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Ralph Alessi

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BY MICHAEL GALLANT

The hottest star in jazz talks about working with Jack DeJohnette, Joe Lovano, Terri Lyne Carrington and other members of her collaborative "Society."



On the cover, from left: Drummer Jack DeJohnette, drummer Terri Lyne Carrington, bassist Esperanza Spalding and saxophonist Joe Lovano. Cover photo and above image shot by Jimmy and Dena Katz in New York City.

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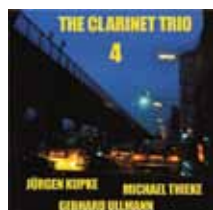
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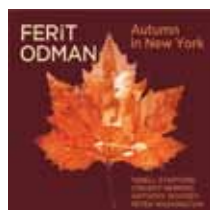
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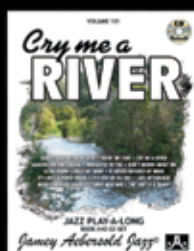


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Describing Lightning

Meeting your heroes can be a great experience. But collaborating with them can be transformative.

In this issue, we celebrate the centennial of the birth of Gil Evans. The legendary composer, arranger and bandleader was inducted into the DownBeat Hall of Fame in 1986, but his name has appeared in the pages of this magazine for seven decades. In a 1950 article, Miles Davis praised Evans' arranging skills on the track "Boplicity," and our Feb. 16, 1961, cover included a photo of Davis, accompanied by the headline "Miles Davis Looks at Alter Ego Gil Evans."

Some key DownBeat articles on Evans have been "The Birth of the Cool" by Nat Hentoff (1957), "The Modulated World of Gil Evans" by Leonard Feather (1967) and "Refocus of Gil Evans" by Robert Palmer (1974).

Stephanie Crease—author of the biography *Gil Evans: Out Of The Cool* (A Cappella)—wrote our feature on Evans, beginning on page 32, as well as a sidebar on Ryan Truesdell's new Artist Share album, *Centennial: Newly Discovered Works Of Gil Evans*. One of the musicians Crease interviewed for our article was saxophonist David Sanborn, who described working with Evans in New York in the '70s: "I was thrilled to be there and to be around Gil, who was one of my idols."

Another artist strongly influenced by his work with Evans is arranger/composer Gil Goldstein, who is quoted in Crease's article, and who includes this statement on his website: "Gil Evans was a philosopher. He possessed cultural secrets which I have tried to absorb and pass on further."

Goldstein has collaborated with dozens of important artists, including Esperanza Spalding. Goldstein worked with the bassist/singer on her 2010 album, *Chamber Music Society* and her new release, *Radio Music Society* (both on Heads Up/Concord).

Just as DownBeat covered the early days of Evans' career, we also have chronicled Spalding's ascension. She was profiled in our June 2008 issue, and then appeared the cover of our Sept. 2010 issue. In the aftermath of her 2011 Grammy win for best new artist, Spalding has become the most talked-about artist in jazz.

She has handled the attention gracefully. In both her words and actions, Spalding has been quick to shine a spotlight on artists who have influenced her, whether they are her heroes, peers or instructors.

Three of the most important members of Spalding's musical family posed alongside her for our exclusive cover photo shoot: drummer Jack DeJohnette, drummer Terri Lyne



Carrington and saxophonist Joe Lovano. In the interview with contributor Michael Gallant that begins on page 24, Spalding refers to Lovano as being akin to a "guru," adding, "I feel like I want to kiss his feet, since I have so much admiration for him as a musician and a person."

One listen to the fantastic *Radio Music Society* makes it clear that Spalding has assembled an amazing "society" of mentors and collaborators to help achieve her artistic vision.

The theme of mentorship, which is so important to the history of jazz, also appears in our feature on the Detroit Jazz Festival, included in our annual summer festival guide, starting on page 30. Check out the insightful comments of the festival's new artistic director, jazz musician Chris Collins.

At times, an artist can feel at a loss for words to describe a mentor. In his discussion with Crease regarding Evans' personality and artistry, Sanborn said, "It's a difficult thing to articulate—like trying to describe lightning to someone who has never seen it."

But that's our challenge, and it's what we strive to do every day: Use the best words possible to describe music and musicians.

Now it's your turn. What are *your* favorite stories about the mentor-disciple relationship in jazz? We'd love to read them. Send your emails to editor@downbeat.com, and be sure to put the word *Chords* in the subject line. Thanks for interacting with us, and please keep on reading. **DB**



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The Journal Structural & Plastic for Hyman Wall

For one thing, the tugging 'tut tut' that a crowd and happy audience at the Knoxville Festival in October was served up a stirring and unusual retrospective of the Great American Music Book & Anthony Bonner. Two signs, placed a yard by the thoughtless, instead of the usual and proper, said: "All of the music from the Great American Music Book & Anthony Bonner is now available in a new, revised, and expanded edition. All of the music from the Great American Music Book & Anthony Bonner is now available in a new, revised, and expanded edition."

As the first of the "Three Great Works" completed by August 1949, *Wang Yang-ming's* essays contained all of these passages. The essays were written in the style of a dialogue between a teacher and his pupils, and Wang was able to express his ideas in a simple, direct, and unadorned manner. The essays were written in the style of a dialogue between a teacher and his pupils, and Wang was able to express his ideas in a simple, direct, and unadorned manner.

[illegible]

Braxton's Brilliance

Joseph Woodard's interview with Anthony Braxton was superb ("Music as Spiritual Commitment," March). I have followed Braxton's recordings and performances since the 1960s but I have not seen him since his ensemble performance at New York's Iridium several years ago. Woodard's article was a beneficial update. Although Graham Lock's book *Forces In Motion* reveals many aspects of Braxton's approach to composition, performance and life, I believe that future academicians will discuss and decipher forever not only Ornette Coleman's Harmolodics but also Braxton's writings and concepts such as "TriCentric Thought Unit Housing."

JAMES DORSEY
BERWYN HEIGHTS, MD.

Benson's Success

Regarding the cover story of your March issue ("George Benson Returns To Jazz"), George Benson has always been a jazz artist. He hasn't gone anywhere. He is a commercial jazz artist, and commercial jazz is about rhythm, repetition and improvisation. Benson is a commercial jazz artist, and he has a couple of luxury cars to prove it.

