetry-inspiring-music-inspiring-poetry program sparked by my friendship with poet Dana Gioia," says Sung about this 2010 collaboration with the former National Endowment for the Arts chairman. "Gioia encouraged me to not be so concerned with literal meaning, to read the words aloud, that the musical aspects of poetry—rhythm, cadence, rhyme—are just as important. I remember him saying, 'The meaning will come at you sideways.' As I checked out various poems, I discovered that imagining the words to a melody helped unlock the poem's meaning for me, so I decided to try and set some poetry to music. I started with 'Entrance,' one of Gioia's poems from his award-winning collection *Interrogations At Noon*, and the program grew to include poets such as Langston Hughes, Gwendolyn Brooks, Emily Dickinson, Gertrude Stein and Robert Friend. This project features a vocalist—in this case, Carolyn Leonhart—and I hope to record it soon."



KATY LAGORRA

Another shared experience involved education. Apart from short residencies at schools (secondary and college) where she does workshops/master classes usually combined with a concert, Sung has served as senior faculty at the Litchfield Jazz Camp (2010), and she now enjoys an associate professorship at the Berklee College of Music. But it was a jazz residency program in 2007 at Camden, N.J.'s UrbanPromise Academy for underserved youth that merits special attention. "The program in Camden was made possible by a Chamber Music America/Doris Duke Foundation grant for Jazz Residencies," Sung is proud to explain. "I first found out about the school when the director gave a mini-info session featuring a performance by the school choir. UrbanPromise serves as an alternative solution for inner-city kids who are unable to function in the public school system, and arts are a major component of their curriculum. This impressed me, so when I received the grant, I asked the school to collaborate on a residency project. After almost a semester of prep work with the arts faculty, I took my quartet down to Camden and held a week of workshops and rehearsals, culminating in a school concert where each grade, K through 8, contributed a musical selection, such as a recorder ensemble, a dance piece, or song, all accompanied by the band. The middle-school choir also performed several jazz pieces I'd arranged for them. It was an amazing experience."

Nowadays the busy pianist maintains a trio, quartet and quintet. She's been playing the inspirational music of such masters as Thelonious Monk, McCoy Tyner and Kenny Wheeler, not to mention her own.

Sung's career trajectory continues to ascend, so wise jazz fans should definitely stay tuned.

—John Ephland

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Colin Stetson
Orchestra Of Sound Streams

When I met Colin Stetson in Vancouver for an interview, he arrived straight from a gig at the city's annual jazz festival. After sliding the case for a bass saxophone beside our table, he still looked as if he'd just arrived from a trip abroad. Strapped to his back were his baritone and alto saxes, as well as a gear bag. A native of Ann Arbor, Mich., Stetson has carved out a dazzling niche with his solo performances—represented beautifully on *New History Warfare Vol. 2: Judges* (Constellation)—but his concerts are not “traveling light” experiences.

Stetson has manipulated extended techniques that many improvisers use on the saxophone—circular breathing, overblowing, vocalizing—to create unlikely, brilliantly inventive pop songs. Using an arsenal of standard microphones in addition to contact microphones in, on and around his horns (as well as one affixed to his throat), Stetson balances and



arranges an orchestra of sound streams that provides percussive, harmonic and melodic material for his rigorous, concise pieces. The clickings of keys become beats, and hummed melodies picked up by the mic on his neck create counterpoint and extra harmonies. A few songs on his latest album feature guest vocals from Laurie Anderson and Shara Worden (of *My Brightest Diamond*), but otherwise the work is instrumental.

His carefully mapped-out compositions demand heightened concentration and great physical endurance. “Sometimes my mind wanders,” he admitted. “When you’ve played it so many times, you start thinking about other things. That’s when you have to get all

yoga about it and be in the moment. Focusing on just what is happening at any given moment with consciousness is the hardest thing to do.”

By the time Stetson graduated from the University of Michigan in 1997, he’d gone from a classical prodigy on saxophone to a stylistic polyglot. With his genre-melting group Transmission, he moved to San Francisco the following year. “I wanted to work with Tom Waits, and we all thought it would be a good place to relocate,” he explained. Stetson ended up playing on several of the quirky singer’s albums, including *Alice* and *Blood Money* from 2002 (both on the Anti- label).

Although he’s made two superb solo albums, most of Stetson’s work has been as a trusted collaborator who does far more than merely blow horn charts. In recent years he’s been a key contributor to the live shows and/or recordings of Anderson, the Afrobeat band Antibalas, the odd Cantorial/West African trance group Sway Machinery and indie-rockers Arcade Fire, Bon Iver (aka Justin Vernon) and Feist.

Stetson moved to New York in 2004 and proceeded to exhaust himself by playing nightly in other leaders’ projects. He reached a turning point two years later when his Transmission bandmate Stuart Bogie had a heart-to-heart with him. “He said, ‘Pick one thing different, do the solo thing, and tell everything else to shut the fuck up,’” said Stetson. “And I did.” The plan has paid off: “I haven’t had to do anything just for money, to say yes to something that I didn’t want to do musically, for years. I’ve been really fortunate to be in that position.”

—Peter Margasak

Otis Brown III

In Dad's Footsteps

Drummer Otis Brown III, who had raised about \$13,000 from 200 donors for the purpose, entered New York's Sear Studios last April with a top-shelf crew of generational peers—pianist Robert Glasper, bassist Ben Williams, saxophonist John Ellis, trumpeter Keyon Harrold and, on separate tracks, singers Bilal, Esperanza Spalding, Gretchen Parlato and Nikki Ross—to record his leader debut, *Thought Of You*. The program, supervised by bassist Derrick Hodge and propelled by Brown's unpredictable, immaculately executed beats and

timbres, coalesces an unruly array of feels and syntaxes common to hardcore jazz expression circa 2011—fiercely melodic improvisations through highbrow harmony and asymmetrical meters; impressionistic tone poems; sampled spoken word; J Dilla beats; smoldering modern gospel; and bravura signifying on a “new standard” (Shania Twain’s “You’re Still The One,” by Parlato) and the Great American Songbook (Richard Rodgers’ “Look No Further,” by Spalding). The ensemble renders each song with virtuosic cohesion, serve-the-function attitude and communicative sensibility.

“There’s a scripture that says, ‘Whatever is good, think on these things,’” Brown said of the CD title, paraphrasing Philippians 4:8. “I wanted a feeling of much love, and these are people I came up with, with whom I have some connection other than music. We’re not playing in a formulated way, like, ‘This bar will be 14, the next one in 6.’ It’s the way we grew up, hearing hip-hop or playing in the church. It feels natural.”

This New Jersey native’s first instrument was saxophone. As a church-going youngster, Brown sang in choir and subbed on drums for his father, who spent time on the road with Bobby “Blue” Bland, Al Green and other stars.

“I know what it takes to project through an instrument or a voice, and these experiences influence my sound,” Brown said. “There’s a rhythm to the African-American church service, and you learn so much. Sometimes you interact with the preacher’s sermon in a way that’s similar to accompanying soloists in jazz, and you learn a lot of feels—how to play in 3 or a strong 2-and-4. It was a fertile environment to learn things that apply to what I play now.”

Brown has toured with saxophonist Joe Lovano’s Us Five Quintet, in which he and Francesco Mela each play trapset, along with Spalding on bass and James Weidman on piano.



ANDREA CARTER

The relationship started 12 years ago, when Lovano heard Brown at the Thelonious Monk Institute Jazz Colony in Aspen, Colo. At the time, Brown was nearing the end of his three-year matriculation at the New School for Jazz and Contemporary Music, where Bilal, Ellis, Glasper and Harrold were classmates.

Along with engagements with Lovano’s various groups, Brown has played with each singer on his CD, as well as vocalists Kurt Elling, Kate McGarry and Somi, not to mention accordionist Victor Prieto and bassist Anne Mette Iverson.

Brown attributes his craft and finesse to early lessons with his father, who is now a high school principal. “The funky stuff was in the house, but my dad was also a huge fan of Elvin Jones and Max Roach,” Brown recalled. “He showed me independence things—like time on the ride cymbal and comping with the snare drum—that I didn’t know were somewhat advanced. When I started hearing how they related to music, it was an easy transition from saxophone to drums.”

That transition coincided with the arrival of trumpeter-educator Donald Byrd as Artist in Residence at Delaware State University, where Brown, following in the footsteps of his parents, was entering his junior year as a music education major. “It was life-changing,” Brown said. “I was content to be a band director, but when I was about to finish, he told me I should think about going to New York. He exposed me to a lot of people, and by his example showed me how many hours go into being a working musician—not just practicing, but listening to music, researching why this does that.

“If I don’t know what something is, I love the challenge of figuring out how to play it authentically. Once I’ve learned those things, even if I never play with that person again, it becomes part of me, and I carry it into the next situation.”

—Ted Panken

John Taylor

Perfect Partner

“There are always new things to do,” said pianist John Taylor. “You just need imagination. There’s always the temptation to say, ‘Oh, well, it’s too difficult.’ But I’m not doing that.”

With his active schedule, it’s clear that Taylor, 70, is not considering retirement. Although he has left faculty teaching positions at Germany’s Cologne College of Music and the University of York, he’s not slowing down at all.

The quiet, compact native of Manchester, England, is probably best known for his work with trumpeter Kenny Wheeler. The two met in the mid-’60s, when Taylor arrived in London—a Bill Evans-influenced player with a beautiful touch. Wheeler was part of an unofficial recording, *Pause, And Think Again*, by Taylor’s sextet in 1971.

Six years later, with Taylor’s then-wife Norma Winstone, the pair formed Azimuth, providing a chamber music counterpoint to the dominant jazz-rock fusion of the era. Since then, the two have been nearly inseparable, with Taylor on board for Wheeler’s late-’80s quintet (with bassist Dave Holland, guitarist John Abercrombie and drummer Peter Erskine), various big band projects and ongoing duets. Taylor’s lyricism makes him an ideal pianist to express Wheeler’s romanticism, but he’s also a solid presence at the keyboard—perfect ballast for the trumpeter’s balletic leaps and moody melodies.

His relationship with Wheeler has expanded to include the Italian vocalist Diana Torto, who has become the trumpeter’s singer of choice in recent years. Obviously influenced by Winstone’s sense of freedom with wordless vocals, Torto has an operatic range and highly accurate pitch. Again, Taylor makes the perfect partner, able to perform on the high wire for Torto’s vocal acrobatics, while providing a strong rhythmic and harmonic foundation. Their musical relationship includes duo work, a trio with bassist Anders Jormin and Nèa Quartet with bassist Palle Danielsson and drummer Francesco Sotgiu.

Danielsson is also a member of Taylor’s trio with drummer Martin France. More recently, the pianist has begun work with yet another trio, the co-operative Meadow, with Norwegians Thomas Strønen and Tore Brunborg.

Meanwhile, ECM has released *Celestial Circle* by percussionist Marilyn Mazur’s quartet, which pairs Taylor’s piano with Swedish vocalist Josefine Cronholm as part of two male/female combinations. The band formed in 2008.

“I get fulfillment from exploring new things,” Taylor said. “That’s why I welcome the invitation to play with people I’ve never met. The unexpect-



ed is very exciting.”

Another attraction of these types of invitations, he explained, was the opportunity to share 50 years of performing and recording experience with young musicians. It’s the same impetus that drew Taylor to teaching in 1993, when the Cologne College of Music invited him to become its professor of jazz piano.

Taylor is self-taught, but during the ’80s he was leading courses at London’s Royal Academy of Music and the Guildhall School of Music & Drama when the German university asked him to apply. “I was scared to death trying to teach at first,” he said. “It’s quite a responsibility, and I wasn’t sure I could give students what they need.”

In 2005, he began to split his teaching time between Cologne and York, where he worked with students pursuing graduate degrees. Now retired from both universities, Taylor continues to conduct master classes at various jazz programs in Europe and Australia. (Our interview took place during a break in his teaching schedule at the Siena Jazz program in Italy.)

“What I like about it, aside from working with the pianists, is the involvement of playing with the students,” he said. “I usually serve as the pianist in student ensembles. I find that very exciting—demonstrating and talking about what the possibilities are. That’s terrific. I know how to invite them in. I’ve found materials over the years that work as building blocks: usually charts by Kenny, Steve Swallow or Ralph Towner—people I’ve worked with. What I try to do is pass on my passion for this music—particularly Kenny’s music—and let them realize how well structured this music is, and what a joy it is to play.”

Looking back on his own introduction to the deep end of the jazz pool, Taylor said that he feels a strong responsibility to pass on what he knows. “My first gig at Ronnie Scott’s club in London was playing with Joe Henderson for three weeks. That doesn’t happen anymore. Young players don’t get those opportunities. Now, if I can help a young person develop by sharing what I know, I’m very happy.”

—James Hale

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George Benson, photographed at home, Dec. 26, 2011

GEORGE BENSON

RETURNS TO JAZZ

WHILE RELAXING AT HOME, THE GUITAR LEGEND TALKS ABOUT HIS NEW, MOSTLY INSTRUMENTAL JAZZ ALBUM, AND HE REFLECTS ON THE PLAYERS WHO INFLUENCED HIM THE MOST

By Josef Woodard : Photography by Brandon Sullivan



After driving through the winding, arid Arizona landscape, I park the car and approach the house. Is this the right place? Upon hearing a familiar voice, singing ornamental soul riffs as he approaches on the other side of the large door, I realize that I have, indeed, arrived at George Benson's residence.

A gracious legend in a tailored black suit, at 3 in the afternoon, Benson offers a kind hand-shake and a warm personality on contact. He projects an air of friendliness, just like at his concerts. We settle into the living room of his expansive, nicely acquitted house outside of Phoenix, where he lives with his wife of nearly 50 years, Johnnie. Picking up one of the inexpensive, classical guitars that he likes to mess around with, Benson loses himself in a medley of themes, intricately adorned with riffs and harmonic slaloms. Suddenly, after one of his fretboard gymnastic feats, the theme songs to *Star Wars*, *Superman* and *Woody Woodpecker* emerge in the musical thicket.

Later during our conversation, he drops his low E string down to D and lays out a gorgeous variation on Leonard Bernstein's "Maria," and wends his way naturally into what has now become a latter-day signature version of "Danny Boy." Flecked with distinctive, octave-leaping hammer-ons, this is one of the dazzling solo pieces from Benson's latest album, *Guitar Man* (Concord Jazz), which has been described as a reconfirmation of Benson, the bona fide and naturally fueled jazz guitar hero who *could*, and still can.

Benson is basking in the success of one of his strongest genuinely "jazz" albums in years and such projects as a well-received tribute

show to another instrumentalist-vocalist of note, Nat "King" Cole, which played to sold-out crowds at Sydney's Opera House and the Kennedy Center in Washington, D.C.

With his virtuoso, improvisational guitar skills and his numerous hit singles—such as "This Masquerade," "On Broadway," "Give Me The Night," and "Turn Your Love Around"—Benson is the rare jazz artist who has crossed over to mainstream pop-culture stardom. For many fans both casual and devoted, Benson is *the* face of jazz guitar artistry.

Benson has had an on-again, off-again approval rating in the jazz and music press. But he occupies a unique place in the jazz pantheon. One of the few musicians on the scene who can lay claim to being both a powerful instrumentalist *and* vocalist, Benson is widely revered as a commanding, clean-toned jazz guitarist who became a pop star but keeps showing us his roots in teasing doses.

Benson's previous Concord album, 2009's *Songs And Stories*, was more pop-lined and vocal-oriented—including some rigorous demonstration of his scatting prowess on the tune "Living in High Definition"—but *Guitar Man* keeps the focus on instrumentals. The song list plays roughly like a retrospective trip down the range of Benson's musical life and influences, from a solo rendition of "Tenderly" through

John Coltrane's "Naima," Stevie Wonder's "My Cherie Amour," the Wes Montgomery-aligned "Tequila" and the sneakily "unsmooth" jazz groove of Ronnie Foster's hooky chordal maze, "Fingerloo."

Most importantly, there's a whole lotta playing on this date, much to the satisfaction of those who have been waiting for Benson, 68, to once again bust loose.

After a long, far-reaching interview, the guitarist leads the way to the garage area of chez Benson, which stores a Rolls-Royce, a late-'50s model red Cadillac (from the man who wrote the tune "Red Cadillac Boogaloo") and, most surprisingly, a 10-foot-tall replica of the silver robot from the classic sci-fi film *The Day The Earth Stood Still*. We pile into the Rolls, replete with a blanketing starry sky effect of tiny lights in the overhead ceiling headliner. As *Guitar Man* plays on the pristine surround-sounding stereo, Benson jumps in to sing along with the tune "My One And Only Love," with a tone and phrasing remarkably similar to that of Johnny Hartman, who made the song famous in jazz circles. "Well, I was exaggerating there," he says of his behind-the-wheel singing. "On the record, it's more *me*."

Later, at a packed, swanky piano bar in a nearby restaurant, the Benson entourage grabs a table in the middle. Benson—who seems a

natural entertainer, onstage and in person—graciously presses flesh with friends and fans, and pays respects to the piano man, who gladly slips “This Masquerade” into the set list.

When I think about the “George Benson paradox,” if it could be called that, I reflect on a Montreal Jazz Festival experience several years ago. Benson and his band played a polished and perhaps *too* slick set in one of the large theaters, before an adoring crowd. But some of us felt the show was flawed by a show-biz vibe, that it was lacking in jazz content, especially for such a prestigious jazz fest. Later that night in the hotel’s after-hour jam session, I was walking by and heard some blistering guitar soloing over “Cherokee,” and I thought, “Damn, that hot-shot player sure has been influenced by George Benson.”

Lo and behold, it was the man himself, burning it up in the wee hours and channeling the once and future jazz muse set deep in his musical DNA. Music flows naturally from his being, as it has ever since his days as a child prodigy in Pittsburgh, starting in the early ’50s, cutting records as “Little George Benson,” long before his life as a jazz guitar master and occupier of positions atop the charts and polls.

DB: *Guitar Man* is one of your simplest productions in years, and also one of your strongest records. How do you feel about it now that it’s a finished product?

George Benson: We didn’t have a whole lot of money to spend on this record, so we decided to keep it simple. It was like the kind of records we used to make years ago. We just went in the studio and said, “Hey, let’s play this.” I had great musicians, so we could interpret it any way we wanted to. I didn’t try to get fancy or anything, but just played like I would if I was on a date with the surge of an audience watching us, for the sake of the music. I let the rhythm and harmonies tell me what to play.

[People] had been asking me to do some solo pieces for a long time. [Producer] John Burk didn’t know I could do any solo pieces on guitar. I would pick up an acoustic guitar, which always sounded better for solo pieces to me. I decided I better get something acoustic under my belt, so I’ll be able to play something significant in the years to come. These things on the album are just small samples of things I’ve been messing with over the years, trying to find reharmonizations of some classics, without losing the composer’s intent.

The first time we did “Tenderly” [for the 1989 album *Tenderly*], it wasn’t so tender. I had an electric guitar in my hand with all of those devices that I had under my thumb at the time. I was “speed demon George.” I let that tiger loose on that song. When I heard it back, I said, “What was I thinking?” But there were nice enough things in there to at least gain the interest of instrumentalists, especially guitar players.

This time, I wanted to go more the Johnny Smith routine. He’s one of my favorite guitar

players of all time. I really love his approach to ballads. I like leaning towards his approach to it. I’m not ashamed. When I see a guy who has something on the ball, I’ll borrow some of that, stick it in as reminders of the great guys who made the song stick out in the past. Johnny Smith certainly is the guy who made that song, at least as far as guitar is concerned, stick out beautifully. He made it show what the guitar is capable of, and gave us some great ideas to run with.



You have a sense of adventure as a player. Even on tracks that are fairly smooth or polished, you’ll take surprising turns and sneak into left field. Would you say that has always been a part of your musical voice?

I’ve never been afraid, man. One time, I heard Andrés Segovia playing along so wonderfully, and all of a sudden there was a little mistake, just a tiny thing, a blip. I jumped to my feet and said, “What? Andrés Segovia making a mistake? That’s impossible.” But I felt, “Well, if he can make a mistake, who cares if I make a mistake?” And I stopped worrying about it.

He said the whole idea of technique is being able to express and convey the idea you’re trying to get across. You don’t have to have chops like John McLaughlin to do “Mary Had A Little Lamb.” You play the best you can, and at a pace that you can convince with and get your point across. If you happen to be a nervous guy like me, I play a lot of notes. It’s the same way I talk.

I like to hear anybody play the guitar. If you happen to be great, like B.B. King, Johnny Smith, John McLaughlin or Pat Martino, that’s even better. But I like to hear anybody play. I listen for things that are personal. I find that each one has their way of approaching the guitar that is different than the next one. That keeps my ears open. I let the other man breathe, take what I can. Some people call it stealing, some people call it borrowing [*laughs*].

People steal—or borrow—from you, as well.

Well, mine is a mixture of everything I’ve heard. I have heard bits and pieces of all these people—from people you’ve never heard of before and superstars like Wes Montgomery, Kenny Burrell, Grant Green, Tal Farlow and many others. Chuck Wayne is another. Django Reinhardt. I’m a conglomeration of all those guys, and have taken bits and pieces from all of them. They were my teachers.

Your version of “Danny Boy” is quite interesting, with distinctive hammer-on notes. Did that idea strike you while you were messing around?

I had been listening to [violinist] Fritz Kreisler’s version of “Londonderry Air.” His piano player’s harmonies were so beautifully played behind him, and I tried to emulate some of that phrasing. It’s a little more difficult on guitar than it is on violin. After that, I was in South Africa and heard an arranger who did it with a string group. He reharmonized “Danny Boy” in the last half. When I heard that, I thought, “Got to adapt that.”

You also take on “Naima.” How much have you explored John Coltrane’s work?

He was my friend. I hung out with him a few times, he and Wes Montgomery and the great drummer Elvin Jones. One of my father’s best friends was his bass player, Jimmy Garrison.

When I think about John Coltrane, I think about “Naima” more than anything else. It defines his character. He was a gentle guy and a giant of a musician, but even when he played sensitively, there was a tremendous power there, and you could feel it getting ready to burst at any moment. He’d play in flares, flaring up and going back to silence. He made sensitive, sensual sounds, and when he wanted to, he could just blow you away with power.

I was thinking about that song, that day. It came out very nicely. I never thought I would [put] that song on a record. It’s a little bit outside for me. But it was fun doing it, and a lot of people say it’s the best tune on the album.

People may be wondering if you might go further down that road, playing more Coltrane or working with modal or hard-bop turf. What do you think?

I don’t rule nothing out, man. I play for people, so when people suggest things to me, it stays on my mind. When I’m at home, I do all kinds of crazy stuff, stuff that I wouldn’t dare think about laying on the people. But when they hear something they like, I listen. They’re on my back about doing that *Superman* theme I was playing for you. All my guitar friends, who heard me play that—and even *Woody Woodpecker*—like it, and say, “George, you gotta put those things out.”

Wes Montgomery had a big influence on you, and there was a point when Coltrane

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asked Wes to join his group, didn't he?

They played together. Wes went on the road with them for a short time. But he didn't stay in the group. He said he felt self-conscious about playing. He wasn't comfortable, so he left. That would have been interesting, although their way of thinking was completely different.

Montgomery was a beautiful player. He liked the sensitive stuff. I think he underestimated himself. He was very self-conscious about what he was doing. We hear things that he wasn't hearing about himself. He was light-years ahead of everybody else in his approach to the instrument, and he turned us on to some really nice things, things that we passed over, like they didn't exist. [There was] his mastery of the dominant seventh chords, and playing them on the inside, and he'd play things guitar players never think about, because we're so root-conscious. He would play the inside stuff, all the flat thirds, flat fives, raised nines, flat nines. He just kept moving. He kept the chords moving and would do multiple chords on top off each other, what I call "chord stacking." I miss that guy.

Wes was a pioneer, and older than you, but you were also contemporaries, weren't you?

I was coming into the industry, and he was the mainstay. He was the captain. He was one of the front-runners in the whole world on his instrument, and in the jazz field and in guitar. He was outstanding, one of a kind. I think he let me hang out with him because I always said nothing but glowing things about his playing—because I meant them. I was happy that he was here, because he was teaching us something. The whole world was hearing and learning things that they didn't know or hear before, so that was a blessing for the guitar and everybody that loved music.

But hanging around him, I checked out his mannerisms and how he approached things. When I saw him play guitar, he was just doing these simple things. I couldn't play like him, but there were things I could do that were special, even if they were only special to me.

These things were true to the way I think. It was important that I got that concept, and I learned it from people like him, from Grant Green, Kenny Burrell, Tal Farlow.... Tal was one of my favorite cats of all time. He was an experimenter. That's what I wanted to be—a scientist—and do things that people had not done. Tal Farlow was the man, as far as that was concerned. He proved that he was truly an octopus. He went in all directions. I used to try to steal his licks, man. I'd hear twenty and I'd get one. I'd think, "Well, that's one I didn't have yesterday."

We became very good friends and did a couple of concerts together. I got to hear him a lot when he came to New York and played on the East Side. I took Larry Coryell along and introduced him to Tal. I played concerts with him, and he wiped us out. But I never felt so

good getting beat up, man, 'cause I was right up close and personal, hearing him and watching him play this stuff.

One thing leads to another. We learn from each other. We've got this great variety of players in the world that we can pick from now, who we didn't have years ago.

Certainly, guitar is one of the most recent to evolve as a lead instrument in jazz. Charlie Christian was making noise long ago, but it seemed that, until the late '50s, guitar didn't stake much of a claim on the larger jazz scene.

There was Barney Kessell, but he was very jazzy. The other one who crossed over was Johnny Smith, with "Moonlight In Vermont." That was a small pop hit. When I heard it, I thought it was a harp.

Barney was my friend, too. He, Jim Hall and myself did concerts in Europe, and Barney was passing out lessons every day. That was in 1967 when [promoter] George Wein [organized] a tour of Europe. Sarah Vaughan and Thelonious Monk were the stars, and he had Archie Shepp and the trio with me, Jim Hall and Barney Kessell. And there was also Elmer Snowden, a banjo player. That was some tour, man.

Were you always locked into the clean-tone, fat-body jazz guitar sound? You didn't really embrace distortion and other effects much, did you?

I'm glad that I couldn't afford all those instruments. I didn't know about a fuzz tone, or these other devices—the wah-wah and other tools. Plus, I was so busy just trying to learn how to play, I didn't have time to worry about what was happening with my feet. Also, I was convinced after hearing Charlie Christian play, the sound was so great, and I was searching for a good speaking voice for the guitar.

I think we stumbled into something fairly good over my lifetime. It went well with my imagination and was very close to what I was hearing. There were some days in the early part of my career when I would hear a guitar and it would sound like a whole different instrument. They were my thoughts, but with somebody else's sound. When I went to Warner Bros. and made [1976's] *Breezin'*, I finally found the sound I was hearing. That took a change of amplifiers. I used a Johnny Smith guitar for the first time, and a Polytone amplifier. I said, "That's what I think I should sound like." No harsh edges. Like a horn, or a keyboard. There was an evenness, and the only sounds were ones I wanted to come out.

When Creed Taylor heard the record I had just done for Warners, I owed him one more, see. I was in the studio making this last project for him and he said, "George, tell us how you got that sound on *Breezin'*." I said, "I've been complaining about my sound all these years, and you never heard me." He wouldn't let me experiment with nothing.

Which amp were you using earlier?

The Fender Twin. They were very harsh. They'd make me afraid to play because I'd have no *ping* to the sound. I was getting that edge, making me sound more like a blues player than anything else. Nothing wrong with playing the blues, but some things I was playing were meant to sound more jazzy than that.

We went around and around about the sound of my guitar, and finally, when I went out to L.A. and hooked up with Al Schmitt and the *Breezin'* album, it was instant. The first thing we played was [*sings the melody to "Affirmation"*]. Tommy Gumina, who owned Polytone, came in the studio and said, "Man, that's the most beautiful thing I've ever heard." That's the first take. We tried it one more time, threw [away] the second take and kept the very first take.

Breezin' was really a game-changer for you, on multiple levels, wasn't it?

No doubt. I finally got the sound I was looking for, even with the vocal. I found that I had a friend—the engineer was very friendly, and that's how I got the guitar sound right. He knew mic placement very well. [For my vocal], he used what used to be a nighttime talk show host microphone, an Electro-Voice 666. Nobody would use that microphone for a singer. I've never heard the voice that sounded like "This Masquerade."

That album also awakened your own sense of how you could combine voice with guitar, scatting along with your playing. That became one of your musical signatures.

I tried to do that when I was with another record company before. I said, "Put a microphone over here. I've got an idea." I started [*scats a riff*]. He said, "Nah, that won't work." I said, "OK, we'll try something else." So I got off of it. When I went to L.A. to record "This Masquerade," I started doing that, and they said, "Man, that's fabulous." You never know in life what's going to happen.

Pretty soon, everybody wanted me to do that on every song. I said, "Enough of that. The reason I did that was because it seemed like the thing to do at the *time*, to bring some interest to the song." They said because it was part of my signature that I should be doing that on every record. But then where is the contrast? I use it on some things now, the way it should be done. When you have some success, everybody wants you to jump on what was successful five years or ten years ago. I said, "Man, that was then."

With your successes along the way, you must have had pressure from record companies and other sources, who wanted lightning to strike again. How have you dealt with that?

[Laughs] I never believed in that. What I loved about Nat "King" Cole was that "Too Young" was not "Mona Lisa," and "Dance Ballerina" was not "Nature Boy," and yet they were all classics within themselves. Every last



Benson with some of the awards displayed in his house

one of his songs was slightly different, the ones that rose above the fray.

It gave you something to look forward to, the next Nat “King” Cole record. I didn’t want another song so close to “Mona Lisa” that I had to make a choice. It was a completely different circumstance with a completely different story. And it shows your talent, that you can take a song that people know from one point of view and give it a slightly different attitude or twist.

You have recently been doing a Nat “King” Cole tribute project, in which you’re taking on a role, channeling another musician. How has it been, stepping into the shoes of another artist?

I’m bringing back some of the best sounds that ever hit people’s ears. They hear it on record, but to hear it live, being in a room with it surrounding you is a whole different thing. The vibe from the people reacting to the music and seeing the orchestra—man, that is exciting. We do that for two-thirds of the show, and then the last third of the show is me doing what people know me for. We cap it off with that, so everybody goes home happy.

There is an obvious analogy between you two, in that you’re both great instrumentalists also blessed with great voices—and whose voices took you into the popular realm. Do you see that connection?

That became a problem for Nat, because there really was no room for crossover at that time. People knew you for one thing, and that’s what they expected you to be doing. If you were a country singer, you sang nothing but country. Sam Cook was trying to go into the Copa [Copacabana in New York City]. It didn’t work the first time. Years later, it started to make sense.

It takes time for people to adjust to anything.

But that doesn’t mean that it’s impossible. That’s the same thing I told Earl Klugh. People don’t know, but Earl’s got a great right-hand picking style. Perfection. I said, “Earl, when you play with your fingers, I can feel you. You project that energy that is warm, romantic, and it’s educational. The prestige of your playing is light-years beyond what people expect.” I’m proud of him, because he changed the outlook of the acoustic guitar in America, big time. Now everybody’s trying to play like that.

That’s an interesting concept, his playing being “educational.” Your own playing has sophistication and potential “educational” content. Do you like that idea of educating or enlightening listeners who might not necessarily be jazz fans?

Well, Jack McDuff was my first instructor on the road, so to speak. I was in his quartet and was very fresh, having never just played guitar for a living. Now I was playing guitar only for a living, with no singing. He hated singers. He said, “They always grab the spotlight. No matter how good the band is, you take a mediocre singer and the people will love them.”

When he was trying to get me to understand what he was looking for from me, and what he expected me to do, he said, “When you play, man, play a little blues, licks, show some technique, and play with conviction, like you mean it.” You know, that formula still works.

Your mid-’60s Columbia titles, *It’s Uptown* and *Cookbook*, have token vocal tracks. How did that happen?

That’s a good question. I had to. John Hammond, who discovered everybody—Bob Dylan, Bruce Springsteen, Billie Holiday, Benny Goodman—would bring in these jazz artists. They wanted people who would sell records.

Some of them turned out to do that, like Bob Dylan and Bruce Springsteen. But he’d bring in these jazz artists who couldn’t sell records. I was one of them. He wanted to sign me to Columbia, and they said, “No, we don’t need no guitar player.” To keep the contract valid, I had to put at least one vocal on.

I thought that part of my career was gone. Remember, I was only 22 years old. But I had been a singing star in my hometown since I was seven years old, working in nightclubs and on street corners, with my ukulele and later the guitar—playing behind my singing, mostly.

Then people started calling on me to play guitar with them in their bands. I learned all the popular stuff on the radio. You don’t need a lot of chops when you’re playing honky tonk. But jazz? That was a whole different story. You had to have imagination and chops to play what your imagination was dictating to you. That took years.

From the era of your more lavishly produced albums, Quincy Jones was another collaborator of yours, who knew how to inject interest in r&b with jazz. Was he a strong creative ally during that time?

It was interesting being involved with these great producers, especially working with Quincy Jones, because he was so slick at everything he did. He knew what was going on. On [the album] *Give Me The Night*, he said, “George, we want to capture the jazz market,” so we did “Moody’s Mood For Love” and won a Grammy for that. But we also won a Grammy for “Off Broadway,” our r&b instrumental hit. And then we had “Give Me The Night,” which was pop. So we got all three that we went after on that record.

Although people tried to label us, and said we sold out, it seemed so foolish to me when I heard people talking like that. I remembered people talking about Nat Cole that way. I thought, “What?”

Have you had moments in your career where you felt like the musical product was too slick and over-produced for your tastes?

The problem was that we sold so many records, we started competing with r&b and pop artists. We were ending up on the same charts. To do that, you cannot compete with someone who is spending \$3 million on a record with a \$50,000 budget. He’ll out-slick you every time. So we ended up spending hundreds of thousands of dollars on our records, and we got used to it.

It’s just like everything. Cat eats caviar every day, he can’t go below that anymore. Don’t get me wrong: I’m not sorry that we did it. I’m happy that I did blues, r&b, pop music, rock ’n’ roll, all of that, and became a successful star. And I went to jazz music and had a career there, went to number-one jazz guitar player, before I had this success.

So now, I mix all of that stuff that I learned, all of the experience, and let it hang out in my own way.

DB



Anthony Braxton, playing a contrabass clarinet in Germany, May 26, 2007

ANTHONY BRAXTON

Music as Spiritual Commitment

By Josef Woodard ∴ Photo by Hyou Vielz

For one dense, time-leaping hour last May, a braced and happy audience at the Victoriaville Festival in Quebec was served up a thrilling and unusual retrospective of the Great American Phenom that is Anthony Braxton. Then again, unusual is usual for this thoughtful jazz legend, inherent experimentalist and process redefiner, still one of the more fascinating figures to emerge from the avant-garde end of the jazz and new music spectrum.

In the case of his piece “Echo Echo Mirror House,” performed by a septet in Victoriaville’s Colisee venue, musicians—all of them younger than Braxton—both improvised and cued off of an elaborate system of trolling and dipping into snippets from the leader’s decades-long recorded history, contained on iPods at the ready. Donning his signature sweater, Braxton guided the ensemble with encoded hand gestures and lent his live input on multiple variations on the saxophone family, in what became a dizzying and delicious, Charles Ives-ian mash-up of sounds from the past colliding with the unfolding present.

By turns structured and free, anarchic and controlled in a creatively systematized way, the experience was, in a word, *Braxtonian*.

Apart from this neatly abridged and vertically stacked retrospective, or the broader portrait lent by a four-night festival at New York’s Roulette last fall, getting a fix on what Braxton is about and who he is at the core becomes complicated. He is a ferocious but angular saxophonist, creator of multiple ensemble situations, an academic (teaching at Mills College and currently at Wesleyan University), a MacArthur Fellow and self-impelled theoretician whose ideas and include his “Tri-Axium” philosophy of art.

Born in Chicago in 1945, Braxton fell in with the Association for the Advancement of Creative Musicians (AACM) in the ‘60s, and moved on to become an important component of the ‘70s

avant-garde scene, playing with Chick Corea and Dave Holland early on, and sympathetic allies Barry Altschul, Gerry Hemingway, Marilyn Crispell and fellow Chicago-born iconoclast George Lewis. Braxton has built up a large discography on such small art-minded labels (mostly European, his primary base of support over the years) as Black Saint, hat ART, Leo and Victo.

In more recent times, Braxton has fostered a new, young set of collaborators and conspirators, culled from students and other smartly equipped players, with much organizational and co-conspiratorial help from trumpeter Taylor Ho Bynum, and such otherwise emerging artists in their own right as guitarist Mary Halvorson and bassoonist Sara Schoenbeck.

One of Braxton’s more ambitious and in-progress efforts is decidedly off the jazz grid. His *Trillium* opera series, which he envisions eventually as a 36-act compendium covering a 12-day festival, may or may not ever be completed. A four-disc set of the *Trillium E* operas was recently released on the New Braxton House label, and the music is a multi-level maze of ideas, science fiction asides, social satire and other less easily described narrative detours, with music ranging from contemporary classical syntax to the outskirts of jazz and beyond.

As Braxton explained, “The opera complex system is something I have been working on for about 25 years or so. And because it takes some-

thing like from six to nine years to complete a four-act opera, the *Trillium* Opera Complex system must be approached in a very deliberate kind of way. This project is the template fantasy grid for the complete ritual and ceremonial musics.”

In a wide-ranging interview with Braxton, the expansive-minded artist described a prolific, creative life very much still in motion. In conversation, as in his music, Braxton shuffles easily between intellectual erudition—including coded words and phrases all his own—and direct, down-to-earth expressions. Ditto, his opera work, as when a dissonant wash in *Trillium E* suddenly yields to the telling phrase “Life in space is rough, but art in space is even rougher.”

Braxton is at a point late in his career when the many strains of work behind him and ahead of him are keeping his work ethic fully engaged, regardless of who’s listening or who’s hiring. He’s listening to a higher calling.

“I’m a lucky guy to have been able to live to be 66 years old,” he said. “I would have never thought something like this could have happened. To still be excited about creative music and my own work, I must say, ‘What a life.’ I have made no money from my music. In fact, I am totally excited about my work and I have no regrets about the decision I made to embrace music as a spiritual commitment, music as part of the dynamics of curiosity and music as part of transposition into ritual and ceremonial spaces.”

DB: It makes perfect sense that the all-inclusive medium of opera would be a good forum for your creative thinking. Is that flexibility part of what attracts you to it?

Anthony Braxton: That's it exactly. There is nothing quite like opera for bringing a creative community together. Dancers, singers, video projectionists, staging and/or building fantasy environments—the magic of storytelling. This is something I knew nothing about as a young guy. Opera would bring me deeper into the world of narrative logics and magic. As a young man, I sought to emphasize the propositional logics as a way to evolve structural premises. Later, with the operas, I would begin the process of looking at holistic structures and fantasy concepts.

Before turning 40, I could not find a way into opera, and came to the conclusion that this was a medium that had no meaning for me. It was only later, when I had the opportunity to experience the opera *Wozzeck* of Alban Berg that, suddenly, it opened the door to opera for me. Since that time period, opera has become very important to me. The challenge of poetic logics, the wonder of narrative structures has been a very nice zone to work in for a guy like myself.

Opera and jazz haven't exactly been bedfellows yet, apart from such examples as Scott Joplin's *Treemonisha* and Anthony Davis' work in the medium. Is that one aspect you are interested in putting forth, the match-making of opera and jazz?

I am definitely interested in advancing the challenge of improvisation/composition and narrative modeling strategies into fresh holistic domains. In your question you use the word *jazz*, but since my music is not jazz but rather creative music—from a trans-idiomatic experience—your question must be re-cast.

Yes, I am interested in “real-time” improvisation combined into a Tri-Centric vision that includes extended structure and ritual story telling. *Trillium* is not a jazz opera or classical European opera. My work doesn't fall into the traditional categories. I have rather sought to evolve my music model organically, through research and development, as part of a Tri-Centric Thought Unit Housing.

At this point, the *Trillium* project is so far along, there must be a gnawing desire in you to get to the staging phase.

Yes. But look, there are complexities in this for me. I had a performance of *Trillium R* and went into debt for 10 years. To do a live performance costs so much money, and I have been criticized for the production of *Trillium R*, because there were mistakes in the performance. But it costs so much money to get everything completely correct and to get the scenery and produce it on the level of a Wagnerian opera.

I get the idea that this line of questioning about straddling idiom makes little sense to you. Do you have a broader view?

My experience has been a universal experience. The jazz musicians were right to reject me. And the classical musicians, including the contemporary classical world, were right to reject my work. I am not a Democrat or a Republican. I have nothing to do with either of those polarities.