LYNN HENDERSON
DENVER

Austrian Venues

In your February issue, the overview "212 Great Jazz Rooms: DownBeat's International Jazz Venue Guide" may be valid for the United States but definitely not for Europe. The writer who compiled the listings for Austria must not have ever been here.

Your guide lists a venue named ZWE, which nobody knows, but it ignored famous clubs in cities other than Vienna, such as Stockwerk Jazz and the Royal Garden Jazz Club, both in Graz, and the Jazzit Music Club in Salzburg. These venues actually *are* “Great Jazz Rooms” and have been for decades.

OTMAR KLAMMER
OKLAMMER@CHELLO.AT

McPherson Stands Out

As much as I like and appreciate the music and drumming of Jeff “Tain” Watts, I doubt there is any serious reason to feature him again in the Blindfold Test (February) while so many other great musicians have not yet been “Blindfolded.” One example is Eric McPherson. When I recently purchased Andrew Hill’s album *Time Lines*, I heard some of most musical, sensitive and fantastic drumming in recent years.

CLEMENS ZAHN
KÖLN, GERMANY

Editor's Note: Andrew Hill's *Time Lines* (Blue Note) was voted Jazz Album of the Year in our 54th Annual Critics Poll (August 2006).

Correction

- In the March issue, our 2012 International Jazz Camp Guide should have included the 11th Annual Kansas City Jazz Camp, taking place June 4–8 (kansascityjazz.org).

DOWNBEAT REGRETS THE ERROR.

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Beat ▶

Re-Imagining *Porgy And Bess*

A Conversation with Diedre L. Murray

It may have been written more than seven decades ago, but the controversy that has erupted over the new Broadway production of Gershwin's masterwork *Porgy And Bess* shows that it has lost none of its power to inspire passionate debate.

That debate began last August when Stephen Sondheim wrote a scathing critique in the New York Times—not of the show, which had yet to open, but of the creative team's intention to “modernize” and drastically trim it from a 4 ½-hour opera into a 2 ½-hour Broadway musical. Yet this is hardly the first production of *Porgy* to shorten and revise the work. Gershwin himself cut about 30 minutes of music from the score after its Boston tryout. The new production was authorized by the Gershwin estate, which also chose the creative team. Now called *The Gershwins' Porgy And Bess* and pointedly subtitled *The Broadway Musical*, it features a tour-de-force performance by Audra McDonald as Bess and opened to generally positive reviews—despite the complaints of some opera purists.

The enormous and sensitive job of re-imagining the colossal score fell on cellist/composer Diedre Murray. A pioneer of jazz cello in groups led by Marvin “Hannibal” Peterson and Henry Threadgill, Murray has written operas and new music compositions. She also worked extensively in the theater, winning two Obie Awards and becoming a Pulitzer Prize finalist. We spoke to her recently following a matinee performance.

How did you get involved with this project?

[Director] Diane Paulus called me out of the clear blue sky—I had worked with her on other productions. When she asked me if I'd like to arrange the music for *Porgy And Bess*, I sang “Happy Birthday” to myself. Of course! It's the ultimate American musical and also the great American opera. I grew up with this music.

Why should the new generation of jazz musicians and fans listen to and care about *Porgy And Bess*?

First of all, it's great American music. And for those who are still interested in the American songbook, it's got great tunes. The score is classical, but in many ways it looks like a contemporary jazz score for a large ensemble—like a Gil Evans score. Gershwin foreshadowed so many things that are still going on: cross-pollination and crossover, essentially, which is what we do now. It's amazing how many different styles of music are in it.



Can you give me an example of how *Porgy* foreshadowed modern music?

Look at the “storm music” [in Act II]. I think that John Coltrane took that motif and made it “A Love Supreme.” I definitely hear McCoy Tyner, too—the way the chords are structured. If you see the chordal structure, you say, “Oh, I know that—those are fourth chords.” And even in the overture, there are fourths; they're “susses,” to use current musical language. There are a million tunes that I think emanate from *Porgy And Bess*.

How did you research the project? What sources influenced you?

There are so many versions. It seemed to have a big renaissance in the '60s—Sarah Vaughan, Mel Tormé, Ray Charles. I listened to as many of them as I could. I loved Ella [Fitzgerald]'s take—what Ella does is free you from thinking that it has to be “opera.” I also examined the scores to anything that Gershwin was interested in, like *Die Meistersinger* and *Carmen*. I listened to a lot of jazz of that era to see what his influences would be—stuff I wouldn't normally listen to, like Cab Calloway, Willie “The Lion” Smith. When he went to Harlem, that's what he would have heard.

Tell me about reducing the score for a Broadway pit orchestra.

The orchestrators [William David Brohn and Christopher Jahnke] did the reduction. What I did was sketch orchestrations, which are bigger than P/Vs [piano/vocals], but they're not the full orchestrations, either.

Riffs ▶

Red Holloway



RIP Red: Saxophonist Red Holloway died in Morro Bay, Calif., on Feb. 25 at the age of 84. Holloway, whose extensive discography included sessions with George Benson, Carmen McRae, Horace Silver and Sonny Stitt, recorded several albums as a leader. He also performed with such iconic blues legends as Willie Dixon, B.B. King and Muddy Waters while living in Chicago.

Eagle Standards: Glenn Frey, guitarist for iconic rock band The Eagles, will release a solo album of jazz standards in May. Titled *After Hours*, Frey's new disc is a collaboration with keyboardists Richard Davis and Michael Thompson. It consists of such classic tracks as "Sentimental Reasons," "Route 66," "Caroline No.," "The Shadow Of Your Smile" and "My Buddy."

Road to Soul: Chris Dave has joined neo-soul vocalist D'Angelo as the drummer and musical director of the singer's 2012 European tour schedule. Dave, who was featured on Robert Glasper's Feb. 28 CD release *Black Radio*, is also set to release a solo project this year entitled *Chris Dave & Friends*.

Les Label: New York venue The Iridium launched its new label, IridiumLive, on April 3. The first release on the label is *Les Paul Trio And Friends: A Jazz Tribute To Les*, which was culled from the club's trademark Les Paul Monday performances and features such artists as Nels Cline, Stanley Jordan, Jane Monheit and Bucky Pizzarelli. The album was celebrated with an April 2 release party that showcased a performance by Monheit.

Smul's Festival: The Litchfield Jazz Festival (LJF) announced that baritone saxophonist Gary Smulyan will assume the role of artist-in-residence for the 17th edition of the Goshen, Conn., event. Smulyan will pay tribute to George Coleman in his second-year appearance at LJF, which runs from Aug. 10–12.

In the sketch orchestration, do you assign instruments?

Sometimes you do, and sometimes you don't. But if I think something is really important, I will write underneath it, "violin" or "bassoon" or something like that. I got it down to six lines. Normally you only want to see three lines besides the vocals.

In the opera, certain scenes go on far longer than in this production. Yet it doesn't seem like you have lost any major arias.

That's right! That's what we were going for. We were trying to let the music speak, [even though] a lot of the songs are shorter than in the opera. [For example], "I've Got Plenty Of Nothing" is shorter.

It also has a different, more modern feel.

Yes, *Porgy's* normally a bass baritone, but our *Porgy* [Norm Lewis] is a lyric baritone. So we changed the song's tessitura—that meant there had to be certain changes. But the biggest change is that we made "I Got Plenty" swing.

How many instruments were you writing

for in the Broadway pit orchestra?

When we did the workshop production in Boston, it was totally different, sort of a big band with three strings, a different concept. You can't put in 30 strings on Broadway. No one can afford it. We have expanded the string section since Cambridge. There are now nine strings. And no synthesizers.

I noticed you used some instruments that were not in the original, like accordion, and dispensed with others, like the banjo.

The accordion takes the folkloric place of the harmonica and banjo. Whenever you hear accordion, it represents the folkloric element of the people, the blues element.

This is hardly the first production of *Porgy* to shorten and revise the work. What do you say to critics who have complained about eliminating parts of the Gershwin score?

Come see it, and see if they like it. I think art should be living and breathing. I'm an improviser and a jazz musician, so of course I think that.

—Allen Morrison



From left: James Westfall, Dan Loomis, Jared Schonig

Caught A Wee Trio Chicago Odyssey

The members of the Wee Trio are chameleons in every sense of the word. Like the subject of their latest venture, *Ashes To Ashes: A David Bowie Intraspective*, the trio's ability to shapeshift musically, and adapt to an arsenal of individual influences, is what helped the group blend so succinctly into the raucous surroundings of Chicago's Green Mill on Feb. 5.

Over the course of three sets, the trio sauntered between the 2012 Bowie B-side revue and *Capitol Diner Vol. 2 Animal Style*, a whimsical account of the Brooklyn-based group's West Coast touring odyssey. What resulted was a perfect marriage of the straightahead and experimental: Vibist James Westfall's no-nonsense melodic lines on such Bowie cuts as "1984" harbored a wide-open rhythmic playground for percussive wun-

derkind Jared Schonig's obvious chops—an amalgamation of highly textured, harried hard-bop, punchy swing and vaporous bossa brushstrokes. Bassist Dan Loomis' steadfast low-end functioned as the rivet locking the group into seamless cohesion. Loomis straddled a fine line between understatement and aggression—a push-and-pull between the restraint of "The Man Who Sold The World" and Sufjan Stevens' "Flint (For The Unemployed And Underpaid)" and some otherworldly technical gymnastics.

But it's Wee's telekinetic, Bowie-esque metamorphosis from one theme to another—whether it's Crescent City mysticism, rock infusion or spacious pastoral wanderings—that contributes to seemingly premeditated but never stiff, airtight grooves. —Hilary Brown

Lucas Niggli



Intakt Brings Top Talent to the Stone

Intakt Records at the Stone, which transpired during the first two weeks of March at John Zorn's Loïsida New York performance space, was as ambitious and logistically complex an event as any in the venue's seven-year history. Curated by label director Patrik Landolt, the project comprised 26 sets from a pool of some 40 musicians, 13 of them Swiss, whose musical production Intakt documents.

On the stormy second night, a packed house listened attentively to an inspired textural duo between University of Basel professor Fred Frith, playing prepared guitar, and Zurich-based saxophonist Co Streiff. Afterwards, Landolt remarked that he began the organizing process 18 months ago, not long after receiving Zorn's email offer of the space. "I replied that it would be an honor," Landolt said. "I knew I had to bring Swiss musicians who rarely if ever play in New York or the U.S. The hardest thing was to organize the funding."

In recruiting musicians, Landolt drew on an international, multi-generational cohort of both genders. The Swiss contingent at the festival included pianist Irène Schweizer, percussionist Pierre Favre, saxophonists Jürg Wickihalder and Streiff, drummer Lucas Niggli, and pianists Gabriela Friedli and Sylvie Courvoisier, the latter a New Yorker of long standing. U.S. leaders included alto saxophonist Oliver Lake, drummers Andrew Cyrille and Tom Rainey, guitarist Elliott Sharp and New York-based, German-born saxophonist Ingrid Laubrock.

"I want to show working bands, but also new experiments," Landolt said. In regard to the former, he offered Streiff's quartet with trumpeter Russ Johnson, Courvoisier's quartet with violinist Mark Feldman and Laubrock's orchestra; the latter included a Ray Anderson-Jan Schlegel-Dieter Ulrich trio, Niggli's duo encounters with Sharp and Frith, and Niggli in trio with Tim Berne and Angelica Sanchez.

Logistics were a gnarlier proposition. A veteran concert producer, Landolt formed a *verein* (voluntary, limited liability association) as an organizing umbrella. He drew on a network of contacts in non-profits and government agencies to fund airfare and lodging, while undertaking the laborious process of obtaining 13 work visas.

Schweizer and Niggli serve on Intakt's board of directors with Landolt and his partner, Rosemarie A. Meier, who co-founded the label in 1986 after finding no takers for a Schweizer performance at the 1984 Taktlos Festival.