Rather, I sought to build an experience context that would be in between the classical definitions, that would give me an opportunity to better experience and integrate what was happening through my experience. And so that difference would be at the heart of my decision to create another formal context.

Do these basic artistic instincts you're referring to go back to your earliest inklings as a musician, or did it develop as you got deeper into music?

It has evolved. My first opportunity to even consider theater music and theatrical devices was when I had an opportunity to experience the great music of Joseph Jarman. In fact, in many ways, this area of my work can be viewed as a post-Jarman offering, because I was profoundly affected by his work in this area. For instance, I experienced the [Jarman] composition “Non-Cognitive Aspects of the City” around 1966, '67. It blew me away and put me in a position where I had to reconsider everything I had learned up until that point.

Can you talk about the effects of the AACM on your development?

In my opinion, when the mature histories are written and documented, the work of the Association for the Advancement of Creative Musicians will be viewed in the same way that we talk of the First Viennese School or the Second Viennese School or the serial movement from Darmstadt, or the indeterminate movement. The AACM will be viewed as a point of definition for trans-idiomatic, explorative logics.

It is the power of American creativity that can reunify our people, re-motivate and direct our people, as we begin to face challenges, which is to say, the Antebellum forces that have controlled information dynamics, especially since the 1960s, have produced a situation where non-marketplace creative musician-composers like myself have been marginalized out of the equation. You don't hear anything about Henry Threadgill on The Huffington Post. On The Daily Beast, there is no awareness of the great music of George Lewis or of Sarah Schoenbeck or Nicole Mitchell.

We have this incredible, universal community that is greatly appreciated in Europe or in Asia, but in America, the people are not necessarily aware of the sub-plane currents happening in this time period. I hope that the Tri-Centric Foundation will be one of the points of light.

There seems to be a new burst of creative fire in you, particularly, maybe as energized by collusion with your students and younger musicians. Is that the case?

The idea of “Braxton and his students” is not really correct, because when I work with someone, they become my students and I become their students. We learn from one another. In the 27 years I’ve been in academia, I have seen generations of young people evolving their work and, in some cases, I have been able to work with them, teach them, but also learn from them. I feel fortunate because of my connection to the great men and women who made the decision to embrace music as a life’s purpose, not just as entertainers.

These collaborators seem to be empathetic to your aesthetic, in that they can embrace the free improvisational impulse but also your quite complex structural ideas.

I have tried to emphasize that it’s important to have experiences in the mutable logic space, it’s important to have experiences in the stable logic space and it’s important to have symbolic transposition. Like the AACM, I try to teach my students about the wonderful discipline of music in a way that doesn’t nail anyone down to any one idiomatic principle. Instead, I try to look at the wonder and the discipline of music as a way to open up possibilities rather than to produce the theory first and have the creative experience come through the theory.

Your “Echo Echo Mirror House” piece at Victoriaville was a time-warping concert experience. My synapses were firing overtime.

[Laughs] I must say, thank you. I am really happy about that performance. In this time period, we talk about avant-garde this and avant-garde that, but the post-Ayler generation is 50 years old, and the AACM came together in the ’60s. So it’s time for new models to come together that can also integrate present-day technology and the thrust of re-structural technology into the mix of the music logics and possibility.

The “Echo Echo Mirror House” music is a trans-temporal music state that connects past, present and future as one thought component. This idea is the product of the use of holistic generative template propositions that allow for 300 or 400 compositions to be written in that generative state. The “Ghost Trance” musics would be an example of the first of the holistic, generative logic template musics. The “Ghost Trance” music is concerned with telemetry and cartography, and area space measurements.

With the “Echo Echo Mirror House” musics, we’re redefining the concept of elaboration. It’s not a linear elaboration. The new holistic models are multi-hierarchical formal states that allow for many different things to happen at the same time, and the friendly experiencer can have the option of approaching the music in many different ways. Compositions, in this context, are not written to be like 5-minute or 30-minute compositions, but rather compositions that can stop and start to meet the needs of the friendly ensemble of musicians, depending on their needs.

I have designed my system, from the beginning, so that the formation reality of the music

involves everything happening at the same time. With the “Echo Echo Mirror House” music, suddenly, it goes back to the old TV commercial: “Is it live or is it Memorex?”

On the subject of keeping tabs on the many strands in the Braxton tapestry, was your multi-project festival at Roulette another way to take stock of the story so far?

I feel blessed to have the Tri-Centric Foundation and the Tri-Centric Orchestra. I have been looking for a while to find a way to build another structure, since I have been shut out of

the jazz world and classical world. I rarely work in America. And now, with the economic complexity that we’re dealing with, work in Europe has become difficult for me, as well.

And so the Tri-Centric Foundation and the Tri-Centric Orchestra is a way for me to have a community of men and women artists to work with, so that I can continue to evolve the science of my music. This is a good thing for me, since, at this point in my life, I would prefer to emphasize composing and research and development, and perform a little bit. Meanwhile, I don’t want performance to mean bass, drums and piano five

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The Tri-Centric Foundation, for me, is kind of akin to a third Millennial League of Nations, where in the beginning, the old dog composer pulls together this model, but in the end, it's not about me. It's about the family and the power of community. We need to unleash the power of creativity to re-motivate our people.

Going back to the AACM ideal of creating opportunities by whatever means necessary, when working outside of the system, does it almost build that muscle to marshal resources and produce results?

Yes. The first thing that was a surprise was that it was impossible to make a living doing the music that I needed to do, and so I had to get a job. Many of the artists of the Third Millennium will have to solve the question of how to survive and, in many cases, survive separate from making a living from one's musics. That has become a very complex proposition in America.

You were talking about the 1960s and the flowering of this idea of expanding beyond our shores. But in your case, going deeper into American musical history, I think of you almost as a post-Ives-ian musician and composer, as well.

Well, Charles Ives is one of my heroes. Also, the great work of William Grant Still and Scott Joplin [are important]. I was fortunate, in discovering music, that I found there are no limits. There are so many different areas to creative music, in America and around the planet. And so, yes, Charles Ives and the great work of John Cage and Arnold Schoenberg, and including the re-structural visionary music of Alvin Lucier, is very important to me.

Do you have some fundamental curiosity about sound? Is that part of what leads you to the multi-instrumentalist place?

I would gravitate towards multi-instrumentalism because one part of my interest in playing the instruments was to have opportunities for experience in the high register, the middle register and the low register. My register experience would come about in the AACM as I learned from my fellow and sister colleagues.

You were saying that you have so many things on your plate and aren't as interested in performing. Yet I assume you still have a passionate relationship with the saxophone.

Yes. I still listen to my Paul Desmond records. I still listen to my Warne Marsh records and my Albert Ayler records. I do not plan to ever

BRAXTON'S ALLIES

Anthony Braxton's burst of activity over the past five years has been made possible, in part, through the support and collaborative graces of Taylor Ho Bynum, a young cornet player.

Bynum, who was a student of Braxton's in the '90s and again for post-grad work in the early 2000s, has gotten involved on multiple levels in helping Braxton pursue his artistic vision—as a producer for a nine-CD and DVD release in 2007, and organizer of the eight-hour Sound Genome project in Vancouver in 2010 and last fall's ambitious festival at Roulette in New York City.

Bynum says of his elder cohort, "Anthony's absolute commitment to his work, his uncompromising artistic idealism, and his magical balance between maintaining clearly articulated and consistent musical principles yet growing an ever-evolving and innovative language that is dedicated to the pursuit of the new—all of that provides an incredible amount of inspiration and focus for my own work. He is simultaneously one of my heroes, one of my principal mentors and one of my closest friends."

Going back to an earlier phase of Braxton's history, in the '80s and '90s, the leader

maintained a powerful and flexible band, with uncommonly gifted and ambi-idiomatic (i.e. "inside/outside") musicians: pianist Marilyn Crispell, bassist Mark Dresser and drummer



Taylor Ho Bynum



Marilyn Crispell

Gerry Hemmingway. Crispell, who worked with Braxton in diverse settings, met him while she was a student at the Creative Music Project in Woodstock, N.Y., in the late '70s. Braxton was so impressed with her playing that he invited her to join his Creative Music Orchestra and took her on a European tour.

"During our first rehearsal, he suggested that I play less notes," Crispell recalls. "I think what he was trying to say was to breathe and feel the phrasing, and to be aware of the role of silence. That was a profound lesson for me, and one that influenced all the music I played subsequently.

"During the time we played as a quartet, he started to seriously develop his concept of combining improvisation and notation in a way where one could become almost indistinguishable from the other—not indistinguishable, exactly, but rather that there was a seamless flow between one and the other. I learned a great deal about composition from playing those pieces."

—Josef Woodard

give up the instruments. I think that would be a big mistake, not to mention that I love the experience of real-time playing. But as I get older, looking at the clock, I find myself very much aware that to complete the opera cycle, I need another 10, 15 years, unless I retire from academia. Maybe then I can complete the specifics of the system in the way I had originally planned.

You have a passion for exploring creative possibilities through technology, but is there a part of you that also wants to escape it and get back to the visceral, physical world?

You have a point, and I think the African-American community has a complex way as we move into the Third Millennium. The Southern strategy that Richard Nixon would set into motion and Ronald Reagan would accelerate would produce a situation where, when the New Orleans musicians came into power in the '80s, the first thing they did was to start the jazz purges. Anyone who had any originality was purged or kicked out.

In its place, they brought in a concept of the tradition that in many ways violated the tradition. The tradition has been creativity. Instead, in the '80s, the tradition would be defined as playing like Louis Armstrong and Duke Ellington, as if nothing relevant has happened in the last 50 or 60 years. The African-American community has been retreating into an idea of Antebellum celebration that has taken the focus away from the challenge of evolution and re-structural development. This is serious.

This came about, in my opinion, because of a political decision that was based on ethnic-centric parameters, that was based upon an attempt to bring in a class of African-Americans who would themselves be put in positions to challenge the music. It's kind of like the "paddy rollers," the slaves who would go chase the slaves who escaped from the plantation and bring them back. And that's what we have been seeing since the 1980s, although in the last 15 years, things have settled down. Now, the "bad" musicians have all been kicked out, and now jazz is clean and fresh again. But it's a different jazz than the jazz that I came up with. The jazz I came up with had everything from Jimmy Smith on organ to Miles Davis doing re-structural music, to Frank Sinatra. You name it. The music has lost something in terms of spectra.

What does the future look like for you?

My hope is to have several more projects. I want to do a large project on the music of Duke Ellington. I want to do a large project on the music of Sun Ra. I want to do a large project on the great music of John Phillips Sousa. There are all kinds of ways to use the tradition, and there are so many different areas of the tradition.

Every now and then, I try to document a project in that direction. It's part of my learning, and it's also part of trying to stay fresh, not to do one thing only, but to partake of the possibilities that we have in this time period and not allow those

possibilities to get you stuck in any one category. There is everything to do, for the people who are interested in moving forward.

And who have the energy, which you seem to have an endless supply of. What's your secret?

Well, if you're going to be broke, you might as well have energy and be excited about something you love.

Is this current time period a creatively rich chapter in your life?

I feel like it's a dynamic time in my life. It's a complex time. I would prefer to have more time to do my own music work. I'm grateful to be in academia and have opportunities to work with our young people. But I'm also somewhat frustrated because time is going by very quickly. I'm not a kid anymore, and there is so much to do.

How would I describe this time period? It's really exciting and also frustrating. Yet, I also recognize that I have really had a fortunate life. I would love to complain, believe me, but the actual fact is that I have had real ups in my life and real downs.

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The advertisement features a portrait of Ignacio Berroa, a man with short grey hair and red-rimmed glasses, smiling. He is wearing a black t-shirt. The background is a dark, slightly blurred image of a drum set. The text is overlaid on the bottom half of the image.

ENRICO RAVA

COSMIC BALANCE

By Ted Panken ; Photo by Christopher Tribble

In a few hours, the 400 concertgoers would be gone, the chairs removed from the floor, and Barcelona's beautiful people would descend on Luz de Gas, a fin de siècle cabaret, to dance and party until dawn. But now, toward the end of Enrico Rava's set, the 72-year-old Italian trumpeter was cuing his quintet to segue from "I'm A Fool To Want You" into a tune that felt like the imaginary soundtrack to a scene of disequilibrium in a Fellini movie.

After projecting the melody with dark tone and soulful articulation, Rava, with a gesture evoking Marcello Mastroianni, cupped his trumpet to his side, closed his eyes, leaned back and began to sway as trombonist Gianluca Petrella filled the room with resonant melody. Rava's eyes remained shut as the band dropped out for Giovanni Guidi to launch an adagio, Keith Jarrett-like variation, transition into a quasi-tango and morph into a boogie-woogie on steroids. Rava opened his eyes and blew, spitting out fragmented, epigrammatic phrases from the Cecil Taylor playbook that coalesced into louché, strutting lines before resolving into the spiky lyric theme.

Rava wove together much of his cogent, 80-minute suite from the nine originals—ballads contemplative and noirish, songs informed by Italian and Brazilian folk music, groove tunes propelled by New Orleans and bebop beats—that constitute *Tribe*, his seventh studio outing for ECM since 2001, and the first featuring this personnel. A highlight is the leader's simpatico with Petrella—their intuitive polyphony, breathe-as-one unisons and idea-trading solos. Another is the rhythm section's control of dynamics and tempo—they're kinetic without bashing and move seamlessly between soft rubato and high-energy feels. Six tunes hearken to various spots on Rava's timeline; the session sounds summational, old master Rava and his acolytes taking stock of the raw materials that define his oeuvre.

The title track, he noted earlier that day, leads off the 1977 album *The Plot*, a product of Rava's first go-round with ECM, with his working quartet of guitarist John Abercrombie, bassist Palle Danielsson and drummer Jon Christensen. "Giovanni liked it and said we should play it," Rava commented, referencing his pianist. "I was

surprised he'd want to play a tune I recorded so long ago, but it sounded like I wrote it yesterday."

Speaking softly, in excellent English, Rava offered an exegesis. "I feel all my bands are like a tribe," he said. "Once I read that the Cherokees had a social organization where nobody owned anything, everything was for everybody and everybody used what they needed. It's a perfect idea of democracy. In a jazz group, when it works, that's what it really is. No one renounces their ego, but you don't impose your ego on everyone else. It's a perfect harmonic situation, like the cosmic balance, where everything is right. Maybe I bring a line, some chords, a little point where we meet and play what I want, but I leave everyone freedom within that frame to find what to add or take out. That way, I think the musicians who play with me give their best, better with me than when they play their own thing."

Rava acknowledged Miles Davis' impact on his predisposition for convening "not only good players, but musicians who are open to this music's entire history" as a way to conjure consistently fresh contexts for creative flow. "Whenever my band starts becoming routine, even a very good routine, I change," he said, noting that no quintet member except Petrella was with him 10 years ago. "Every tune we play, even if we play it every day, will never be the same. The day I get bored, fuck it, I'll do something else."

His affinity for full-bodied trombonists—he's shared front lines with Roswell Rudd, Ray Anderson and Albert Mangelsdorff—dates to childhood in Turin, when he absorbed his older brother's Bix Beiderbecke and Louis Armstrong recordings. "Listening to the trombone made the mechanism of their music so clear," he said. "Already I loved the trumpet players, but I whis-

pled all the trombone lines." He got one at 14, from the trombone player in a local Dixieland band. A few months later, he joined the band, "but my father didn't want me to come back late at night, so it was a tragedy. I was so bad at school that the trombone was locked in a closet, and that was the end."

A self-described "black sheep" and academic underperformer, Rava dropped out of school and started working "from the bottom" in the family business. Toward the end of 1956, Davis, Lester Young, Bud Powell and the Modern Jazz Quartet came to town. "I'd been listening to Miles' records like *Blue Haze*, and he was already my favorite," Rava said. "But I didn't imagine it could be so incredibly strong in person. The sound was filling the room. I kept the adrenalin; I couldn't sleep for a couple of days. Then I bought an old trumpet and started learning by myself, playing with the records by Miles and the Gerry Mulligan Quartet with Chet Baker. I wasn't planning to be a musician. But after a few months, they started calling me at jam sessions with amateurs, and eventually I found myself playing with very good people."

One of those people was tenor saxophonist Gato Barbieri, who suggested Rava make music his profession. "One day, I woke up and told my father, 'That's it.' It was a family drama that lasted forever, because my father was mad at me for the rest of his life. One morning, I left for Rome in my little car to play with Gato. We played 'Half Nelson,' 'Bye Bye Blackbird,' everything by the Miles Davis Quintet with Coltrane. From then on, it was all natural and easy."

Barbieri joined a group led by trumpeter Don Cherry in 1965, while Rava—now deep into Ornette Coleman and Albert Ayler's *Spirits*—



joined soprano saxophonist Steve Lacy's ensemble, playing Thelonious Monk and Carla Bley tunes in a quartet with Johnny Dyani and Louis Moholo. Rava recalled, "Since our improvisations had no relation to the tunes, we decided not to play the heads anymore, just to improvise from zero. That so-called 'free music' became the song of the young people's revolution in Europe—it had a heavy political connotation. But at a certain moment, this amazing freedom became a routine, a cliché finally less interesting than the bebop cliché. I started feeling that if a music is free, you should be free also to play a

melody if you want. But when I played a melody, I immediately heard, 'No, this is not free-jazz.' It became almost like religion.

"In fact, by the late '70s in Italy things got ridiculous, like Dadaism 40 years too late. We'd play a concert that was a Happening, where one guy played on top of a roof while another was on a horse. From the Fluxus point of view, maybe it was interesting, but from the musical point of view, no. I wanted to play again melodies, harmonies, rhythm. But I kept an idea of freedom also."

By this time, Rava had spent much of the previous decade in New York. "My idea was to go

where whatever you like to do happens," he said. "You could be the best musician in the world, but if you live in a small town in Italy, it will never happen for you. New York is where my idols were, all the people I wanted to meet." Given entree to the "new thing" crowd by Lacy and access to clubs by drummer Charles Moffett, who befriended him, Rava gigged with Rudd; sat in with Archie Shepp and Hank Mobley; heard Ayler and Jackie McLean at Slugs, and Davis and Monk at the Gate; and partied at Taylor's loft.

"One thing I got from American musicians is when you play, you play like it's the last time of your life," Rava said. "We didn't have this in Italy. The country was still very formal, we all looked like bureaucrats. So it was very impressive to be in New York. All these colors. Vietnam veterans marching in the streets. My first review in *DownBeat* was for a concert that I did with Roswell in '67. It was something that until a year before had been a dream, a fantasy I never expected to happen. When I started doing this in Italy, to be a jazz musician only—like a poet, an artist, not just a professional musician—was like wanting to be the chief of the Sioux tribe."

These days, Rava is acknowledged as the informal chief of a thriving tribe of Italian jazz folk. But he shoots down the notion of a generalized "Italian" style. "The only folklore we have that is for the whole country is opera," he says.

In fact, Rava paid little attention to opera until marrying his second wife, Lidia Panizzut, "an opera freak" who inspired his intriguing cusp-of-the-'90s projects *L'Opera Va* and *Carmen*. "She brought me for the first time to La Scala to see *La Traviata* and *Tosca*, and suddenly I found out that this thing is fantastic. But two records were enough. The context is too strict. With classical people you cannot say, 'OK, I play one chorus more.'"

This will not be an issue with Rava's next ECM project, a suite of Michael Jackson songs to be recorded after a performance three weeks hence with the Parco della Musica Jazz Lab at the Rome Jazz Festival.

"[My wife] laughs at me, because every morning, when I wake up, still with the eyes closed, I take my trumpet, which I have very close to my bed, and check whether the lips vibrate on the mouthpiece," he said, describing a ritual he started after reconstructive dental surgery two years ago. "I used to consider myself more like a guy who organizes sounds and then sings, but I never fell in love with the instrument itself. But in my sixties I started practicing much more. I gained an octave. I found the right mouthpiece, the one Miles used to play, a Heim #1. Everything was going good until these implants. Of course, I lost that octave!

"Over the last two–three months it's coming back. If I vibrate the trumpet, my wife knows I'll be in a good mood all day. Just one note. 'Oggi vibra,' 'Today it vibrates.'"

Rava's scheduled U.S. tour dates include gigs in San Francisco (Feb. 17), Portland (Feb. 18) and New York City (Feb 21–25). **DB**

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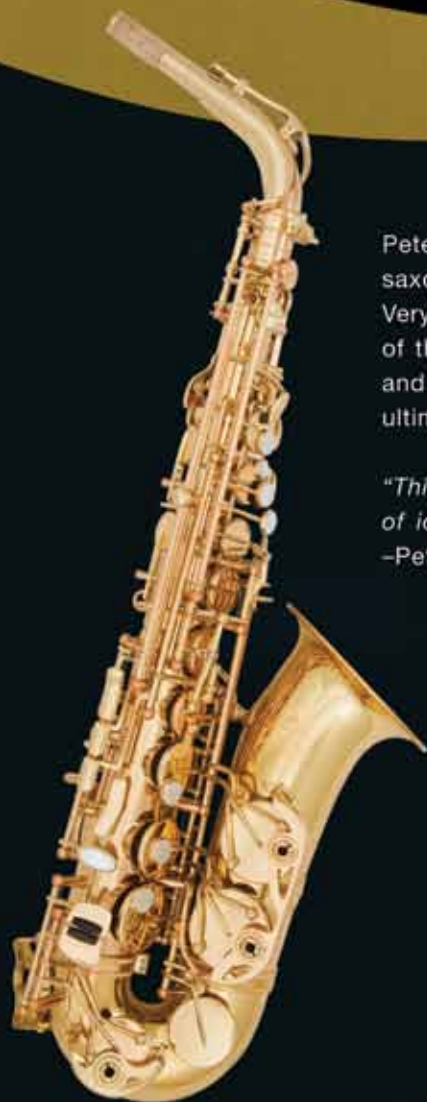
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Enrico Rava

For the second annual DownBeat Blindfold/Winefold Test, trumpeter Enrico Rava listened to tracks that had been paired thematically with wines selected by sommelier César Cánovas. The live session took place at the wine club Monvínic as part of the 2011 Voll-Damm Barcelona International Jazz Festival. In the text below, Rava comments on the music, and Cánovas describes the rationale for each wine selection.

Roy Hargrove Big Band

"My Funny Valentine" (from *Emergence*, EmArcy, 2009) Hargrove, flugelhorn; Frank Greene, Greg Gisbert, Darren Barrett, Ambrose Akinmusire, trumpets; Jason Jackson, Vincent Chandler, Saunders Sermons, trombones; Max Seigel, bass trombone; Bruce Williams, Justin Robinson, Norbert Stachel, Keith Loftis, Jason Marshall, saxophones; Gerald Clayton, piano; Danton Boller, bass; Montez Coleman, drums.

Wine: Emilio Lustau, Jerez-Sherry, Solera East India (Palomino): "A slow, deliberate, almost melancholy number, but with a full, opulent big band backing. We have chosen a fortified wine with intensity and persistence. Its sweetness offers volume and density. A wine that needs time and deliberation. Its toasty aromas of nuts transport us to an autumn setting."

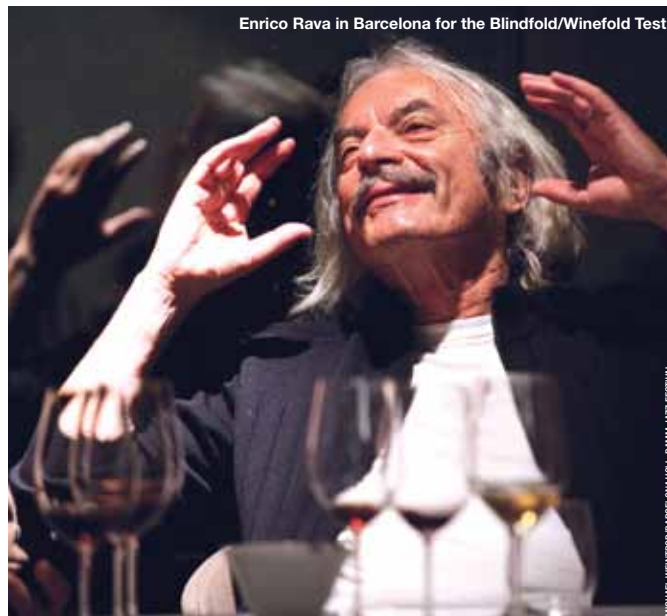
This is tricky. I have no idea who it could be. It's very, let's say, traditional playing, but it's somebody that plays very well, has a big sound. I don't hear that big personality. It could be somebody like Chris Botti. It's a very traditional way of playing. He plays very well. He has a really good sound. I thought it was a flugelhorn, by the way. He reminds me, in a way, of a trumpet player who I just saw a video of—a DVD of this cat, called Chris Botti, who was playing exactly "My Funny Valentine." I know it's not him, but it reminds me of him. Who is it? [after] No! It's incredible. I must say, I don't know that well Roy Hargrove, but the little I know, I like him a lot. But I would never recognize him. To me it didn't sound like him. I've heard him playing a little bit like that in one record, the one with Shirley Horn, which was the homage to Miles Davis. But this was pretty different. I'm used to hearing Roy Hargrove more wild, in a way. I could give it 3 stars. But only 3, because, although the arrangement was very good, the trumpet was played very delightful, but it didn't really go anywhere. But it was very nice. It was nice to be out with a nice girl to dinner and have this record playing.

Avishai Cohen

"Art Deco" (from *Introducing Triveni*, Anzic, 2010) Cohen, trumpet; Omer Avital, bass; Nasheet Waits, drums.

Wine: Viña Von Siebenthal, Valle del Aconcagua Carmenere 2007 (Chile): "A contemporary, modern, energetic and intense trumpeter. Chile is one of the so-called new world countries and a paradism in the elaboration of modern wines, with a strong presence of mature fruit edged with hints of aging in new oak. Dense, full and substantial wines. Ripening the Camembert grape can pose problems. It needs to be taken to the limit of maturity to avoid aggressive textures and vegetal notes."

The tune is a Don Cherry tune. It's called "Art Deco." By the way, I am going to play this tune tomorrow. The trumpet player should be...because I just played with him...it should be Avishai Cohen. Personally, I love the way he plays. Besides, I love the person, too. He's one of the greatest today. The tune is fantastic because it had the roots in the real tradition of jazz. It could almost be a Dixieland tune—a New Orleans tune. But at the same time, it allows you to open up. It's one of those tunes that have no limits. It is not limited to a certain period. It could be played by a New Orleans player, or by a free player. It's very open and very easy to remember, too. I love melodies. It has a very catchy melody. It's very smart, but is very poetic at the same time. One of the best tunes Don Cherry brought—although he brought so many beautiful tunes. But this one stands out. I love the way Avishai played it. You kind of got me, because I didn't know who it could be, but then I recognized the attack. He has a very special way of playing. 5 stars for the tune, for the beautiful trumpet and for the beautiful cat.



Jerry Gonzalez

"In A Sentimental Mood" (from *Y El Comando De La Clave*, Sunnyside, 2011) Gonzalez, flugelhorn, congas; Diego "El Cigala" Salazar, vocals; Israel Suarez "Piraña," cajon; Alain Perez, guitar.

Wine: André and Mireille Tissot, Arbois, Savagnin, 2007 (France): "This number conveys the lament, the pain, the sentiment of flamenco (which we also find in the blues) expressed through the language of Cuban music and the improvisation of jazz. The wines from the alpine region of Jura have and always have had a lot in common with Andalusian wines, due to very similar winemaking techniques. Fusion? French spirit with an Andalusian accent."

I have no idea. The idea is nice, trumpet and voice. But then I'm not so sure they really interact. Maybe that was the intention, to keep something so quiet. It's OK. I would give it 2½ stars. Anyway, it is my taste. Something it is fantastic. But the way they did it, it didn't get to me. [after] Now I know why I didn't know who it was, because I really don't know at all Jerry Gonzalez's music. Maybe I never heard him play. So there was no way to know him. He's a good player, of course. But today, everybody is good. I'm not crazy about the way they materialized this idea. But the idea was good. I was taken by the music. I was listening to it, except I was waiting for the two of them to [interact] some more.

Tomasz Stanko

"Kattorna" (from *Lontano*, ECM, 2006) Stanko, trumpet; Marcin Wasilewski, piano; Slawomir Kurkiewicz, bass; Michal Miskiewicz, drums.

Wine: Prager, Wachau Riesling Federspiel Steinriegl, 2010 (Austria): "Modern and contemporary European jazz that transports us to a cold and mysterious place, yet also has a rich lyricism. The Riesling grape has an acidic, deep, hard, almost aggressive structure, yet is also refreshing and smooth, with beautiful aromas that flow from the glass and hang suspended, offering us subtlety and tonality."

Here again, I don't really know who it could be. It's one of these new cats that play the hell out of the trumpet. I'll just say one name: It could be Ambrose [Akinmusire]. But it's not. He is my age? Impossible. Nobody is my age. Except dead people. A contemporary of mine. American? I don't know who could play like that in Europe, in this style. The people I like, that I know the way they play, one is the Danish guy, for instance, but it's not him. What's his name, the Danish guy that I admire...Allan Botschinsky, but it's not. I don't think I can get him. It was very nice. The guy was playing beautiful. I was not crazy about the tune. In fact, there was no tune. It was really a rhythmic phrase, but it was very good trumpet playing, and I'm very amazed that you say he's a contemporary of mine and he's European. Because Europeans of my age, the only one is Tomasz Stanko—it's not him. [after] It is? Well, let me tell you that I know Tomasz so well, I've played with him so many times, and I would never recognize

Tomasz. I never heard him play so straight and to phrase in such an orthodox way. I didn't even know he could. I knew he was very good playing a certain thing. But I didn't expect him to play like that—to play this. For me, it is a big surprise. I almost don't believe it. I should see the picture! But being Tomasz Stanko, the only thing I can say is I hope he reads this in DownBeat and he listens to what I am going to tell him: Tomasz, you are playing really unbelievably. Congratulations. I always liked you, but I didn't know you could play so well, like in this record. 5 stars for Tomasz. Not for the tune. The tune I didn't really care for. But 5 stars.

Eddie Henderson

"Popo" (from *For All We Know*, Furthermore, 2010) Henderson, trumpet; John Scofield, guitar; Doug Weiss, bass; Billy Drummond, drums.

Wine: Bodega Mas Alta, Priorat, Artigas, 2008 (Garnatxa, Carinyena): "A classical education, experimentation, and then back to the classical roots of hard-bop, this is the journey of Eddie Henderson. And so we consider Priorat to be the alter ego of Eddie Henderson. An historic wine region that was reborn in the 1980s through experimentation and reinvention, and has since returned to its roots by giving more and more importance to its traditional varieties, the Garnatxa and Carinyena, and trying to concentrate more on expressing balance and freshness without losing any of the strength and body of the terroir."

The problem is that when they play with the Harmon mute, they all sound alike. They all sound like Miles. That's why I never play with the Harmon mute. It could be many people. For instance, Paolo Fresu sounds like that a lot—but it's not him. It was a nice feeling. It wasn't particularly exciting for me. I'll give it 3½ stars, whoever it is. [after] He's a trumpet player I don't know too well. I used to hear him when he was playing with Herbie Hancock in the '70s, and sometimes I happened to meet him in some festival, but I don't really know what he's doing, so there was no way I could recognize him. Anyway, he sounded very good, of course. But the tune itself didn't kill me.

Kenny Wheeler

"The Lover Mourns" (from *What Now? CamJazz*, 2004) Wheeler, flugelhorn; Chris Potter, tenor saxophone; John Taylor, piano; Dave Holland, bass.

Wine: Tamar Ridge, Tasmania, Pinot Noir, Devil's Corner, 2008 (Australia). "The Pinot Noir grape well reflects many of the ideas that we find in the music of Kenny Wheeler, like delicacy, lyricism and poetry. Intense suspended bouquet, smooth textures and a restrained freshness and tension in this wine from the coolest region of Australia."

This is an enjoyable piece, 4 stars. The whole tune has a nice atmosphere. The trumpet player is excellent. There's many people who can play like that. I must say that as much as I knew all the trumpet players of the '50s and '60s very well, now I have a certain problem with today's trumpet players, because they all play to a very, very high level, but at the same time it's very difficult to recognize. When you're talking about trumpet players of the past, you hear one note of Chet [Baker] and say, "Oh, this is Chet"; one note of Miles, "This is Miles." Everyone had a different technique, a different tone. Today, I don't hear that. Now, maybe it's my ears that are not as good as they used to be! That is another possibility. This one had something I knew. Maybe once you tell me who it is I'll say, "How could I not?" [after] Oh, Kenny. OK. This is another thing. As much as the Harmon mute, the flugelhorn tends to unify the sounds. Everyone, even my aunt, gets this beautiful warm and dark sound with the flugelhorn, but it takes away a little bit of the personality of the trumpet player. Of course, Kenny is someone who I know very well. We even toured together. I'm sorry. I should have recognized him. It was a nice tune. Very enjoyable. Who was the piano player? John Taylor? Ah, that's why it was so good.

Ambrose Akinmusire

"What's New" (from *When The Heart Emerges Glistening*, Blue Note, 2010) Akinmusire, trumpet; Gerald Clayton, piano.

Wine: Bodegas Marañones, Vinos de Madrid, 30,000 Maradevies, 2009 (Garnacha). "We find many parallels between the two young talents of Ambrose Akinmusire, the new prodigy on the renowned Blue Note label, and Fernando Garcia, the young self-taught winemaker, who is working to recuperate Garnachas from the old vines of the Sierra de Gredos. With a very contemporary approach to winemaking,

he aims for a fresh wine style, with little intervention, in an attempt to provide the maximum expression of the vineyard."

Is that Uri Caine on piano? No? It sounds a little bit like him when he does this. Dave Douglas? No. I thought so from the sound of a certain phrase at the beginning. Then I thought no, but he's the only one who came to my mind. I really liked what the trumpeter did. It was very natural, flowing, and also harmonically it was very interesting. The way the tune started, that they didn't play the head, they started improvising—it was a very nice. Nothing special, but anyway a good idea to play "What's New" like that. 4½ stars. [after] Oh! I swear I was going to say that. No, really. It's true. I was thinking Ambrose. I only heard one record of Ambrose, but he plays much more... how can I say? It's not a negative thing; it's a positive thing. There shows up most of the time more of his amazing technique. He's one of the trumpet players who has really impressed me enormously lately, so much that I wanted to have him next year in the festival of which I am the director. That tells you how much I like this guy. He really goes up and down this instrument. Although I said 4½ stars, I could even say 5 stars. The thing is, it didn't last long enough. 4½ for the tune; 5 for Ambrose.

Jazz at Lincoln Center Orchestra with Wynton Marsalis

"La Llamada De La Sangre (Blood Cry)" (from *Vitoria Suite*, EmArcy, 2010) Marsalis, trumpet; Sean Jones, Ryan Kisor, Marcus Printup, trumpets; Vincent Gardner, Chris Crenshaw, Elliot Mason, trombones; Sherman Irby, Ted Nash, Walter Blanding Jr., Joe Temperley, saxophones, woodwinds; Dan Nimmer, piano; Carlos Henriquez, bass; Ali Jackson, drums.

Wine: Bodegas López de Heredia, Rioja Viña Bosconia Reserva, 2002 (Tempranillo, Garnacho, Mazuelo, Graciano). "Wynton Marsalis was the arch revivalist of classicism in the 1980s. Impassive to criticism, he sought to rediscover classical jazz. The López de Heredia bodega is an excellent example of classicism, tradition and resistance. Almost all of the bodegas in Rioja, whether large or small, succumbed to the siren song of modernity. At López de Heredia, the third generation chose to maintain the legacy and character of their forebears despite the changes all around them and the pressures to alter their style. Now, faithful to this tradition, they are still the landmark winery they have always been."

That's a Miles phrase from *Sketches Of Spain*. Is that trumpet or cornet? It sounded like an homage to Miles, some citation from *Sketches Of Spain*, and then at the last minute it sounded like a kind of thing for Duke Ellington. It could be Dave Douglas. It could! But it's not. The piece got me. I like it. In fact, I'm glad I did this Blindfold Test where I didn't get nobody except Avishai, because it gave me the will now to go out tomorrow here in Barcelona, where there is a very good store, to buy some records. Maybe in my playing it doesn't sound like it, but I'm still listening always to the same thing that I've listening to for 50 years. I still listen to Bix, to Satchmo, to Miles. So there's a lot of things I don't know, I don't listen, and it's probably a big mistake. Now I feel like going out to buy stuff. And also to retire, because people play so good.

The composition was very interesting. It was a very nice arrangement. There was some Gil Evans stuff in it. In fact, it reminded me of some of Gil Evans' things 50 years ago with Johnny Coles—even the way the trumpet player sounded. Because there was some Miles in it, but of course it was not Miles. It's a nice record. I would like to buy it, in fact. But I have no idea who it is. I couldn't even tell you now if I think this thing had been done today or 40 years ago. In fact, this is another thing that confirms what I have been saying all the time, that the last big change in the language was done by Ornette in the late '50s and early '60s, and from then on, we still metabolize whatever we'd been doing before. I will give it 4½ stars. I could give more, but 4½ is a lot of stars. I wish I'd get 4½ often. [after] I have many records by Wynton Marsalis. I would never recognize him in this tune. He sounds different. Usually at home, to have fun, I play with records, and one of the records I play very often is Wynton Marsalis' record *Live At The House Of Tribes*, where he plays only standards. If you compare what he played on that record with what he plays on this record, there's no way you could say it's the same person. So what can I say? I didn't recognize him; the tune was beautiful. It's very interesting, because that makes my judgment much more real. I want to go buy this record. **DB**

JOHN HOLLENBECK

The Right Chemistry

By John Ephland | Photo by Jos L. Knaepen

Listening to John Hollenbeck talk is like to listening to John Hollenbeck play. That's how good he is at describing his art. Then again, there's nothing quite like hearing the terrific array of colors and contrasts he has crafted over the course of 11 CDs as a leader of both large and small ensembles.

It's a good thing Hollenbeck's got a knack for explaining his music because some people may not "get it" upon first listen, what with its unconventional twists and stop-on-a-dime turns. Still, for listeners who love intelligent music, this drummer/composer who kicks ass at both positions has his finger on a pulse that a growing number find hard to resist. At press time, he'd just received yet another Grammy nomination, this time in the category Best Instrumental Composition for "Falling Men," a track from his large-ensemble album with the Orchestre National de Jazz, *Shut Up And Dance* (Bee Jazz/Abeille Musique). The title of that CD indicates something about Hollenbeck's personality: You never can tell with this guy.

And that attribute applies to his main gig, the Claudia Quintet, as well. Consider their latest album, *What Is The Beautiful?* (Cuneiform). Full of recited and sung poetry, along with intricate arrangements and freewheeling instrumental expression, the CD is another departure from Hollenbeck's norm-less norm. As critic John Murph aptly noted in a 4½ star *DownBeat* review (December 2011), "The singers play a crucial role on this album because it's Kenneth Patchen's pioneering poetry that serves as its launching pad."

"I knew who Kenneth Patchen was," Hollenbeck explains from the comfort of a Midtown Manhattan hotel lounge chair, "most-

ly because he made two records with poetry and jazz. And I'd read two things in jazz literature about his working with Charlie Mingus, and the other might be a myth that Charlie Parker used to carry around Patchen's poetry books."

As Hollenbeck quietly speaks, the hotel's revolving front door constantly spins nearby. That perpetually swinging door is a metaphor for his busy musical life, which seems to be filled with new opportunities at every turn.

With all things Hollenbeck, musically speaking, there usually is a back-story: "I got this call," he continues, "from Richard Peek, the director of Rare Books, Special Collections [& Preservation] at Rush Rhees Library at the University of Rochester. They were doing an exhibition for Kenneth Patchen's 100th birthday of his poems, paintings and drawings, and covers for record labels and books. And there's a jazz lover in Rochester who, typically for their exhibitions, will fund a CD, a recording of some kind. So they asked me if I wanted to do something. I kind of took it from there."

As the story develops, one can get a peek into the creative process Hollenbeck follows, a process that smacks of Zen, the metaphorical brush following the canvas. "I thought it would be a really interesting project for the Claudia Quintet," he says, "and to make it a commercial release. That was about a year ago. So over the Christmas holidays, I couldn't find any Kenneth

Patchen books in the bookstores, so I went to the library and read just about everything he did. There's a good biography, and that helped. If I found something that hit me in some way, I'd write that down, and I got a list of maybe 20 or so poems. He had a wide variety, but maybe five definite genres that he was working in. So I wanted to take a cross-section of those."