"We decided that if we could organize a festival, we could also bring out a record," Landolt said. "It sold well." Over the next five years, Intakt released seven Schweizer concerts (her Intakt offerings now number two dozen, most recently *To Whom It May Concern: Piano Solo Tonhalle Zürich*) and the first of 19 documents of Barry Guy, a Swiss resident for six years, most recently the DVD *Harmos: Live At Schaffhausen*.

Each Intakt release has a well-designed booklet with liner notes in German and English, and the sound is uniformly excellent (Landolt frequently collaborates with Swiss Radio and Germany's Sudwestfunk Radio and Radio Berlin, which offer excellent production facilities). The break-even sales marker is 2,500 units. The label releases 16 items per year, and only two are out of print.

"I'm always in discussion with the musicians, but I make the final decision," Landolt said, acknowledging that his personal aesthetics define the Intakt sound. "I like Coltrane and Monk. I like experiments that cross borders into rock or classical music. At one time, Europeans learned and copied a lot from American musicians. Over the last 20–30 years, they've developed many different sub-styles, personal styles. But it's important to have a relationship to American artists. That's the origin—and New York is still a center of innovation." —Ted Panken

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Cecil Taylor & Tony Oxley

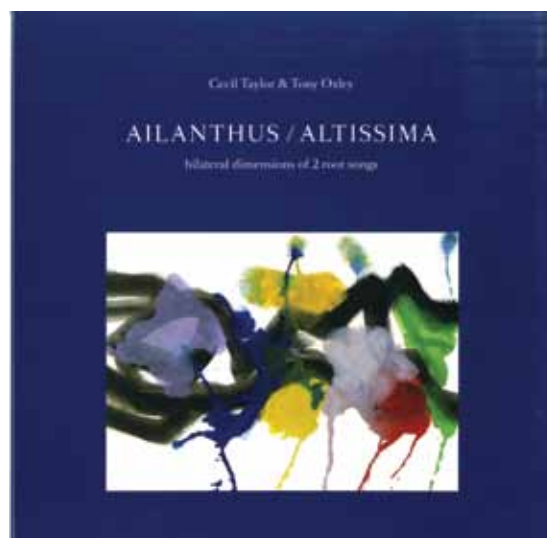
Ailanthus/ Altissima

TRIPLE POINT RECORDS, 2009

In this month's column, I'm using a recent release as a way to talk about the crazy number of Cecil Taylor records that are digitally unavailable. Talk about a master whose music has been consistently well-documented but poorly attended to as media have migrated. The pianist has essential records from various phases that are only accessible in their original format.

To be fair, Taylor has an impressive discography, and there are quite a few great items in print. But consider the missing information from the 1960s and 1970s, culled from a casual perusal of my own collection. From the late '60s—a key time for Taylor as he began to introduce his solo concept to the jazz world—there is *Praxis* (Praxis double-LP, 1982), an Italian solo, and several volumes of *Nuits De La Fondation Maeght* (Shandar, 1969), an essential quartet recording with Jimmy Lyons on alto, Sam Rivers on tenor, and Andrew Cyrille on drums. From the '70s, there is the fearsome trio with Lyons and Cyrille, recorded at Antioch College and released as *Indent*, and *Spring Of Two Blue-J's*, dedicated to Ben Webster, with a solo on one side and a quartet featuring Sirone on bass (both of these released on Taylor's own Unit Core label in 1973, the year they were recorded). Other classic C.T. Unit records from the era, like *Dark To Themselves* (Enja) and *Live In The Black Forest* (MPS) were reissued on CD at the dawn of the digital era, but have lapsed from print and are now difficult to find. Plunge into the 1980s, and right away, the atomic *Fly! Fly! Fly! Fly!* (MPS, 1980) has never been revisited.

To these vinyl-only historical goodies, you can now add a newly issued double-LP duet by Taylor and British drummer Tony Oxley. It's as lovingly produced an item as one could hope to find, beautifully printed and pressed—reminiscent, in this, of Taylor's brilliant Japanese double-LP *Akisakila* (Trio, 1973), still worth hunting for even though it's been reissued—with an artfully designed



booklet featuring facsimiles of Taylor's handwritten poetry and images of Oxley's paintings. The twosome has a long, deep partnership dating back to 1988 that existed for years as the Feel Trio with bassist William Parker. Here, their dialogue is particularly direct and intimate, the percussionist often anticipating the pianist's next move or vice-versa. Indeed, there's a yin-yang quality about the duo. Oxley has certain aspects of his playing that might be described as pianistic—lots of color, a vaguely melodic use of tuned metal, post-Elvin Jones sense of deferred or subverted timekeeping. Meanwhile, Taylor is of course a notoriously percussive pianist, his notion of the keyboard as a huge drum perhaps more apt as an octogenarian than it was when he was in his 20s. Clocking in at around 82 minutes, nicely recorded in 2008 at the Village Vanguard, *Ailanthus/Altissima* is subtitled "bilateral dimensions of 2 root song." If you follow the music carefully, you can hear how the song basis of Taylor's music is, indeed, at the root, spreading out in this case in (at least) two directions. As ferocious as his music is, you can often find sections to hum along with and little thematic segments that stick in the brain. There is plenty of hardcore free music here, but there's also pensive moments of quiet and extreme tension, a Taylor specialty. A labor of love undertaken by producer/scholar Ben Young in celebration of the pianist's 80th birthday, it should be treated as a necessary part of the well-stocked Taylor fan's library. **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.



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Caught

Tim Berne's Snakeoil Delivers Writhing Orchestration, Sidewinding Melodies

On stage, Tim Berne mentioned that he hadn't performed in Washington, D.C., in the past 14 years. Judging from the packed house during his first set at Bohemian Caverns, his performance was hotly anticipated almost as if he was some local hero who had returned from a long sabbatical. But Berne has long been a fixture on the New York and Brooklyn modern jazz scene, constantly churning out provocative ensembles that maximize his meticulous arrangements and gripping alto saxophone sound. For this particular concert, Berne showcased his new combo, Snakeoil, which performed two extended compositions from his recent ECM disc of the same name.