Singers Kurt Elling and Theo Bleckmann both played crucial, unique roles in the project (Bleckmann having previously worked with Hollenbeck). In this instance, that uniqueness included their using the written word even as Hollenbeck found new ways to compose. He may discuss it as though it were business as usual when he put the music together, but there was something different going on. Commenting on the process of going from the written word to the written note, he says, "I try to separate each piece and really let each piece be its own thing. Like, 'The Snow Is Deep On The Ground'—one of Patchen's love poems—I thought of Theo, I thought of a song, whatever that means, and then just started working with the rhythm, writing down what the rhythm could be.

"The stuff that Kurt's on," Hollenbeck adds, "I had, for the title track, a real idea, but there was no way to put it together beforehand. Kurt came in before anybody else because he couldn't be there on the same day as us. He came in and recited maybe 10 poems. And then I wrote



John Hollenbeck performing in Antwerp, Belgium, Nov. 11, 2011

music, after I had recordings of him reciting the poems. Then I had actual rhythms, and pitches, in some cases. So those pieces were a completely different process than the other ones. There were a couple of poems that I had no idea what they meant [because] they flipped around so many times. For example, the title poem—you think you know, and then all of a sudden, he comes up with a different voice. He goes from dark to light really quickly sometimes. It can be pretty disorienting. Some of them I just knew that I wanted to do something, but I couldn't figure what the poem was about, and it took me a long time. I kept reading the poem."

Hollenbeck comments that certain poems reminded him of something or someone specific. "Some of them are really narrative, like 'Opening The Window,' the last track, is like a story," he says. "Those were a little easier, and then I could just go with the flow and keep the environment. With each one, I just tried to wait and let each one be its own thing, its own direction."

The unpredictable Hollenbeck then offers another revealing tidbit: "What Is The Beautiful? was the first record we [created] in the studio," he states. "[With] all our other records, the music was done; we performed it, and then we recorded it. We performed a couple of the Theo songs right before the recording, but everything else was done in the studio. So I was able to experiment a little, and come up with some things in the studio that I hadn't really figured out. For instance, 'The Limpidity Of Silences' was one of those enigmatic poems that I was trying to figure out for a long time. Consequently, the first [thing] I came up with was to write a piano solo for this poem. And then I had both Kurt and Theo recite it. I had Theo recite it in a kind of whispering voice. I finally ended up embedding that poem quietly in the middle of the piano solo."

Giving the album a special imprimatur, the Claudia Quintet's premiere performance of all the music took place in November at John Zorn's The Stone in Manhattan, with Bleckmann handling the vocals. In attendance was impresario George Wein, who has booked the band for the 2012 Newport Jazz Festival, on Aug. 3–5.

A full, fascinating discussion of Hollenbeck's innovative approaches to writing can be found in his DownBeat essay "Composing From A Drummer's Perspective" (Woodshed, November 2011). Echoing ideas from that article, he extends the conversation, talking about certain advantages unique to drummers. "It comes down to if you're mostly a drummer, you're not working with pitches as much as other instrumentalists are. So that is the first dilemma. But it can be a good thing, because when you start dealing with pitches, you have more of a freer relationship with them. If you're an instrumentalist, you practice a lot of scales, a lot of patterns, and a lot of people call upon those things in their moment of need. When you're composing, you have a lot of those moments. So, you might tend to write something that you've already done, that you know. But if you don't know anything, or you

don't have anything to grab onto, then it's harder in that moment. But in the end, you can hopefully get something that's a bit more refreshing. In essence, that's turning a disadvantage of being a drummer to your advantage. That's a big part of it. Then again, like the access point, if the rhythm element of your piece is strong, you've got a great foundation. It's not as simple as paint-by-numbers, but it could be a B-flat. If it's not a B-flat, try a B. If it's not a B, try an A. I've done an exercise that I talk about in that article where I transcribe a great drum solo and then apply pitches to it. Because the rhythmic element and sometimes the formal element—like in the case of most Max Roach solos—is so strong, the pitches have it easy!"

“As a
drummer,
you can
destroy it,
or you can
make it
happen.”

Hollenbeck, who serves as a professor of jazz drums and improvisation at the Jazz Institute Berlin, brings his wisdom to the classroom. "I tell my students," he says, "to write a piece with only rhythm and get that really solid. Then you add pitches, and that helps you see how the rhythm aspect is more important. It's a glue—it's a foundational thing. Bob Brookmeyer said something like, 'Pitch is the color; rhythm is the carrier.' It's important, but you gotta have those rhythm elements to be very strong. As a drummer, you're usually looking at this overall picture of a piece. You're playing and helping with the overall thing, and that comes in real handy as a composer. Non-drummers maybe haven't done that as much. They may be writing good small things, parts or miniatures, but it's hard as a composer to see the whole thing—what the piece means, what the emotional impact of the piece is, and where's it going. So, as a drummer, a lot of times you're more responsible than anyone else in the group is to make that part of it happen. You can destroy it, or you can make it happen."

For Hollenbeck, the other side of the player-away-from-the-drums coin is that of the arranger. In October, Hollenbeck took on key duties in tribute to another one of his musical inspirations, trumpeter Kenny Wheeler. "Working

with Kenny at the Jazz Standard," he notes, "was a combination of 'our thing, my thing and Kenny's thing' at the same time. Everybody was really happy with the way it held all those kinds of things at the same time. When you're arranging, if you go too far, then it's not arranging anymore—people don't hear the song, and they don't recognize that it's an arrangement. But if you don't go far enough, then it's like you really didn't do anything [laughs]. So, it's a balancing act."

Hollenbeck's process is somewhat similar whether he's arranging for a small group or large ensemble. "When I start arranging," Hollenbeck says, "I arrange it so far that it becomes another thing. Take 'Foreign One,' the first track from the last John Hollenbeck Large Ensemble record, *Eternal Interlude*. It started out as an arrangement of 'Four In One,' the Monk tune, and then became something else. But in the case of all the arrangements I did for the Frankfurt Radio Big Band that my large ensemble played at Newport in August, those actually maintain the essence of the song. You can hear the song. So I played with that to see how far I could go but still keep the song."

The performance at the 2011 Newport Jazz Festival featured arrangements Hollenbeck wrote for special guests Bleckmann, Kate McGarry and Gary Versace. The music was recorded with the 18-piece Frankfurt band, and the resulting album is due out in April. "It's an arrangement record of pop tunes," Hollenbeck states, "but I put a couple of my tunes on it as well.... Part of the process [was] trying to figure out what pop music is to me." Hollenbeck notes there are a couple Jimmy Webb tunes, a Queen song and music by Imogen Heap, Nobukazu Takemura and Kraftwerk, as well as the traditional tune "A Man Of Constant Sorrow."

Having seen Hollenbeck perform with the University of Michigan Jazz Ensemble, playing works from *Eternal Interlude* (Sunnyside), this writer got a firsthand look at how the drummer works with a large ensemble. "I have a conductor," Hollenbeck explains. "With the large ensemble, the leading-the-band part, a lot of it takes place beforehand, in rehearsals. The actual leading is more about being in the moment. Not really for cues, but the inspiration, the time, the vibe. You can't write it down, so you have to talk through it." In fact, Hollenbeck was at his helm behind the drum kit, while Ellen Rowe, associate professor and Chair of Jazz and Contemporary Improvisation, conducted the ensemble in the sanctuary of St. Andrew's Episcopal Church. It was magical to witness how Hollenbeck's pre-show prep freed him up to be "just" one of the players while Rowe took charge of the complex piece of music.

While arranging for Wheeler and working and studying with Brookmeyer were real treats, when asked about other musical influences, Hollenbeck quickly goes into deep reflection. The self-effacing artist then chooses to add some autobiographical history. "What hap-

pened to me was, from day one, I was looking at my brother, Pat, who's a composer/arranger/drummer," Hollenbeck says. "And then there's our first teacher, Russ Black. He believed you should do everything: You should be equipped to play every style and every percussion instrument, and you should be able to read well. That was something that was drilled into me. Both my brother and Russ Black gave me this sense that all musicians are composer/arrangers. Which, now I know, is not true [laughs]. I didn't realize that until I went to college [at Eastman School of Music].

"Two things I realized when I got to college," Hollenbeck continues, "were that a lot of people haven't been listening to jazz. I'd been listening to it since I was 10. A lot of these people were just kinda getting into jazz. When I got to college, I still hadn't written too much. I'd written one big-band arrangement and some different arrangements and songs, but I was trying. A lot of people weren't trying. I thought, 'Oh, you don't have to do it.' I was always under the impression you *had* to do it as part of the deal. So, a lot of it was my brother pushing me and bringing records home."

Eventually mentioning some better-known artists who've influenced him, Hollenbeck goes on to say, "I met Bob Brookmeyer when I was about 12. In high school, I still didn't have the skills to do much. I was still learning basic theory. It took me a couple years at Eastman to get the skills together, and then I went to the Banff Workshop in Jazz and Creative Music and met Muhal Richard Abrams. That was a catalyst moment. Like most people, I was gathering up all this material but didn't have a way to get it out, with the tools and skills. So, it was just a matter of getting that together."

The prolific Hollenbeck chuckles when reflecting on how many projects he juggles. "Right now I'm trying to work on a conceptual piece from an Earth, Wind & Fire song for the Gotham Wind Symphony," he says. "I'm also trying to get a new group together, and that's a little vague. I think I have a gig, and I think I have a group for the gig. It would be [saxophonist] Scott Robinson, [keyboardist] Craig Taborn and [trumpeter] Ambrose Akinmusire. So, I definitely feel another group coming on."

As to what kind of sound this band would have, Hollenbeck seems to point in all directions. Is it based more around the particular musicians rather than an idea? "Yeah," he says. "I want to get people who are really different than me. That's the main thing, different than each other and who don't know each other or don't play in each other's zones already. These guys definitely fit that category. I've only played with Scott. I know Craig, but I've never played with him. I know Ambrose, and I like his music a lot. I'm starting to think about what we'd actually play."

Looking back, Hollenbeck confesses, "I always thought I wanted to be a straightahead jazz drummer, and be like a big-band drummer. I kind of hit my climax around 1997, '98,

playing with the Vanguard Jazz Orchestra in Mel Lewis' old chair, subbing for John Riley on some Mondays. But I was also playing other Mondays at alt.coffee in the Village with our newly formed Claudia Quintet. During this period, I feel like I finally saw who I was, or at least who I wanted to be, which involved a combination of leading a group, composing and playing non-genre-specific music."

The Claudia Quintet—formed in the wake of another band, the Refuseniks—currently features acoustic bassist Drew Gress, accordion player Ted Reichman, reedist Chris Speed

and Matt Moran on vibes and percussion. Hollenbeck explains the Claudia Quintet's mission in a matter-of-fact manner: "I wanted this group to be able to play completely notated 'new music' as well as jazz-based, improv-based music. So I was emulating the common-name format of chamber ensembles.

"I was thinking and plotting my own group since my first days in New York in the early '90s. After many years, it finally came together, with the right chemistry of personnel and instrumentation. Something I can truly call my own."

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The Artist as Label

By Dan Ouellette

In more ways than one, Willie Jones III owes a debt of gratitude to the late, legendary drummer Billy Higgins.

Jones is the top-tier, straightahead jazz drummer who pilots the label WJ3 Records, which he founded in 2000 to release his debut album. Today the WJ3 artist roster includes marquee stars Eric Reed, Cyrus Chestnut and Justin Robinson (the latter two making their label debuts in 2012).

“Billy was a mentor, and he was always talking about independence,” says the New York-based Jones, while sipping on a cup of hot cider at Joe The Art of Coffee cafe near Union Square and reminiscing about the birth of Black Note, a quintet he co-founded with Marcus Shelby in Los Angeles in the early '90s. “I didn’t put much stock in what Billy said at the time, but it was always in the back of my mind. Billy emphasized that it was important not to rely on major labels that told you when to record, who to record with and what to record—the whole nine yards.”

At the time, Jones was breaking into the jazz scene in L.A. by frequenting impromptu sessions, including the World Stage that Higgins and poet Kamau Daáood founded in 1989 as a humble storefront space for dance and vocal workshops, poetry readings, live shows and weekly jams. “When we formed Black Note, Billy heard us and said, ‘You guys should make a record,’ then put up some money to record *43rd & Degnan* in 1991 on his World Stage label,” recalls Jones.

The album created a buzz that led to a major label deal, after all. Columbia scooped up the group, which released the well-received *Jungle Music* in 1994. “Columbia signed us, then dropped us after the first record,” says Jones, with a smile. “But then Impulse signed us, we released *Nothin’ But The Swing* [in 1996], and they dropped us. It dawned on me that these companies on a whim can say that your career is not worth investing in anymore, and you’re gone.” (Black Note also recorded the album *L.A. Underground* for an Italian label that was distributed in 1994 by Red.)

Black Note largely disintegrated when Jones began touring internationally with trumpeter Arturo Sandoval. A few years later in 1997, Jones moved to New York and soon began working in trumpeter Roy Hargrove’s band, an invaluable gig that lasted eight years.

Shortly into his tenure with Hargrove, Jones was already thinking of making his own



Willie Jones III

album. Jones admits that he started at the top. “Yes, I knocked on a few doors of the majors,” he says. “I knew people at some of those labels from my previous experiences. But there were no takers. Then I approached a couple of quality indie labels. Same thing. No takers. Then I remembered Billy. What am I doing? I might just as well do it myself.”

Easier said than done, but Jones kept his eyes on the prize, which turned out to be the very fine *Volume 1...Straight Swingin’*, with a band that included such personnel as alto saxophonist Sherman Irby and pianists Eric Reed and Billy Childs. It was a labor of love that Jones took a step at a time. “I saved up some money, and I recorded,” he explains. “Then I saved up a little more and I mixed, then a little more and I pressed it up.”

Jones concedes that he probably didn’t break even on his first outing. However, he says, “When I hold that CD in my hand, I know it’s mine and I own it, and it doesn’t matter if I sell five copies or 5,000. I didn’t have to answer to anyone, I’m my own A&R person, I’m the musician, I’m the producer—everything. I came to find out how much I love the process of being in the studio, of mixing the record, of making the CD. And you can do it on your own time because you are the label.”

Jones has never viewed WJ3 Records as a vanity project to solely release his own music. “From the time of my first CD, I had a wish list that I could develop a boutique label with maybe six or seven other artists,” he says. As it turned out, while he was beginning to work on his sophomore album, *Volume 2...Don’t Knock the Swing* (2002), Jones approached a Latin jazz band, the Banda Brothers, which he knew from his L.A. days, to record for WJ3. “I was barely scraping up the nickels for my own album, but on a trip home to see my family in 2001 I saw them play,” he says. “I knew them from the Black Note days, and they were killing. So I asked Ramon Banda, if I could come up with some money, would they be interested in recording for me. They said yes, so I came to L.A. and we recorded their debut in 2003, *Acting Up!* That’s been my philosophy as WJ3 has grown: If I really like something, let me see if I can make it happen.”

Another case in point is pianist Eric Reed, a friend from Jones’ teenage years who has recorded for Impulse, MaxJazz, Savant and HighNote, among others. “Eric is a godsend,” says Jones. “We go back well over 20 years. We played in church together. Later we both realized we were into jazz and Billy Higgins, so we reconnected at World Stage. He played a lit-

tle with Black Note, but by that time he was already living in New York. I always wanted to record him, but it seemed like he was always recording for some other label. But one time, we were conversing on an airplane after a gig, and I was talking to him about WJ3, and he suggested, 'Why don't I record for you?'"

That conversation led to three Reed albums, which are *WE 2* (the 2007 duo date of jazz and gospel standards with trombonist Wycliffe Gordon), the all-originals *Stand!* (2009) and WJ3's biggest seller to date—*Something Beautiful* (2011), an excellent CD that is the pianist's 20th release. Next, in response to a request from Jones, Reed will go into the studio to record a solo piano album for WJ3. "What I appreciate about Willie is that he always supports my musical vision," says Reed, who will also be releasing a Thelonious Monk project on HighNote in 2012. "It's always great to work with someone you trust, who's straight-up, honest, co-operative. On many labels, you tend to get lost in the shuffle and even cast out. But recording with Willie, I feel perfectly comfortable and in complete creative control."

Reed, who appears on Jones' last two solo projects (2006's *Volume III* and 2010's *The Next Phase*), marvels at how he brings the whole package together, from the administrative to the musical. "What Willie does would split my mind," he says with a laugh. "He's overseeing the projects, and I need that outside perspective. He's wearing a lot of hats, plus he's a touring musician."

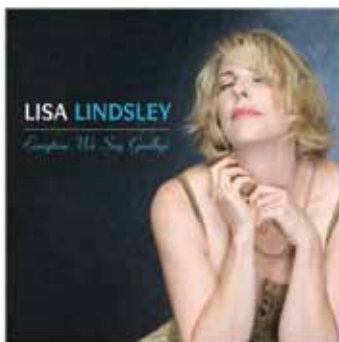
Chestnut, whose first outing with WJ3 Records is a rare quartet date of original arrangements, agrees with Reed. "It's good to be on a label that allows artists to be themselves," Chestnut says. "Willie has been supportive of the cats. He's concerned about good music. If it feels good, he's going to send it out to the masses."

Jones feels strongly about the artist's vision. "All the jazz marketers used to feel like they needed a concept, [such as] a tribute album or a songbook," he says. "But that's played itself out; it's been overblown. I have a new idea: Let's just get behind whatever an artist wants to record. That's what we're going to market. Who am I to tell Eric Reed what to record? I'm not here to mold an artist into something. If you've got good music, let's do it."

As for future growth, Jones wants to take WJ3 to the next level while continuing to do sideman work with Cedar Walton, Roberta Gambarini, Jimmy Heath and others. "I'd like to record somebody I've heard in a club or someone who would approach me with a demo that's good," he says. "Maybe this will happen in another three years or so."

What if, in the meantime, a major label or large indie approached him to record? "If they did, it would have to be for a lot of money, and at this point, that's just not going to happen." Jones smiles and adds, "I'm perfectly happy right where I am."

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Brooklyn Jazz Underground's Collective Vision

By Bradley Bambarger

“Confusion can be the way to success, apparently,” says bassist Alexis Cuadrado. A native of Spain who has spent a decade-plus based in New York, he is one of the moderators of the record label affiliated with the Brooklyn Jazz Underground collective.

Cuadrado explains that the label's biggest hit since its launch in 2008—pianist David Cook's 2010 trio album, *Pathway*—was stoked by a case of mistaken identity. Cook has the same name as the Season 7 winner of *American Idol*. When *Pathway* was released, that coincidence led to more than 600 downloads of the album and individual tracks in the first week, mostly via iTunes. “People were pissed when they realized he wasn't the same David Cook they were looking for,” Cuadrado recalls with a grin. “They'd comment, ‘He doesn't even sing!’”

Anne Mette Iversen, a Denmark-born bassist and the other moderator of BJU Records, adds, “Our David Cook continues to be the label's best-selling artist. So maybe we made some jazz fans out of *American Idol* watchers.”

As a performance collective, the BJU has been an inspiration for the Paris Jazz Underground and other collectives. Now, as Iversen and Cuadrado eat lunch in a Greenwich Village restaurant near where he teaches at the New School for Jazz and Contemporary Music, the duo reflects on the milestone of having released their label's 30th CD: bassist Josh Ginsburg's *Zembla Variations*.

The BJU performance collective includes, along with Iversen and Cuadrado, drummer Rob Garcia, reed player Adam Kolker, saxophonist Dan Pratt and trumpeter David Smith. Not all of the collective's artists put out recordings via the BJU imprint, while outside artists come under the umbrella just for releasing a record. The productions are self-funded by the artists, who license their albums to the label. The musi-

cians benefit from the BJU's pool of record-making experience and share in the costs of publicity.

“New York is the biggest jazz scene in the world, of course, so we all realize it's virtually impossible to be the big fish here, and that it's better to cultivate a sense of kinship with your peers,” Cuadrado explains. “We are ‘the 99 percent’ of jazz artists; that's for sure. There isn't a lot of money around. So, the BJU is a means for dealing with the jazz landscape as it is.”

The catchy Brooklyn Jazz Underground brand doesn't encompass all of the borough's multifarious music scene, particularly not the more avant-garde corners. The collective and its label merely represent a group of like-minded musicians who share geography and motivations.

“Just take Alexis and I—we both come from very different places, but that's so New York,” Iversen says. “The thing we have in common—and that you find in our collective, on the label and in the Brooklyn scene generally—is that we're musicians committed not just to playing often and well but to evolving as artists.”

Cuadrado adds, “And when you have a lot of musicians pushing together, it moves the music forward aesthetically.”

Highlights of the BJU Records catalog include Iversen's *Best Of The West/Many Places*, a double album that includes a suite with strings; Cuadrado's *Noneto Ibérico*, with its Spanish tinge; saxophonist Dan Blake's irresistible, Ornette Coleman-framed *The Aquarian Suite*; the funky *Night For Day* with guitarist Will Bernard, bassist Andrew Emer, pianist Benny Lackner and drummer Mark Ferber; guitarist

Oscar Peñas' Latin-inflected *From Now On*; and two discs from the Rob Garcia 4, with the drummer joined by pianist Dan Tepfer, saxophonist Noah Preminger and bassist John Hébert.

Set for a March release is Iversen's *Poetry Of Earth*, a double album of chamber jazz centering on 18 poems in Danish and English that she set to music for singers Maria Neckam and Christine Skou. April brings the first BJU album from guitarist Isaac Darche, an organ trio project.

As for the type of music accepted into the BJU Records fold, Cuadrado says, “It has to be high-quality contemporary jazz with original material, creative improvisation and a serious level of commitment by the artist, based in New York. The music we've been putting out covers a pretty broad range. We don't want to box ourselves or anyone else in to just a straightforward thing or just an avant thing.”

Iversen interjects, “We have to hear a kindred-spirit vibe. We want the records to be pictures of now.”

Ginsburg's *Zembla Variations*—an album of originals that features saxophonist Eli Degibri and drummer Rudy Royston, with George Colligan on piano and Fender Rhodes—is the bassist first's BJU experience, even though he and Iversen are married. The word *Zembla* in the title refers to an invented country in Vladimir Nabokov's novel *Pale Fire*, which Ginsburg describes as “a modernist book, a mad fantasy, something improvised that brings to life a world that draws you in.” He adds, “That sounds like jazz to me, and Brooklyn seems a lot like that to me, too.”

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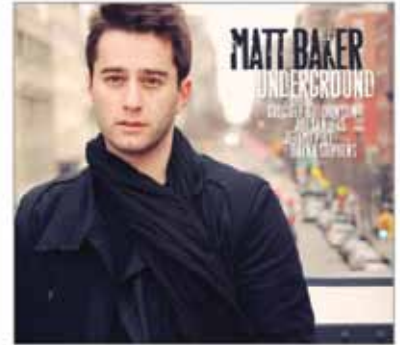
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The Power of Paich, DIY-Style

By Ed Enright

For vocalist Jeff Hedberg, seeing his *Too Darn Hot* project through from conception to completion was the hardest thing he's ever done. It was a more-than-worthwhile endeavor, though—the experience transformed him.

Hedberg and his Chicago-based C11 ensemble have recorded two volumes of highly stylized music that has its origins in the 1950s partnership of arranger Marty Paich and vocalist Mel Tormé. With instrumentation identical to Paich's famous Dek-tette, Hedberg's group recreates the arrangements from such classic albums as *Mel Tormé & The Marty Paich Dek-tette* (Bethlehem, 1956; reissued as *Lulu's Back In Town*), which featured the scatting singer in a West Coast ensemble setting of alto, tenor and baritone sax, trombone, French horn, two trumpets, tuba, bass, drums and occasional piano.

Hedberg, 32, doesn't go so far as to imitate Tormé's vocals note for note. He prefers to put his own spin on the material and is more comfortable with his own interpretations of the lyrics to standards like "Too Close For Comfort," "The Lady Is A Tramp," "Just In Time" and "Lullaby Of Birdland." Ultimately, Hedberg says his goal was to preserve the seldom-heard Paich-Tormé repertoire and move it into the present.

"Mel and Marty aren't around anymore to present this music," he says. "Also, the material is not readily available, so the band is pretty unique; nor are there a lot of active ensembles out there that use this particular instrumentation."

Acquiring the Paich arrangements was the first of many challenges Hedberg faced after conceiving the project, which evolved from his studies as a grad student at Northwestern University in 2004 and grew into a full-blown passion. Since the arrangements aren't part of any publisher's catalog, and the Paich estate wasn't forthcoming with any charts, he had to transcribe some of the material himself. The rest of the charts were completed with considerable help from Sid Potter, a semi-retired trumpeter with an expert ear who's based in Olympia, Wash.

Getting the arrangements in hand was just one of many obstacles that Hedberg—a full-time music educator based in Villa Park, Ill.—would ultimately overcome. He had to find local musicians who were not only capable of executing the charts properly but were willing to put in the time required to work up the material in rehearsals and live performances at various Chicago venues. He paid for studio time out of his own pocket and spent countless hours mixing each track, listening meticulously to make sure all of Paich's instrumental parts were present and balanced—in many cases more clearly than on the original



albums, thanks to 21st century recording technology and the conscientiousness of engineer/co-producer Scott Steinman. When Hedberg temporarily lost his main teaching gig, he put everything on hold, only to start back up again once he was rehired. When money started to run out near the end of the project, he set up an online donation site that brought in the final \$2,000 he needed to manufacture the discs. The CD is now available through the website CD Baby, and a second volume is due out in mid-2012.

"It's a whole lot of do-it-yourself," Hedberg says, reflecting on the process of making *Too Darn Hot* a reality as an independent artist and bandleader. "It was a big learning curve—I learned what it really costs to run a large group. And it was a waiting game. When you're really excited about a project, playing that waiting game is really hard."

Hedberg says he wants to book the C11 ensemble performing the Paich-Tormé repertoire—as well as some Paich arrangements done for alto saxophonist Art Pepper—at concerts and festivals. For the long term, he hopes to get back to recording and performing in the small-group settings of his earlier vocal work, as represented on his 2004 debut *The Summer Knows* (BluJazz). "Once I got these discs in hand and I went back and listened to *The Summer Knows* and a recording I made before that, it was nice to hear the progression of going from this singer with a thin, wispy approach to coming into full voice and working in tandem with all of these instruments coming at me. It blew my mind." **DB**



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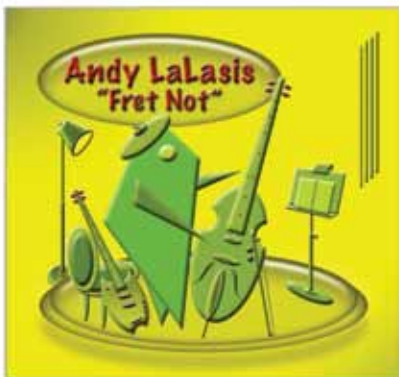
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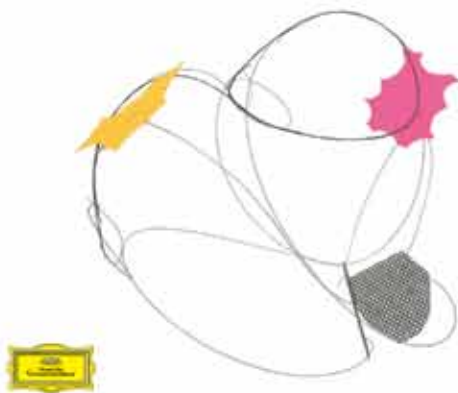
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- 67 | Blues
- 71 | Beyond
- 73 | Historical
- 76 | Books

REVIEWS ▶

Paul Desmond (left), Joe Morello, Eugene Wright and Dave Brubeck



Dave Brubeck Quartet *Their Last Time Out*

COLUMBIA/LEGACY 81562

★★★★★

If you haven't heard, the world is closing shop Dec. 21, so says the Mayan calendar. So what will you be doing on Dec. 20, when all consequences become moot? It kind of frees one's thinking.

Such thoughts may or may not have crossed the minds of these men on the last night of life for the Dave Brubeck Quartet. On the day after Christmas, 1967, in Pittsburgh, the quartet called it quits after 17 years. By the evidence here, the end came with neither a roar nor a whimper. Just another gig, but with nothing left to prove. Still, it was sufficiently apocalyptic at the time to attract the

national news media. Yet, it went unnoticed at Columbia Records—until now.

Taped by unknown hands, the mono sound puts Paul Desmond's demitasse alto a bit off-mic here and there, but never enough to warrant more than a quibble. Such tiny fingerprints of imperfection, in fact, instruct us that this music was never intended to survive the night and that we should be damn grateful for it. After 15 prolific years with Columbia, it's surprising that this final performance adds two new, if minor, titles to the Brubeck discography. "For Drummers Only" showcases Joe Morello's sense of coherent design, while "Set My People Free" is bassist Eugene Wright's forgotten contribution to the civil

rights era. Brubeck is present on both, but alas, Desmond is not. When he is on, he moves like a spiraling wraith of smoke, always on the edge of melting into thin air. For all the years during which he and Brubeck cemented their partnership, one can't help but notice how little actual interaction there is between these two men. They seem to function as independent souls of the same whole, rarely as an ensemble.

The cheers that erupt as the group slides into "Take Five" remind us that no jazz musician alive could trigger such a feverish expression of recognition. A couple of the tunes do suffer from overexposure, but most offer compelling variations on earlier accounts. "Three To Get Ready" is a

wry and witty mix of waltz and four-four time with a sense of propriety that echoed the Modern Jazz Quartet. Whereas Brubeck was sleek and linear in the original "Ciclitto Lindo," here he is all hands and chords. Similarly on "Someday My Prince Will Come," he finds an unexpected quote from "Flying Home" before falling into a rut of hammering quarter-notes. This was a group that made their set pieces breathe to the end.

—John McDonough

Their Last Time Out: Disc One: Introduction; St. Louis Blues; Three To Get Ready; These Foolish Things; Cielito Lindo; La Paloma Azul; Take The "A" Train; Someday My Prince Will Come (47:49). Disc Two: Introduction Of The Members Of The Quartet; Swanee River; I'm In A Dancing Mood; You Go To My Head; Set My People Free; For Drummers Only; Take Five (50:14).

Personnel: Dave Brubeck, piano; Paul Desmond, alto saxophone; Eugene Wright, bass; Joe Morello, drums.

Ordering info: legacyrecordings.com

Gregory Tardy *Monuments*

STEEPLECHASE 31725

★★★★½

Tenor saxophonist Gregory Tardy brings smart ensemble planning and excellent writing to this muscular, soulful, celebratory album, many tracks of which give off an aura of ancient mystery, reinforced by modal scales, swirling lines and some Bible-influenced titles. Familiar through his work with Elvin Jones and the Mingus Big Band, Tardy is a dependable journeyman and team player who isn't always a scintillating storyteller as a soloist, occasionally falling back on patterns, even when he's mixing things up rhythmically. His straightforward renderings of the love songs "My Romance" (duo with bass) and "Never Let Me Go" (with trio) are heart-melters, though, particularly when he's hooting in his lower register. Other high points include his scratch-and-pop fluttering on the swinging title track and his brawny spitting and throaty cries on "Dry Seasons." Tardy uses an underpinning of bass clarinet to good effect on "Nonpersons," but his B-flat clarinet sound on "The Oil Of Gladness" is typical tenor man—rich and thick, but occasionally pinched and out of tune.

The solo highs on this album come from Tardy's bandmates, trumpeter Avishai Cohen and pianist George Colligan. Drummer Jaimeo Brown—sounding like Jeff "Tain" Watts with his powerful, relentless polyrhythms—sets the tone by providing not only the album's underly-



ing mood of intense fire but its stuttering, halting tension-and-release that involves dramatic hesitations followed by surges of energy. Unfortunately, Brown also comes through as blunt, dry and high in the mix, an unappealing sound that has been turning up on a lot on jazz recordings lately.

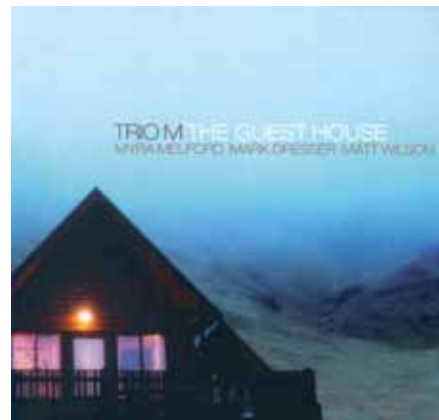
Tardy says in the notes that the centrality of rhythm to his concept comes from his time with Jones. He also notes the influence of Ali Jackson and the Marsalises. All that urgency is here, but even more welcome is Tardy's sense of optimistic belief.

—Paul de Barros

Monuments: Dust Groove; Monuments; The Oil Of Gladness; My Romance; Nonpersons; Image Of Jealousy; Dry Seasons; Never Let Me Go; Power In Weakness; The Plain-Clothed King. (62:44)

Personnel: Gregory Tardy, tenor saxophone, clarinet, bass clarinet; Avishai Cohen, trumpet; George Colligan, piano; Sean Conly, bass; Jaimeo Brown, drums.

Ordering info: steeplechase.dk



Trio M *The Guest House*

ENJA/YELLOW BIRD 7721

★★★★

It's a rarity to find a really democratic group, especially one that might otherwise be called a "piano trio." That denomination would suggest that Myra Melford is the leader of Trio M, but she's not; she's part of an equilateral triangle with bassist Mark Dresser and drummer Matt Wilson. They all contribute music, and they all equally steer the ship, taking turns supporting, jumping out front and working together.

Trio M is as much a piano trio as Jason Moran's Bandwagon. Which means that they can step into that storied history if they want to, but for the most part they are busy making jazz that extends the creative music lineage. Proceedings can swing nimbly, as on Dresser's "Ekonomi" (recalling Chris McGregor) and Wilson's delicate, giddy "Don Knotts," or they can open up, as on the bassist's "Tele Mojo," originally scripted for a different trio that swaps trombonist Michael Dessen for Wilson.

Dresser pushes the music further into exploratory territory than his partners tend to, which makes for a suitable balance, his yin to their yang. Melford has blossomed into such a wonderful presence, her predilection for songful melodic themes having lost some of its earlier sentimentality, yielding to an original intuition. On the title track, she rolls and tumbles over Wilson's second-line shuffle, shifting mood abruptly a couple of times, returning to an authoritative bass figure before ending with an airy coda. Her lament "Even The Birds Have Homes (To Return To)" has an Eastern European feel, melancholic, with Wilson sounding chimes and Dresser matching with arco harmonics. A more optimistic feel emerges on "Hope (For The Cause)," bassist and pianist spelling out the melody in tandem, drummer softly joining on brushes.

—John Corbett

The Guest House: The Guest House; Don Knotts; Kind Of Nine; Sat Nam; Hope (For The Cause); The Promised Land; Tele Mojo; Al; Even Birds Have Homes (To Return To); Ekonomi. (63:35)

Personnel: Myra Melford, piano; Mark Dresser, bass; Matt Wilson, drums.

Ordering info: cduniverse.com

Opus 5 *Introducing Opus 5*

CRISS CROSS 1339

★★★★½

The concept of teamwork resounds in the debut of this new quintet. There are no stars, per se; each of the musicians—saxophonist Seamus Blake, trumpeter Alex Sipiagin, pianist David Kikoski, bassist Boris Kozlov and drummer Donald Edwards—have led bands during their careers, but are best known as consummate sidemen. Nothing wrong with that. Jazz needs chops-heavy improvisers as much as it does innovative conceptualists. The proof resides inside the subtleties of this animated mainstream date.

Their work in the Mingus Big Band has given them a chance to absorb each other's approaches. That's one of the blessings about *Introducing Opus 5*. When the group wants everything to be aligned, they have no problem doing so, and when they look for some well-designed wrinkles to provide personality, that, too is easily accomplished.

Ultimately, the writing takes a back seat to



the solos. Kikoski's "Baker's Dozen" is a riff-slanted melody with a churning rhythmic bottom. But the operatives make it something a bit more by treating it like both barnburner and rhapsody. Blake's kick-off brings aggression to the vamp. Sipiagin's follow-up injects additional bravura. Edwards tosses nuanced barbs into the

swing groove and offers an aside that points the way to dreamland.

It's Kozlov who makes the largest compositional dent, contributing a pair of tunes. His "Nostalgia In Time" references Mingus' famed 1959 sessions without aping any of the maestro's motifs. The finale, a Russian folk tune entitled "Sokol," is the program's finest piece, an 11-minute swirl that allows room for several transitions, gusts of energy and outside curves that ultimately swoop back over the plate with overt swing.

—Jim Macnie

Introducing Opus 5: Think Of Me; Tallysman; Baker's Dozen; Ton To Ton; Nostalgia In Time; Asami's Playground; Sokol. (62:35)

Personnel: Seamus Blake, tenor saxophone; Alex Sipiagin, trumpet; David Kikoski, piano; Boris Kozlov, bass; Donald Edwards, drums.

Ordering info: crisscrossjazz.com

The Hot Box

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

Dave Brubeck Quartet <i>Their Last Time Out</i>	★★★★	★★★★	★★★★½	★★★★
Gregory Tardy <i>Monuments</i>	★★★	★★★★	★★★★½	★★★★½
Opus 5 <i>Introducing Opus 5</i>	★★★★½	★★★★½	★★★★½	★★★
Trio M <i>The Guest House</i>	★★★★	★★★★	★★★★½	★★★★

Critics' Comments

Dave Brubeck Quartet, *Their Last Time Out*

All about chemistry. The band that introduced so many of us to jazz, here in swan-song mode, playing together with joyous abandon. I like the rough recording quality, very live, which spotlights the spontaneity of this classic group. —John Corbett

It's the versatility that knocks me out about the foursome's final date. The liner notes allude to the fact that frolic was in the air because their time together was concluding. Each jaunty aside is a hoot. —Jim Macnie

Buried treasure here, with nary a sign of boredom after 10 years of playing together. Whatever the thick-gravy shortcomings of Brubeck's piano solos, there's no denying everyone came to play that last night in Pittsburgh—mischievous, joyous and totally in the moment. —Paul de Barros

Gregory Tardy, *Monuments*

The more agitated this music grows, the less interesting I find it becomes. At times hardly a note can raise its head without getting crowned with a manic cymbal smash, reminding us that there is virtuosity in restraint. So one seeks shelter in the two standards. They give Tardy space to breathe, not just blow, and escape the heaviness elsewhere. —John McDonough

Tardy's tunes, Colligan's fine playing and a considered program tip this from a solid straight-ahead date to something more fun. The pianist and saxophonist have an electrifying connection; Tardy's explosive, hard-toned saxophone and Colligan's probing, urgent comping mix a mighty potent cocktail. Cohen's killer, as always, and Brown, new to me, is a powerful, limber agitator. —John Corbett

Love the aggression that Team Tardy brings to the table on this one. They filter a hard-bop stance through a modern lens and assure animation at every turn. If you don't like the title cut, you don't like jazz. —Jim Macnie

Opus 5, *Introducing Opus 5*

"Introducing" hardly describes these old hands, who've logged a collective 350-plus sessions over 30 years. But the high octane of energy and musicianship fails to translate into a quintet of any pointedly distinctive elements. Within its genre, though, it navigates its self-inflicted challenges with a poised and secure assurance. —John McDonough

Well-constructed mainstream play with no sharp edges. On either horn, Sipiagin has a soft sound, supplemented by Blake's gentility. Requisite r&b flavorings, both rhythmic ("Baker's Dozen," odd meter with light backbeat) and sonic (Kikoski's super clean Rhodes), and hard-bop stock designed for a fivesome ("Tallysman," the bassist's lovely "Nostalgia In Time"). The adapted folk song is a nice twist—unexpected, sweet, climactic, right. —John Corbett

Opus 5's solid forward thrust and sizzling multiple threads should make this Blakey-and-beyond quintet more compelling than it is, but there's some magic missing here—in both the material and the solos. That said, Sipiagin's trumpet on the smartly chosen George Cables opener, "Think Of Me," and ex-Vancouver tenor ace Seamus Blake's singing solo on the ballad "Asami's Playland" are memorable. —Paul de Barros

Trio M, *The Guest House*

The cover art may suggest *The Summer Of '42*, but the music inside bends sentiment through the downtown lens of a lyrical surrealism that is bracing and invigorating without being annoying. Airy lyricism mingles with foreboding ambivalence seasoned with tangled swirls of Cecil Taylor-esque scribbles. An accessible but adventurous fling. —John McDonough

They've always been tight, but this disc finds them bring the interaction to a superb level—a place where they're guessing each other's gambits and sharing the heavy lifting on an impressive level. —Jim Macnie

Myra Melford seamlessly traces the intersection of concrete and abstract, inside and "out," managing somehow to play the piano as both a percussion instrument and a lyrical vehicle for melody. "Al," for Albert Ayler, is one of the sweetest tributes ever. —Paul de Barros



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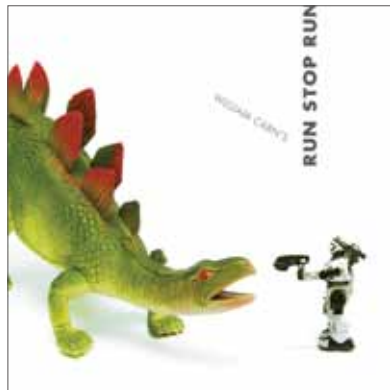
William Carn *Run Stop Run*

MYTHOLOGY 11

★★★★½

Canadian trombonist William Carn has graced countless recording sessions and stages in supportive, genre-flexible capacities. On his own intriguing project *Run Stop Run*, Carn shows invention and sensitivity in the line of creative duty on his own time, managing to create music at once fresh, challenging and assuring. This is a collaborative venture, with the unusual upfront voices of Carn's limber trombone persona and electric guitarist Don Scott's versatile touch in alignment with acoustic and electric bassist (and fine composer) Jonathan Maharaj and drummer Ethan Ardelli. Together, they summon up new-sounding grooves and savor ambiances and a sense of space and color.

On the band's debut album, Carn's driving song "The Fallen" kicks things off in a rugged rush but quickly accesses the band's critical soft side on the Scott tune "Butter Side Down." Things turn loopily meditative on the dreamy modernist-romantic number "The Gift." Here, the trombone's lilting long-tone melody floats atop hypnotic guitar-keyboard arpeggios and a pliant wordless vocal part by David Binney. Binney is a noted alto saxophonist, and also owner of the record label Mythology, but here



he leaves his horn at home.

Rock-fueled distorted guitar riffs underscore the exclamatory urgency of Carn's "Murphy!" but the energy level and emotional spirit ease down into more lyrical, yearning turf on Maharaj's "His Eyes Are Sad And Knowing" and Scott's "LBJ." Maharaj's epic

and impressionistic "Rorschach" features Ardelli's splashing grace, soloing in and around the circular logic of the piece's shape-shifting chords and melodic flotation devices.

Carn's set plays out with a kind of conceptual structural design, with short, ethereal passages concocted by Binney—"Beginning," "Interlude" and "End"—framing the sequence, and imposing on it a semblance of a narrative arc. True enough, the varied tunes and stylistic statements made over the course of the album tell some tacit story, more about the ensemble character and painterly possibilities of the music than about the mere expression of instrumental prowess. We feel like we've gone somewhere, running, stopping and hovering over a landscape we can't quite describe but get a pictorial sense of through sound.

—Josef Woodard

Run Stop Run: Beginning; The Fallen; Butter Side Down; The Gift; Glassman; Murphy; Interlude; His Eyes Are Sad And Knowing; LBJ; Q's Idea; Rorschach; End. (63:00)
Personnel: William Carn, trombone; Don Scott, guitar; Jonathan Maharaj, bass; Ethan Ardelli, drums.
Ordering info: williamcarn.com



Matt Baker *Underground*

MBC 004

★★★★½

Pianist Matt Baker's fourth CD as a leader is the Australian native's first as a newly transplanted New Yorker, although he hasn't exactly traveled a straight line from point A to point B. His still-nascent career has found him performing at a number of European festivals, Stateside dates and a stint with his trio as the house band at the Montreux Jazz Festival.

With all that he's managed to accomplish in a short time, however, *Underground* betrays no hint of the urgency that comes with ambition. Baker has a playful approach to melody, particularly on the standards that he interprets with Joe Sanders and Gregory Hutchinson.

The album kicks off with Hutchinson's call-to-arms eruption opening "If I Were A Bell," before Baker reins the tempo back in with a lilting, off-handed statement of the melody that captures the lyric's enthused giddiness. The trio's "Mood Indigo" nearly dissolves the melody, Baker hazily hinting at it as if humming in his own head, while Sanders and Hutchinson craft a contrasting tension. The pianist's solo take on Billy Reid's "The Gypsy" is cast in a late-night hue; you can picture Baker's jacket slung over his shoulder as lights blink out around him.

Even when trumpeter Jeremy Pelt and saxophonist Dayna Stephens join in, Baker tends to set a pensive mood. The bright-hued theme of "Underground" gives way to an introspective tenor solo by Stephens, melding into Pelt's recursive trumpet, seeming to grasp at a thread of memory in the back of the mind. The leader and Hutchinson steer the tune onto rockier shoals, but the piece is indicative of the album as a whole, which exhibits a cerebral intensity even at its most up-tempo.

—Shaun Brady

Underground: If I Were A Bell; Underground; Mood Indigo; Refuge; Central Park North; Island Of Many Hills; The Gypsy; Away. (60:21)
Personnel: Matt Baker, piano; Fender Rhodes; Joe Sanders, bass; Gregory Hutchinson, drums, percussion; Jeremy Pelt, trumpet; Dayna Stephens, tenor saxophone.
Ordering info: mattbaker.com.au

Rez Abbasi's *Invocation* *Suno Suno*

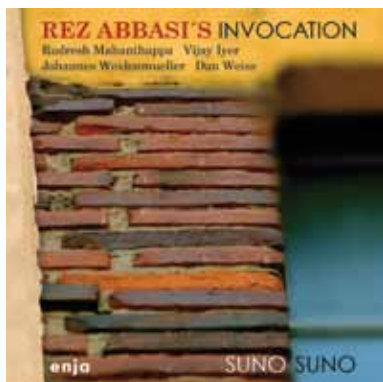
ENJA 9575

★★★★★

When a bandleader uses his liner notes to explicitly discuss the influence of qawwali, a Pakistani devotional music, on his compositional process for his new album, you might reasonably

expect to be greeted by a melody that reflects the scales and harmonic structure of the music when you hit "play." Something that sounds a bit like Nusrat Fateh Ali Khan, for instance.

You won't hear that on *Suno Suno*. What you will hear is a series of winding, uniquely structured original compositions that are built off a few basic ideas that lie at the heart of qawwali music. There is a rhythmic insistence to these pieces that can be traced to the group clapping in qawwali, while the doubling of melodies between sax and guitar teases out another element of the music. Abbasi stringent-ly avoids writing melodies that imitate qawwa-



li songs or approach some sort of obvious hybrid.

He has the perfect band for accomplishing this synthesis. Vijay Iyer and Rudresh Mahanthappa both have subcontinental ancestry as well, and have made a dialogue with their heritage an essential part of their music, while drummer Dan Weiss has studied tabla and bassist Johannes Weidenmueller

has long experience with global influences. This quintet first recorded together in 2009, and their interplay is finely tuned.

The lines between composition and improvisation are blurry across the album; the players integrate the repetition of the compositions into their solos. Iyer's solo toward the end of "Nusrat" especially exemplifies this understanding of Abbasi's goals, goals *Suno Suno* achieves with admirable subtlety and skill.

—Joe Tangari

Suno Suno: Thanks For Giving; Onus On Us; Monuments (intro); Monuments; Nusrat; Overseas; Part Of One. (64:18)
Personnel: Rez Abbasi, guitar; Rudresh Mahanthappa, alto saxophone; Vijay Iyer, piano; Johannes Weidenmueller, bass; Dan Weiss, drums.
Ordering info: enjarecords.com

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Aki Takase & Han Bennink

Two For Two

INTAKT 193

★★★★

In recent years, Japanese pianist Aki Takase has recorded quite a few duos. Therefore, it should be no surprise that she found in Dutch drummer Han Bennink a more than sympathetic musical partner. He has been heard in distinguished meetings with Misha Mengelberg or Irène Schweizer. Together, they tackle a comprehensive program that consists primarily of Takase's own compositions but also includes a standard, a few Thelonious Monk themes and Eric Dolphy's "Hat And Beard," which gets a quite Monk-ish treatment.

Just like Monk or Carla Bley, whose name comes to mind when listening to "My Tokyo," Takase has a knack for making dissonance sound pretty or at least attractive, and she might win over those who are most allergic to anything that strays from swing or melody. Bennink can sometimes be overwhelming when he relies too heavily on his old bag of tricks and goofy attitude, but he shows throughout great discipline and exemplary attunement. His commentary on Monk's "Locomotive" is on target and deliciously funny. And if wit is a trait that both musicians share aplenty, they can also relent to a display of tenderness as the

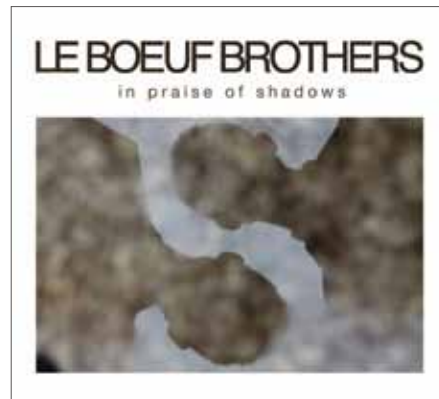


touching "Knut" bears witness.

Perhaps because Takase has been living in Berlin for so long, the spirit of Kurt Weill also inhabits some of the pieces and provides elements of theater that are a perfect fit for Bennink. It is another aspect of this collaboration's far-reaching stylistic diversity that is transcended by a unity of purpose and execution. As a result, fans of both musicians will enjoy this solid and cohesive—not to mention delightful—effort.

—Alain Drouot

Two For Two: Two For Two; My Tokyo; Locomotive; Zankapfel; Knut; Baumkuchen; Monochrome; Raise Four; Do You Know What It Means To Miss New Orleans?; A Chotto Matte; Hat And Beard; Ohana Ham; Rolled Up; Hell Und Dunkel; Hommage To Thelonious Monk; Two For Two. (59:07)
Personnel: Aki Takase, piano; Han Bennink, drums.
Ordering info: intaktrec.ch



Le Boeuf Brothers

In Praise Of Shadows

SELF RELEASE

★★★

Brothers in musical crime and creative invention, Remy (on reeds) and Pascal (piano) Le Boeuf are young East Coast up-and-comers with chops and a flexible pocketful of ideas about how jazz could go in the 2010s. Whereas other recordings have heeded old-school notions of jazz as a real-time, acoustic interplay scenario, the latest album freely incorporates electronics, digitized production modes and sounds from the pop realm, while slipping in tasty improvisational elements into the sometimes overly slick conceptual machinery.

At times, as on the opening "Fire Dancing Dream" and "D2D," the melodicism of the material suggests a contemporary update of the musical language of the German fusion band Passport, sporting a fusion-flavored approach but with integrity. Among the impressive young players along for the ride are the versatile drummer Henry Cole, guitarist Nir Felder and tenor saxist Mike Ruby, although we rarely get a sense of live human musicians playing in the same room at the same time. Impressionistic dreaminess prevails on "Calgary Clouds" and "We Thought They Were Planets," and energetic maze-making grabs the ear on "Circles." Closing the program, the tolling, lilting and grooving minor-mode waltz of a title track makes for an coolly appealing finale.

Pascal lends his clear-toned, agile voice to the unabashedly romantic progressive pop songs "Everything You Love" and "For Every Kiss," which, however ear-pleasing the tracks are by pop standards, tends to detract from whatever artistic continuity and jazz-centric identity the album strives toward.

—Josef Woodard

In Praise Of Shadows: Fire Dancing Dreams; Everything You Love; Two Worlds; D2D; Calgary Clouds; Circles; We Thought They Were Planets...; Red Velvet; The Last Time You Were Happy; For Every Kiss; In Praise Of Shadows. (49:00)

Personnel: Remy Le Boeuf, alto sax, bass clarinet, tenor sax; Pascal Le Boeuf, piano/keyboards, vocals; Mike Ruby, tenor sax; Linda Oh, bass; Henry Cole, drums; Nir Felder, guitar; Adria Le Boeuf, ambient vocals; Myth String Quartet: Talle Brunfelt, Jeremy Blandin, violins; Kim Uwate, viola; Isaac Melamed, cello.
Ordering info: leboeufbrothers.com

Ernie Watts Quartet

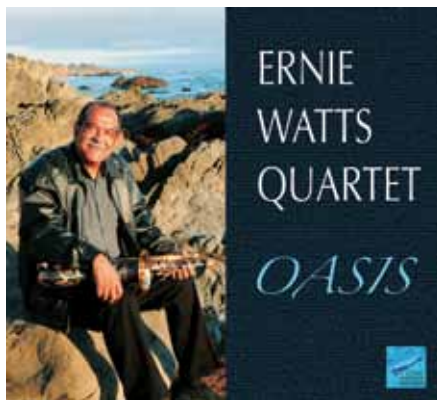
Oasis

FLYING DOLPHIN RECORDS 1008

★★★★

Tenor saxophonist Ernie Watts drew upon a variety of sources while making *Oasis*, a solid and at times highly captivating post-bop album. *Oasis* presents diverse material in a coherent and focused fashion. The disc consists of three Watts originals; one tune each from his drummer, Heinrich Koebberling, and pianist, Christof Saenger, a Beatles cover, John Coltrane's "Crescent", two ballads and "Shaw Nuff." The group makes the tunes their own, demonstrating its identity and approach. Watts' quartet, which is filled out by bassist Rudi Engel, occasionally evokes Coltrane's classic quartet, especially on the title track and "Crescent." Koebberling's use of mallets on his toms recalls Elvin Jones, as do his fills. And Coltrane's influence on Watts is quite audible. Saenger frequently reels off extended single-note runs during his solos, and Engel and Koebberling are rock solid.

The album's focus is on Watts, who makes playing the saxophone at such a high level sound effortless, especially considering the relative ease with which he reels off long, virtuosic and complex lines at will—just check out "Crescent" and his solo introduction and blazing choruses on "Shaw Nuff," which are



highlights. He exhibits complete command of the horn, whether doubling up the time, singing in the upper register, or blowing long, lyrical lines. His tenor sound is complex: simultaneously mellow, bright, rich, smooth and slightly edgy. Watts' performance throughout the disc is inspired and nearly flawless, although his treatment of "Blackbird" is slightly stiff, his solo and cadenza on the tune are excellent. Clocking in at just under 75 minutes, the album's length is its only weakness, as after a while it begins to be a bit too much of the same.

—Chris Robinson

Oasis: Konbanwa; Oasis; One Day I'll Fly Away; Blackbird; Palmito; Crescent; Twilight Waltz; Bass Geige; You Are There; Shaw Nuff. (73:17)
Personnel: Ernie Watts, tenor saxophone; Christof Saenger, piano; Rudi Engel, bass; Heinrich Koebberling, drums.
Ordering info: erniewatts.com

Theo Bleckmann
Hello Earth! The Music Of Kate Bush

WINTER & WINTER 9101832

★★★½

Kate Bush
50 Words For Snow

ANTI- 87186

★★★



certain doom and a woman who turns building a snowman into an erotic act.

Songs don't rise and fall in the conventional sense as much as they muse on their given ideas. For support, she's brought in a more workmanlike musical team than Bleckmann's, one that includes drumming god Steve Gadd and, on one track, bassist Danny Thompson.

The album has its bold moments, especially "Snowed In At Wheeler Street," a fine duet with Elton John where he and Bush play war-torn lovers. But *50 Words For Snow* is a largely hushed affair. It's the album's greatest weakness as well as the reason for its quiet grandeur.

—Zach Phillips

On *Hello Earth! The Music Of Kate Bush*, vocalist Theo Bleckmann reinterprets the British singer's work through his own lens. It's a gutsy move. Bush's idiosyncratic musicality makes her difficult to cover, and tougher to re-imagine. What's surprising about *Hello Earth!* is how seamlessly Bleckmann pulls it off.

Along with tackling obvious choices from her catalog, some beautifully ("Running Up That Hill" and "Army Dreamers"), he dabbles with more ambitious material from Bush's song cycles. "And Dream Of Sheep," "Under Ice" and the title track—all taken from the suite on the second half of *Hounds Of Love*—act as *Hello Earth!*'s emotional centerpiece. On many of these songs, Bush had originally deployed an arsenal of vintage synth sounds and effects, some of which could sound dated to modern ears. Bleckmann, instead, relies

on the muscle of a spartan quartet—featuring drummer John Hollenbeck—that leapfrogs styles from straightforward vocal jazz to ambience to thrash metal ("Violin").

Like Bush, Bleckmann has a flair for odd-ball harmonies and vocalese. His voice is also supple enough to charge the most often-covered Bush numbers, particularly "This Woman's Work," with deep empathy. It makes for a generous collection, limited only by the near-impossibility of its vision.

50 Words For Snow would've given Bleckmann more material. Bush's latest release, and the closest thing she'll ever have to a holiday album, is a low-key fantasia centered around her jazz-tinged piano and wintery themes. In her hands, this means inhabiting such characters as a snowflake falling to earth, an explorer trying to save the Yeti from

>Hello Earth! The Music Of Kate Bush: Running Up That Hill; Suspended In Gaffa; And Dream Of Sheep; Under Ice; Violin; Hello Earth; Cloudbusting; All The Love; Saxophone Song; Army Dreamers; The Man With The Child In His Eyes; Watching You Without Me; Love And Anger; This Woman's Work. (60:28)

Personnel: Theo Bleckmann, vocals, electronics; Henry Hey, piano, harpsichord, Fender Rhodes; Caleb Burhans, violin, guitar; Skuli Sverrisson, bass; John Hollenbeck, drums, percussion, crotales.

Ordering info: winterandwinter.com

50 Words For Snow: Snowflake; Lake Tahoe; Misty; Wild Man; Snowed In At Wheeler Street; 50 Words For Snow; Among Angels. (65:09)

Personnel: Kate Bush, vocals, piano, keyboard, bass; Steve Gadd, drums; Del Palmer, bass, bells (1, 4); Dan McIntosh, guitar; Danny Thompson, bass (3); Albert McIntosh, vocals (1); Elton John, vocals (5); Andy Fairweather Low, vocals (4); Stefan Roberts, vocals (2); Michael Wood, vocals (2); John Giblin, bass (4, 5, 6); Stephen Fry, vocals (6).

Ordering info: anti.com



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Marilyn Mazur
Celestial Circle

ECM 6025 276 8056 9

★★★★★

With the musical company enjoyed by Josefina Cronholm, John Taylor and Anders Jormin, percussionist Marilyn Mazur continues to amaze, building on the fetching musical intimacies found on her duet recording *Elixir* with reedist Jan Garbarek.

Combining the signature elements of that “ECM sound” not to mention vibe, Mazur adds her own flourishes, starting with the outlandishly subtle percussives of Taylor’s opening “Your Eyes,” which comes across as about as romantic an anthem as anything I’ve heard on this label. “Winterspell” continues the trance, and the singing, by the way, which is exquisite, intimate and full. Somehow the percussionist doesn’t need to be necessarily playing to get her message across, Cronholm’s velvety smooth voice piercing but not pleading. Not that pleading wouldn’t be a bad thing here. It’s just that the music comes in so beautifully, sensuous even, that a bit of screech doesn’t seem to be needed. This is “jazz music,” but it’s really more from that romantic tradition other than the one that spawned a whole bunch of other cats who were more about the groove. *Celestial Circle* seems to be more about other qualities, chief among them texture and getting real close. Odd for a drummer, Mazur’s percussion has much to do with that world of groove, but her drumming’s quietly profound here. Check out her introductory interplay on “Kildevaeld,” which also includes some rap-fire vocalisms commingling with all those bells and whistles, so to



speak. This tune also swings, as Taylor’s piano and Jormin’s bass pick up steam along the way. Cronholm’s wordless vocals are the perfect driver to this upbeat confection. The same can be said for what follows: no wrong turns, with music that keeps the fires burning without burning out. In part earning her stripes with Miles Davis, Wayne Shorter and the Gil Evans Orchestra during the 1980s, Mazur has gone on to forge a more than substantial career of her own, along with Garbarek recording and performing with Bob Stenson, Palle Mikkelborg, Kenny Werner and Dino Saluzzi. And as attested by the music on *Celestial Circle*, what she does is fairly unique, combining different instrumental combinations with great writing (except for “Your Eyes,” her pen is every-

where on this disc, including lyrics), reinventing the role of the percussionist. Also perhaps recalling previous muses, the rocking, incantatory “Drumrite” combines both Mazur’s doubling up on vocals with her percussionist zeal, the spirits of singer Flora Purim as well as percussionist Airtto Moreira somehow in the mix.

One of *Celestial Circle*’s greatest treats is Mazur’s bringing in John Taylor, whose piano never ceases to astound, his lyrical touch and pacing, his note choices and overall genuine artistry a marvel of sonic majesty. That he and Mazur happen to be on the same page is cause for celebration. And that Josefina Cronholm and Anders Jormin are also up to the challenge makes for a real party.

—John Ephland

Celestial Circle: Your Eyes; Winterspell; Kildevaeld; Temple Chorus; Antelope Arabesque; Chosen Darkness; Among The Trees; Tour Song; Drumrite. (53:54)
Personnel: John Taylor, piano; Josefina Cronholm, voice; Anders Jormin, bass; Marilyn Mazur, drums, percussion, voice.
Ordering info: ecmrecords.com

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Larry Coryell
With The Wide Hive
Players

WIDE HIVE 0305

★★★



The last thing you hear on Larry Coryell's latest is a voice, presumably Coryell's, saying, "It sounded so great, man, I got spaced out and forgot to look at the music." This provides a summation of the record that bursts with positive energy. *With The Wide Hive Players*, which recalls Coryell's first Eleventh House record, flirts soul, jazz, r&b and Chicago blues, but its loose approach gives it a jam-band feel.

Coryell doesn't play with the Wide Hive Players—who are from the San Francisco Bay Area and consist of rhythm section and a trombone/saxophone front line—so much as they play with him; this is Coryell's date. His guitar is up front in the mix, and the first non-Coryell solo doesn't appear until the eighth cut. While Coryell is generally in fine form, churning out lengthy rock lines and occasionally grinding out heavy chords, he sometimes ventures into territory where he seems to noodle. The tunes, all written by various Wide Hive Players, aren't so much compelling statements as they are a launching pad for Coryell. On a handful of cuts, Coryell pulls out his acoustic, giving the listener some downtime.

—Chris Robinson

With The Wide Hive Players: Torchlight; Cobalt; Terco; The Last Drop; Return Of Shirtless; December Blues; Moody On My Mind; Moose Knuckle; Beauty And Failure; Honey Dijon; Tilden; Dream Scene; Once For T.G. (63:05)

Personnel: Larry Coryell, guitar; Doug Rowan, saxophones; George Brooks, tenor saxophone (8); Mike Rinta, trombone; Adam Shulman, piano, Fender Rhodes; Matt Montgomery, bass; Gary Brown, bass (5); Thomas McCree, drums; Josh Jones, percussion.

Ordering info: widehiverecords.com

Nils Petter Molvaer
Baboon Moon

THIRSTY EAR 57201

★★★★½



When an artist has something as distinctive as the trumpet tone created by the Norwegian Nils Petter Molvaer, there's a risk of becoming imprisoned by it. His richly aspirated, meditative tone has not only inspired many disciples, but it has sometimes made Molvaer's recordings more about sound than substance. There's no mistaking his sound on *Baboon Moon*, the first album with his superb new trio, but the compositions, group interaction and morphing shapes make this his most gripping album in years.

Guitarist Stian Westerhus has emerged as one of Norway's most exciting players. He uses his arsenal of effects pedals and a bottomless imagination to summon a veritable symphony of color, texture and density, while drummer Erland Dahlen unleashes relentless tom-heavy grooves like a carpet bomber. Their fury forces Molvaer to rough up and expand his sound, and there is a thrilling streak of razor-sharp blowing that recalls Miles Davis at his most abrasive, but the band can also pull back without sounding antiseptic or wan. They drop out altogether to clear space for the trumpeter's gorgeous bone-dry coda on "Mercury Heart," while on something like "Bloodline" they dial down with tactile friction and crackling atmosphere.

—Peter Margasak

Baboon Moon: Mercury Heart; A Small Realm; Recoil; Bloodline; Sleep With Echoes; Blue Fandango; Prince Of Calm; Coded; Baboon Moon. (43:19)

Personnel: Nils Petter Molvaer, electric and acoustic trumpet, voices, loops, bass synth; Stian Westerhus, electric and acoustic guitars, baritone guitars, analog synth, hand percussion, fazezither, harmonium, Roland RE-201, Hiwatt tape echo, vocals, prepared piano, beaten piano frame, pedals; Erland Dahlen, drums, log drum, steel drum, metal percussion, omnichord, saw, vocals, harmonium, bells, candybox shaker; Susanna Sundfor, vocals (9).

Ordering info: thirstyear.com

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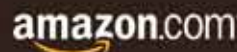
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Emmet Cohen *In The Element*

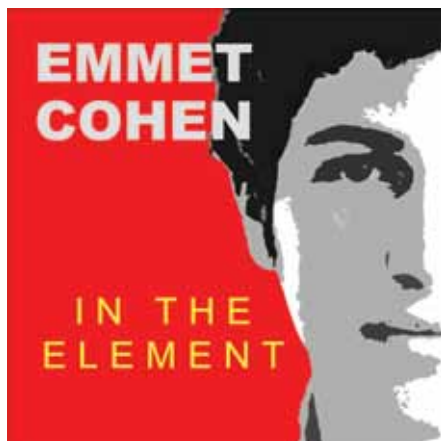
BADABEEP

★★★★½

There are occasions on Emmet Cohen's *In The Element* when it feels like the 21-year-old pianist is trying to make his fingers blow past the perceived competition, much in the way that an aggressive driver zooms off when a traffic light turns green. Cohen isn't turning out cheetah-fast melodic lines for the sake of flash. And he's not overcompensating. His nimble touch, measured stride and warm harmonic vocabulary indicate he's above any convoluted technical showmanship. Instead, the dalliances with rapid-fire notes and recurring chord bundles seem a product of youthful enthusiasm and in-progress maturation.

Cohen, who started playing the ivories at age 3, counts an impressive resume. Formally trained, he began as a classical pianist before coming to jazz. He's won this magazine's Student Music Award for Jazz Soloist. On record, the Miami native's sense of pace supports claims of his virtuosic abilities. He just needs to learn how to take a breath and utilize tension and balance in a similar manner in which he manipulates glissando passages to his advantage.

In regular step with his two-piece rhythm section, Cohen switches between originals and standards, with compositions often sequenced in an order that alternates tempos. The strategy provides a buffer between aptly named fare

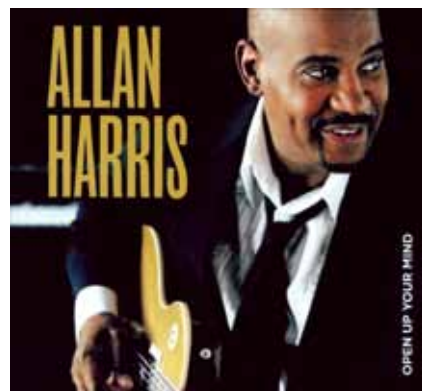


like "The Swarm" and the moonlit romance of Rodgers and Hart's "Where Or When," yet it also becomes somewhat predictable. However, the entrance of sonorous trumpeter Greg Gisbert on three tunes improves the dynamic. Gisbert's presence establishes a steadier focus and forces Cohen to more closely consider his surroundings.

The headliner is equally effective going solo for the lyrical ballad "For All We Know," which, rising from a minimalist structure, emerges as an elegant piano ballet that hints at a bright future once Cohen burns off his nervous energy.

—Bob Gendron

In The Element: It's Alright With Me; Resentment (Without Reason); Where Or When; The Swarm; Just Desserts; Good Morning Heartache; In The Element; Simone; For All We Know; 3 O'Clock In The Morning. (60:05)
Personnel: Emmet Cohen, piano; Rodney Green, drums; Joe Sanders, bass; Greg Gisbert, trumpet (5, 6, 10).
Ordering info: emmetcohen.com



Allan Harris *Open Up Your Mind*

LOVE PRODUCTION RECORDS 6441

★★★★½

Allan Harris continues to extend the legacy of mighty jazz singers such as Billy Eckstine, Joe Williams and Lou Rawls, who keenly balanced the rhythmic and melodic suppleness of jazz with the emotional immediacy and succinct phrasing associated with soul music. On *Open Up Your Mind*, Harris also displays his burgeoning talents as a songwriter. Except for his rugged makeover of "Fly Me To The Moon" that also showcases him alternating between grungy and bluesy licks on the guitar, all the songs are penned or co-penned by him.

He owns a whiskey-soaked baritone that he powers with an effortless sense of swing. As a songwriter, he knows how to concoct catchy melodies. Such is the case with the sanguine opener "Can't Live My Life Without You" and the gorgeous "Autumn," on which Lafayette Harris underscores with graceful piano accompaniments. If record labels still released jazz 45s, those two songs would surely be on heavy rotation in various jukeboxes. When Harris digs deeper into the blues as on the grinding "Inner Fear" and sauntering "Color Of A Woman," he sometimes conveys the brimming urgency heard on the Malaco and Dakar labels.

Writing eloquent lyrics aren't Harris' strongest skill, though. And for all of his good intentions on his tribute to everyday people of America, "I Do Believe" still amounts to patriotic treacle. Another drawback is Jesse Jones Jr.'s tinny tone on the alto saxophone, which when paired with electric instrumentation gives the disc a low-budgetted smooth-jazz sound less befitting of Harris' expressive voice.

—John Murphy

Open Up Your Mind: Can't Live My Life Without You; Hold You; Fly Me To The Moon; Color Of A Woman; There She Goes; Autumn; Shores Of Istanbul; Inner Fear; Open Up Your Mind; I Do Believe. (50:47)

Personnel: Allan Harris, vocals, guitar; Paul Beauchry, acoustic and electric bass; Lafayette Harris, piano, electric keyboard; Jerome Jennings, drums; Jesse Jones Jr., saxophones; Shawn Banks, percussion; Jesse Fisher, keyboard overdubs; Mathias Kunzli, Turkish percussion (7).
Ordering info: allanharris.com

Sharon Lewis & Texas Fire *The Real Deal*

DELMARK 816

★★★★

Sharon Lewis is a Chicago-based blues singer born in Ft. Worth, Texas. She first met the blues fairly late in life. With gospel and soul in her background, one night in the early '90s, she encountered vocalist Patricia Scott gigging at a South Chicago venue, Lee's Unleaded Blues. She left Lee's that night with a new sense of direction, setting up shop with the blues but bringing those soul sensibilities.

With an assist from a band of well-travelled musicians (including harmonicist Billy Branch, singer Deitra Farr and guitarist Dave Specter), Lewis' album dips a finger into a variety of genres. Out of 13 songs, eight were penned by herself. While the reggae "Ain't No Sunshine" and the slow 12-bar "Mother Blues" are just this side of being cliched, she does well by the r&b standard "Don't Play That Song," which she based on Aretha Franklin's rendition. A welcome surprise is a dramatic cover of



Wynona Carr's "Please Mr. Jailer." But it's on her own originals that she gets to stretch: "Mojo Kings," an interesting tribute to her backup band, is infused with a New Orleans second-line rhythm. "What's Really Going On" is tinged with social commentary. "Do Something For Me" is reminiscent of B.B.

King's "The Thrill Is Gone." But the real highlight is "Blues Train," a great funk footstomper with Branch providing the train sounds via the amplified harp.

In Chicago, there is no shortage of female blues singers angling for a piece of the pie. Lewis' unerring gift for different feels ensures that she won't be lost in this large field.

—James Porter

What's Really Going On?: The Real Deal; Do Something For Me; Crazy Love; Mother Blues; Blues Train; Please Mr. Jailer; Mojo Kings; Silver Fox; You Can't Take My Life; Ain't No Sunshine; Don't Play That Song; Angel. (60:22)
Personnel: Sharon Lewis, vocals; Bruce James, guitar; Roosevelt Purifoy, keyboards; Melvin Smith, bass; Tony Dale, drums; Dave Specter, guitar; Billy Branch, harmonica (6, 8); Kenny Anderson, trumpet (2, 4); Steve Berry, trombone (2, 4); Hank Ford, tenor sax (2, 4); Jerry DiMuzio, baritone sax (2, 4); Bruce James, Tony Dale and Deitra Farr, background vocals (6, 13).
Ordering info: delmark.com

Sirens Of Today

Erin Dickins, a founding member of Manhattan Transfer, gathers a large ensemble with background vocals that plays like a small group through 12 songs on *Nice Girls* (Champagne Records; 47:20 ★★★). It all leans toward standards with the occasional original and foreign-language inclusion. Dickins' vocal style is intimate without being too coy, her phrasing suggesting she's comfortable singing and swinging. Her best moments come when she backs away from the sunny optimism of "I Just Found About Love" and "Sometimes I'm Happy" and delves into more nuanced stories, as with the sexy, slinky "Nice Girls Don't Stay For Breakfast."

Ordering info: champagnerrecords.com

Andrea Wolper's *Parallel Lives* (Jazzed Media 1054; 58:50 ★★★½) offers the sound a woman singing as if she were talking. Less reliant on standards, Wolper draws on inspirations like Joni Mitchell with the ruminative, poetic "Song To A Seagull" and "Skylark," tunes that showcase her relaxed evocations and love of words. Her own songs, like the swinger "The Girls In Their Dresses" and "June Rose," demonstrate an affinity for something closer to the stage than a recording studio.

Ordering info: jazzedmedia.com

Nichola Miller saves the best for last on *Thou Swingeth* (Self Release; 48:45 ★★★½). Her crawl through "But Not For Me" could be a template for what works best for this more throaty, full-bodied singer. Recorded live at St. Paul's Artists' Quarter, Miller and her quartet—featuring pianist Rick Carlson and saxophonist Dave Karr—blow through nine familiars that play as fresh takes on what almost feels like a bygone era. Miller's song choices limit her with fewer verses, but the combination of band and singer give a fetching immediacy.

Ordering info: cdbaby.com

Judy Wexler's *Under A Painted Sky* (Jazzed Media 1052; 58:55 ★★★) serves as a kind of soundtrack to a movie waiting to be made. Wexler dips into French with the lovely "Avec Le Temps." She plays the tourist with a rare cover of Egberto Gismonti's dreamy "Cafe." Another song with a Latin feel that speaks of longing is Abbey Lincoln's "And How I Hoped For Your Love." Wexler's song choices are unique, and her takes with a small group sound intimate. The album closes with a rare cover of Gary McFarland's "Sack Full Of Dreams."

Ordering info: jazzedmedia.com

Another evocative take on standards comes from Lisa Lindsley's *Everytime We Say Goodbye* (Blondsongress; 48:20 ★★★). The mood is intimate as her duo accompaniment of keyboardist George Mesterhazy and bassist Fred Randolph help her keep it quiet and subtle.

Judy Wexler



An album full of love songs, "The Nearness Of You" sets the pace with a lazy cadence and rhythm; Lindsley's simple delivery is delicate and unaffected. Other gems delivered straight-on include the Billie Holiday classic "Don't Explain" and Cole Porter's title track.

Ordering info: lisalindsley.com

A pair that express the breezier sides of love include Shirley Crabbe's *Home* (MaiSong Music; 44:25 ★★★) and Sophie Milman's *In The Moonlight* (EOne 2157; 57:19 ★★★½). While Crabbe's date includes credible small/large group ensemble work, Milman rolls out the occasional orchestra with a number of high-profile guests, including Gil Goldstein, Julian Lage and Randy Brecker. Crabbe's almost-Ella Fitzgerald vibe glows with sunshiney takes on "Lucky To Be Me," "You Taught My Heart To Sing" and, especially, Carole King's "So Far Away." Milman penetrates with Ellington's "Prelude To A Kiss" and "Day Dream" and especially with Michel Legrand's "Watch What Happens," her consistent sheen suggesting something deeper, yet to be revealed.

Ordering info: shirleycrabbe.com; sophiemilman.com

All these songs of love have their anchor in the paradoxical world reflected by Alexis Parsons' self-titled series of tomes on the theme of conflicted, difficult arrangements (Self Release; 40:35 ★★★). Accompanied by pianist Frank Kimbrough, the bloom's off as Parsons delivers an unmannered "The Winter Of My Discontent," followed by a wistful look back with "Hello Young Lovers," only to be followed up by a rare, upbeat swinger with "Just Squeeze Me." The mood is melancholic, as the more seasoned Parsons' breathy, desultory delivery reminds us that love is not a game to be entered into lightly.

Ordering info: alexisparsons.com

JOHNATHAN
BLAKE



THE ELEVENTH HOUR

SSC 1304 / in Stores FEBRUARY 28

Good things come to those who wait. Those waiting for the debut recording of drummer/composer Johnathan Blake, an important part of the New York jazz community as an adept accompanist and collaborator, should be completely satisfied with his new CD *The Eleventh Hour*. The program of forward leaning originals and two fantastic covers was performed by an impressive cast, including keyboardist Kevin Hayes, bassist Ben Street, saxophonists Jaleel Shaw, Tim Warfield and Mark Turner, along with special guests trumpeter Tom Harrell, harmonica player Grégoire Maret and pianist Robert Glasper.



Available on
iTunes

iTunes.com/JOHNATHANBLAKE

BEN
WENDEL



FRAME

SSC 1308 / in Stores FEBRUARY 28

The incredibly eclectic saxophonist/composer Ben Wendel's new CD *Frame* will give a glimpse of his musical foundation, composed of equal parts jazz, rock and ambient music. His unique combination of sounds and influences create compositions that are wholly unique listening experiences. The CD's program features eight new compositions and a duo arrangement of Dizzy Gillespie's "Con Alma" featuring piano wunderkind Gerald Clayton. Wendel is joined on the album by an amazing ensemble, including pianists Tigran Hamasyan and Adam Benjamin, guitarist Nir Felder, bassist Ben Street and drummer Nate Wood.



Available on
iTunes

iTunes.com/BENWENDEL

Guillaume Bouchard
Bleu Et Blanc

SELF RELEASE
★★★★½

In an age of cultural globalism and jazz idioms freely crossing borders, it may be dangerous to make assumptions based on a cultural basis, yet there is something detectably French about this fine and satisfying album led by Canadian bassist Guillaume Bouchard. It may have something to do with the lightness of approach, partly thanks to the vibrant, clean-toned work of electric guitarist André Lachance and tenor saxist Michel Côté's crispness of taste and general subtlety. It also has something to do with a suavity of the swing, seasonings of impressionistic harmony and technical strengths pressed into the service of musicality and esprit de corps, and a latter-day embrace of early '60s jazz values.

Overall, *Bleu Et Blanc* makes a persuasive impression from opening title track on. Bouchard is a masterful bassist and a composer with clarity and restrained adventure going for him, and each of the four players (including drummer Francois Cote) make the right moves as soloists and as sensitive group-conscious voices. Blue, as emotionally encoded color and musical cue, is a recurring theme in Bouchard's song set. But these are varying



shades of light blue, from the title track through the amicable dynamics of "Blues Orange" and "L'eau Blues," both drawing on infectious melodic riffs with blues changes only slightly twisted.

Subtle intricacies line the way, however easy the surface appeal of the music, as with

the loopy lobe of the 7/4 meter and bi-tonal tension on the tune "Blues En Peinture." A waltz-time sway worthy of neo-French café atmospherics holds forth on "Cinq Contre Trios," but with a few unexpected measure counts in the otherwise traditional structure. The brisk, bright-toned filigree of "Souvenirs" conjures up echoes of Toots Thielemans, while "Elle Est Partie" flows with the relaxed, slightly melancholy manner of a Franco-phonics bossa nova tune, Cote hugging the tenor's breathy low range, seeming to channel Stan Getz.

On a broader scale, Bouchard's new album carries its badge of retro convention proudly, mainly because it speaks to the here and now as well as echoes of the past—from the jazz-loving French diaspora and below the United States/Canadian border. —*Josef Woodard*

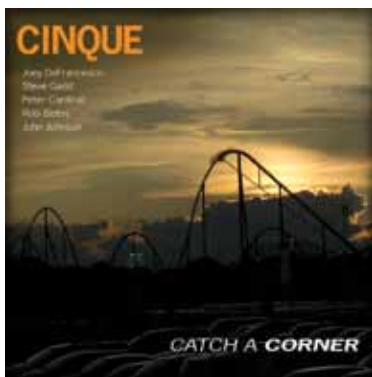
Bleu Et Blanc: Bleu Et Blanc; Blues Orange; Je Pense A Vous; L'eau Blues; La Route En Gris; Cinq Contre Trois; Blues En Peinture; Souvenirs; Elle Est Partie; L'autre Virée. (55:00)
Personnel: Guillaume Bouchard, bass; Michel Côté, tenor saxophone; André Lachance, guitar; François Côté, drums.
Ordering info: guillaumebouchardjazz.com

Cinque
Catch A Corner

ALMA RECORDS 83012
★★★★

For the better part of a decade, Toronto-based producer and bassist Peter Cardinali has been recording impromptu, three-hour sessions as part of Alma Records' One Take series. *Catch A Corner* is not part of that project, but it shares a similar spirit. In the Cinque ensemble, Cardinali's bass is rounded out by a dream rhythm section: One Take alums Joey DeFrancesco and Robi Botos on Hammond B3 and piano, and fusion mastermind Steve Gadd behind the drum kit. Along with John Johnson, one of the Toronto music scene's busiest sidemen, the quintet spent two afternoons in the studio, collaboratively writing and recording six original tracks plus interesting arrangements of Cedar Walton's "Bolivia" and Paul Simon's "Still Crazy After All These Years."