Presented, in part, by Transparent Productions, a local collaborative responsible for bringing some of the most intrepid avant-garde jazz to the District metropolitan area, Berne did not disappoint. He blasted off with the perplexing yet oddly transfixing "Adobe Probe," a rough-hewn composition marked by jagged yet orchestral rhythms, dark dissonant harmonies and writhing melodies from alto and clarinet. Berne shared the front line with

clarinetist Oscar Noriega, who wields a hearty, robust tone that sometimes recalls Alvin Batiste. The two reedists made a formidable pair, playing lissome melodies then breaking away to create coiling improvisations that blistered with unexpected turns.

Considering that Snakeoil doesn't have a bassist, the music could have easily sounded rootless. Drummer Ches Smith pounded an array of fascinating multidirectional rhythms, functioning more as an orchestral percussionist in the vein of Warren Smith or Famoudou Don Moye than a conventional jazz drummer. Smith nevertheless provided the quartet with the necessary elastic propulsion on the skittering "Scanners" and "Yield," both of which began with tricky rhythmic patterns that eventually dissolved, allowing Smith to showcase his command of textures and spatial awareness on various cymbals and Latin percussion. Matt Mitchell's dark rumbles on the piano helped anchor much of the choreographed cacophony. But he, too, was prone to unraveling labyrinthine improvisations that often scurried underneath Berne and Noriega's heated excursions.



Snakeoil's controlled mayhem thrilled the audience, prompting Berne to deliver "Jesus Christ Mini-bar" as an encore, leaving his fans hoping that it won't take another 14 years for him to return.

—John Murph

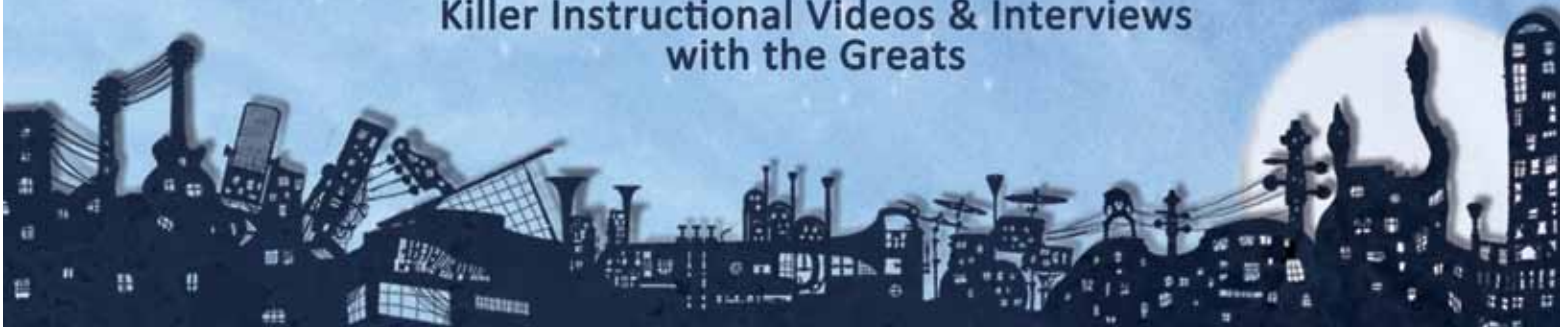
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Caught

Mayhem Ensues at Le Poisson Rouge

Grabbing a seat at Le Poisson Rouge, a woman in her 60s said, “I thought I was the only one who knew about Jenny.” A glance at the sold-out, standing-room-only Feb. 20 show suggested an alternate reality. Particularly interesting was the diversity of the audience. A minute into the “Junius Elektra,” an older tune of violinist Jenny Scheinman’s, a plausible explanation for such a widespread following presented itself. A penetrating 7/4 rock groove initiated by drummer Jim Black laid ground for guitarist Nels Cline and bassist Todd Sickafoose to begin an infectious unison bass line, followed by a brief series of sustained pad-like figures created by Cline and Scheinman. Upon the entrance of the melody from Scheinman, the harmony moved in a decidedly less tense direction from the previous ominous-sounding introduction.

Lyrical and often folk-like, the melodies were a perfect foil for the mayhem brewing in the core of the rhythm section. Cline and Scheinman’s use of electronics contributed to the group’s unique sound, and Black’s imaginative palette of sounds (including such oddities as bowed cymbal on tom in spots) supported these notions. If the band’s nod to rock

music was not as evident in the opening two compositions, in Scheinman’s “Blues For The Double V,” it became obvious. As the title foreshadows, a catchy blues riff set up by Cline and Sickafoose—once again supported by the frenetic-sounding yet precise groove of Black—paved the way for a brief statement of the melody by the violin, followed by a to-the-point rock-flavored solo by Cline. Restatement of the theme at its original tempo and then a shift towards its gradual deconstruction created a perfect journey for the listener. More often than not, bands are in search of the perfect shape to their composition—for that right moment to apex—yet many fall short in their pursuit. Not only was Mischief & Mayhem able to agree on the climax of each composition in what seemed to be the perfect spot, the band demonstrated an impeccable ability to create an overall arch for the entire evening. After finishing “Blues For The Double V,” Scheinman made the remark that she felt like she had just finished playing a game of dodge ball. A catalyst to these sentiments was no doubt the persistent energy level of the band as a whole, but most strikingly from the band’s drum chair.



Throughout the 90-minute continuous set, Scheinman kept her compositions brief and to the point, never at the expense of the music. A completely engaged audience remained in excited anticipation of what mischief lay ahead and openly greeted any and all mayhem that resulted. —Adam Larson

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A black and white photograph showing a close-up of hands playing a piano keyboard. The lighting is dramatic, highlighting the keys and the fingers.

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Smalls Develops Membership Program As Jazz-Venue Survival Mechanism

Jazz clubs in New York may appear to be thriving, but if they're not serving expensive diners, booking top-of-the-line acts and charging astronomical ticket prices with bar minimums, they can be in trouble. A few prominent—and world-famous—Greenwich Village clubs that gave up the ghost over the past few decades come to mind: the Village Gate (shuttered in 1993), Bradley's (gone in 1996) and Sweet Basil (closed as a jazz venue in 2001).