The two-part "Saturday Night, Sunday Morning" exemplifies the best this combo has to



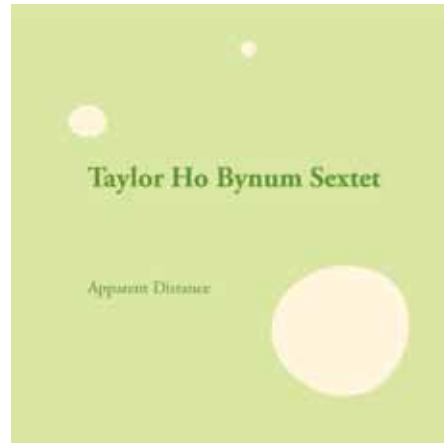
offer: DeFrancesco's unfeeling soulfulness is complemented by Gadd's rocking rhythms. As the two fall instantly in sync, Johnson rides over the top, making for a richly textured sound. Things change midway through the piece, as a lush piano solo ushers in the "Sunday Morning" coda: "Geppetto's Blues," combines swaggering B3 romps with a swinging beat.

The Simon classic—which Gadd played on for his 1975 recording—gets a near torch-ballad treatment courtesy of Johnson's breathy lines.

At other times, vamps extend longer than necessary, as on the overly jammy "Conflicting Advice." The fusion and smooth-jazz elements may also detract from the album's success for some listeners. But *Catch A Corner* remains a solid and often compelling soul-jazz foray.

—*Jennifer Odell*

Catch A Corner: Conflicting Advice; Geppetto's Blues; Saturday Night, Sunday Morning; Two Worlds; Catch A Corner; Over The Humpty Dump; Bolivia; Still Crazy After All These Years. (51:56)
Personnel: Steve Gadd, drums; Peter Cardinali, bass; Joey DeFrancesco, Hammond B3 organ; Robi Botos, piano; John Johnson, saxophone.
Ordering info: almarecords.com



Taylor Ho Bynum Sextet
Apparent Distance

FIREHOUSE 12 0401014
★★★★½

This new sextet includes associates whom we are used to seeing alongside cornet player Taylor Ho Bynum. They are guitarist Mary Halvorson and drummer Tomas Fujiwara. The others are musicians who are likely not to be viewed as close cohorts although they share some history with the leader: bass trombonist and tuba player Bill Lowe, alto saxist Jim Hobbs and bass player Ken Filiano. And this seemingly disparate group ends up being a successful attempt at bringing together the Boston and New York scenes as well as several generations of musicians.

Apparent Distance is a four-part composition and reaffirms that the suite is Bynum's preferred mode of musical expression—this is as much the result of his deep admiration for Duke Ellington's music as the acknowledgment that it is the best device he has so far found to achieve his ends. Although the cornetist put much effort into developing a concept for the piece, the individual performances are what instantly grab the attention. Bill Lowe's surprisingly nimble tuba ruminations, Filiano's searching arco sawing, Halvorson's electrifying wizardry, Hobbs' heart-wrenching statements, Fujiwara's musical constructions, or Bynum's own twirling flights are just a few examples of what these fine musicians have to offer.

During the course of the suite, the sextet is in fact often broken down into various combinations going from solo to full formation and everything in between. This process allows for a remarkable symbiosis to take place, whether it is Halvorson and Hobbs engaging in a more-than-satisfying interlocked dialogue on "Strike" or Filiano and Fujiwara combining their skills to provide an understated yet effective backdrop.

—*Alain Drouot*

Apparent Distance: Part 1: Shift; Part 2: Striker; Part 3: Source; Part 4: Layer. (59:07)
Personnel: Taylor Ho Bynum, cornet; Jim Hobbs, alto saxophone; Bill Lowe, bass trombone, tuba; Mary Halvorson, electric guitar; Ken Filiano, bass; Tomas Fujiwara, drums.
Ordering info: firehouse12.com

Veterans Tear Up Blues Highway

Cornell Dupree: *I'm Alright* (Dialtone 0023; 53:40 ★★★★★) What a way to go out. Though mortally ill, Dupree proves he still owns the patent on soulful studio guitar playing here in Austin, Texas. Aretha Franklin's former royal attendant remains remarkably fluent in funk, soul and especially blues, whether doing his own tunes or sizing up material by Tony Joe White, Bill Withers, Jimmy McGriff, Jimmy Reed and Pee Wee Ellis from James Brown's band. Combining melancholy with a sly sophistication in his sound, Dupree gives a beautiful, gentle study of White's "Rainy Night In Georgia" (a song he once famously recorded in the employ of Brook Benton). Another high spot on an album without lows is "CL Blues," right out of T-Bone Walker's Texas. No matter if Dupree and three different bassists don't lock into an amazing groove like he used to with bassist Chuck Rainey. Bonus: Kaz Kazanoff's saxophone.

Ordering info: dialtonerecords.com

Morgan Davis: *Drive My Blues Away* (Electro-Fi 3424; 44:58 ★★★½) Almost 40 years on the blues highway, singer-guitarist Davis adds depth and texture to the solo acoustic and electric blues he presents on his eighth album. His own songs are fine—"The Money Men" is of topical interest, "Thank You, Mr. Reed" addresses Jimmy—and there's an immediacy of discovery in his well-reasoned, rhythmically assured versions of Skip James' "Look Down The Road," Robert Johnson's "When You Got A Good Friend" and the second Sonny Boy Williamson's "Dissatisfied." The one song taped in 1973, RJ's "Ramblin' On My Mind," lacks the gravitas of the new performances.

Ordering info: electrofi.com

The Duke Robillard Band: *Low Down And Tore Up* (Stony Plain 1357; 49:13 ★★) Guitarist Robillard is so skilled at his craft that he could play this set of songs he grew up on in his sleep. But, like previous albums, the Rhode Islander's singing bogs down in smarm and shtick, negating revivals of Guitar Slim's "Quicksand" and 11 more oldies. Minor relief arrives whenever Sax Gordon walks the bar, honking and bleating to kingdom come.

Ordering info: stonyplainrecords.com

Scott Ramming: *Crawstickers* (Arbor Lane Music 325; 46:00 ★★★★★) Ramming brings honest wit to entertaining original songs



Cornell Dupree

mainly about domestic squabbles. He doesn't seem to mind getting put in his place by duet singer Mary Ann Redmond on the slow-sizler "There Must Be Something Wrong With You." His plea for peace, wit intact, is called "I Dreamed I Met Jesus." In addition to his passable vocals, Ramming plays good jazz sax, with Sonny Rollins flourishes. Some of the leading roots musicians in the Mid-Atlantic area help him out.

Ordering info: scottramming.com

Laurie Morvan Band: *Breathe Deep* (Screaming Lizard 0005; 55:23 ★★★) Power and technique characterize Morvan's blues-rock guitar style while a light urgency infuses her singing on a package of title-revealing songs (such as "I've Had Enough" and "Hurtin' And Healin'") she wrote for this album. Unlike the many bands that self-destruct in white-hot flames, these five Californians pack heat with an intelligent approach that makes use of dynamics and built-up tension.

Ordering info: lauriemorvan.com

Lucky Peterson: *Every Second A Fool Is Born* (JSP 8831; 57:49 ★★) Throughout his fifth album for a British label, Peterson tosses nasty termite grenades labeled "blues-rock." A technically formidable guitarist prone to overheated posturing, he adds to the molten noise that he and his backup crew pack into pedestrian Steve Washington songs. Not so foolish: Convictive power informs his singing on the real blues "My Baby Changed."

Ordering info: jsprecords.com



MEREDITH D'AMBROSIO BY MYSELF

SSC 1285 / IN STORES JANUARY 31

iTunes.com/MeredithdAmbrosio



Among d'Ambrosio's 17 albums, this is the first devoted to the work of a single composer. Schwartz and his songs are products of the uniquely American alchemy that shaped jazz from a mishmash of ingredients and then melded its spirit with elements of Viennese operetta and the British music hall to create Broadway and motion picture musicals...

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—Doug Ramsey



Available on
iTunes

The Thing With Jim O'Rourke *Shinjuku Growl*

SMALLTOWN SUPERJAZZ 201

★★★★½

Fire! With Jim O'Rourke *Unreleased?*

RUNE GRAMMOFON 2111

★★★★½

The titanic Swedish reedist Mats Gustafsson and the mercurial multi-instrumentalist Jim O'Rourke have worked together since 1994, collaborating in countless contexts. Both have voracious musical appetites and wide curiosities, so their work together has evolved over the years, from projects like Discoholics Anonymous with Thurston Moore to the heavy-duty improv noise-rock project Original Silence. These two hard-hitting albums were recorded during trips to Tokyo (where O'Rourke lives) in 2008 and 2010, by Gustafsson's two main working bands The Thing and Fire!, and the natural connection on display makes it seem like the guest is a full-fledged member of both outfits.

The Thing sticks primarily to high-energy improvisations on *Shinjuku Growl*, with Gustafsson uncorking furious overblown lines stoked by his roiling rhythm section of bassist Ingebrigt Håker-Flaten and drummer Paal Nilssen-Love. O'Rourke tends to shadow the saxophonist, shaping his own intense, feedback-soaked guitar lines as a complement, but he's no shrinking violet, summoning the spirit of early Sonny Sharrock and Masayuki Tagayanagi at their most violent and expressive. The epic opening piece grows from a slow simmer into an



all-out maelstrom before ebbing into silence, with all four musicians perfectly in sync as they tamp the mood down. Even on the slightly more temperate title track, there's a gripping unity.

Fire! is a newer, more rock-oriented project, but on its second album, *Unreleased?*, the material is all improvised within the heavy, head-nodding grooves meted out by bassist Johan Berthling (a member of Tape and the Sten Sandell Trio) and drummer Andreas Werliin (of Wildbirds & Peacedrums and Dan Berglund's Tonbruket). O'Rourke works hard to fit in, listen and deepen the action, whether that means shaping pulsing low-end figures beneath Gustafsson's cranky, slow-moving baritone lines at the start of "Are You Both

Still Unreleased?" or dropping shadowy, acidic post-psychedelic figures as the piece grows more turbulent. Most of the tracks feature Gustafsson and O'Rourke shifting instruments and textures, a freewheeling, open-ended series of jams that maintain a rigorous control without sounding stiff or stunted. Both albums are concerned with abstract sound colliding with aggressive rhythm, and both bands find ever-changing ways to make the approach sound fresh.

—Peter Margasak

Shinjuku Growl: If Not Ecstatic, We Replay; Half A Dog Can't Even Take A Shit; I Can't My Mouth Is Already Full; Shinjuku Growl. (56:28)

Personnel: Mats Gustafsson, alto and baritone saxophones; Jim O'Rourke, guitar; Ingebrigt Håker-Flaten, bass; Paal Nilssen-Love, drums.

Ordering info: smalltownsuperjazz.com

Unreleased?: Are You Both Still Unreleased?; ...Please, I Am Released; By Whom And Why Am I Previously Unreleased?; Happy Ending Borrowing Yours. (41:25)

Personnel: Mats Gustafsson, baritone saxophone, Fender Rhodes, live electronics; Johan Berthling, electric bass; Andreas Werliin, drums, percussion; Jim O'Rourke, electric guitar, synthesizer, harmonica.

Ordering info: runegrammofon.com

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Jeff Williams
Another Time

WHIRLWIND RECORDINGS 4616

★★★★

It all begins with a drum solo. For more than a minute, “Search Me,” the first track off *Another Time*, bursts out of the speakers with crisp snare rolls, thundering toms and, finally, stunted cymbal sibilance. The improvisation, neither flashy nor indulgent, is Jeff Williams’ only brief moment in the spotlight. Williams sits in the background, but he doesn’t become time-keeping wallpaper. His drumming interacts with trumpeter Duane Eubanks and alto saxophonist John O’Gallagher, but he never demands to be heard. In the quartet—John Hebert, on bass, lays down a harmonic foundation in the absence of a piano—Williams has focused on creating an energy for his bandmates through vibrant, organic patterns.

On *Another Time*, Williams celebrates the contributions of his musical allies by including three tunes written by each of the sidemen (the drummer penned the remaining pieces). Eubanks’ “Purple, Blue And Red” starts as a mournful ballad and takes on a new shape with a double-time section before slowing back down for the solos. Hebert’s “Fez” is a sprightly piece, and Williams sits out initially before swooping in with brushes on O’Gallagher’s “Go Where You’re Watching,” a tender tune with a spindly melody.

—Jon Ross

Another Time: Search Me; She Can’t Be A Spy; Double Life; Purple, Blue And Red; Fez; Under The Radar; Go Where You’re Watching; Another Time. (52:58)

Personnel: Jeff Williams, drums; Duane Eubanks, trumpet; John O’Gallagher, alto saxophone; John Hebert, bass.

Ordering info: whirlwindrecordings.com



Yuval Cohen
Song Without Words

ANZIC 2000

★★★★½

At the heart of soprano saxophonist Yuval Cohen’s second album as a leader is an appreciation of the beauty inherent in the human exchange of ideas. In this case, that exchange takes the form of eight conversations between soprano sax and piano. The result is a searingly beautiful mix of odes to wide-eyed melancholy (“Nehama”), the Israeli countryside (“Nature Song”) and the melodic possibilities that open up when a duet focuses on the pure spirit of their musical interaction.

Both Cohen and Shai Maestro contribute original compositions, and each player gracefully shares responsibility for moving pieces forward. Maestro’s pensive “Nehama” opens with Cohen taking dark, measured steps across the melody line, as a simple, equally cautious piano refrain grounds the soprano sax. The duo tackles John Coltrane’s “26/2,” in 7/4 time with a semblance of ease despite the challenging arrangement.

Like “26/2,” the standards on the album follow unexpected routes. “Bye Bye Blackbird” builds its energy slowly, until late in the tune when it starts to swing, making it identifiable as the upbeat, Henderson and Dixon-penned tune. And the mellow twittering of the melody on “Skylark” allows each player to float and weave around one another, creating an equal and symbiotic dialogue.

—Jennifer Odell

Song Without Words: Song Without Words; Nehama; Bye Bye Blackbird; Skylark; Angelo; 26/2; Shir Hasade; Nature Song. (51:11)

Personnel: Yuval Cohen, soprano saxophone; Shai Maestro, piano.

Ordering info: anzicrecords.com



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Melissa Aldana

Free Fall

INNER CIRCLE 017

★★★★

The daughter of Chilean saxophonist Marcos Aldana, young tenorist Melissa Aldana obviously grew up with an ear to her father's playing and an eye on his record collection. The influence of sax giants of earlier generations is obvious throughout Aldana's solid debut, particularly Sonny Rollins and Atlantic-era John Coltrane.

Those forebears, of course, loom large in any tenor player's development, and Aldana isn't mired in the past. Yes, "Broadway Junction" nods towards "Giant Steps," and the breezy "Flip Flop" explicitly quotes "St. Thomas," but Aldana breathes considerable life into this sound, never seeming like she's looking over her shoulder into a long-gone era.

She smartly anchors her quartet with a veteran rhythm section. It's impossible not to swing with Ralph Peterson Jr. behind you, and the drummer sounds crisp and propulsive throughout, joined by bassist Lyles West. The duo also contributes the album's two ballads: West offers the tenderly sensual "Lacy Things," Peterson the torch-song "Tears That I Cannot Hide," which gives Aldana the opportunity to unveil a warm breathiness in her playing. She's an expressive instrumen-



talist; listen for the slight catch she lends to the melody of the mid-tempo "Pasos," which adds a bittersweet vulnerability to the tune.

The ensemble is completed by Aldana's Berklee classmate Michael Palma on keys. His aptly titled "Creepo The Thief," with its darting-in-shadows head, is a standout; a free breakdown in the middle shows a more abstract side to the quartet, Aldana and Peterson daringly suspending time. The piece is the strongest evidence here of the mentorship of their mutual teacher (and label chief) Greg Osby.

—Shaun Brady

Free Fall: Free Fall; Pasos; Creepo The Thief; Tears That I Cannot Hide; L-Line; Broadway Junction; Lacy Things; Broken Roses; Flip Flop. (60:22)

Personnel: Melissa Aldana, saxophone; Michael Palma, piano; Lyles West, bass; Ralph Peterson Jr., drums.

Ordering info: innercirclemusic.net



Ali Jackson/Aaron Goldberg/Omer Avital

Yes!

SUNNYSIDE 1271

★★★★

On this lush and superlatively swinging set, drummer Ali Jackson, pianist Aaron Goldberg and bassist Omer Avital explore the value of time and space, and what happens when those musical principles are measured with grace and a little grit. At its heart a simple, traditional swing outing, *Yes!* is performed with such confidence and finger-snapping sense of relaxation/jubilation that its whole becomes greater than its parts. And that traditional infuse-ment is surprising, to say the least. One might expect this trio to bust out of the gate at warp speed, perhaps plying Latin, folk melodies, or progressive improvisations (as Goldberg did on the recent *Bienstan* with Guillermo Klein) in a burst of Manhattan-centric energy.

Lifelong friends who have worked together in a variety of settings, Jackson/Goldberg/Avital instead take a trad approach to Monk ("Epistrophy," with Jackson particularly colorful), Ellington (Duke and Mercer) and Abdullah Ibrahim, then jump on the romping title track (which recalls a hyperactive *Piano In The Foreground*) and a handful of equally empathetic songs. It all fits like a soft leather glove, and the highlights are many: the lovely warmth of Avital's solo over Jackson's glowing brushwork in his sweet "El Soul"; the Basie-esque swing-sizzle of Mercer Ellington's "Way Way Back"; the great feeling between the notes in Ibrahim's inchworm-like "Maraba Blue"; and the funky-butt blues groove of Duke's "The Shepherd," where everyone smiles. Throughout, the *Yes!* trio seemingly knock back a few cool ones, take their own sweet time and put some serious soul to CD.

—Ken Micallef

Yes!: Maraba Blue; Yes!; Azil Dance; Epistrophy; El Soul; Way Way Back; Homeland; The Shepherd; Manic Depressive. (64:22)

Personnel: Ali Jackson, drums; Aaron Goldberg, piano; Omer Avital, bass.

Ordering info: sunnysiderecords.com

John Colianni Quintet

On Target

PAWTUXENT 222

★★★★

For piano players going back to the basics of tasteful, simmering swing is not just an occasional pleasure. It's more like a necessity to fill the tank with high-octane, old-school, eight-to-the-bar groove juice.

That's what John Colianni and his group pump throughout *On Target*. The tracks include covers of big-band tunes, which feature sizzling brush work by Matt Fishwick, steady walking eights from bassist Young Robert Wagner and most critically pulsing rhythm guitar from Joe Friedman. The arranged parts are played by Colianni and guitarist Justin Lees in tight unisons or harmonies for the sole purpose of driving the beat even harder.

And the solos spotlight the leader's clean articulation. Everything Colianni plays is about swing. Even when Justin Lees rips through his choruses, the piano is riffing like a wall of horns behind him. Hardly a space is left unfilled. Sometimes that's a little taxing: On Woody Herman's "Apple Honey," Colianni repeats a 16th-note three-against-four lick throughout Lee's solo, stopping for breath only at the middle eight and then picking it up again on the other side. It actually doesn't push the



groove as much as distract from what the guitar is doing. The magic is more likely to happen on the out choruses. When the middle eight hits before the last chorus of another Herman staple, "Northwest Passage," everyone blows like crazy. When the tempo relaxes, Colianni does, too. He invests "Ill Wind" with the weary/wise insights of the saloon balladeer; a key change before the last chorus feels like lights coming on as last call is sounded.

—Bob Doerschuk

On Target: Apple Honey; Ill Wind; Northwest Passage; Quintet Symphonette; Whacha Know, Joe?; One For Jimmy Hicks; This Side Up; 52nd St. Theme; Boulevard Of Broken Dreams; Strictly Instrumental; Gone With "What" Wind?; Casa Loma Stomp; A Nightingale Sang In Berkeley Square; Jumpin' At The Woodside. (41:53)

Personnel: John Colianni, piano; Justin Lees, guitar; Joe Friedman, guitar; Young Robert Wagner, bass; Matt Fishwick, drums.

Ordering info: pxrec.com



New Metal's Mythic Tales

You probably wouldn't know it from reading mainstream rock press, but metal long ago expanded beyond the loud, aggressive traits that continue to stimulate Beavis and Butthead.

Few contemporary groups play with as much force and precision as Mastodon. Coming off three concept studio albums, the Atlanta quartet takes a breath on *The Hunter* (Warner Bros. 528158; 52:54 ★★★★★) by cutting down song lengths without sacrificing complexity, versatility or looseness. Fractal-shaped notes, brawny albeit comprehensible multi-part vocals and harmonic-tipped marches coexist with a colorful mélange of sludge-based structures. But the secret weapon remains Brann Dailor, a seemingly eight-limbed drummer whose percussive techniques owe more to improvisational jazz swing than visceral stomp.

Ordering info: warnerbrosrecords.com

Whereas Mastodon embraces oscillation, YOB's cosmic tunes are pureed, sifted and ground into expansive soundscapes. The Oregon ensemble's blues-bent dirges are the sound of vintage tube amplifiers turned up to 10, with tunings skewed to bottom-dwelling frequencies. *Atma* (Profound Lore 083; 55:06 ★★★★★) spends equal time hypnotizing and crushing, with tolling bells and nocturnal effects feeding a dusky ambience.

Ordering info: profoundlorerecords.com

Earth once exclusively traded in related slow-burning doom methodology. Yet on *Angels Of Darkness, Demons Of Light I* (Southern Lord 128; 60:25 ★★★★★) leader Dylan Carlson continues to incorporate film music, chamber pop and country strains within arrangements that prize tension and atmosphere. For all of the suggestive bleak undertones and ominous accents, the desert-reaching material simultaneously exhales with graceful elegance and stubborn grit.

Ordering info: southernlord.com

Seldom averse to experimentation, Wolves in the Throne Room increase the weirdness on *Celestial Lineage* (Southern Lord 142; 48:52 ★★★★★½) and craft a mythical-themed masterwork. Pianos, synths, wind chimes, church-inspired female refrains and acoustic guitars abet traditional black-metal devices like claustrophobic blast beats, melancholic melodies and horrific shrieks in constructing cathedral-sized compositions. The madness enchants.

Ordering info: southernlord.com

Krallice also peruses blackened sonic parameters, scorching the earth by way of over-driven tremolo guitars, machine-gun drums and surprisingly patient bass lines. Thick and reinforced, the aural walls on the imposing *Diotima* (Profound Lore 076; 68:52 ★★★★★) invite sprinting fills, sudden tempo shifts and searing hooks to sprout like flowers.

Ordering info: profoundlorerecords.com

Rwake stays close to home and leans on its Arkansas roots on *Rest* (Relapse 71082; 52:47 ★★★★★½). Bold struggles punctuate fare on which a seesawing, swampy grind emanates akin to moss draped on a live oak. Similarly evocative, vocalist C.T.'s burly, distortion-filtered roar resembles that of a jaguar engaged in a tussle with a crocodile.

Ordering info: relapse.com

For Cave In, change has been the lone constant during a 16-year career. On *White Silence* (HydraHead 218; 35:44 ★★★★★½) diversity runs wild, with dynamic interplay and melodic contrast providing requisite cohesion. Just when the collective's attention-deficit-disorder hyperactivity and hardcore flurry threaten to suffocate innocent bystanders, the unexpected emerges in a trio of swirling psychedelic-pop ditties.

Ordering info: hydrahead.com

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Jason Palmer *Here Today*

STEEPLECHASE 31724

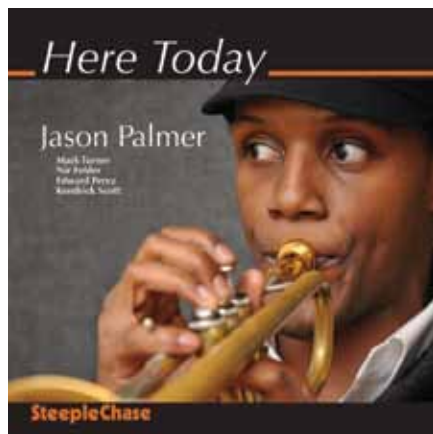
★★★★½

Jason Palmer's "Skylark" sits on the back of the beat, casual in its introspection. The duet with tenor saxophonist Mark Turner is all about creating a soothing atmosphere in the middle of *Here Today's* lively tunes. But like the rest of the compositions on the disc,

"Skylark" has a little something more, a path that's not as straightforward as it seems. After a final run-through of the melody, the drums shimmer and Palmer changes moods, choosing a more sultry approach for "I Can't Help It," the tune made famous by Michael Jackson.

This blend of pop and a well-worn standard mirrors the feel of the record as a whole; Palmer has created an album of lengthy, intriguing compositions that are full of engaging extras.

A constant presence on this CD, Palmer's third as a leader in four years, is Nir Felder's guitar, which is used in unison to add depth to Palmer's trumpet lines or to create atmosphere at the beginning of tunes like "Abu Abed." The band's sonorities—trumpet, tenor, guitar, bass—blend well together, and Palmer



in Boston since 2001, so they were intimately familiar with each other. Palmer chose to expand his range a bit on this album—all the musicians are based in New York but have ties to the Boston area. This sense of community, and the shared geographical connection, lends a warm, joyful presence to the music.

Palmer is an exciting player—achieving pinpoint focus in his attack one minute, turning his concrete bebop lines into caramel, sliding through pitches and bending them to his will the next. If Palmer's music stays close to home, he should go far.

—Jon Ross

Here Today: Here, Gone Yesterday; Abu Abed; 3rd Shift; Takes Courage To Be Happy; Skylark/I Can't Help It; 3 Point Turn; Capricorn. (60:04)

Personnel: Jason Palmer, trumpet; Mark Turner, tenor saxophone; Nir Felder, guitar; Edward Perez, bass; Kendrick Scott, drums.

Ordering info: steeplechase.dk

Chris Thomas King *Antebellum Postcards*

21ST CENTURY BLUES RECORDS 329

★★

Chris Thomas King has been one of the leading progressive bluesman since the 1990s, when his *City Of The Prophets* rightly garnered praise. On 16 feature albums since, all rooted in the bayou blues of his father, Tabby Thomas, he has explored rap-blues and various alterations. Some albums have been good, others disappointing. *Antebellum Postcards*—on which he produced, wrote six tunes and contributed guitars, keyboards, percussion and backup vocals—belongs to the latter camp.

Opener "I Wanna Be Your Drug Tonight" pleases as a love-celebrating pop anthem, a bit smarter than its dumb title, but thereafter his magnetic compass of creativity often goes awry. About a worker gloating over a cruel boss's bad luck, "How Does It Feel?" snaps convincingly to life only to endure a blues-rock guitar solo that is merely boilerplate. Ramping up aggressive hard rock, "Rehab (Winehouse Blues)" doesn't bring anything in the way of insight about a woman's self-destruction. Nodding to classical Indian music, "Sketches Of Treme" has lyrics turned inward in the guise of sensitivity. Hazy self-consciousness, indeed,



"Caught In Between," a hospital bed soliloquy, satisfies as general-purpose rock, at least until his preening, testosterone-jacked guitar shows up. King-sized makeovers of four traditional songs, including "Wayfaring Stranger," are a real drag, afflicted with strained vocals, still more empty guitar melodrama, peculiar juxtaposition of instruments. —Frank-John Hadley

Antebellum Postcards: I Wanna Be Your Drug Tonight; Wayfaring Stranger; Rehab (Winehouse Blues); California Letter; How Does It Feel?; Sketches Of Treme; Caught In Between; I Am A Man Of Constant Sorrow; Louis Collins; Michael Row The Boat Ashore. (37:49)

Personnel: Chris Thomas King, vocals, electric and acoustic guitars, lap steel guitar, mandolin, dobro, harmonica, piano, organ, string and drum programming, Fender Rhodes piano, percussion, djembe, electric bass, acoustic bass; Ryan Clute, electric bass; Jeff Mills, drums.

Ordering info: christhomasking.com

has created a nice balance among his compatriots.

For Palmer's last outing, released in 2010, the trumpeter brought what amounted to his musical family into the studio to record *Nothing To Hide*. The musicians had been playing together as the house band at Wally's Jazz Café



Michael Bates *Acrobat: Music For, And By, Dmitri Shostakovich*

SUNNYSIDE 1291

★★★★

The music of Dmitri Shostakovich may seem an odd choice for a jazz tribute. Unlike Sergei Prokofiev and Aram Khachaturian, who continue to enjoy mass recognition, Shostakovich doesn't have much presence in the classical pops realm. Even Bates seems to recognize that this catalog is hardly suited to David Matthews-style jazzification, as only one of the nine pieces here are directly adapted from a Shostakovich score.

Instead, what Bates tries to capture is a sense of the composer's melodic vocabulary, which he describes in the liner notes as "[t]he grotesque mixing with elegance and dissonance, anger and humor, serenity and sarcasm." When he pulls it off—which is most of the time—the result is a remarkably expressive and versatile platform for improvisation.

"Fugitive Pieces," for example, is a rambling, picaresque number that not only puts its Slavic-sounding theme through a number of meter changes, but manages to sound brash and ebullient during Russ Lossing's richly textured Rhodes solo while seeming flighty through Chris Speed's folksy turn on clarinet. It's a full suite of ideas that seems grander than its eight minutes ought to have allowed.

The writing isn't entirely Shostakovichian; the angular trumpet and tenor lines of "Strong Arm" could pass for late-'60s Miles Davis, while between Bates' slow, funky bass and Lossing's chorused Rhodes, "Silent Witness" has a mood redolent of *Bitches Brew*. But even when the melodic ideas are pure Shostakovich, as on "Dance Of Death," the playing—particularly Russ Johnson's lyrical, deeply melodic trumpet lines—invariably lifts the music to another realm.

—J.D. Considine

Acrobat: Music For, And By, Dmitri Shostakovich: Dance Of Death; Talking Bird; Strong Arm; Some Wounds; Fugitive Pieces; Silent Witness; The Given Day; Yurodivy; Arcangela. (66:44)

Personnel: Chris Speed, saxophone, clarinet; Russ Johnson, trumpet; Russ Lossing, piano, Rhodes; Tom Rainey, drums; Michael Bates, bass.

Ordering info: sunnysiderecords.com

Nessa's Collective Improv, Classic Swing Revisited

Chuck Nessa was the first man to commercially record music from the nascent AACM; his work with Joseph Jarman, Muhal Richard Abrams and, first and foremost, Roscoe Mitchell, put the organization on the map. Mitchell's classic 1966 recording *Sound* was released on Delmark and has long stood as the first AACM album. So it's fitting that Nessa has just issued an even earlier Mitchell effort on his long-running Nessa imprint. ***Before There Was Sound* (Nessa 34; 53:03 ★★★★★)** was recorded in 1965 by the reedist's working band at the time, with bassist Malachi Favors, drummer Alvin Fielder and trumpeter Fred Berry.

The music isn't quite as bold as what would soon follow, but it reveals a musician carving out his own space. Mitchell and company weren't merely ditching the changes; they were inventing new forms. Some of the leader's pieces are complex, multipartite wonders careening through shifting moods, tempos and densities ("Outer Space"), while others collide discreet, disparate improvisational schemes between theme statements ("And There Was Peace"). This is incredible, rigorously rehearsed and researched music made only less radical by what followed it—but in 1965 this would have blown minds.

The music Mitchell made just two years later with the proto-Art Ensemble of Chicago can still blow minds. The material collected on ***Old/Quartet Sessions* (Nessa 27/28: 50:37; 64:58 ★★★★★)** was without precedent while demonstrating a fluency in numerous disparate traditions. While the wonderfully loose "Old" looks back at the whole of jazz history while nonchalantly pushing forward, the epic "Quartet" is 37 minutes of collective improvisation of the highest level; Mitchell, trumpeter Lester Bowie, Favors and drummer Phillip Wilson had been woodshedding, and you can hear the work pay huge dividends. This indispensable two-CD set includes all of the material cut on four days in 1967 (much of it previously available only on the 1967/1968 box set from 1994).

Over the years Nessa has reached beyond the avant-garde as well. In 1975 the label cut a fruitful one-day session with Chicago tenor genius Von Freeman, three years after Atlantic released his first album. ***Have No Fear* (Nessa 6; 51:59 ★★★★★)** was the first of two releases to feature that material, a brisk, hard-core blast of post-bop that had the reedist hitting a fiery comfort zone by working with long-time colleagues (pianist John Young, bassist David Shipp and drummer Wilbur Campbell). The performances highlight Freeman's gripping idiosyncrasies,



leaving his fingerprints through skewed intonation and wild rhythms, both in their lightning-quick speed and breathless acceleration and deceleration. Freeman is at his best.

***Indian Summer* (Nessa 22; 49:49 ★★★★★)** was the first recording of the great Chicago swing tenor saxophonist Eddie Johnson, cut when he was already 60, in 1981. He wasn't a throwback, but a living link to a lost era, with a warm, elegantly driving sound masterfully supported by his working band of the time—trumpeter Paul Serrano, pianist John Young, bassist Eddie de Haas and drummer George Hughes, all Chicago fixtures of the time. Its first appearance on CD includes a previously unissued take on "I'm Old Fashioned."

In recent years Nessa has focused on getting Anthony Braxton's catalog on CD, but it's nice to see a new recording turn up, too. ***6 Duos (Wesleyan) 2006* (Nessa 33: 55:26 ★★★★★½)** is a congenial session between Braxton and acolyte trumpeter John McDonough, who stands up strong to his mentor with an album of fleet give-and-take. They tackle a Sousa march, navigate the trumpeter's aptly titled, quick-blink homage to John Zorn ("Schizoid") with quicksilver alacrity and improvise at length with melodic generosity. A delightful low-key session and further testament to Nessa's understated, ongoing devotion to the art of American improvised music. **DB**

Ordering info: nessarecords.com

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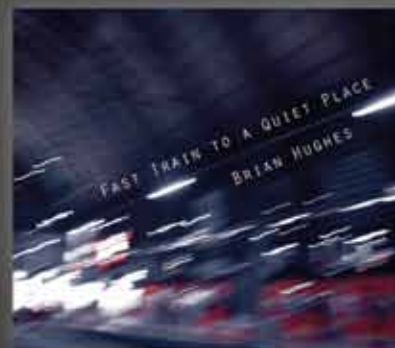
Triosence with Sara Gazarek *Where Time Stands Still*

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Tigran *A Fable*

VERVE 276 068 6

★★★★½

With *A Fable*, the 24-year-old Armenian pianist Tigran Hamasyan, who goes by Tigran, delivers a poetic and haunting album. His fourth album as a leader and first solo-piano recording, *A Fable* consists of Tigran's original compositions, which were inspired by Armenian poetry and folk tales, and arrangements of music by Armenian composers. The album is more stylistically similar to classical music than jazz, and its 13 emotionally laden character pieces express diverse images and affects. Tigran's voicings and rhythmic approach are similar to his countryman Aram Khachaturian's solo-piano compositions, and his use of lush harmonies, sustain pedal, open octaves and rubato make the music romantic and enchanting. Tigran's touch is sublime: Single notes sparkle, chords radiate luminously. His multi-sectional compositions present numerous themes, which are developed, exchanged for new ones and return in slightly altered ways.

The track sequencing gives the album a narrative arc. The brief "Rain Shadow" evokes a sad yet beautiful music box and introduc-



es "What The Waves Brought." The latter piece's roiling figures and numerous hemiolas give it a "wave" feel, and it includes two ethereal and dreamy sections featuring Tigran's overdubbed whistling, humming and singing. "Longing" and "Carnaval" both feature

Tigran singing along with layers of his overdubbed vocals. "Longing" is based on Hovhannes Tumanyan's poem about the feelings of exiled Armenians longing for home. "Carnaval," a medium-up celebratory piece, is the album's emotional high point and includes drummer Nate Wood's percussion. A jazz standard almost seems out of place here, yet Tigran's reharmonized version of "Someday My Prince Will Come" is melancholy and fits the album's aesthetic perfectly. The album's closing piece is Tigran's arrangement of the Armenian hymn "Mother, Where Are You?" which serves as a reflective and moving coda to this gorgeous album.

—Chris Robinson

A Fable: Rain Shadow; What The Waves Brought; The Spinners; Illusion; Samsara; Longing; Carnaval; The Legend Of The Moon; Someday My Prince Will Come; Kakavik (The Little Partridge); A Memory That Became A Dream; A Fable; Mother, Where Are You? (51:31)

Personnel: Tigran Hamasyan, piano.
Ordering info: vervemusicgroup.com



Sam Yahel *From Sun To Sun*

ORIGIN 82596

★★★★½

This trio side has a lot going for it. There's a fetching lyrical quality to much of what keyboardist Sam Yahel offers on *From Sun To Sun*, and an experimental side as well. It has to be tough to parlay standards and originals in the classic, tried-and-true piano-trio format and still sound like yourself. Yahel plays ear-catching Hammond B3 organ touches and treatments, and in a number of different time signatures and still swinging. But the idea that it always has to swing is not on this group's agenda. Together, bassist Matt Penman, drummer Jochen Rueckert and Yahel sound like a working band. Even though only three of the tunes are covers, much of *From Sun To Sun* sounds like a charmed visit to the world of standards.

"2 Pilgrims" sounds slightly off-kilter with its weighted 4/4 bounce, the medium-tempo groove laced with pretty chords and an open feeling. And then, the meter-less "After The Storm" adds some of that Hammond B3, coupled with Yahel's sprightly piano lines, all of it in less than two minutes. "After The Storm" gives the impression of an album that's likely to have more than a fancy dance with the twist and turn. "Saba" gets us back into band mode with some real odd-and-uptempo, rolling swing, a cooker that shows everybody off. Donald Kahn's "A Beautiful Friendship" is taken at a leisurely, straightforward pace, while "One False Move" reroutes the groove to an uptempo mode. And it's here where the band shows its muscle and ability to maneuver and listen, dancing all over their respective instruments, Rueckert given some welcomed solo space, especially. The playful title track revisits the unexpected with some more artful Hammond B3, an elusive 7/4 swing.

—John Ephland

From Sun To Sun: 2 Pilgrims; After The Storm; Saba; A Beautiful Friendship; One False Move; From Sun To Sun; Blink And Move On; Toy Balloon; By Hook Or By Crook; Git It; So In Love; Prelude; Taking A Chance On Love. (68:44)

Personnel: Sam Yahel, piano, Hammond B3 organ; Matt Penman, bass; Jochen Rueckert, drums.
Ordering info: origin-records.com

Jason Stein Quartet *The Story This Time*

DELMARK 2013

★★★★½

If you're going to make bass clarinet your instrument, Chicago is probably the place to be. Jason Stein has done just that. It's astonishing that he only picked up the notoriously difficult reed when he was 23 years old, after devoting himself to the guitar. He plays with fluid dexterity, and his unusual commitment to making the bass clarinet his only instrument has brought him steady work in the Windy City.

Stein has played in bands across genres, where the seldom-heard honk of his instrument often helped build a unique texture for each group. This is his first date as a straightforward quartet leader. Josh Abrams and Frank Rosaly are a formidable rhythm section, but the key to the quartet's identity is Stein's constant dialogue with saxophonist/contrabass clarinetist Keefe Jackson.

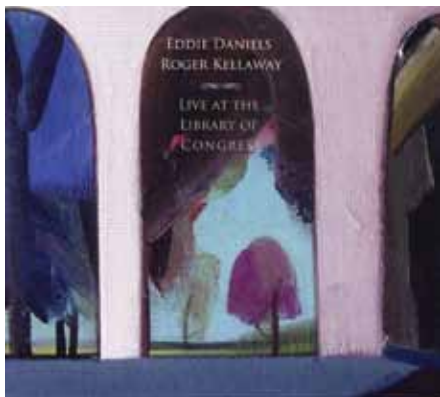
Each woodwind player solos on the record, but far more often, they're heard playing together, harmonizing on the head, and then separating to spar and commiserate. The fact that Stein complements his own compositions with interpretations of a tune apiece by Lee Konitz and Warne Marsh isn't accidental—Stein felt a kinship with the way his elders interacted.