Also in 2001, in the aftermath of 9/11, Smalls took a dive, but came back to life in 2004. Today the West Village club is coming to grips with a skyrocketing lease and an attempt to boost the salaries of artists who are playing for, as co-owner Spike Wilner admits, "much less than they deserve." To keep afloat, Wilner and co-owner Mitch Borden, who founded the club in 1994, have come up with a fresh plan for a for-profit jazz venue: Form a membership platform that gives access to Smalls' daily live video broadcasts (begun in 2007) and offers unlimited streaming rights to the archival footage, as well as the full catalog of SmallsLIVE CDs.

With a membership, \$3 pays for a 48-hour pass of unlimited live video broadcasts, and \$20 (the cost of a single admission to the club) offers unlimited online access to all live shows for a year. Other membership platforms with added benefits include SmallsLIVE (\$100), patron (\$500) and benefactor (\$1,000). The audio stream, a library archive of 95 percent of the shows at Smalls, remains free.

"My goal for this membership program is having a survival mechanism," says Wilner, who partnered with Borden in 2007. "At the club, we have 60 seats and we don't have a policy of turning the house for each band. Pay the cover and stay all night." That creates a comfortable, community environment, but revenue is limited. So a major part of the Smalls membership goal is to raise wages for the performers as well as continue to fund the Harry Whitaker Foundation, which provides emergency financial relief for

jazz musicians in need.

But Wilner is also thinking of posterity. "Can you imagine if they recorded every show, every night at Birdland or the Royal Roost?" he says. "Can you imagine hearing Bird develop as an artist over a year's worth of playing?" He recognizes that Smalls can offer that viewpoint.

"We feel the price is fair, and we can create a worldwide club of jazz enthusiasts," Wilner said. "And we want to continue to create a community of musicians who play here—from the people for the people."

If Wilner is the pragmatist of the Smalls partnership, then Borden is the romantic. Borden says that "Smalls will never die" and considers himself the captain who will not let the ship go down. As for the Internet platform for the club, he rhetorically asks, "Isn't Smalls as good as the History Channel on cable?" The membership model, he hopes, will "generate revenue for our musicians."

And it could continue to offer great worldwide exposure for the artists who perform there. Smalls veteran Ari Hoenig says that he gets called for gigs by people who tune in to the action on the club's website. "Smalls has helped my career," the drummer says. "I'm hoping the membership fee won't discourage people. Because the music here is consistently good, it can have historical significance."

Another longtime member of the community, guitarist Peter Bernstein, hopes that the additional revenue can keep alive the "communal feel" of the venue. "What's most important is that the club is there and that it stays there," he says. "This is a serious club that not only showcases young cats but is also drawing older artists like Jimmy Cobb and Kenny Werner. While I may not get paid what I do at a place like Dizzy's, people check me out through the archives here."

So, is the Smalls membership platform a viable model for other jazz clubs to keep in the black? Wilner says, "I can't say, but this seems to have raised a lot of eyebrows." —Dan Ouellette



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Alex Lopez *Enter the Storyteller*

It is a warm afternoon when tenor saxophonist Alex Lopez invites two good friends over to his apartment in Manhattan's Morningside Heights to practice. Bassist Lauren Falls and pianist Sam Harris arrive and set up; lunch is discussed and delayed, while the smell of home-cooked food wafts in through an open window.

The trio is warmed up by the time it tackles "End Of A Dream," one of Lopez's original compositions from his self-released debut CD, *We Can Take This Boat*. Harris, who plays on the album, leads the way with a stately introduction on an electric keyboard, and then Lopez joins in and complements the meandering melody before embarking on a twisting solo that alternates between long, expressive whole notes and well-placed, staccato half and quarter notes. The rich, expansive tone of Lopez's sax playing is full of confidence and creates a discernible melodic path, even in his improvising, rather than merely showcasing virtuosity or technique.

All eight songs on *We Can Take This Boat* are Lopez's own; the composition process began, he says, in late 2008 and early 2009 while he was finishing graduate studies at the Manhattan School of Music. The album works as a song cycle that reflects on the end of a relationship doomed by long distance. Opening with the bold and assertive "Rejected"—Lopez isn't hiding from the facts here—the album then returns to the early days of the romance with the dreamy tune "Sleep Like A Starfish," which underscores the saxophonist's preoccupation with melodies that stretch out.

The album's title alludes to a line of dialog spoken by Bruce Lee in the classic 1973 martial-arts film *Enter The Dragon*. The disc's title track features a funky drum intro from Norman Edwards, which leads Harris and bassist Linda Oh to produce a dramatic vamp that Lopez and guitarist Greg Duncan build on.

"What's the point of music without a story?" Lopez asks aloud later when talking about his composing style. "I was writing some of my best music ever during a time when I wasn't happy, and this gave me a chance to express my emotions and make sense of it all by recalling what happened."

Harris' piano work on "Rejected" conveys an angry mood, while the songs "Curtains" and "Remember When" are, in turns, pensive and reflective, full of yearning but not mawkish. Lopez explains that "End Of A Dream" was spurred by a realization: "I'd never get this girl back again—and my acceptance of this."

The album's defiant closer, "Trying To Start Over," is framed by power chords that resemble Radiohead, the melody announcing that Lopez is ready to love again. "These are lyrical, straight-



forward stories," says Harris of the album's tracks. "People relate to their universal themes."

One of seven children, Lopez hails from a small town in central Wisconsin. He grew up listening to classical music and Broadway musicals, then started playing saxophone in 5th grade. Vince Guaraldi's music for the animated "Peanuts" TV specials turned him on to jazz, and the discovery of Sonny Rollins' *Saxophone Colossus* sealed his fate. "I enjoyed skateboarding with my friends, but they listened to techno while I was getting serious about the saxophone," Lopez says.

He attended the New England Conservatory, where he studied with Jerry Bergonzi. "From the start, Alex had a sound and direction in mind that he wanted, and that separated him from a lot of his peers," Bergonzi recalls.

Focused musically but having a restless nature, Lopez maintained an itinerant lifestyle. He transferred to the University of Miami, where he graduated, and soon afterward found work on a cruise line as a band musician. Then there was his stint teaching saxophone at the University of

Nevada-Las Vegas before he moved to New York for graduate school. An ardent gymnast and martial-arts expert—his sparsely furnished apartment is adorned with posters of Bruce Lee and John Coltrane—Lopez supported his jazz career by teaching gymnastics on Long Island (and living with his sister in Brooklyn) before spending another long stretch aboard a cruise ship, enjoying the luxe life while fattening his bank account.

For Lopez, it is imperative to perform new music—original compositions, his own or others', as well as the jazz-influenced arrangements he writes for *Fighting in the Streets*, the quintet he co-founded with Edwards three years ago that is devoted to covering music from video games.

"Most artists in the pop and rock worlds play their own songs, so I don't understand the need to base a career on playing standards," explains Lopez. "As a composer, I want to perform what I write and see the response I get. For me, the songs on *We Can Take This Boat* are still happening, and I want people to know them."

—Thomas Staudter

Marilyn Mazur *Spiritual Space*

Danish percussionist and composer Marilyn Mazur became internationally renowned during her tenure with Miles Davis' late-'80s band. Since then, she has expanded her style and sound over the course of nine discs. *Celestial Circle*, her third album for ECM, is an acknowledged left turn for the adventurous musician. Accompanied by Josefine Cronholm (voice), John Taylor (piano) and Anders Jormin (bass), Mazur explores themes of stillness, clarity and the influence of nature.

"Those are literally some of the images in the music," Mazur says from her home outside Copenhagen. "Nature images sparked a lot of the music: nature pictures, tranquility and dreamy qualities. I like to capture different vibrations and different moods in my music. This is a very acoustic group, and very soft moods seem to fit with the musicians and with the singer."

Mazur composes on piano or from an enormous array of percussion instruments, many of them from far-flung corners of the globe. "In the

studio, I often play free pictures in the moment," Mazur elaborates. "And I start with titles. Not always the final title, but some words to create a direction or an inspiration. Sometimes the instrument has its own message."

Unlike some of her previous work with Jan Garbarek, Eberhard Weber and Pierre Dorge, *Celestial Circle* represents Mazur's serene side. But there are also moments that stir the embers, such as the tom-tom-thumping, ritual-worthy "Drumrite," or "Kildevaeld," a sonic whirlwind propelled by jewel-like cymbal flourishes, Taylor's twinkling piano commentary and Cronholm's supple scatting.

"I've actually wondered, 'Is this record too quiet?'" Mazur says with a laugh. "A lot of my music goes in many directions. It can be more wild and energetic, more raw, unpolished, and not as pretty. When I am at home, I like listening to music where there's room for the listener's own thoughts and feelings. There's a lot of space and air in this album. My other music is more



aimed at live performance and being more energetic and physical."

The album's title suggests there is more to Mazur's music than merely song craft. "It implies a spiritual quality for me," she says. "That you're in connection with spirituality and with the air and the sky. When you walk in the woods, as I often do, you tend to go into a mood where you are in touch with your feelings and life as a holistic theme."

—Ken Micallef

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Stephane Wrembel *Musical Mission*

It's another Sunday night, and Stephane Wrembel is back at Barbes—an off-the-beaten-path Brooklyn bar where, for most of the past decade, the French-born, Django Reinhardt-inspired guitarist has commandeered the small, back-room performance space for his weekly gig.

As usual, the place is packed with devoted local fans, along with a coterie of international Djangoophiles. For a few seconds, Wrembel looks out into the dimly lit room as if he has something to get off his chest. Then, he reminds his audience of why they've gathered together. Entreating them to listen as if it will be the last music they will ever hear, he states (in his engaging French accent), "That eez 'ow we play—as if eet will be our last performance!" And with that, Wrembel launches into a blistering rendition of "All Of Me."

Growing up in Paris and Fontainebleau, the classically trained Wrembel switched from piano to his chosen instrument at age 16. At first, he was inspired by rock guitar heroes. But a few years later, the teenager happened to hear Reinhardt's recording of "Minor Swing," and everything

changed. "I fell in love with the music," he recalls, "and dedicated my life to playing it."

Although Wrembel pursued formal studies at the American School of Modern Music in Paris, he also began to haunt the encampments of Fontainebleau's *Manouche* (French Gypsy) community, serving a traditional apprenticeship. His conservatory training may have provided the source of his technique, but it was the Gypsies who contributed "the soul," as he puts it. Wrembel soon discovered, however, that the two didn't always mesh. When he arrived in the United States to study at Berklee College of Music, it was made clear that, among the school's purists, Reinhardt's "Gypsy jazz" wasn't considered jazz at all. This prompted Wrembel to pursue his vision with even greater determination.

After graduation, he moved to New York, where he began forging a fusion of Django-based swing with the African, Indian and Middle Eastern influences he had been absorbing through his wide-ranging musical research. These influences are discernible on his 2008 CD *Terre Des*



Hommes, as well as in the music of The Django Experiment, a quartet he's led for a few years.

Today, Wrembel avoids many Reinhardt classics, supplanting them with compositions that combine Gypsy jazz improvisation, classical impressionism and arena-rock energy with modal harmonies and exotic rhythms. "I had to let go of the Django stuff because it misled people," Wrembel explains with a shrug. "Everyone tries to pin me down to one category or another, but there is no category. I don't want to be associated with that anymore."

So it's ironic that when Woody Allen commissioned Wrembel to compose the theme for *Midnight In Paris*, the director's love letter to the City of Light (circa 1925), it was on the basis of the guitarist's deep connection to Reinhardt's musical vocabulary. The tune Wrembel composed is a beguiling waltz titled "Bistro Fada," and it captures the romance of Paris with a suave, Djangoesque *je ne sais quoi*. (Allen previously had used the guitarist's Latin-tinged tune "Big Brother," from his *Gypsy Rumble* CD, with equal effectiveness in his 2008 film *Vicky Cristina Barcelona*.) Wrembel performed "Bistro Fada" on this year's Academy Awards telecast, and he included the tune on his fifth album, *Origins*, slated for release in May.