Stein and Jackson don't play cool, though. Their improvisation is heavily informed by free-jazz and bop, and their dialogue is sometimes spiked with overtone playing and note clusters. The opening minutes of "Laced Case" are an exercise in entropic decay, as Stein gradually untethers the woodwinds from the rhythm section, then sets them free entirely for a honking, squealing conversation that hectors the drums and bass to join back in. —Joe Tangari

The Story This Time: Background Music; Laced Case; Little Big Horse; Skippy; Badlands; Palo Alto; Hatoolie; Gallop's Gallop; Hoke's Dream; Work; Lennie Bird. (66:29)

Personnel: Jason Stein, bass clarinet; Keefe Jackson, tenor saxophone, contrabass clarinet; Joshua Abrams, bass; Frank Rosaly, drums.
Ordering info: delmark.com



Eddie Daniels/Roger Kellaway
Live At The Library Of Congress

IPO 1021

★★★★

Nature may detest a vacuum, but clarinetist Eddie Daniels and pianist Roger Kellaway seem to love it. Without the controlling encumbrance of a rhythm section to answer to, they flit through all the extra open space with a whimsical, sometimes random asymmetry that zips by like scenery in a high-speed train. Yet, it's all under the control of an elegant virtuosity that brings austerity, authority and wit to these multiple-personality duets.

The austerity is rooted in the classical poise each player brings to the performance and which pervades many of the pieces. Daniels' clarinet lines are full of polite purity, decorative trills and bold flourishes, befitting an 18th century drawing room soiree. It can be alternately jazzy and laid-back. The authority comes from the unexpected twists and turns the music takes without ever jumping a rail.

Kellaway offers several compositions of his own, some of which bend to the eccentric nature of the music when invited, and then bend back to create a montage of contrasts. "Capriccio Twilight" is flexible in this regard, while "A Place That You Want To Call Home" is a straight and lovely tune with folkish undertones, which Daniels takes care of with his immaculate sound in all registers. "Rhythm-a-ning" is fetchingly oddball on its face, but gets a hard-swinging run, allowing each man extended a cappella room to move around. The interplay toward the end is quick-thinking exactitude. It's the one track where a rhythm section would not have been unwelcome.

This is chamber jazz of the rigorous variety, sometimes strident, sometimes respectful. In the hands of two great virtuosos, though, it's a compelling set. —John McDonough

Live At The Library Of Congress: Strike Up The Band; Capriccio Twilight; Somewhere; Rhythm-a-ning; American The Beautiful; Etude Of A Woman; Pretty Woman; Just Friends; A Place That You Want To Call Home; 50 State Rambler. (58:31)

Personnel: Eddie Daniels, clarinet; Roger Kellaway, piano.
Ordering info: iporecordings.com

David Budway
A New Kiss

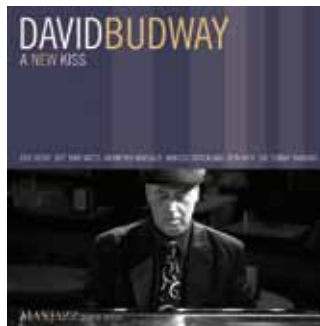
MAXJAZZ 222

★★★★

Patience and imagination: In all the arts, these are qualities that grow with experience. It's rare to find someone new who already exhibits these virtues, but in his debut album pianist David Budway makes these the pillars of his style.

Throughout *A New Kiss* is Budway's command of composition and his talent for saying a lot with no overkill. The best example of this is on "Lonely Cane," a ballad he wrote in memory of Kenny Kirkland. The melody is gorgeously conceived, with long notes set within chords that recast their context from major to minor. The line peaks with a leap by a sixth up to the minor third of the chord and a plummet down to the flatted five, which functions as a passing tone while imparting a dissonance that aches with insinuations of loss. Guesting on soprano sax, Branford Marsalis plays this with very little elaboration; the notes speak for themselves.

When soloing at quick tempos, Budway sometimes seems pushed toward his limit. Following an extended unaccompanied quote from the solo piano part from "Rhapsody In Blue," he leads bassist Eric Revis and drummer Jeff "Tain" Watts into a burning sprint through "Strike Up The Band." The first couple of choruses feel a tad too fast; some of his 16th notes fall slightly behind the count, a few of them are smeared a little and several phrases seem to run out of gas prematurely. But that



doesn't matter because what follows is more interesting: Gradually the trio slows down to a saucy strut and the changes evaporate, leaving them free to invent their own tune.

That's a refreshing way to reconstruct familiar material, and Budway takes it further on two tracks he plays on his own.

He sets "Round Midnight" against an ascending eighth-note figure, broken up by some original changes which come across like intrinsic elements to the composition that had somehow become forgotten. A similar treatment is given to "You'd Be So Nice To Come Home To," based on eighth-note staccato enunciations of the theme as a contrasting single line rises, mirrors the melody and elevates into full-blown extemporized counterpoint.

The last two tracks, Revis' composition "Phi" and Budway's "Sama'i Shat Arabud," melt together into an evocation of Middle Eastern dance. Time signatures shift constantly from straight 4 to a sequence of 3-3-4 and beyond. The trio, augmented by Marcus Strickland on soprano sax and Joe "Sonny" Barbato on accordion, executes long melodies in unison, negotiating minor seconds and other modal elements along the way.

—Bob Doerschuk


A New Kiss: Japanese Brunch; Lonely Cane; Strike Up The Band; Love You Tonight; Slinky; Round Midnight; Maintain Speed Through Tunnel; You'd Be So Nice To Come Home To; A New Kiss; Phi; Sama'i Shat Arabud. (62:49)

Personnel: David Budway, piano; Eric Revis, bass; Jeff "Tain" Watts, drums; Branford Marsalis, soprano saxophone; Marcus Strickland, soprano saxophone; Ron Affir, guitar; Joe "Sonny" Barbato, accordion.

Ordering info: maxjazz.com

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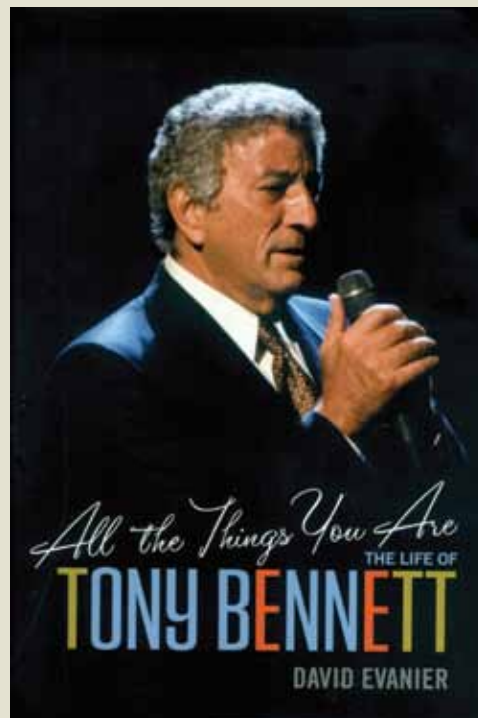
Why Bennett's Star Keeps Shining

Tony Bennett's story begs a biopic. Midway through 1949, Anthony Dominick Benedetto, an ex-infantryman who had served in the front lines during the last days of World War II, is living with his mother in Astoria, the blue-collar neighborhood in Queens where he grew up. While holding a day job as an elevator operator, he sings in various joints around town under the name Joe Bari. Pearl Bailey, then performing with an all-black cast at the Greenwich Village Inn on Grove Street and Seventh Avenue, hears the aspirant and asks him to open the show. Bob Hope, headlining that week at the Paramount Theater in Times Square, comes by. Benedetto blows him away. Backstage, Hope tells him to sit in with his show and names him "Tony Bennett." A star is born.

Thanks to a series of late-career successes and collaborations with the creme de la creme of contemporary popular music, at 85 Bennett's Q-score is as high as it ever was. A cross-generational fan base regards him as the foremost living male purveyor of the Great American Songbook since his "master," the late Frank Sinatra, who famously passed the torch to Bennett in a 1965 *Life* magazine interview, suggesting that the junior singer was much more of a purist than he.

For all his mass appeal, Bennett was never a pop culture signifier a la Sinatra, nor was the press, tabloid or highbrow, ever eager to place him in its crosshairs. For one thing, Bennett missed out on Swing Era celebrity—he didn't tour with a big band, wasn't a Hollywood leading man, kept his love life and vices out of public view. He radiates an optimistic, everyman persona, a certain opacity distinct from the all too transparent longueurs and elations that formed such a consequential component of Sinatra's appeal. As David Evanier writes in the introduction to *All The Things You Are: The Life of Tony Bennett* (John Wiley & Sons), Bennett prefers to "avoid songs with negative outcomes," imparting a perpetual "touch of hopefulness, for embedded in [his] philosophy is a commitment to uplifting his audience."

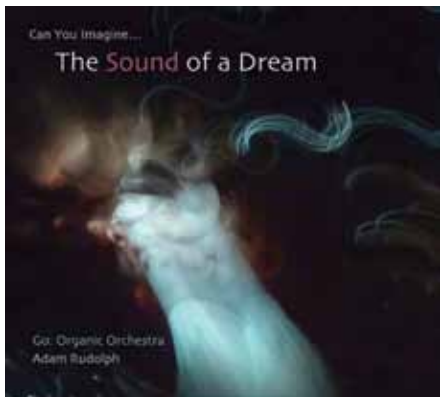
Which may be the reason why—with the exceptions of Bennett's 1998 memoir *The Good Life*, co-written with Will Friedwald, and Robert Sullivan's *Tony Bennett In The Studio: A Life Of Art And Music*, which



examines Bennett's parallel career as a painter—*All The Things You Are* is Bennett's first full-length biography.

Bennett neither cooperated nor interfered, but Evanier's narrative is nothing if not thorough, informed by several dozen interviews with family, friends, informed observers and musical colleagues and employees; a clip file spanning five decades of reviews and interviews; and the author's inner soundtrack of seemingly every extant Bennett recording and video. Evanier effectively positions Bennett's artistic proclivities and hardcore work ethic within the context of his working-class Italian-American background. The book also includes compelling recounts of his military experience and vividly depicts the post-war New York milieu in which he developed his craft. The tone is favorable, with tendencies towards hagiography that Evanier counterstates with candid, non-sensationalistic accounts of Bennett's conflicted relationships with the wiseguys who managed him early on, his two failed marriages, his mid-career issues with cocaine and marijuana, his relationships with musicians and the strategic recalibration that propelled the high notes of his golden years. He never loses sight of Bennett's artistic integrity, his insistence on risking it all to do it his way (purveying the Great American Songbook with jazz aesthetics) and emerging as king of the hill, more comfortable in his own skin than Sinatra ever seems to have been. **DB**

Ordering info: wiley.com



**Adam Rudolph/Go:
Organic Orchestra**
*Can You Imagine...The Sound Of
A Dream*

META RECORDS 014

★★★★★

If the romantic ideal of America as the world's multicultural melting pot had a score, it might resemble *Can You Imagine...The Sound Of A Dream*. Chicago-born composer Adam Rudolph leads the 46-piece Go: Organic Orchestra through a series of loosely connected suites that reflect the participants' stunning diversity. Brazilian, Japanese, Indian, Dominican and German accents flutter through atmospheric pieces steeped in minimalist classical, avant-garde jazz, musique concrète and traditional Middle Eastern styles.

Rudolph's "creative improvised music" concept—partially based on his composing by generating pitch intervals that stray from conventional notation devices—contributes to the record's concept of freedom. Each tune maintains a particular shape, direction and mood. Yet structures are continually subject to parachute-like descents, with spontaneous percussive clatter and biting chamber-string plucks strangling faint melodies akin to kudzu enveloping a sapling. Calmness and violence collide, but only to advance contrasts and textures. During more aggressive passages ("Lament And Remembrance"), severe brass and scraping woodwinds evoke the clatter of an African animal preserve.

For all the potential firepower, the orchestra values generous spaciousness and incremental improvisation. Icy dissonance and slow, creeping noir-bent progressions project a spooked malaise that, on multiple occasions, brings to mind the ominous aura and madness of "The Shining." Via fare such as the concisely nimble "Neither Mirage Nor Death" and subtly rhythmic "Dawn Redwoods," Rudolph and Co. express in written and aural forms the states of consciousness that hover between real and imagined.

Reflecting influences ranging from early '70s Art Ensemble of Chicago to the atonal-

ism of Anton Webern and timbral experimentation of Edgard Varèse, *Can You Imagine...The Sound Of A Dream* embraces theories as it extends them, beckoning listeners to ambitious foreign landscapes implied by its title.

—Bob Gendron

The Sound Of A Dream: Glimpse And Departure; Dance Drama Part 3 (Green); Ambrosia Offering; Slip Of Shadows; Lament And Remembrance; Love's Light; White Sky; Black Clouds; Dance Drama Part 3 (Blue); Treelines; Neither Mirage Nor Death; To Rafter, To Skylight; Murmur And Dust; Dance Drama Part 3 (Red); Dance Drama Part 4; Wing Swept; Glow And Orbit; Dawn Redwoods; Nascence. (68:16)

Personnel: Sylvain Leroux, Michel Gentile, Zé Luis Oliveira, flutes; Kaoru Watanabe, noh kan, fue, C flute; Steve Gorn, bansuri flute, hichiriki; Peter Apfelbaum, flutes, melodica, bamboo saxophone; Ralph Jones, C and alto flute, bamboo flutes; Batya Sobel, oboe,

ocarina and argul; Sara Schoenbeck, bassoon, sona; Ned Rothenberg, B-flat and bass clarinet, shakuhachi; Avram Fefer, B-flat and bass clarinet; Charles Waters, B-flat clarinet, bamboo flutes; David Rothenberg, B-flat clarinet, seljefloytes; J.D. Parran, E-flat contrabass clarinet, alto flute, kalimba; Ivan Barenboim, B-flat and bass clarinet, bamboo flutes; Stephen Haynes, trumpet, cornet, didgeridoo, ewart bamboo horn; Graham Haynes, cornet, flugelhorn, ewart bamboo horn; Peck Almond, trumpet, conch, kalimba; Ted Daniel, trumpet, ewart bamboo horn; Peter Zummo, trombone, conch, didgeridoo; Steve Swell, trombone, ewart bamboo horn; Sarah Bernstein, Charles Burnham, Trina Basu, Mark Chung, Elektra Kurtis, Curtis Stewart, Midori Yamamoto, Skye Steele, Rosemarie Hertlein, violins; Jason Kao Hwang, violin, viola; Stephanie Griffin, viola; Marika Hughes, Daniel Levin, Isabel Castela, cellos; Janie Cowan, double bass; Kenny Vessel, electric guitar, banjo; Marco Cappelli, acoustic guitar; Brahim Frigane, cajon, tãrja, oud, percussion; James Hurt, sogo, kidi, igbo bell, percussion; Matt Kilmer, frame drum, djembe, kanjira, percussion; Tim Kleper, dusun goni, pandeiro, percussion; Keita Ogawa, earthtone drum, hadjira, pandeiro, percussion; Tripp Dudley, kanjira, cajon, percussion; Chris Dingman, vibraphone; Alex Marcelo, acoustic piano; Stuart Popejoy, acoustic bass guitar.

Ordering info: metarecords.com

FRIDAY, MARCH 9, 8:00

N I C H O L A S
P A Y T O N

Television Studio Orchestra

Trumpet wizard Nicholas Payton, praised for "the sheer range of his expression" (*Chicago Tribune*) after his appearance on the 2010/11 SCP Jazz Series, returns with his own big band, the Television Studio Orchestra. "Mr. Payton's gifts as a trumpet soloist have never been open to question, and now with this latest effort he establishes himself as a composer-arranger-maestro on par with any working today" (*The Wall Street Journal*).



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MSU Jazz Camp

June 17-June 22, 2012

This residential camp is for middle and high school students with intermediate and advanced playing experience on their instruments. The program focuses on jazz orchestra and small groups, exposing participants to the many arrangements and composition styles used in jazz. Students will learn applied theory, sight-reading, and improvisation. Students stay in residence halls and eat in the cafeterias, getting a firsthand look at college life. In addition to working with MSU College of Music world-class faculty, students work closely with MSU Jazz Studies student mentors.

Tuition

Tuition is \$625 for residential campers and \$525 for day campers. Financial aid is available to campers with need. Please call (517) 355-7661 or visit www.cms.msu.edu for a financial aid application. The due date for financial aid applications and audition CD is Friday, May 4. Tuition includes a DVD of the final performance.

Schedule

Campers will spend their mornings in studio class and jazz combos. After lunch, campers will have big band rehearsal. Dinner will be followed by a recreational activity or performance.

Sections

Students will be accepted on the trumpet, trombone, saxophone, piano, bass, guitar, and drums.

Playing experience

All students should have prior playing experience, however, jazz experience is not required.

Camp Concert

Camp will culminate with an evening performance on Friday, June 22, at the East Lansing Summer Solstice Jazz Festival.

Camp Faculty

Rodney Whitaker, Bass, Camp Director
Etienne Charles, Trumpet
Michael Dease, Trombone
Randy Gelispie, Drums
Perry Hughes, Guitar
Diego Rivera, Saxophone
Reginald Thomas, Piano

MSU Community Music School

841-B Timberlane Street • East Lansing, MI 48823
Email: commusic@msu.edu • Web: www.cms.msu.edu
For more information call (517) 355-7661

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Offerings at University
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102 Jazz Camp Abroad

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EAST

Berklee's Five-Week Summer Performance Program

Boston, Massachusetts

July 7–August 10

Now in its 26th year, the largest, most comprehensive summer music program welcomes 1000 students from over 70 countries each year. Students can improve their performance abilities in one of four different tracks of student: jazz, pop/rock, funk/fusion or pop/r&b. Students must be at least 15 years old and have played their instrument for a minimum of six months.

Faculty: 160 various Berklee faculty and visiting artists.

Cost: \$8,005 (including housing).

Contact: Summer Programs,
(617) 747-2245;
berklee.edu/summer.

Camp Encore/Coda

Sweden, Maine

June 27–July 22, July 22–August 12

From large ensembles to intimate combos, the 63rd season of Camp Encore/Coda offers students numerous performance opportunities—including the ability to learn a second instrument—at a scenic lakeside location.

Faculty: Brent LaCasce, Kevin Norton, Jared Andrews, Jared LaCasce, Sean Richey, Kyle Moffat.

Cost: First session (3.5 weeks) is \$4,700 inclusive; second session (3 weeks) is \$3,950 inclusive; full session (6.5 weeks) is \$7,300 inclusive.

Contact: James Saltman, (617) 325-1541;
jamie@encore-coda.com;
encore-coda.com.

Camp Medeski Martin & Wood

Big Indian, New York

July 30–August 3

An 80,000-acre site in the Catskill Mountains plays host to this exclusive 80-person camp, a five-day musical cross-training program conducted by the band Medeski Martin & Wood. Students ages 16 and up will experience a non-traditional curriculum replete with guest collaborations and evening jam sessions.

Faculty: John Medeski, Billy Martin, Chris Wood and special guests.

Cost: \$2,000 full tuition (includes shared accommodation at resort, tuition, meals); \$1,100 for outdoor camping tuition (campers have access to public bathroom facility). Schol-



arships and discounts available.
Contact: (212) 925-6458;
camp@mmw.net; mmw.net/
campmmw.

Cost: \$350.

Contact: Paul Evoskevich,
paule@strose.edu

Camp MSM at the Manhattan School of Music

New York, New York

July 8–21, July 22–August 4

This rigorous musical theater camp includes acting, vocal coaching, dance and performance techniques. In addition to mandatory ear-training and theory courses, Camp MSM also offers musical and non-musical electives including dance, acting, art, jazz band and stagecraft, all of which culminate in an end-of-summer musical theater production in MSM's state-of-the-art recital hall.

Faculty: Various area musicians and educators including members of the Village Vanguard Jazz Orchestra and Lincoln Center Jazz Orchestra.

Cost: Single session day camper: \$1,875; residential camper: \$3,000. Both sessions day camper: \$3,275; residential camper: \$5,500.

Contact: (917) 493-4475;
msmny.com/camp;
summercamp@msmny.com.

College of Saint Rose Summer Jazz Program

Albany, New York

June 26–August 3

The 25th edition of the College of Saint Rose Summer Jazz program furthers campers' musical skills through structured rehearsals and public performances as well as optional master classes. Students are divided into two jazz ensembles: students in grade 7–9 and students in grades 10–12.

Faculty: Paul Evoskevich, Matthew Cremisio, Danielle Cremisio.

COTA CampJazz

Delaware Water Gap, Pennsylvania

July 25–31

Directed by NEA Jazz Master Phil Woods, the program's star-studded faculty leads students on an exploration of jazz theory at such noteworthy jazz landmarks as the Deer Head Inn. Attendees will discover the world of professional musicianship through a field trip to Red Rock Recording Studio and the Al Cohn Memorial Jazz Collection at East Stroudsburg University.

Faculty: Phil Woods, Rick Chamberlain, Jim Daniels, Bill Goodwin, Eric Doney, "Sweet" Sue Terry, Evan Gregor, Michael Stephans, Jay Rattman, Bob Dorough, more.

Cost: \$450.

Contact: Lauren Chamberlain,
info@campjazz.org; campjazz.org.

Eastern U.S. Music Camp at Colgate University

Hamilton, New York

June 24–July 21

Thomas and Grace Brown developed a program that emphasizes individualized instruction, and classes are limited in size to ensure that each student aged 10–18 receives undivided attention. Improvisation, theory, harmony, composition, arranging and conducting are covered.

Faculty: Sean Lowery, Tom Christensen, Rick Montalbano.

Cost: From \$1,055–\$4,694. Two-, three- and four-week sessions available.

Contact: (866) 777-7841, (518) 877-5121;
EasternUSMusicCamp.com;
summer@EasternUSMusicCamp.com

Eastman Summer Jazz Studies at the University of Rochester

Rochester, New York

July 2-13

This two-week program provides an intensive, performance-based experience for highly motivated students currently in grades 9-12 and is ideally suited for those considering jazz studies at the collegiate level. Students work directly with the renowned Eastman School of Music jazz faculty during the two-week session in a rigorous program designed to enhance improvisational and ensemble skills.

Faculty: Jeff Campbell, Harold Danko, Bob Schneider, Paul Hofmann, Dariusz Terefindo, Bill Tiberio, more.

Cost: \$1,989 (two-weeks room and board); \$25 deposit.

Contact: (800) 246-4706;
esm.rochester.edu/summer/jazz

Hudson Jazzworks

Hudson, New York

August 9-12

The sixth edition of the Hudson Jazz Workshop boasts a curriculum with an improvisational and compositional focus. Highlights include a special guest artist who will conduct a seminar and headline a public concert on the final day of camp.

Faculty: Armen Donelian, Marc Mommaas, special guest Joe Locke.

Cost: \$585.

Contact: info@hudsonjazzworks.org;
hudsonjazzworks.org

Jazz House Summer Workshop

Montclair, New Jersey

August 6-18

Artistic Chair Christian McBride and Camp Director Mike Lee have assembled a faculty of top jazz performing and recording artists that offer personal instruction and pro advice to budding musicians. This year's camp will feature over 100 students, faculty and special guests.

Faculty: Christian McBride, Billy Hart, Freddie Hendrix, Dave Stryker, Michele Rosewoman, Mike Lee, Bob Ferrel, Bruce Williams, Radam Schwartz, Oscar Perez, Andy McKee, Steve Johns, Ted Chubb, more.

Cost: Before March 15: \$950;
before May 15: \$1,050.

Contact: Ryan Maloney,
rmaloney@jazzhousekids.org.

Jazz in July Summer Music Programs

July 9-20

Amherst, Massachusetts

Jazz in July's two-week program unites students with pro artists as they instruct



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61 (3) 9348 7486

Jazz@trinity.unimelb.edu.au

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(435) 283-7472

www.snow.edu/jazz

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on improvisation and stylistic concepts. The University of Massachusetts Amherst sets the scene for a series of lectures, master classes, clinics and ensemble coaching.

Faculty: See website for details.

Cost: \$600 per week,
\$1,200 for entire program.

Contact: (413)545-3530; jazzinJuly@acad.umass.edu; umass.edu/fac/jazz.

Jazz Institute at Proctors Schenectady, New York

July 16-20, July 23-27

Back for an eighth season, the Summer Jazz Institute faculty is committed to teaching jazz in a hands-on, fun and all-inclusive way. Students will build such skills as listening, critical thinking, communication and teamwork. This camp is unique because students learn the music of Charles Mingus and Dizzy Gillespie without sheet music.

Faculty: Keith Pray, Arthur Falbush and a guest artist.

Cost: TBA (Proctors.org/education).

Contact: Jessica Gelarden, education program manager, (518) 382-3884; jgelarden@proctors.org.

Jazz Intensives: Samba Meets Jazz

Bar Harbor, Maine & Paraty, Brazil

July 22-27, July 29-Aug 3

February 2013 (Paraty, Brazil)

Directed by Nilson Matta and Roni Ben-Hur, these weeklong Jazz, Brazilian and Afro-Cuban instrumental & vocal workshops are taught by an all-star faculty in spectacular oceanfront locations. Hobbyist, students and pros are invited to participate in this all-levels-welcome camp, which offers ensembles, big band, clinics, private lessons, student and faculty concerts, and jams. A maximum enrollment of 36 assures personalized attention.

Faculty: Arturo O'Farrill, Steve Wilson, Café, Nilson Matta, Roni Ben-Hur, Amy London, with special guest faculty Leny Andrade, more.

Cost: TBD.

Contact: Alice Schiller, (888)435-4003; alice@SambaMeetsJazz.com.

Juilliard Summer Percussion Seminar

New York, New York

July 15-27

Designed for advanced high-school percussionists, conservatory hopefuls will spend two intensive weeks at Lincoln Center, pursuing hands-on study of all major percussion instruments (two- and four-mallet keyboard, snare drum, timpani and orchestral accessories). Students are also introduced to world hand drums, percussion chamber music and both multi- and solo-percussion repertoire through challenging master classes, clinics, lectures, rehearsals and performances.

Faculty: Joseph Gramley, Daniel Druckman, Gordon Gottlieb, Joseph Pereira, Gregory Zuber, Javier Diaz, Glen Velez, Haruka Fujii, LINEC3 Percussion Group,

Cost: 2010 tuition totaled \$1,365.

Contact: juilliard.edu/summer/percussion.

Kennedy Center Mary Lou Williams Women in Jazz Piano Emerging Artist Workshop

Washington, D.C.

May 9-12

This four-day workshop is open to female jazz pianists ages 18 to 35 and provides instruction, insight and tools rooted in the foundations of jazz, swing and harmony. The workshop culminates in a public performance by workshop participants on the Kennedy Center's Millennium Stage during the 17th Annual Mary Lou Williams



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For students entering grades 7-10
July 23-August 3

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For all ages

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Women in Jazz Festival.

Faculty: Drawn from the artists present during the Mary Lou Williams Women in Jazz Festival.

Cost: Free to those selected.

Contact: (202) 416-8811; kennedy-center.org/womeninjazzworkshop.

KoSA International Percussion Workshop, Drum Camp & Festival

Castleton State College, Castleton, Vermont

July 24-29

The intensive camp offers hands-on classes with professional, world-class drummers and percussionists to players of all ages and levels. Attendees will live and work with their mentors, perform with rhythm section labs and more.

Faculty: Past faculty has included: John Riley, Dafnis Prieto, Steve Smith, Glen Velez, Dave Samuels, Arnie Lang, Changuito, Jimmy Cobb, Emil Richards, Mike Mainieri, Giovanni Hidalgo, Horacio Hernandez, Memo Acevedo, Geoff Hamilton, Aldo Mazza.

Cost: TBD.

Contact: (800) 541-8401; kosamusic.com.

Litchfield Jazz Camp

Kent, Connecticut

July 8-July 13, July 15-July 30, July 22-July 27, July 29-August 3, August 5-August 10

The class offerings at Litchfield are vast, from such fundamentals as theory and composition to fun, off-the-wall electives like boot camp for jazz musicians and r&b band. Students are immersed in a Kent School faculty of seasoned professionals as they flex their musical chops.

Faculty: Don Braden, Claudio Roditi, Champion Fulton, Matt Wilson, Claire Daly, Doug Munro, Jimmy Heath, more.

Cost: \$960 for tuition for one-week day campers, \$1,370 tuition for one-week residential campers.

Contact: (860)361-6285; info@litchfieldjazzfest.com; litchfieldjazzcamp.com.

Maryland Summer Jazz Camp & Festival

North Bethesda, Maryland

July 14, July 25-27

A new hands-on theory class and July 14 pre-camp clinic have been launched this year. Students will cover the music they'll play at camp two weeks later. During the eighth season of this adult-oriented jazz camp, attendees will participate in a festival of workshops, jams and public concerts located near Washington, D.C.



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John Clayton, Artistic Director

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800.733.3608






Faculty: Jeff Antoniuk, Peter BarenBregge, Fred Hughes, Marty Morrison, Alison Crockett, more.

Cost: \$470 before May 1, \$544 before June 30.

Contact: Jeff Antoniuk, artistic director, 410-295-5591; marylandsummerjazz.com.

National Guitar Workshop Norwich, Connecticut August 20-24

Guitarist Pat Metheny has enlisted the help of bassist Larry Grenadier and drummer Jack DeJohnette for an all-inclusive learning experience at The Spa at Norwich In. The curriculum will encompass all aspects of improvisation and musicianship, along with a private concert from the trio on the opening night of the camp.

Faculty: Pat Metheny, Larry Grenadier, Jack DeJohnette, Jim Hall.

Cost: On-site participant, \$4,950; off-site participant, \$3,750.

Contact: James Ulreich, (800) 234-6479.

National Jazz Workshop at Shenandoah University Winchester, Virginia July 8-13

Inspired by the Stan Kenton Jazz Camp model, the camp includes instruction in improvisation, big band and small-group performance, composition, arranging, jazz history, Mac software technology, recording technology and instrumental master classes.

Faculty: Washington, D.C.-area educators such as the Airmen of Note, the jazz ensemble of the U.S. Airforce and the U.S. Army Blues band.

Cost: TBD.

Contact: nationaljazzworkshop.org.

New York Jazz Academy Summer Jazz Intensives New York, New York July 9-August 3

NYC's most popular summer jazz camp for adults and teens includes effective tracks for beginners and advanced players, including private lessons, ensembles, master classes and concerts. It also boasts jazz club visits, tours of historical jazz sites and late night jam sessions.

Faculty: Dave Allen, Dave Ambrosio, Javier Arau, Adam Birnbaum, Dan Blankinship, Pete Zimmer, special guest artists.

Cost: \$695-\$895/week plus optional NYC housing.

Contact: (718) 426-0633, summer@nyjazzacademy.com; nyjazzacademy.com.

New York Jazz Workshop Summer Summit New York, New York July 26-29, August 2-5, August 9-12, August 16-19

Some of the four-day interactive clinics offered by the Fourth Annual New York Jazz Workshop include improvisation, guitar, vocals and rhythm. Held just around the corner from Times Square, the workshops are limited to a maximum of 10 students each, divided by skill level.

Faculty: Marc Mommaas, Tim Horner, Vic Juris, Fay Victor, Tony Moreno.

Cost: \$575.

Contact: info@newyorkjazzworkshop.com; newyorkjazzworkshop.com.

New York Summer Music Festival Oneonta, New York June 24-July 7, July 8-July 21, July 22-August 4

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July 30-August 5, 2012

BGSU College of Musical Arts
BOWLING GREEN STATE UNIVERSITY

www.bgsujazz.com

students ages 11–25 offers more than 50 ensembles and classes performing up to 50 public concerts each summer. Students may major in multiple instruments and study multiple styles of music, including orchestral, band, chamber, jazz and vocal.

Faculty: Justin DiCioccio, Charles Schneider, Robert Isaacs, Sherrie Maricle, Mike Holober, Allen Tinkham, Kelly Corcoran, Steven Reineke, Robert Koenig, Donny McCaslin, John Patitucci, more.

Cost: From \$1,800–\$4,900.

Contact: Keisuke Hoashi, co-founder/director of communications, info@nysmf.org; nysmf.org.

Skidmore Jazz Institute
Skidmore College, Saratoga Springs, New York

June 24–July 7

Led by Artistic Director Todd Coolman, the Jazz Institute provides a new generation of musicians the opportunity to intermingle with and learn from gifted educators and world-class performers in an intimate and supportive environment. Previous students have successfully pursued jazz-related careers in the areas of performance, teaching and business.

Faculty: Todd Coolman, Bill Cunliffe, Curtis Fuller, John LaBarbera, Pat LaBarbera, Dennis Mackrel, more.

Cost: \$2,428 including room and board.

Contact: Wendy Kercull, summerjazz@skidmore.edu, (518) 580-5546.

Tritone Jazz at Naz
Nazareth College
Rochester, New York

July 22–27

This jazz “playcation” offers a week’s immersion in jazz for adult (over 21) players and singers of all levels. Instruction in big band and combo playing, improv and ear training. Lots of playing and learning opportunities under the watchful guidance of a keynote faculty who teach as well as play. Enrollment is capped to ensure personal attention.

Faculty: Gene Bertoncini, Darmon Meader, Clay Jenkins, Rich Thompson, Dariusz Terefenko, Mark Kellogg, Jim Doser, Bill Tiberio, Ike Sturm.

Cost: \$775.

Contact: Bob DeRosa, (585) 377-2222; bob@tritonejazz.com.

University of the Arts
Pre-College Summer Institute Music Program

Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

July 8–July 21

Students in their junior or senior year of high school can experience college-level

music courses in the heart of downtown Philly. Activities also include student presentations, portfolio reviews with UArts admissions counselors, and trips to local museums and points of interest.

Faculty: From the School of Music.

Cost: Total Commuter Student Cost, \$1,650; Total Residential Student Cost, \$2,450.

Contact: (215) 717-6430;
precollege@uarts.edu;
cs.uarts.edu/summerinstitute/
music-studies.

Vermont Jazz Center Summer Program Putney, Vermont

August 5-11

The Vermont-based program focuses on theory, composition and arranging, ensembles, listening, master classes and jam sessions. Students study in small groups, creating a feeling of community.

Faculty: Sheila Jordan, Jimmy Heath, John Abercrombie, Lee Konitz, Jimmy Cobb.

Cost: From \$1,100-\$1,500.

Contact: (802) 254-9088; vtjazz.org/ed/summer; info@vtjazz.org.



Camp MSM at the Manhattan School of Music

William Paterson University Wayne, New Jersey

July 22-28

This camp includes seven days of small-group performances and rehearsals, as well as four levels of classes in improvisation, arranging and jazz history. The curriculum features master classes with daily guest artists, free admission to major nightly jazz concerts and a free trip to

a legendary New York City jazz club.

Faculty: Jimmy Heath, Jim McNeely, Steve La Spina, Marcus McLaurine, James Weidman, Tim Newman, more.

Cost: Last year's resident tuition was \$689 for commuters; \$989 including room and board.

Contact: WP Center for Continuing Education, (937) 720-2354; wpunj.edu/cpe/.

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Modest Origins in the Modern World

STANFORD JAZZ WORKSHOP (SJW) IS CELEBRATING ITS 40TH ANNIVERSARY THIS SUMMER. LIKE OTHER HIGH-TECH ESTABLISHMENTS IN THE SAN FRANCISCO BAY AREA, THE ANNUAL MUSICAL INSTITUTION HAS HUMBLE ROOTS.

“When we started in 1972, you didn’t have as many resources as are available to students today,” said Jim Nadel, SJW artistic and executive director. Nadel had graduated from Stanford with a bachelor’s degree in music and started a twice-weekly gathering with classmate and fellow saxophonist Bert Carelli.

Local musicians and Stanford students would play together Monday nights and then meet up again the following evening for off-the-bandstand activities. “We’d exchange ideas and approaches to improvisation,” Nadel said, “and we’d talk about some tunes we might want to play and the changes and listen to recordings. That became the core of the Stanford Jazz Workshop. And that idea has continued through all our programs.”

These days, SJW offers two weeklong Jazz Camp sessions for 12- to 17-year-old students and a weeklong Jazz Residency for adults and advanced teens. It also offers an Evening Summer Classes program and the Stanford Jazz Festival (SJF), which runs from late June through early August. Though all events are hosted on the Stanford campus, SJW is academically and financially independent of the university.

“We never really attracted anybody beyond the local community until I contacted Stan Getz in 1982—he had moved to the Bay Area by then—and invited him to participate in our summer program,”

Nadel recalled. “He’d reached a point in his career when he wanted to teach. Because it wasn’t practical for him to come for eight Mondays or Tuesdays, we restructured the program and put it into one week. And that year we offered a residential option. So it was possible for students to come in and actually stay on campus in Stanford dormitories.”

With Getz aboard and housing offered, students from out of state and abroad began to attend. Two summers later, Nadel invited friend Dizzy Gillespie to teach.

In 1985, the student base further expanded with the introduction of the then-weeklong Jazz Camp. “We started out primarily with adult participants, but the program always attracted some younger players,” Nadel said. “We have counselors to stay in dormitories with the students and watch over them. There are also activities that are just fun. There’s a talent show and a dance and an ice cream social—camp-type activities throughout.”

Two years later, SJW became a 501(c)3 nonprofit corporation. Its jazz vocal program debuted in 1991, and a songwriting track was introduced in 2010.

Nadel attributed the SJW’s longevity to the same sense of community and earnest enthusiasm that brought together that initial group of musicians. “The faculty that come, they often get recharged and revital-

ized and make connections with both young people and peers who they might not normally get to play with," he said.

After an SJF concert last summer, drummer Greg Hutchinson fondly recalled a gig he did as a member of bassist Ray Brown's trio with tenor saxophonist Joe Henderson in 1995. It was the first time Brown and Hutchinson played together, Hutchinson pointed out.

"They were once in a big band in Europe for a minute, but they never had a connection," Nadel said. "So we brought them together in the classroom and on the bandstand."

Former SJW students, from saxophonist Joshua Redman, bassist Reid Anderson and drummer Bill Stewart to violinist Jenny Scheinman, saxophonist Grace Kelly and guitarist Julian Lage, have come back to teach and perform. (SJF artists who perform during the camp or residency period typically are in the classroom during the day.)

"As you can imagine, it's quite satisfying," Nadel said of his returning "campers."

A mentoring system is helping some make the transition from student to teacher. Musicians from ages 18–25 are eligible for the two-year program. Applicants "tend to come from jazz programs in colleges but not 100 percent," Nadel said. Six to eight musicians are chosen for each cycle, one per instrument.

"They spend the first year shadowing our faculty and playing together. The second year, they'll do more teaching," he explained. "The idea is that these young musicians that complete this program, when they go on in their careers, if they should they have the opportunity to teach they're more qualified to do this," he said. "Plus, they can take some of our best practices out into the world" or possibly return to SJW as well.

Pianist Taylor Eigsti started at the SJW when he was 11, and at the end of his fourth summer he was promoted to the faculty. A native of neighboring Menlo Park, Calif., the 27-year-old New York resident has taught there every summer since.

"This next summer, it'll be my sixteenth year there," he marvels. "It's a part of my musical and even personal identity." Eigsti remembered his first combo, which included trumpeter Ambrose Akinmusire, saxophonist/double bassist Dayna Stephens, cellist/trombonist Dana Leong and drummer Thomas Pridgen, who is now a member of the alternative rock band The Mars Volta.

"In the past five years, there's been such a load of California musicians coming to New York," Eigsti said. "And so many of them met at Stanford and became friends and played together there. There's a generation that's getting a chance to really be heard out here."

The unique geography of the campus also contributes to the communal setting, Nadel pointed out: "We're in the university's music department, so we have great pianos. And then right within walking distance, you'll find the Coffee House, which has its own bandstand. Next door, we have noon concerts in front of the student union. The music building and the more informal venues are all gathered in one central area. So folks will have lunch and play music and have all these interactions very easily in one centralized area that's connected by just foot traffic."

"Last year, Danya and Yosvany [Terry] were having this heated debate over some different harmonic voicing," Eigsti fondly recalled. "It was 4 a.m., and we were out in the quad, yelling at each other, having this passionate, nerdy debate. I've taught at a bunch of other jazz camps and workshops. Stanford's the one place where the faculty is clearly enjoying growing as much as any of the students."

The sense of community that SJW fosters has led to some memorable Stanford Jazz Festival concerts.

"It's always been interesting to me that there's a high percentage of peak performances we get to experience here," Nadel added, who points out that most musicians who perform on the road have to acclimate to different venues and housing situations. "When they come to Stanford, we make a point of trying to make everybody comfortable."

"You've got 200 eager kids there, and you've got your friends there who are also musicians," Eigsti said. "Every single year, [the Stanford Jazz Festival date] is my favorite gig—without any variation for the past ten years, because the vibe is always good."
—Yoshi Kato

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Oakland University's jazz faculty, famed jazz violinist Regina Carter and the OU Jazz Quartet will lead two days of activities including combo rehearsals, listening classes, world percussion sessions and more. Non-traditional jazz instruments are welcome. The workshop will conclude on Sunday with a free combo concert open to the public. Registration fee: \$60

To register,
visit oakland.edu/jazzworkshop12.

For more information,
call (248) 370-2030
or email stapleto@oakland.edu.



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Egg Harbor, Wisconsin

July 23-August 4, August 6-18

Along with personalized training in a 2-to-1 student to teacher ratio setting, Birch Creek offers students a chance to perform publicly with pros. Attendance is limited to approximately 50 campers between the ages of 14-19.

Faculty: Jeff Campbell, Tom Garling, Reggie Thomas, Clay Jenkins, Bob Chmel, Rick Haydon, more.

Cost: \$1,995 (includes room and board).

Contact: (920) 868-3763; mainoffice@birchcreek.org, birchcreek.org.

Bowling Green State University, New York Voices Vocal Jazz Camp

Bowling Green, Ohio

July 30-August 5

The Bowling Green State University New York Voices Vocal Jazz Camp lets campers perform firsthand with members of a prominent local jazz quartet. The intense six-day workshop offers sessions in both solo and ensemble setting, as well as coachings and special interest sessions.

Faculty: Kim Nazarian, Lauren Kinhan, Darmon Meader, Peter Eldridge, Greg Jasperse, Chris Buzzelli, Morgen Stiegler.

Cost: Full tuition, \$589; audit only, \$379.

Contact: bgsujazz.com, info@bgsujazz.com.

Columbia College Blues Camp

Chicago, Illinois

July 2012

Presented by educator Fernando Jones and the Blues Kids Foundation, Blues

Camp gives student musicians ages 12-18 an opportunity to learn and play America's root music in the hands-on environment of Columbia College Chicago's South Loop campus. Student musicians must audition for positions.

Faculty: Fernando Jones, blues ensemble director.

Cost: TBD.

Contact: (312) 369-3229; blueskids.com; bluesnewz@aol.com.

Drury Jazz Camp Springfield, Missouri**June 18-22**

Daily activities include rehearsals, master classes, jazz theory, improvisation, listening and jam sessions. In addition, the Drury Jazz Camp Faculty will perform each evening of the camp. The camp is open to students 13 years and older with a minimum of one year experience.

Faculty: Tina Clausen, Ned Wilkinson, Brian Hamada, James Miley, Jamey Simmons, Rob Tapper, John Strickler.

Cost: TBD. See website for details.

Contact: (417) 873-7296; music.drury.edu/jazz.

Interlochen Arts Camp Interlochen, Michigan**June 23-July 14, July 15-August 6**

Jazz students will develop improvisational skills and broaden their understanding of jazz history. Performance opportunities include big band and combo programs. Placement in ensembles will be determined based on a live audition with the faculty prior to the first day of classes.

Faculty: Bill Sears, Lennie Foy, Dennis Wilson, Laura Caviani, David Onderdonk, Kelly Sill, David Hardman,

Rob Smith, Paul Brewer, Luke Gillespie, Frank Portolese, Rodney Whitaker, David Hardman.

Cost: \$4,745.

Contact: Office of Admission & Financial Aid, 800-681-5912 (toll-free U.S.); admission@interlochen.org; camp.interlochen.org.

Jamey Aebersold's Summer Jazz Workshops

Louisville, Kentucky

July 1-6, July 8-13; Two-Day Sessions, June 30-July 1, July 7-8

At the University of Louisville, campers can choose from two week-long sessions and three two-day sessions. From instrument master classes to ear-training sessions and faculty concerts, students of all ages and abilities receive a broad education in jazz concepts.

Faculty: Jamey Aebersold, Rufus Reid, Ed Soph, Dan Haerle, Steve Allee, Dave Stryker, more.

Cost: \$495 plus dorm accommodations and meal plan (additional cost).

Contact: (800) 456-1388 ext. 5; Jason Lindsey, jason@jazzbooks.com.

Janice Borla Vocal Jazz Camp

Naperville, Illinois

July 22-27

This six-day intensive workshop is ideal for the solo vocalist over age 14 who wants to expand his/her jazz concepts, style and improvisatory skills by studying with acclaimed jazz artists. Curriculum includes vocal jazz techniques, styles and repertoire and improvisation, and master classes, student jam sessions and faculty artist performances.

Faculty: Janice Borla, Jay Clayton, Suzanne Pittson, Dan Haerle, Bob Bowman, Jack Mouse, Art Davis.

Cost: \$625 for commuters, \$925 for residential.

Contact: Janice Borla, (630) 416-3911; janiceborla@gmail.com; janiceborlavocaljazzcamp.org.

Kansas City Jazz Summit

Kansas City, Kansas

April 25-27

Along with final concert performance in a Kansas City jazz club, students will experience jazz history firsthand as they tour the American Jazz Museum and the Mutual Musicians Foundation, and take a trip to Charlie Parker's gravesite.

Faculty: Jim Mair, Doug Talley, Steve Molloy, Rod Fleeman, more.

Cost: \$190.

Contact: (913) 288-7503; kansascityjazz.org.



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For online registration, visit www.wpunj.edu/cpe and click on Summer Youth Programs 2012.

For further information, contact Professor David Demsey, coordinator of jazz studies, at 973.720.2268 or e-mail demseyd@wpunj.edu

Keith Hall Summer Drum Intensive

Kalamazoo, Michigan
June 11-16, June 18-23

Many aspects of jazz drumming are covered here, from learning tunes to performing with a drum choir ensemble and professional rhythm section at a local jazz club. Held on the campus of Western Michigan University, the Intensive is sectioned off into two segments based on players' skill levels.

Faculty: Keith Hall, Matthew Fries, Phil Palombi, more.

Cost: \$450 plus room and board.

Contact: (201) 406-5059;
 keithhallmusic.com;
 keith@keithhallmusic.com.

McNally Smith College of Music—Jazz workshop

St. Paul, Minnesota
June 28-July 3

Students interested in mastering the art of improv can work with the McNally Smith faculty and immerse themselves in a week of jazz study. McNally Smith partners with the Twin Cities Jazz Festival to bring campers a bounty of pro clinicians. Past guests include vibraphonist Gary Burton and pianist Danilo Pérez.

Faculty: Scott Agster, Pete Whitman, Chris Olson, more.
Cost: Registration \$420 (\$475 after March 31) for residential students; \$340 (\$380 after March 31) for commuters.
Contact: (800) 594-9500;
 sean.mcpherson@mcnallysmith.edu;
 summercamps.mcnallysmith.edu.

Michigan State University Jazz Camp

East Lansing, Michigan
June 17-22

Intermediate and advanced student musicians will feel right at home at this MSU School of Music program, which gravitates toward jazz orchestra and small combos. Campers master musical concepts through a seasoned faculty while experiencing all that a college campus has to offer.

Faculty: Rodney Whitaker, Etienne Charles, Michael Dease, Randy Gelispie, Perry Hughes, Diego Rivera, Reginald Thomas.

Cost: \$625 for residential campers, \$525 for day campers.

Contact: MSU Community Music School, (517) 355-7661;
 cms.msu.edu.

Music for All Summer Symposium

Ball State University,
 Muncie, Indiana
June 25-30

The camp includes concert performances every evening, and high school students are welcome. Study areas include concert band, percussion, marching band, color guard, orchestra, drum major and jazz band. The Summer Symposium also offers a Leadership Weekend Experience (June 23-25).

Faculty: TBD.

Cost: Past-participant fee, \$499; early bird registration (before March 31), \$549; full tuition, \$599.

Contact: (800) 848-2263; musicforall.org/
 what-we-do/summer-camp.

Northern Illinois University Jazz Camp

DeKalb, Illinois
July 15-20

This camp is for jazz musicians of all skill levels who want to focus on a creative approach to improvisation and ensemble playing. Campgoers are assigned to either big band, combo or Latin jazz arrangements, and attend rehearsals, seminars on jazz styles and business of music throughout the week.

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 info@shelllakeartscenter.org
shelllakeartscenter.org

Faculty: Ron Carter and other NIU faculty members and graduate students.
Cost: \$495 before June 1, \$555 full tuition.
Contact: Renee Page, (815) 753-1450; niu.edu/extprograms.

Oakland University Jazz Workshop featuring Regina Carter

Varner Hall, Oakland University, Rochester, Michigan
May 19–20

A weekend-long jazz camp for students aged 14 and up that focuses on creative jazz improvisation and World Music traditions. Violinist Regina Carter remains artist-in-residence for a truly collaborative professional experience.

Faculty: Miles Brown, Regina Carter, Mark Stone, Sean Dobbins, Tad Weed, more.

Cost: \$60.

Contact: Deneen Stapleton, stapleton@oakland.edu.

The Roberto Ocasio Latin Jazz Music Camp Cleveland, Ohio

July 2012

Students in grades 8–12 can partake in this camp, which concentrates on playing, composition, improvisation, rhythms, styles, history and culture, all of which emphasize a Latin jazz focus.

Faculty: Bobby Sanabria, Enrique Haneine, Peter Brainin, Alex Hernandez, Eric Dregne.

Cost: \$500.

Contact: (440) 572-2048; robertoocasio.foundation.org/campinfo page.

Jazz Ensemble & Combo, Shell Lake Arts Center

Shell Lake, Wisconsin

June 17–22, June 24–29.

Students in grades 6–12 will complete a week of jazz playing in small groups, which gives every student an all-intensive experience in minimal time. Improvised solo skills, styles, and jazz standards performance are daily activities conducted under the instruction of an all-star faculty.

Faculty: Greg Keel, Scott Johnson, Tom Luer, Jeff Gottwig, Dean Sorenson, Chris Olson, Chris White, more.

Cost: (Before March 1) \$505; (After March 1) \$540.

Contact: Tara Burns; info@shelllakeartscenter.org.

Jazz Improv & Combo, Shell Lake Arts Center

Shell Lake, Wisconsin

July 1–6

Shell Lake's Improvisation and Combo Camp features small group playing

and rehearsals, master classes, improv sessions, jazz history and listening. This program for campers in grades 6–12 includes individual improvisation lessons and arranging classes.

Faculty: David Milne, Kelly Rossum, Phil Ostrander, Chris Olson, Luke Gillespie, Chris Bates, Dave Schmalenberger.

Cost: \$505 before March 1, \$540 after March 1.

Contact: Tara Burns; info@shelllakeartscenter.org.

Singproviser! Jazz Vocals, Shell Lake Arts Center

Shell Lake, Wisconsin

July 1–6

This is an information-packed week of jazz from a singer's point of view, taught by a seasoned professional jazz singer and voice coach. Campers will learn about jazz history and its roots in the blues, along with healthy vocal technique, jazz styles, phrasing and improvisation, "scat" singing and music theory. Students will also practice and stage presence ideas,



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Simpson College Jazz Combo Camp

Indianola, Iowa
June 10-15

Renowned jazz educator Dave Camwell instructs students on basic repertoire as well as concepts such as jazz theory and composition, improvisation in master classes settings. Each day ends with a nightly concert by the camp faculty for students' listening pleasure.

Faculty: Dave Camwell, Jim Oatts, Jason Danielson, Jon Kizilarmut, Seth Hedquist, Dave Kobberdahl, Dave Altmeier, John Benoit, Eric Kreiger.
Cost: \$340 for tuition and board; \$395 for tuition, room and board.
Contact: Dave Camwell, (515) 961-1575;
 simpsoncollegejazzcamp.com

Steve Zegree Vocal Jazz Camp

Kalamazoo, Michigan

June 24-29
 This camp at Western Michigan University seeks both high school and college players, as well as teachers and pros at all levels. Limited to 40 students, the camp week offers four private lessons for each student and culminates in a student performance at the Union Cabaret and Grill.

Faculty: Steve Zegree, Michael Wheaton, Duane Shields Davis, Diana Spradling, Ly Tartell, Peter Eldrige and Gary Fry.
Cost: \$495 plus room and board.
Contact: wmugoldcompany.com/camp.

Summer with the Jazz Masters Program

Cleveland, Ohio
June-July 2012

Summer jazz studies program held at Cuyahoga Community College with weekly guest artists, workshops, clinics and performances. Program has about 30 students, ages 12-18.

Faculty: Steve Enos, Ernie Krivda, Dave Sterner, Demetrius Steinmetz and Tri-C Jazz Studies Artist(s)-in-Residence.
Cost: \$350.
Contact: Steve Enos, (216) 987-4256;
 Stephen.Enos@tri-c.edu;

Tritone Jazz at Interlochen

Interlochen Center for the Arts,
 Interlochen, Michigan

June 17-22
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Faculty: Darmon Meader, Bill Carrothers, Jim Fox, Clay Jenkins, Steve Houghton, Jose Encarnacion, Ike Sturm, Fred Sturm.

Cost: \$945 (\$895 for Interlochen alumni).

Contact: Bob DeRosa, (585) 377-2222; bob@tritonejazz.com.

Tritone Jazz Fantasy Camp Cool at the Lake

Baileys Harbor, Wisconsin

July 10-15

This camp is designed for adult players (21 and over) looking to spend a week in a total-immersion jazz playing experience regardless of ability of skill level. Instrument and vocal master classes, small-combo and large ensemble playing, theory and improv and an intimate meet-the-artists session.

Faculty: Gene Bertocini, Ron Blumeneau, Mike Hale, Tom Hampson, John



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Cost: \$775 (tuition only), \$1,075 (tuition and meal plan).

Contact: (585) 377-2222; tritonejazz.com/camps/bjorklunden.

University of Central Oklahoma Jazz Lab Summer Camp

Edmond, Oklahoma

July 8-13

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for a jam-packed week designed to participate daily in combos, masterclasses, improv, theory sessions, jazz history presentations, and evening jam sessions in a fun and relaxed environment. This camp is open to instrumentalists age 14 and up.

Faculty: Brian Gorrell, Kent Kidwell, Jeff Kidwell, Lee Rucker, Dennis Borycki, Michael Geib, David Hardman, Danny Vaughan, Clint Rohr, more.

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jazzworkshop@ucojazzlab.com;
ucojazzlab.com.

University of Michigan MPulse Jazz Institute

Ann Arbor, Michigan

July 15-28

Students attending MPulse will be exposed to the rigorous training provided by the university including improvisation, listening, jazz history, applied instrument training, theory and musicianship. Students participate in small group performance and creative collaboration with other MPulse sessions. MPulse is open to students who have completed grades 9-11, and attendees must audition to be selected.

Faculty: Andrew Bishop and various School of Music faculty.

Cost: \$1,750.

Contact: (866) 936-2660;
music.umich.edu/
special_programs/youth/mpulse.

University of Missouri, St. Louis Jazz Combo/ Improv Camp

St. Louis, Missouri

June 10-15

Students from beginner to advanced experience jazz improvisation and combo playing, master and jazz theory classes, jam sessions and daily concerts. Jim Widner, director of jazz studies at UMSL, serves as one of the anchor faculty.

Faculty: Jim Widner, Dave Pietro,
Dave Scott, Scott Whitfield.

Cost: \$299 registration fee,
\$187.95 for housing and meals.

Contact: umsl.edu.

University of Missouri Kansas City Jazz Camp

Kansas City, Missouri

June 24-28

The UMKC Jazz Camp brings world-renowned performers and jazz educators to Kansas City with talented young instrumentalists and vocalists ages 14 and up. Students work with distinguished clinicians, and the week features intensive combo rehearsals, coaching sessions, daily master classes, theory and improvisation classes and faculty performances.

Faculty: Bobby Watson, Dan Thomas.

Cost: \$350; \$320 if registered and paid by April 13.

Contact: Julie Koch, (816) 235-2741;
kochjc@umkc.edu;
conservatory.umkc.edu/cmda/
jazzcamp.cfm.



The University of Central Oklahoma



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The University of Nebraska at Omaha's Jazz Workshop Summer Camp

Omaha, Nebraska

June 17-22

The University of Nebraska at Omaha's Jazz Workshop Summer Camp is intended for students and band directors from middle school through college, as well as adults. Featuring the Jim Widner Big Band in nightly concerts, students take classes in improvisation, jazz theory, jazz history, big band and combos.

Faculty: Jim Widner Big Band featuring Dave Pietro, Kim Richmond, Chip McNeil, Darren Pettit, Gary Anderson, John Harner, Mike Vax, Dave Scott, Jim Oatts, Scott Whitfield, Paul McKee, Pete Madsen, Tom Matta, Ken Kehner, Rod Fleeman, Jim Widner and Gary Hobbs.

Cost: \$330 commuter tuition, \$630 residential tuition.

Contact: Pete Madsen, (402) 554-2297; petermadsen@uomaha.edu, unojazzcamp.com.

The University of Toledo 2012 Summer Jazz Institute

Toledo, Ohio

June 17-23

Instrumental and vocal jazz is taught at this weeklong camp for students of all levels ages 14 and up. The instrumental track emphasizes the development of jazz improvisation, style and composition skills, while the vocal track focuses on developing skills in jazz style, rhythm and scat singing.

Faculty: Jon Hendricks, Vic Juris, Claude Black, Gunnar Mossblad, Norm Manschroder, Stephanie Nadasian and Mark Byerly.

Cost: Varies by program.

Contact: (419) 530-2448; jazz@toledo.edu; utoledo.edu/as/music.

Western Illinois University Summer Jazz Camp

Macomb, Illinois

June 10-15

The camp strives to help students develop the knowledge, practice and appreciate of music in a nurturing musical environment. Instruction includes ensemble, sectional, solo opportunities and optional private lessons led by instructors and clinicians including Western Illinois University School of Music faculty, in addition to jazz educators from throughout the United States.

Faculty: Various.

Cost: TBD.

Contact: (309) 298-1505; wiu.edu/summermusiccamps, SM-Camps@wiu.edu.

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THE UNIVERSITY OF NORTH TEXAS CONTINUES ITS LEGACY OF PROVIDING TOP-NOTCH WORKSHOPS AND PRO-QUALITY FACULTY

As the first university in the United States to offer a jazz program degree, the University of North Texas (UNT) got a head start on much of its competition, establishing an early reputation for academic excellence and becoming one of the jazz scene's most famed and fertile talent incubators.

UNT is known for its sterling music programs, which over the years have instilled American jazz into thousands of graduates. The university is probably best known for its One O'Clock Lab Band, a long-running aggregation that has recorded 60 albums and received multiple Grammy nominations while compiling an illustrious litany

of alumni. Former members of the Lab Band include Jimmy Giuffre, Herb Ellis, Lyle Mays, Billy Harper, Marc Johnson, Bob Belden and Bill Evans.

But the One O'Clock Lab Band is just a small part of the UNT jazz program that for decades has drawn students to its campus, which is located just 40 miles north of Dallas. The legendary Leon Breeden, an early inductee into the International Association for Jazz Education (IAJE) Hall of Fame, was instrumental in developing UNT's tradition of teaching jazz skills that could be successfully carried from the classroom into the professional music world. His endur-



Lynn Seaton Double Bass Workshop at the University of North Texas

ing influence has provided the university with a mindset and mission that has been upgrading the jazz scene with its efforts for many years.

Saxophonist Shelley Carroll, who took time away from his own band and his teaching duties to tour with Sheryl Crow and the Duke Ellington Orchestra last year, is a UNT alumnus whose career has afforded him a professional perspective on his time at the university. Carrol is a graduate of another distinguished Texas training ground for aspiring jazz artists—Houston’s High School for the Performing and Visual Arts—and his fellow HSPVA alumni include pianists Jason Moran and Robert Glasper, saxophonist Everette Harp and drummer Kendrick Scott, among others.

Carrol sees hands-on training as an important aspect of UNT’s overall approach to jazz education.

“It’s just a great learning environment, no matter what your interest is,” he says. “The academic grounding, in theory and composition, is as good as it gets. But the fact that the instructors could combine it with so much real-life musical experience made it [especially] valuable to me.”

Everything the UNT jazz program offers is available in some form or fashion year-round. The university’s public offerings during the summer months provide prospective students with well-designed samples of the educational approach it has developed, giving young musicians a realistic preview of what advanced study in the jazz field entails.

The centerpiece of the school’s summer activities is a combo workshop, which is scheduled this year for July 15–20, that involves more than a dozen faculty members in an expansive educational experience. The Jazz Combo Workshop is open to musicians, age 14 and over, of all levels, and it uses an unusually comprehensive curriculum to encompass as many aspects of jazz study and practice as will fit into a week. In addition to instruction in jazz theory, jazz history, combo playing and improvisation, there is a wide array of additional activity, including concerts, jam sessions and individual instrument master classes.

But the university’s approach is probably best illustrated by its specialized courses, such as the Lynn Seaton Jazz Double Bass Workshop, a summer class Seaton has supervised for the last dozen years after initially approaching the university with the concept.

“I wanted to design something more intimate than the usual summer situation, and the university was very receptive to the idea and has remained supportive of it through the years,” Seaton explains.

Seaton’s workshop is open to advanced high school and college students as well as to professional and serious amateur bassists. He caps the size of the workshop at 15, and he also assures participants that they receive personal attention from the instructor in addition to close interaction with their fellow students. He’s convinced that there are lessons to be learned in both settings; workshop veterans, who uniformly extol the experience, agree.

Seaton, who previously taught at William Paterson University, relocated to Denton from New York City in 1998. He is a sincere salesman for the opportunities offered at UNT. And, with an active performing career and past participation in more than 100 recordings, including the Grammy-winning *Dianne Schuur & The Count Basie Orchestra* (GRP), he is as credible as he is convincing.

“Everyone, including the professors, learns here on a daily basis,” Seaton said. “It’s just an amazing faculty with world-class experience, but it is the instructors’ expertise in imparting information that is so unique. And in these economic times it bears mentioning that it’s a state school so it’s unusually affordable as well.”

—Michael Point



mpulse Jazz Institute

Andrew Bishop, U-M faculty director
with U-M Department of Jazz faculty

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Music, Theatre & Dance

SOUTH

Juilliard Summer Jazz Residency, Bak Middle School for the Arts

West Palm Beach, Florida

June 11–15, June 18–22

The Summer Jazz Residency in West Palm Beach, FL is a one-week program for students, ages 12–18, who are dedicated, disciplined and passionate about jazz. The program is designed to help students refine technique, performance, and understanding of various jazz styles.

Faculty: Juilliard Jazz Division Faculty and Juilliard students.

Cost: \$350.

Contact: (212) 799-5000 ext. 7380; juilliard.edu/summerjazz.

Louis “Satchmo” Armstrong Summer Jazz Camp

New Orleans, Louisiana

July 2–20

Students at this camp will receive beginner and advanced instruction in piano, bass, drums, percussion, guitar, brass, and woodwind instruments.

Instruction in vocals, music composition and swing dance are also offered. The program is open to students 10–21 years old who are currently involved in a music education program in school or with a private instructor for at least two years.

Faculty: Edward “Kidd” Jordan, David Murray, Norma Miller, Kent Jordan, Germaine Bazzle, Peter Cho, more.

Cost: Determined by residency, student status and program. Visit website for details.

Contact: (504) 392-2002; jazzcamp@louisarmstrongjazzcamp.com; louisarmstrongjazzcamp.com.

New Orleans Traditional Jazz Camp

New Orleans, Louisiana

June 10–16

During their stay in the Big Easy, students will perform with evening jams sessions, sit in with a band the French Quarter and play at Preservation Hall. Tuition includes jazz camp housing at the lovely Bourbon Orleans Hotel and meals. Saturday sessions are held at the Palm Court Cafe.

Faculty: Conrad Jones, Dan Levinson, Ray Moore, David Sager, David Boeddinghaus, Kerry Lewis, more.

Cost: \$1,600.

Contact: Banu Gibson, (504) 895-0037; info@neworleanstradjazzcamp.com.



Bowling Green State University

North Florida Music Camps Jacksonville, Florida

June 17–21

This five-day intensive camp is for students entering grades 8–12 or those currently enrolled in a junior college music program. Students, who will receive instruction in music and jazz theory, improvise and participate in jazz ensembles and combos, must have two years experience on their instrument.

Faculty: University of North Florida faculty and various guests.

Cost: \$360, tuition and meals only; \$495 tuition, meals and room.

Contact: (904) 620-3841, mdickman@unf.edu; northflmusiccamps.com.

University of Miami Frost School of Music Young Musicians' Camp

Coral Gables, Florida

June 18–June 29, July 2–July 20

The prestigious Frost School features a summer honors jazz program for Instrumentalists and vocalists, as well as programs for middle school and pre-college level students. Jazz theory, master classes, improvisation, composition, jam sessions and concerts with our world-class faculty round out the curriculum.

Faculty: Ira Sullivan, Brian Murphy, Lisanne Lyons, Ed Maina, Felix Gomez.

Cost: See website for details.

Contact: youngmusicianscamp.com; youngmusicianscamp@gmail.com.

University of North Carolina School of Arts, Summer Festival Jazz Repertory Orchestra at UNCSA

Winston-Salem, North Carolina

June 24–July 13

This new 17-piece ensemble offers participants the opportunity to learn

and perform major repertoire of the most renowned big bands and jazz legends, both traditional and progressive. Advanced college and graduate jazz students will rehearse and perform five full public concerts over the three-week program. Critical professional skills and exercises include sight-reading, concentrated performance preparation and learning an extensive collection of big band jazz music.

Faculty: Ronald Rudkin, Artist Faculty at the University of North Carolina School of the Arts.

Cost: \$2,752 (includes room and board)

Contact: Ron Rudkin, (336) 770-3356, rrudkin@uncsa.edu; faculty.uncsa.edu/music/summerjazz/.

University of North Carolina Wilmington Summer Jazz Workshop

Wilmington, North Carolina

July 15–20, 2013

High-school students receive a broad education in jazz studies, including music theory classes and jazz history with individual lessons and evening performances. Students work one-on-one with jazz faculty and guest artists.

Faculty: Frank Bongiorno, Tom Davis, Steve Bailey, Joe Chambers, Bob Russell, Jerald Shynett, more.

Cost: \$475 for tuition, housing and three daily meals during the workshop.

Contact: Dr. Frank Bongiorno, (910) 962-3395; uncw.edu/music.

University of North Texas Jazz Combo Workshop

Denton, Texas

July 15–20

Open to all-level musicians over age 14, this workshop provides comprehensive studies in jazz combo playing and impro-

visation. The curriculum includes combo, nightly faculty concerts, jazz history and listening, jazz theory, master class instruction on bass, drums, guitar, piano, saxophone, trombone and trumpet, concerts and jam sessions.

Faculty: Ed Soph, Mike Drake, Lynn Seaton, Jeff Eckels, Stefan Karlsson, Brad Leali, Will Campbell, Steve Jones, Jim Riggs, Mike Steinel, Rodney Booth, Tony Baker.
Cost: \$495 (plus room and board).
Contact: Mike Steinel (940) 565-3758; michael.steinell@unt.edu; jazz.

**University of North Texas
Jazz Winds Workshop**
Denton, Texas

July 9-14
 The UNT Jazz Winds Workshop provides saxophone, trumpet and trombone players ages 14 and older with a comprehensive and intensive curriculum devoted to jazz. Working in an intimate setting with master educator/performers, students will study topics including big band performance, jazz improvisation and combos, sight-reading and basic jazz style. Students will also receive targeted instruction depending upon their chosen instrument (reed or brass).

Faculty: Mike Steinel, Jay Saunders, Rodney Booth, Brad Leali, Shelly Carroll, Steve Wiest and Tony Baker
Cost: \$495 (plus room and board)
Cost: \$495 (plus room and board).
Contact: Mike Steinel (940) 565-3758; michael.steinell@unt.edu; jazz.unt.edu.

Lynn Seaton Jazz Double Bass Workshop at the University of North Texas

Denton, Texas
June 11-15
 Seaton's workshop includes upright technique, bass line development, theory and jazz bass history, in addition to performance in bass ensembles and a rhythm section, which will be coached. Outstanding faculty concerts will be presented throughout the week and concludes with everyone playing in Friday night's Bass Bash Concert.
Faculty: Lynn Seaton.
Cost: \$495 (plus room and board).
Contact: Lynn Seaton, (940) 369-7639; lynn.seaton@unt.edu; jazz.unt.edu/doublebassworkshop.

University of North Texas Vocal Jazz Summer Workshop

Denton, Texas
July 15-20
 The UNT Vocal Jazz Summer Workshop is open to vocalists and vocal educators of all levels (minimum age 14). For one intense week, participants cover solo and ensemble performance, improvisation, pedagogy and theory. Educators may attend a daily class devoted to vocal jazz directing, programming, rhythm section and arranging.
Faculty: Jennifer Barnes, Rosana Eckert, Greg Jasperse, Gary Eckert, Paris Rutherford.
Cost: \$495 (plus room and board).
Contact: Jennifer Barnes, (940) 565-4731; jennifer.barnes@unt.edu; jazz.unt.edu/node/124.

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Jazz Camp: Go Abroad

TAKING THE TRIP OVERSEAS FOR A SUMMER JAZZ COURSE CAN SEEM LIKE A DAUNTING—AND COSTLY—PROPOSITION. BUT DIRECTORS AND PARTICIPANTS FROM THESE PROGRAMS SAY THERE ARE MANY BENEFITS TO STUDYING ABROAD. HERE IS SOME OF THEIR TESTIMONY.

Dave Douglas, the current director of the Canadian Banff Center's three-week jazz course, has been running the program for the past decade. He'll be handing over the reins this summer to Vijay Iyer.

The program at Banff is really about getting into what young musicians want to play. It's not as much scales and note memorization of bebop licks. This is more about what are your ideas, what is your vision, where do you see yourself in 10 years. When I call a prospective visiting artist to invite them into the program, I impress upon them that this isn't about you giving saxophone lessons, this is about the bigger picture of what do the arts mean, what can we say through music, why are we practicing.

Going that far away from home and living in a national park where the only other people you're around are the other 65 students in the program—there's something special about that that ignites a flame. You're living music 24-7. For me, it's just a joy because I love to be around music and musicians. But I think a lot of people who go have never experienced that, so it can be very intense. You learn a lot fast.

More and more, these types of workshops are replacing the traditional mentorship model. There are very few gigs where you can go out and play 45, 50 weeks a year, like there used to be. The experiences I've seen at jazz workshops all around the world are really for the musicians to get a hands-on, close view of what a practicing artist is doing, and what life is like, and what they're thinking about. For myself, that was mysterious when I was 18. I was certainly working on it, but I didn't have people around where I could say, "How did you manage to write all this music for your group, and what were you thinking about, and why did you call so-and-so to be in your band?"

Trumpeter Taylor Barnett participated in the Banff workshop in 2011.

The campus is laid out in a way that's really conducive to being on your own. They have 30 or 40 practice rooms, which are more or less in the woods. Even though we had a pretty full schedule, it seemed like, compared to my daily life, I had so much more time to just go in there and felt like I didn't have to get something done immediately. Literally being in a cabin in the woods is pretty idyllic. My wife jokes that when I talk about Banff, I get a glint in my eye.

The schedule during the day is intense. It's essentially like having an entire semester of music school crammed into three weeks.

It was a pretty international group, and everyone could play. We could also see how universal a lot of things are. Everyone knows a lot of the same tunes, listens to a lot of the same records.

Stephen Keogh is the director of Global Music Foundation, an organization that hosts residential programs in Saarwellingen, Germany, and Certaldo, Italy.

It's nice to be in a beautiful place, and that has a very good effect on the mind, but it's not hedonistic. One of the differences between the courses that we run and other summer schools is that we want students

Dave Douglas (second from left) at the Banff Centre



to go out into these communities; we want them to be part of it. Some other summer schools, they'll take over a chateau in France, or they'll go to some more isolated or enclosed place.

Summer programs in general provide inspiration—that's the most important thing, really. Inspiration gives you the energy and the drive to go more deeply into whatever it is that you love. If you didn't love it, if you didn't have a general interest in it, you wouldn't be prepared to put in the time. It would become a terrible chore, and then things tend to become mechanical.

Pianist Bruce Barth will serve as an instructor at GMF's August camp in Germany for the second year in a row.

The course is a way of going to a new place, but also to have this other experience that connects you with the people. I know it's expensive, but I also know that with Global Music Foundation, you're going to end up doing the whole music program and staying and eating probably for less than you would pay for a hotel when you go on vacation.

The other thing about it is for students coming to the summer program, it's a chance to be with professional musicians very closely. You socialize together, you eat together. You have time to talk and to see musicians and their relationship to their music.

Vicky Tilson will help run the Jazz Academy program this summer at England's Royal Academy of Music with the help of Gabriel Garrick. Garrick's father, Michael, who died in November, founded the summer course in 1989.

The great thing about Jazz Academy is that it's always been very inclusive. I'm literally talking about anywhere from the ages of 14 to about 80. The courses bring people together, and you'll get the 14-year-olds having a laugh with the 80-year-olds.

Not everybody can access formal jazz education for one reason or another. There are other people of my age and older who have talent, but they're not going to get into music college. It's really important that these people have an opportunity to go and study and play.

Sue Karzis is the director of summer schools at Trinity College—University of Melbourne in Victoria, Australia. The school added a weeklong jazz component run by Juilliard professors in 2010.

It's a very different experience coming to a new country and playing with people from all around the world who are passionate about jazz. For the students, this is an opportunity to share their passion of music with other young people, but also to learn from these amazing jazz musicians. They can have music lessons at school, but where else would they have the opportunity to dedicate themselves to their music for a week?

Summer schools are proof that there are plenty of young aspiring jazz musicians out there, and it's not a dying form of music; it's very much alive and relevant to young people all over the world. —Jon Ross

The University of North Texas
Division of Jazz Studies Presents

Summer Jazz Workshops

June 11 - 15, 2012

The Lynn Seaton Jazz Double Bass Workshop



Lynn Seaton

The Workshop includes sessions on:

- Upright Technique
- Soloing
- Developing Walking Bass Lines
- Jazz Bass History and Theory
- Small Group Playing and Rhythm Section
- Performance Opportunities

North Texas Vocal Jazz Workshop/Camp June 19 - 24, 2012

An intense and enjoyable week of vocal jazz (and ONLY vocal jazz) Classes and coaching, ensemble and soloing, improvisation, pedagogy. Designed for students, educators and young professionals this week-long workshop is a great experience. This year's faculty will include: Jennifer Barnes, Rosana Eckert, and Greg Jasperse.



Jennifer Barnes
Workshop Director

UNT Jazz Winds Workshop

(Sax, Trpt and Trb)

July 9-14, 2012

The UNT Jazz Winds Workshop provides saxophone, trumpet and trombone players of all levels (minimum age - 14) with a comprehensive and intensive curriculum devoted to jazz.

- Big Band and Combo
- Technical Development and Equipment
- Jazz Style, History and Improvisation



Mike Steinel
(Workshop Director)

Faculty (Partial Listings):
Trumpets - Mike Steinel, Jay Saunders, Rodney Booth
Trombones - Steve Wiest, Tony Baker
Saxes - Brad Leah, Shelby Carroll

UNT Jazz Combo Workshop July 15-20, 2012

The Jazz Combo Workshop is open to musicians of all levels (minimum age 14) and provides comprehensive studies in jazz combo playing and improvisation. The curriculum includes: combo, faculty concerts (each evening), jazz history and listening, jazz theory, master class instruction on bass, drums, guitar, piano, saxophone, trombone and trumpet, student concerts and student jam sessions.

Guitar - Fred Hamilton and Richard McClure
Piano - Stefan Karlsson and Bob Morgan
Jazz History - John Murphy and Bob Morgan
Trumpet - Mike Steinel and Rod Booth
Trombone - Steve Wiest and Tony Baker

Alto Saxophone - Jim Higgs, Brad Leah, and Will Campbell
Tenor Saxophone - Chris McGuire and Steve Jones
Drums - Ed Soph and Mike Drake
Bass - Lynn Seaton and Jeffrey Eckels

Note: Exact Faculty may be subject to change.

For more information
go to:
www.jazz.unt.edu

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WEST

Brubeck Institute Jazz Camp

Stockton, California

June 17-23

This camp at the University of the Pacific offers students in grades 8-12 instruction in big band, combos, improvisation, master classes, jazz history and theory.

Faculty: Last year's faculty included Tim Acosta, Chip Tingle, Patrick Langham, Aaron Garner, more.

Cost: Resident/overnight camper \$650; commuter camper \$550 (before May 15). Financial aid available.

Contact: (209) 946-2416; musiccamp@pacific.edu; go.pacific.edu/musiccamp.

CSN/Tom Ferguson Jazz Combo Camp

Las Vegas, Nevada

August 2012

The College of Southern Nevada houses a wealth of improvisation, theory and jazz choir exercises. Musicians from top jazz bands and Las Vegas shows play side-by-side with instrumentalists and vocalists of all skill levels.

Faculty: Dick McGee, Walt Blanton, Matt Taylor Bob Bonora, Chris Davis, Gary Queen, Dave Loeb, Mark Wherry.

Cost: \$175.

Contact: Carolyn Barela, (702) 651-4110; carolyn.barela@csn.edu; csn.edu.

Centrum Jazz Port Townsend Workshop & Festival

Fort Worden State Park, Port Townsend, Washington

July 22-29

One of the nation's longest running jazz workshops, Jazz Port Townsend is open to and appropriate for musicians high-school aged and above. Participants receive daily individual and small-group coaching from world-class faculty/artists. Big band groups, master classes and theory are covered.

Faculty: John Clayton, Clarence Acox Jr., George Cables, Jeff Clayton, Dawn Clement, Chuck Deardorf, Dena DeRose, Bruce Forman, Wycliffe Gordon, Benny Green, more.

Cost: \$785 tuition (room and board available).

Contact: Gregg Miller, gmiller@centrum.org, (360) 385-3102 ext. 109; centrum.org/jazz.

Colorado University Summer Jazz Academy

Boulder, Colorado

July 8-13

During this one-week session, students are placed in jazz combo settings, and each student will also be divided up into one of many improvisation classes. Students will also participate in master classes and seminar sessions with a renowned guest artist.

Faculty: CU faculty members and graduate students in the CU College of Music.

Cost: \$550 residential; \$320 commuter.

Contact: Brad Goode, brad.goode@colorado.edu; music.colorado.edu/summermusicacademy/jazz/.

Eastern Washington University Jazz Dialogue Middle School Summer Camp

Eastern Washington University Campus, Cheney, Washington

July 21-26

This instrumental educational experience includes three



big bands, six levels of jazz theory and improvisation, listening sessions and faculty concerts. The program is limited to 50 campers and 20 staff members.

Faculty: Mike Bryan, Rob Tapper, Jessie Leek, Kyle Smith, more.

Cost: \$460 (includes room and board).

Contact: Rob Tapper, (509) 359-7073; rtapper@ewu.edu.

Eastern Washington University Jazz Dialogue High School Camp

Eastern Washington University Campus, Cheney, Washington

July 29-August 4

This instrumental and vocal experience includes daily big bands or jazz choir, 12 levels of jazz theory and improvisation, instrument master classes, combos and vocal solos and listening sessions.

Evening faculty concerts feature such guests as Greg Gisbert, the Bob Curnow Big Band, Benny Green and more.

Faculty: Todd DelGiudice, Steve Treseler, Vern Sielert, Andy Plamondon, Rob Tapper, Brian McCann, more.

Cost: \$550.

Contact: Rob Tapper, (509) 359-7073; rtapper@ewu.edu.

Fairbanks Summer Arts Festival

Fairbanks, Alaska

July 15-July 29

The FSAF consists of two weeks of study and performance opportunities, including workshops in music, visual arts, literary arts, theatre arts, culinary arts, dance and healing arts with dozens of performances.

Faculty: Barney McClure, Greta Matassa, Clipper Anderson, Brad Boal, Brad Dutz, Diamond Fuller.

Cost: Workshops a la carte, \$500 typical for a full load.

Contact: Terese Kaptur, (907) 474-8869; festival@alaska.net.

Great Basin Jazz Camp

College of Southern Idaho, Twin Falls, Idaho

July 9-13

Jazz phrasing, performance skills, sight-reading and one-on-one instruction are key focal points of the Great Basin repertory. Students also have the opportunity to play in a range of groups, from big bands to combos.

Faculty: Bruce Forman, Carl Saunders, artists-in-residence.

Cost: \$485–\$525. See website for special commuter rates.
Contact: info@greatbasinjazzcamp.com;
 greatbasinjazzcamp.com.

Jazz Camp West

La Honda, California

June 23–30

This eight-day jazz immersion program for instrumentalists, vocalists and dancers boasts an array of diverse activities that include workshops, personalized instruction, student performances, faculty concerts, late-night jams. The camp offers more than 130 courses and hosts 250 participants ages 15 and over.

Faculty: 45 all-star faculty members, including Art Lande, Allison Miller, Rizzo Harris, Lorca Hart, Kate McGarry, and John Santos.

Cost: \$1,000–1,250, based upon accommodations.

Contact: Stacey Hoffman, (501) 287-8880;
 stacey@jazzcampwest.com; jazzcampwest.com.

Julliard Jazz Workshop at Snow College Ephraim, Utah

July 16–21

The Jazz Workshop lets high school and college focus on the key issues of instruction. It will also prepare students for a future in music by teaching them essential skills and giving them the opportunity to meet artists that have already succeeded in the music business.

Faculty: Carl Allen, James Burton III, Brandon Lee, Ron Blake, Benny Green, Rodney Jones, Ben Wolfe, Kelly Eisenhour.

Cost: \$490 before June 21, \$600 after June 21, plus room/board.

Contact: Snow College Music, (435) 283-7472.

Mammoth Lakes Jazz Jubilee Jazz Camp Mammoth Lakes, California

July 8–15

The Mammoth Lakes Jazz Jubilee Jazz Camp is open 42 students ages 13–17, and all instruments are welcome. The camp focuses on improvisation, and campers perform several times in the Mammoth Lakes Jazz Jubilee.

Cost: \$625.

Faculty: Bill Dendle, Corey Gemme, Danny House, Jason Wanner, Eddie Erickson, Shelley Burns, Beth Goodfellow, Lee Westenhofer.

Contact: Bill Dendle, bdendle@winfirst.com; mammothjazz.org.

Mel Brown Summer Jazz Workshop Monmouth, Oregon

August 5–11

Participants perform in both large and small jazz ensembles and attend seminars that cover various topics including theory, history, improvisation, the music business and music technology.

Faculty: Stan Bock, Renato Caranto, Keller Coker, Robert Crowell, Clay Gilberson, Carlton Jackson, Derek Sims, Tim Gilson, Chris Woitach, more.

Cost: \$695 (residents), \$575 (commuters).

Contact: (503) 838-8275; melbrownworkshop@wou.edu;
 melbrownjazzcamp.com.

Sacramento Traditional Jazz Society Youth Jazz Camp

Pollock Pines, California

August 6–12

A full week of camp in Sly Park, with outstanding faculty and counselors, focused on improvisation, instrumental/vocal technique and small-band performance. Traditional jazz and swing music is emphasized for students ages 12–18.



Jazz House Summer Workshop

August 6–18, 2012
Montclair, NJ



- **Special student Performances:**
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Montclair Jazz Festival, Trumpets Jazz Club
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- **Masterclasses:** Notable guests have been Steve Turre, Christian Sands, Maurice Chestnut, Steve Wilson
- **Educators Workshop:** "No Secret to Swing" - 1 day

Christian McBride

Artistic Chair

Mike Lee

Camp Director

Julius Tolentino

Director of Large Ensembles



Christian McBride



Mike Lee Julius Tolentino

Summer Faculty

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Ted Chubb

Trombone
Bob Ferrel

Saxophones
Bruce Williams
Ed Palermo
Mike Lee

Guitar
Dave Stryker

Piano
Michele Rosewoman
Radam Schwartz
Oscar Perez

Bass
Andy McKee
Christian McBride

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Steve Johns
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Cost: \$625.

Faculty: Rusty Stiers, Bria Skonberg, Terry Myers, Anita Thomas, Greg Varlotta, Jason Wanner, Curtis Brengle, Eddie Erickson, Lee Westenhofer, Shelley Burns, more.

Contact: Bill Dendle, bdendle@winfirst.com; sacjazzcamp.org.

Sacramento Traditional Jazz Society Adult Jazz Camp

Pollock Pines, California

July 29–August 3

A full week of camp in Sly Park, with outstanding faculty and counselors, is focused on improvisation, instrumental/vocal technique and small-band performance. Traditional jazz and swing music is emphasized. No audition necessary.

Cost: \$850.

Faculty: Rusty Stiers, Bria Skonberg, Terry Myers, Anita Thomas, Greg Varlotta, Jason Wanner, Curtis Brengle, Eddie Erickson, more.

Contact: Bill Dendle, bdendle@winfirst.com; sacjazzcamp.org.

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 Omaha Jazz Workshop Summer Camp
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 at 402-554-2297 or
petermadsen@mail.unomaha.edu

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Stanford Jazz Workshop

Stanford, California

July 15–20, July 22–27,

July 29–August 3

Jazz Camp is for musicians aged 12–17, and provides an encouraging environment in which to get deep into jazz improvisation. Jazz Residency is for adults, and gives emerging professionals a chance to work closely with the greatest jazz artists of our time. Students are also admitted free to the Stanford Jazz Festival.

Faculty: 2011 faculty included Joe Lovano, The Bad Plus, Larry Grenadier, George Cables, Bill Frisell, Gregory Hutchinson, Donald Bailey, Ndugu Chanler, more.

Cost: One-week, \$1,025;



Mel Brown Summer Jazz Workshop

Jazz Residency, \$1,125.

Contact: stanfordjazz.org, (650) 736-0324; info@stanfordjazz.org.

University of Northern Colorado Jazz Camp

Greeley, Colorado

July 15–20

The UNC Jazz Camp will be led by faculty from the University of Northern Colorado and special guests Clay Jenkis, Don Aliquo, and Paul McKee. Classes will include big bands and combos, instrumental master classes, jazz theory and listening classes, nightly faculty group concerts and a special performance by the Colorado Jazz Orchestra.

Faculty: Dana Landry, Nat Wickham, Andy Dahlke, Jim White, Erik Applegate, Steve Kovalcheck, more.

Cost: Tuition \$385, room and board, \$250.

Contact: Austin Day, (970) 351-2394; austin.day@unco.edu; uncjazz.com.

Yellowstone Jazz Camp

Cody, Wyoming

July 8–13

The 25th annual camp is for students entering high school and adults. Students participate in one of three big bands and one of six jazz combos. In residence is the Yellowstone Big Band, which presents two concerts during the camp and at the Yellowstone Jazz Festival in Cody on July 14.

Faculty: Neil Hansen, Art Bouton, Greg Yasinitzky, John Harbaugh, Matt Harris, Mike Hackett, Eric Richards, and more.

Cost: \$615.

Contact: Neil Hansen (307) 754-6437, neil.hansen@northwestcollege.edu; northwestmusic.org.

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- Bill Moring** bass/MSU Jazz Band II
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Dutch Improv Academy

Amsterdam, the Netherlands

August 19–26

This academy focuses on the technique behind free improvisation as instructed by Dutch masters of the craft. Although reading music is not a prerequisite of the camp, some sessions do shift the focus to composition. The week concludes with a concert at the Bimhuis in Amsterdam followed by a gig the next day at ZomeJazzFietstour (SummerJazzCycleTour).

Faculty: Michael Moore, Anne La Berge, Carl Ludwig Hübsch, Oscar Jan Hoogland, Han Bennink.

Cost: Approximately \$400 (excluding lodging).

Contact: info@dutchimproacademy.com; dutchimproacademy.com.

International Music Camp, Summer School of Fine Arts

International Peace Garden

(border of North Dakota and Manitoba, Canada)

July 15–21

Jazz Week features instrumental and vocal jazz, big bands and combos, improv and master classes, jazz harmony and theory, live concerts and private lessons for junior-high and high-school students.

Faculty: Professional artist teachers from Canada and the United States. Bios and links are posted on the website.

Cost: \$370–\$385 for the week, includes room and board, private lessons extra.

Contact: internationalmusiccamp.com;
info@internationalmusiccamp.com.

IJamJazz Summer Jazz Camp

Bonefro, Italy

June 30–July 21

This three-week, small-ensemble (combo) intensive includes jazz theory, instrumental lessons with an emphasis on improvisation, combo sessions and several performances in various hilltop towns in the Molise region of Italy.

Faculty: Peter Barbieri, Brad Upton, Mark Simon, Bill Kopper, Mike Marlier, Greg LaLiberte

Cost: \$4,200.

Contact: Dr. Peter Barbieri; peter@ijamjazz.org, ijamjazz.org.

Juilliard Winter Jazz School

Melbourne, Australia

July 1–7

The Juilliard School sends some of the world's greatest jazz musicians and teachers from their faculty to work with dedicated, devoted and passionate young jazz musicians in Melbourne and from other parts of the world. This program is for students ages 15–18.

Faculty: Carl Allen, Rodney Jones, Matthew Jodrell, Lucas Pino, David Baron, Kris Bowers.

Cost: Approximately \$1500 AUD.

Contact: Trinity College, jazz@trinity.unimelb.edu.au.

Keep An Eye Summer Jazz Workshop

Amsterdam, The Netherlands

June 25–29

The Manhattan School of Music ventures to Amsterdam to conduct its advanced-level jazz workshop in the confines of the Conservatorium van Amsterdam's brand new facility. Europe's



KoSA Cuba



International Music Camp, Summer School of Fine Arts

largest educational jazz department hosts a wealth of workshops, master classes and lectures for serious students looking to vastly improve their abilities.

Faculty: Justin DiCioccio, Dick Oatts, Scott Wendholt, Frans Van Der Hoeven, John Riley, Yaniv Nachum, Maarten Van Der Grinten, Harmen Fraanje.

Cost: Approximately \$610 (does not include meals and lodging).

Contact: cva-summerjazz@ahk.nl, (+31) (0)20 527 7502.

KoSA Cuba

Havana, Cuba

March 4–11

The KoSA Cuba One-week Study Program and Fiesta del Tambor allows students of all ages and skill levels to be immersed in Cuban rhythms, music and culture while taking classes in conga, bongo, timbales, bata, drum set and more. Daily activities include workshops, ethnomusicology, lectures, cultural tips and nightly concerts. Legal travel license possibilities are available for U.S. citizens.

Faculty: Giraldo Piloto and his band Klimax, Julio Lopez Sanchez, Jean Roberto San Cristobal, Panga, Yaroldy Abreu, Adel Gonzales, Oliver Valdez, Amadito Valdez, more.

Cost: Varies by package.

Contact: (800) 541-8401; info@kosamusic.com; kosamusic.com.

MacEwan Summer Jazz Workshop

Edmonton, Alberta, Canada

August 12–17

The workshop offers serious students 12–20 years old with an opportunity to immerse themselves in the study of jazz through

big band and combo performance formats. Technique and performance skills will be taught in rehearsal situations and class instruction.

Faculty: MacEwan Music Faculty and special guest clinicians.

Cost: \$395.

Contact: Brenda Philp, philpb@macewan.ca, (780) 497-4303.

Oberlin Italy

Arezzo, Italy

June 6–10

Oberlin's five-week program in the heart of Tuscany immerses campers in Italian culture while at the same time letting them perform in two full-production operas, working with artists, teachers, stage productionists and more.

Faculty: Daune Mahy, Salvatore Champagne, Joan Patenaude-Yarnell, Marlene Rosen, Marco Balderi, Edward Crafts, Piergiorgio del Nunzio, Sally Stunkel, Enza Ferrari, Anna Fre, Danielle Orlando, LeAnn Overton, Scott Skiba, Andrew Altenbach.

Cost: \$5,200–\$5,500.

Contact: Anna Hoffmann, Anna.Hoffmann@oberlin.edu, (440) 775-8044.

Puerto Rico Conservatory of Music 2012 Summer Jazz and Latin Jazz Camp

San Juan, Puerto Rico

June 11–15

Enjoy a one week program of Latin, Caribbean and jazz workshops for high-school and college students. Classes offered include combos, jazz and Latin jazz culture, private lessons and jam sessions.

Faculty: Various Faculty from CMPR Jazz and Caribbean Music Department.

Cost: TBD.

Contact: (787) 751-0160, jazzcamp@cmpr.edu.

University of Manitoba Summer Jazz Camp

Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada

August 19–26

This week-long summer jazz experience welcomes players of all ages and abilities.

Faculty: Steve Kirby, Quincy Davis, Jimmy Greene, Derrick Gardner, more.

Cost: TBD.

Contact: Warren Otto, w_otto@umanitoba.ca, (888) 216-7011 ext. 8006; umanitoba.ca/summer.

Siena Jazz Summer Workshop

Siena, Italy

July 24–August 7

Higher-level master classes feature a stellar faculty. Students will attend two instrumental and two jazz combo classes every day, six days per week, together with Jazz History course (first week) and Musical Forms Analysis (second week), for a total of six hours of lessons per day. Join us in one of the most beautiful towns in Italy with other students coming from all over the world.

Faculty: Avishai Cohen, Dave Douglas, Lionel Loueke, Eric Harland, John Taylor, Anders Jormin, Michael Blake, Miguel Zenón, Greg Osby, Ferenc Nemeth, Reuben Rogers, Franco D'Andrea, Roberto Gatto, Stefano Battaglia, Achille Succi, Pietro Tonolo, Mauro Negri and more.

Cost: See sienajazz.it for details.

Contact: info@sienajazz.it.

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Integrating Afro-Cuban Rhythmic Patterns Into Jazz, Rock Styles

Music is not exclusive. It belongs to everybody.

We all know the blending of different cultures has had a direct effect on the musical riches we enjoy today. In fact, in Cuba as well as in the United States, Africans, Europeans and natives left behind the roots that gave birth to multiple genres such as rumba, conga, cha-cha-cha, mambo, blues, jazz, rock, funk and even rap and hip-hop.

I mention these two nations in particular due to my heritage and my passion for jazz, as well as my preference for rock and funk. After all, it is the blending of Afro-Cuban patterns with jazz that has defined my voice as a drummer.

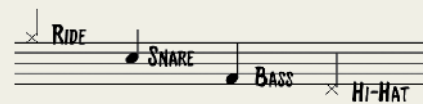
The Afro-Cuban “clave” is the rhythmic essence of all popular Cuban music. The “cascara” is another pattern derived from the “clave” commonly found in other Cuban genres such as son, guaracha and mambo, the three basic ingredients of what is commercially known as “salsa” and the main contributors to the birth and evolution of the so called “Latin jazz.”

In the written examples I’ve provided, I will demonstrate how to blend the Afro-Cuban rumba clave and the cascara with the jazz ride pattern and two basic rock and funk patterns. Check out my books *Groovin’ in Clave* and *A New Way of Groovin’* (Playintime Productions) for further references.

On the following examples we’ll use the 3–2 rumba clave. For that matter, the cascara pattern will also go in the 3–2 direction.

Example 1 is the key for reading the following examples as they relate to the individual drums on the kit.

Example 1

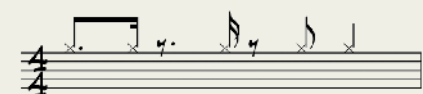


Examples 2a and 2b are a basic 3–2 rumba clave, written in a triplet feel and with a 4/4 feel.

Example 2a



Example 2b



Examples 3a and 3b are a jazz ride pattern in triplets and a 4/4 feel.

Example 3a



Example 3b



Examples 4a and 4b are a jazz ride pattern over a hi-hat clave, written in a triplet feel and a 4/4 feel.

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Example 4a



Example 4b



Example 5a shows a jazz ride pattern over snare and hi-hat, while example 5b shows a jazz ride pattern with snare, bass drum and hi-hat.

Example 5a



Example 5b



The shuffle pattern is one of the most popular American drumming styles. It was in the early '90s while playing a shuffle pattern with Dizzy Gillespie that I started adding the rumba clave to this style of drumming. I call this "Ignacio's Shuffle." Example 6a shows a basic shuffle beat, and example 6b is a shuffle beat incorporating the hi-hat.

Example 6a

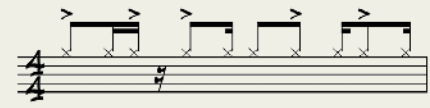


Example 6b



Example 7 is a 3-2 cascara pattern.

Example 7



Example 8a is a rock beat, and example 8b is a rock beat with hi-hat.

Example 8a



Example 8b



Example 9a combines a rock beat and a cascara pattern, while example 9b shows a rock beat and cascara pattern with hi-hat added.

Example 9a



Example 9b



Example 10a shows a basic funk beat. Example 10b is a funk beat with hi-hat, and example 10c combines a funk beat and cascara with hi-hat.

Example 10a



Example 10b



Example 10c



Keep in mind that practicing these examples for independence alone is not enough. Instead, your goal should be to bring them to life in a musical context. **DB**

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JD Allen's Precise, Musically Pithy Tenor Saxophone Solo on 'Victory!'

The album *Victory!* (Sunnyside) from tenor saxophonist JD Allen is an anomaly in modern jazz. The songs, and the solos, are all very concise (the tracks all clock in at 5 minutes or less, most of them under 3 minutes). For the title track, Allen plays a solo that is a brief 16 measures (with a half-bar pickup) over a chord progression that is a mere four bars. But in these four phrases he delivers a precise, compact and musically pithy statement.

The tempo is brutally slow (56 bpm), and Allen uses this to his advantage, varying between triple and duple subdivisions, and even treating the triplet like the quarter-note, as in the first half of measures 6 and 10. These variations are far from random. Notice that his most dense flourishes always occur in the last measure of each phrase, on the VI to V turnaround (measures 9, 13 and 17), whereas notes held longer than a quar-

ter-note most frequently occur during the measures with the tonic chord (bars 2, 4, 8, 10 and 12).

The note choices are not random, either. Allen favors certain sounds on certain chords. Notice how on the Am measures, he sticks to either an Am7 arpeggio (bars 2, 8, 12) or A-minor pentatonic scale (bars 6, 10, 16), one exception being the ninth he adds onto the arpeggio in measure 14. The only other one is the F-natural in measure 4, giving the A minor an Aeolian flavor. But on every measure containing the G chord, he makes a point of adding in an F#, making the chord a Gmaj7 but also creating a Dorian sound in this key.

On the bars with the dominant, Allen moves harmonically away from the key center, using an F melodic-minor scale. It's a clever choice since it works for both chords. It adds a minor feel to the F chord,



JD Allen

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but on the E7 it provides an altered dominant sound, being the $\flat 2$, #2, 3, $\flat 5$, #5, 7 and root of E. Curiously there is no A (the root of the progression) in this scale, yet it doesn't sound "out," and it resolves quite strongly back to the A. Allen doesn't start defining this scale until measure 9, but the notes he plays in measure 5 are common to both A minor pentatonic and F melodic minor.

It's also interesting to note that Allen uses the simplest harmonic material on the root chord, gets more complex (yet still fairly simple) on the VII chord and plays his most complex improvisations on the dominant chord, which is also coupled with the densest rhythmic material. This gives the E7 a high degree of tension, both harmonic and rhythmic, pushing the music to resolve from there, and makes the A minor sound like a resting place, the arriving point of both the chords and the solo. **DB**

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♩ = 56
 124
 Am 3
 Gmaj7
 4 Am F E7 Am 3 STRAIGHT
 7 Gmaj7 Am 3
 9 F 3 E7 3
 10 Am Gmaj7
 12 Am F E7
 14 Am 3 Gmaj7
 16 Am F STRAIGHT E7



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Yamaha Custom Z Soprano Saxophone

Worth The Wait

Yamaha has another winner in its line of professional saxophones with the Custom Z soprano saxophone, introduced last spring. After spending years in development with top saxophone artists from around the world, the Custom Z soprano joins the Yamaha Custom Z alto and Custom Z tenor.

Available in straight and curved-neck versions (models YSS-82Z and YSS-82ZR) and featuring a one-piece neck-through-bell construction, the Custom Z soprano is based on the design of Yamaha's 62 and 62R soprano saxes, which were discontinued about 20 years ago. It's been a long wait, but the Custom Z soprano delivers the playability and professional options that players expect from a high-end horn.

I play-tested a curved-neck version of the Custom Z soprano in gold lacquer and was immediately impressed with its clear, full response in all registers. With nice, even key heights and comfortable, consistent spring resistance in the action, I found I could play fast and difficult passages with ease on this horn. The flange on the low B-flat made it especially easy to navigate the horn's bottom end, and the left-hand palm keys were set at a perfect height for playing upper-register passages smoothly.

Having a neckstrap hook on the horn—simple as it might sound—was a huge plus. Most sopranos include a hook these days, but not all, and since none of us can support the weight of a soprano for an entire set and still have any feeling left in our hands, this is an important feature for serious players. Having a moveable thumb hook on the Custom Z is also very smart, as it allows you to set it for proper hand posture. The Custom Z soprano also has plenty of fine-adjustment screws on various keys, so you and your repairman can really tweak it to suit even your pickiest preferences.

The Custom Z played with a sweet, colorful tone that's flexible enough for use in jazz, rock and even classical settings. It had a well-rounded sound that was obedient and predictable—both excellent qualities in any professional sax. This was without question one of the finest sopranos I've played in years. And it played remarkably in tune.

Like Custom Z alto and tenor models, options abound on the Custom Z soprano. You can go for the free-blowing, open feel of the straight version, or choose instead to enjoy a bit more control and tonal warmth with the curved-neck model. Different finishes are available—including gold lacquer, silver-plated, black lacquer and unlacquered.

"The Custom Z soprano rounds out the line nicely," said Brian Petterson, assistant marketing manager, Yamaha Wind Instruments. "It's been a long time coming, but it's been worth the wait."

—Ed Enright

Ordering info: yamaha.com



Godin 5th Avenue Jazz

Crisp Tone, Classic Styling

Godin's 5th Avenue archtop guitars have been well received since their introduction, and the series has continued to expand with the addition of single- and dual-pickup models as well as cutaway designs. The new Godin 5th Avenue Jazz model is built to meet the needs of the jazz guitarist.

Robert Godin has been designing and building guitars for more than 20 years, and the company offers an impressive array of electric and acoustic/electric instruments. Godin is probably best known for its acoustic/electric guitars, which feature innovative designs and top-notch electronics. The 5th Avenue series is the company's first entry into the fully hollow archtop world, and Godin now has five models to choose from. The Jazz model is the first in the line to feature a true floating pickup.

Like the other 5th Avenue guitars, the Jazz model is constructed from molded laminate Canadian wild cherry wood and utilizes the classic 1950s archtop styling that the series is known for. Color options include piano black and flame maple in either a natural or sunburst finish (the flame maple guitars use a layer of maple laminated over the cherry wood core). The neck is constructed from silver leaf maple.

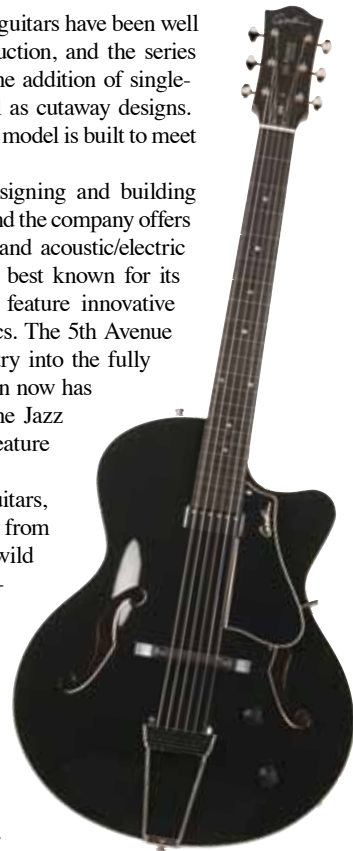
The overall design of the guitar is very clean with a traditional look and feel. The 16-inch body features an arched top and back with a Venetian-style cutaway in three-ply binding. The trapezoid-style tailpiece is custom-designed by Godin, and the engraved floating triple-bound pickguard complements the guitar nicely. The Jazz model's adjustable bridge is a standard design, but Godin chose to utilize durable synthetic Tusq material as opposed to the more traditional ebony or rosewood. The electronics consist of a single Johnny Smith-style Godin floating mini-humbucker jazz pickup with one volume and one tone control knob—which are stylishly made of ebony—mounted into the guitar's top.

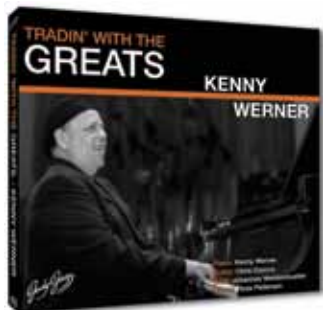
The 5th Avenue Jazz guitar plays fairly well with a decent setup right out of the box. The neck is comfortable, and it frets easily and with good intonation up and down the fingerboard. Typical of laminate guitars, it produces a minimal amount of volume acoustically, enough to be effective when practicing or in an intimate jam session, but not adequate for performance situations. The floating pickup does render a decent "jazz" tone, but it tends to be a little bright sounding and requires rolling off of the treble to warm up the tone. In general, the tone is very crisp with extremely clear notes.

Considering the successful track record of the 5th Avenue series, it makes perfect sense for Godin to add a Jazz model to the existing product line. At a street price of around \$1,895, it is the most expensive instrument in the series, but the impressive workmanship and quality features will make it worth the investment.

—Keith Baumann

Ordering info: godinguitars.com





JodyJazz Tradin' With the Greats

Your Turn to Blow

Here's a novel concept: jazz play-along CDs that are designed not only for developing advanced improvisational skills, but for learning the art of *trading* solos as well. And not just with anyone, but seasoned pros George Garzone and Kenny Werner.

Two new volumes of Tradin' With the Greats from saxophone mouthpiece-maker JodyJazz place you right on the bandstand with tenor saxophonist Garzone and pianist Werner, where you can improvise back and forth just as if you were trading solos with them on a gig. The act of trading inspires you to play at higher levels of artistry than normal. It forces you to exercise your listening chops and makes the experience of practicing your improv that much more rewarding.

Each two-disc set actually has a dual purpose. Disc One is set up for you to play the melody of each tune and then trade choruses, eights and fours with the featured artist and their groups. Disc Two is in a more traditional play-along format where you can play everything—heads and solos—while the rhythm section comps. Chord sheets for instruments in C, B-flat, E-flat and bass clef are provided via pdf files that are included. Melody lines for a couple of original tunes by each artist are also provided; for the standards, however, you'll have to play the heads from memory or learn them on your own.

The Garzone volume includes "There Is No Greater Love," "Softly As In A Morning Sunrise," "Green Dolphin Street," "My One And Only Love," "Billy's Bounce," "I Love You," "It Could Happen To You," "Out Of Nowhere" and "Alone Together," plus the originals "The Mingus That I Knew," "Tutti Italiani" and "Hey, Open Up." In addition to Garzone, the other musicians on the tracks are pianist Mulgrew Miller, bassist John Lockwood and drummer Bob Gullotti.

The Werner volume includes "What Is This Thing Called Love," "Beautiful Love," "Invitation," "Stella By Starlight," "Giant Steps," "Yesterdays," "Lonnie's Lament" and "Autumn Leaves," plus the originals "Autumn In 6" and "Yump." Backing up Werner, the supporting cast of cats includes guitarist Chris Crocco, bassist Johannes Weidenmueller and drummer Ross Pederson.

Tradin' With the Greats is an invitation to sit in on a session with some of the best improvisers of our time. Recorded at System Two in Brooklyn, both volumes were mixed like a real album, which means that the drums and bass are not panned hard right and left. And remember, the musicians on these tracks haven't been thrown together for a one-time session; they all perform together regularly and know each other intimately. The experience of playing along with Werner and Garzone and their respective bands is incredibly real, and when it's your turn to play you immediately get a sense of just how well you measure up to the greats. Each two-disc volume costs only \$19.95; purchase both of them together for \$37.90. —Bruce Gibson

Ordering info: jodyjazz.com

P. Mauriat PMB-302GL Baritone Saxophone

Low B-Flat Beauty

Sometimes, you don't want a low-A bari. You'd rather have an instrument that plays and feels more like a *saxophone* and less like an oak tree.

That's exactly what you get with the P. Mauriat PMB-302GL baritone saxophone, a low-B-flat horn with modern, professional features that's lighter in weight and noticeably easier to manage than any of the low-A horns that have dominated the market for decades.

Designed with the soloist in mind, this bari is also more than appropriate for ensemble work, something I discovered during a recent big band gig where it admirably performed double-duty.

The PMB-302GL played with a gutsy bari sound that anchored the sax section nicely; it was especially sweet during passages with quiet dynamics. Its Selmer-style keywork was lightning fast, which helped quite a bit while soloing and playing more modern big band arrangements.

Features of the PMB-302GL include a high F-sharp key, straight tone holes, Pisoni professional pads, metal resonators, blued steel needle springs, headed bullet point pivot screws, a three-hole neck-strap ring that helps you balance the horn and adjust the angle of the neck to your liking, palm-key keyguards and cosmetically cool abalone key touches. Available in gold-lacquer and unlacquered finishes, it has a body constructed of red brass and keys made from yellow brass. The bow and bell of the PMB-302GL feature classy hand-engraving for a sophisticated look. It comes with a wheeled ABS case for easy transportation on smooth surfaces (be careful not to take it over too many bumps in the road—excessive vibration could ultimately lead to leaks and throw things out of adjustment).

If you play-test the PMB-302GL for yourself, you'll discover just what a positive effect a low-B-flat bari like this can have on your overall performance. So what if the arrangement calls for a low A? Either use your foot, or take it up an octave and let the bass trombone worry about blasting out that low concert C.

—Ed Enright

Ordering info: pmauriat.com





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Roland's R-26 Portable Recorder provides up to six simultaneous channels of recording to SD/SDHC media. Features include two types of built-in stereo mics, XLR/TRS combo inputs and USB functionality. **More info:** rolandus.com

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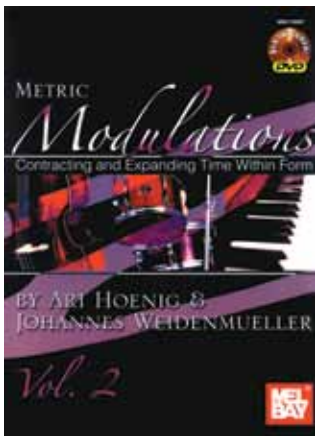
RS Berkeley and Drake Mouthpieces recently added the Frank Foster series to their Legends series of saxophone mouthpieces. It's an exact reproduction of Foster's original gold-plated model. Similar to the Johnny Griffin Legend series piece, Foster's model was created through a one-piece casting method that's completely hand-finished.

More info: rsberkeley.com



WAVE-SHAPER

Cakewalk's Z3TA+ 2 is a second-generation wave-shaping synthesizer featuring improved sound design and real-time expression. The Z3TA+ 2's sound-synthesis-generation engine features per-oscillator wave-shaping capability, vast filters and multi-stage envelope generators with powerful effects routing. **More info:** cakewalk.com



POLYRHYTHMS VOL. 2

Mel Bay's *Metric Modulations: Contracting and Expanding the Time Within Form* is an extension of the rhythms presented in the book *Intro to Polyrhythms*. This second volume covers groupings of eighth-notes and triplets in five and seven and presents methods of applying metric modulation over 5/4 and 7/4 time.

More info: melbay.com



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Slide Hampton (second from left) instructs McGill University students

Slide Hampton Returns to McGill University for Celebratory Residency

Montreal's McGill University was the first school to develop a graduate jazz program in Canada, and a "Year Of Jazz" celebration at McGill's Schulich School of Music contributed some sterling moments to its legacy. Led by Gordon Foote, director of the university's jazz orchestra, the series hosted several prominent musicians—including Jim McNeely, Terri Lyne Carrington and Joe Lovano—with whom students studied or performed in concerts open to the public. Trombone icon Slide Hampton returned to McGill for the first time in three years, as an artist-in-residence a few months shy of his 80th birthday.

Clinics included a mega-master class for 30 trombone players, which included both students and established musicians, followed by the orchestra's performance of Hampton's arrangements and originals.

"We'd planned on bringing Slide back after his visit in 2008," said Joe Sullivan, head of McGill's jazz studies program. "It had been a wonderful experience for the students, and Slide was impressed with the sound and quality of the band. The emphasis of this second visit was on mentorship. The concert was our way of paying tribute."

Hampton nodded and clapped approvingly as the orchestra breezed through the music with grace and energy. Trombonist Alex Truelove shined on Hampton's arrangement of Thelonious Monk's "Round Midnight." Trumpet player Andy King delivered a poignant solo on Freddie Hubbard's "Lament For Booker," as did fellow trumpeter Dominic Rossi on the Henry Mancini-Johnny Mercer

classic "The Days Of Wine And Roses." Rossi's passionate solo was preceded by a captivating unison line shared by bassist Mike De Masi, baritone saxophonist Andrew Morrill and bass trombonist Felix Del Tredici.

"We got the chart last week," Foote told the audience after roaring applause. "That's the dedication of these students." Next came Eddie Harris' "Freedom Jazz Dance," which was laced with a funk groove. Hampton's "Gullah Suite"—a tribute to Buddy Johnson and Dizzy Gillespie in three movements—had the orchestra swinging hard, especially during the last movement.

Foote addressed Hampton from the stage, noting that his residency was "a real honor, a pleasure and an inspiration." The entire room was on its feet, cheering and applauding, acknowledging the magnitude of his influence. Trombonist Taylor Donaldson offered his arrangement of "The Song Is You" as an encore.

The following day, the orchestra recorded the music in studio, including the previously unreleased Hampton compositions "Gullah Suite" and "Mandela," which is part of his four-song series entitled "A Tribute to African-American Greatness."

"The performance and compositional skills were all on a very high level," Hampton said. "The teachers and kids are so serious about what they're doing. You don't always find musicians who are so respectful of the music and of themselves. They have been very good to work with. The way they played—I couldn't be anything but happy." —Sharonne Cohen

School Notes ▶

Joe Lovano



Lovano's Big Band: Saxophonist Joe Lovano joined the Juilliard Jazz Orchestra for a performance on Jan. 24 at the Juilliard School of Music's Peter Jay Sharp Theater. Lovano presented big band arrangements and compositions he originally wrote for ensembles, including songs from the *Trio Fascination* and *52nd Street Themes* albums and his big band and symphony orchestra project, *Symphonica*. Details: juilliard.edu

Kenton Takes Manhattan: The Manhattan School of Music Jazz Philharmonic Orchestra performed the music of Stan Kenton during a centennial tribute to the composer beginning Jan. 27. The orchestra-plus-big band offered a two-concert series that covered much of Kenton's expansive catalog, including *City Of Glass*, *Improvisation*, *Artistry In Rhythm*, *Ennui* and *Amazonia*.

Details: msmnyc.edu

Prize Partners: Vocalist Al Jareau partnered with the Los Angeles Music Academy to offer a vocal scholarship in his name. The first scholarship was awarded to Ethiopia native Nefthalem Mulat, who received a prize of \$13,800. One singer will be awarded the scholarship each semester.

Details: lamusicacademy.edu

Recording Session: The Walsall Campus of the University of Wolverhampton in England constructed its new performing arts center, which will integrate the music, dance, drama and technical support departments. The highlight of the new facility is the Performance Hub recording studio with state-of-the-art, professional equipment.

Details: wlv.ac.uk

Swing High: Twelve of the nation's top high school jazz bands have been selected to participate in the seventh annual Swing Central High School Jazz Band Competition & Workshop, an event produced by the Savannah Music Festival in Savannah, Ga. The competition takes place from March 28-30.

Details: savannahmusicfestival.org

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iJamJazz ijamjazz.org	97	OnBoard Research tuners.com	112		

Donny McCaslin

In front of an audience at the 2011 Monterey Jazz Festival, Donny McCaslin took his first Blindfold Test. The New York-based saxophonist grew up in nearby Santa Cruz, Calif. His latest album, *Perpetual Motion*, was released in 2010 on Dave Douglas' label, Greenleaf Music.

Wayne Shorter

"Blues A La Carte" (*Introducing Wayne Shorter*, Koch Jazz, 2001, rec'd for Vee-Jay, 1959) Shorter, tenor saxophone; Lee Morgan, trumpet; Wynton Kelly, piano; Paul Chambers, bass; Jimmy Cobb, drums.

I don't know who this is. What is interesting about this is that I feel there are three main influences in this tenor saxophonist's [voice]. First, John Coltrane for the sound and the type of melodic lines at the beginning of the solo. Then some gestures reminded me of Charles Lloyd. As the tune continued I started to hear a Wayne Shorter influence with the wide interval skips that were unexpected and thought-provoking. It is Wayne Shorter? Wow, it's his first album? The interval thing makes sense now because of the unexpectedness—especially for 1959. The way he plays his line with such a sense of composition is so compelling.

Von Freeman

"Never Fear Jazz Is Here" (*The Great Divide*, Premonition, 2004) Freeman, tenor saxophone; Richard Wyands, piano; John Webber, bass; Jimmy Cobb, drums.

Again, I'm not sure who this is, and again, I have three guesses: David Murray, Dewey Redman, Von Freeman. I listened to a lot of David Murray when I was younger, but not much recently. I like how he uses the structure of song tradition but plays over it loosely. That goes the same for Dewey Redman. But I'm going to say Von Freeman for that sense of freedom and exploration in the playing. That sounds like a Von Freeman vibe to me—the way he uses "Rhythm" changes, how he's not playing bebop, but playing free over the top, in the key and then out of the key, squeaking and squawking, and playing devil-may-care. Another thing I noticed was the piano player, how his comping helped to settle the tune. Von was wild and freaking out, so you can hear the contrast with the piano helping to anchor without playing edgy.

Stanley Turrentine

"Too Blue" (*Don't Mess With Mister T.*, CTI/Sony Masterworks, 2011, rec'd 1973) Turrentine, Joe Farrell, tenor saxophone; Bob James, keyboards; Harold Mabern, electric piano; Richard Tee, organ; Randy Brecker, John Frisk, trumpets; Alan Raph, bass trombone; Pepper Adams, baritone sax; Jerry Dodgion, alto saxophone; Eric Gale, guitar; Ron Carter, bass; Idris Muhammad, drums; Rubens Bassini, percussion.

I enjoyed that a lot. There's so much feeling, expression, bluesy soulfulness—the way he was just putting it out there. I think it's Stanley Turrentine. One of the first records I owned was *Let It Go* by Stanley with Shirley Scott. Then there was also a Jimmy Smith album with Stanley. When I heard the organ on this, I thought it might be Stanley. But he is so distinctive in the way he plays with the blues and soul feel that the connection with the organ wasn't important. I could teach a class on analyzing this tune—using the diatonic blues scale—but it wouldn't matter. This music is so compelling, it doesn't matter what he's doing. It's just so moving and you feel it in your body. And it's sassy.

Dexter Gordon

"Hanky Panky" (*The Complete Blue Note Sixties Sessions*, Blue Note, 1996, rec'd 1965) Gordon, tenor saxophone; Freddie Hubbard, trumpet; Barry Harris, piano; Bob Cranshaw, bass; Billy Higgins, drums.

That was so good. A big thumbs-up. That's Dexter Gordon, and it was totally killing. The depth of his sound on tenor during the melody is great, then when he solos the time feel is so beautiful. I especially like



Donny McCaslin at the 2011 Monterey Jazz Festival

how he stretches the time and then lays back on the time. The sound is so big. It's so relaxed, so comfortable the way he plays. The lines Dexter plays are so meaty and so clean and so mature. There's no sense of being frivolous. I began listening to him after listening to John Coltrane, and I could hear how much Dexter influenced him.

Marcus Strickland

"Mudbone" (*Triumph Of The Heavy*, Vol. 2, Strick Muzik, 2011) Strickland, tenor saxophone; Ben Williams, bass; E.J. Strickland, drums.

I love this. I love the sense of development in the saxophone solo. As a listener, it gave me a lot of ideas. The mix with the rhythm section was great, especially with the interaction—the bass and the drums feeding off each other. My guess is JD Allen, though initially I thought it was Marcus Strickland, but then it didn't quite feel like his sound. It is Marcus? I should have trusted my gut. He was playing with concert C's and then an octave key with some grit in there, which I don't usually associate with him. But I love Marcus and I love this theme. He's a great player in the way he does thematic development. You know what tricked me? Some of what E.J. Strickland is playing on the drums reminds me of Rudy Royston, who plays with JD.

Michael Brecker

"The Mean Time" (*Pilgrimage*, Heads Up, 2007) Brecker, tenor saxophone; Pat Metheny, guitar; Herbie Hancock, piano; John Patitucci, bass; Jack DeJohnette, drums.

I thought I knew who this was initially. The first two bars reminded me of an album Adam Rogers made with Chris Potter. But then I realized who this is: Michael Brecker. It's so good to hear him. He was iconic to me in high school and college—he was the leading saxophonist of this generation. It's incredible how he's such a virtuoso but also plays with expression, and with harmonic sophistication. He truly mastered the tenor saxophone. The word virtuoso is overused these days, but Michael was a true virtuoso. He makes his sound seem so effortless. The emotional intensity is so compelling. Michael never went through the motions. On this last album, you feel that sense of urgency that's so beautiful and inspiring.

DB

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



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