As he continues expanding the boundaries of his genre-defying fusions, a profound spirituality now informs the guitarist's identity. He no longer views himself as just an entertainer. "I see it as a mission," he says, putting his impromptu speech at Barbes in context. "All that happiness that I have every day, all that beauty that I see, all that life—I try to put it in my music. That is our role as musicians."

—David Kestin



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Jorge Rossy

Serving the Song

Even a cursory listen to the new box set *The Art Of The Trio: Recordings, 1996–2001* (Nonesuch)—which chronicles the development of pianist Brad Mehldau’s influential group with Larry Grenadier (bass) and Jorge Rossy (drums)—illuminates the Catalan drummer’s impact on rhythmic expression over the last decade.

Mehldau once noted that Rossy stamped the trio’s unique sound with his “refined sense of harmony,” as well as his ability to flow with in 5/4 and 7/4 time signatures, simultaneously sustain and float over the groove, and generate constantly morphing beat shapes across the entire drum kit. “Jorge opened up my phrasing, and got me out of playing licks I knew,” Mehldau explained in 2005, two years after Rossy had left the trio. “There’s a certain wonderful strangeness about him; he’s a musician who happens to play the drums.”

Post-Mehldau, Rossy returned to his hometown of Barcelona, taught at the University of Basel, concentrated on his pianistic and compositional skills, made two albums of original music—*Wicca* (Fresh Sound) and *Iulianus Suite* (Nuba)—and spent quality time with his two sons. In 2010, he produced and played drums on his eldest’s debut, *Introducing Felix Rossy* (Fresh Sound), a swinging affair on which the 17-year-old trumpet wunderkind interpreted 11 old-school standards with abundant chops. In January, Rossy traveled to New York to cut another date, joined by his son, Ben Street on bass, R.J. Miller on drums and Raffi Garabedian on tenor saxophone.

“I was blocked about writing while I was a drummer living in the States, because I was so focused on playing incredible music by other people,” Rossy said the day before the recording session. Windows opened through intensive studies in Barcelona with composer Guillermo Klein. “Trumpet was my first love, so I hear lines, and I write from those melodies, which imply changes. It’s not a drummer’s approach. Actually, I think my strength—and weakness—on drums is that I’m less focused on the instrument than on a general musical awareness. That’s also the strength of my piano playing—I don’t have a worked-out vocabulary, so I go for a spur-of-the-moment thing.”

In 1988, when Rossy enrolled at Berklee College of Music, his resume included trumpet gigs with a Barcelona group modeled on Weather Report and a quintet with eminent Catalan altoist Perico Sambeat inspired by “Kenny Dorham hard-bop.” On drums, he’d played *nuevo flamen-co* with pianist Chano Domínguez and swung in



local rhythm sections for masters-on-tour like Jimmy Owens, Woody Shaw and Jack Walrath.

At Berklee, he bonded with such younger artists as Seamus Blake, Chris Cheek, Kurt Rosenwinkel and Mark Turner. “They needed an experienced drummer like me,” Rossy said. “It’s a beautiful thing to be able to develop with people in your generation.” Soon thereafter, Rossy worked with Danilo Pérez, a fellow student, who taught him the *cascara* and other Afro-Caribbean beats, preparing him for several years with Paquito D’Rivera.

Having developed his language by the time he met Mehldau in 1991, Rossy—who was checking out such contemporary beat hybridists as Jeff “Tain” Watts, Bill Stewart, and Dan Rieser—ran with this opportunity to function as a professional creative musician, bringing to the trio refractions of “*buleria* and other flamenco rhythms I’d played with Chano and the different claves, particularly Brazilian, that I’d played with Paquito.”

Demand for Rossy’s skills remains high nowadays. In December, he played in a trio with Mehldau and Joe Martin at Bilbao and Orvieto, following a tour with Carla Bley and Steve Swallow. In July, he’ll sub for Brian Blade on a three-week European tour by the Wayne Shorter Quartet. On *Passport* (Musica della Parca), a March 2011 quartet date with tenor saxophonist Pietro Tonolo, he doubles on piano and drums, sharing percussion duties with Joe Chambers, who also plays vibraphone.

“For a while, I thought the drums were taking time from the piano, but now it’s good to go back and forth,” Rossy said. “Just the song is important. The instrument is irrelevant.”

—Ted Panken

By Michael Gallant | Photography by Jimmy and Dena Katz

ESPERANZA SPALDING'S *Musical Family*

THE HOTTEST STAR IN JAZZ TALKS ABOUT WORKING WITH JACK DEJOHNETTE, JOE LOVANO, TERRI LYNE CARRINGTON AND OTHER MEMBERS OF HER COLLABORATIVE "SOCIETY"

"Recently I've been reading interviews from the '40s, '50s and '60s with people like Gore Vidal and John F. Kennedy," says Esperanza Spalding, leaning forward in her seat for emphasis. "I've been amazed at the eloquence of these individuals speaking about their ideas. I sense that type of communication is an art form in danger, and I wonder, as an artist, if I can embrace it and nurture it in the work that I do."

This comment reflects the essence of Spalding: endlessly curious, unpredictable, intellectually hungry, committed to bettering the world, and always looking for ways to hone her craft, regardless of how many miles outside of the proverbial box such paths may take her.

Radio Music Society (Heads Up/Concord) is no exception. Spalding's fourth album is an engagingly deep project that melds visual and auditory elements with the confidence that audiences have come to expect from the 27-year-old artist. Spalding has filmed 12 conceptual music videos to accompany the album. "In most of the songs, there's a little story," explains Spalding, who sang, played upright and electric bass, composed, arranged and produced on *Radio Music Society*. "The videos are just an attempt to portray those stories so people can engage the music in a different way."

A creative marketing gimmick? Hardly. The cinematic sibling for Spalding's "Black Gold," for example, opens with a poignant prologue in which an African American father teaches his two children that African history is about much more than Egyptian pyramids and slave ships. The video hits as powerfully as the message behind it, a sincere and touching call to embrace education, self-knowledge and cultural pride. Then there's the music itself, a vibrant, grooving track with r&b flavors and a hook that's ready for mainstream radio. Yet there is also a complex call-and-response between horns and vocals,

the expertly playful drum work of Terri Lyne Carrington and a sinuous, guitar-and-voice solo by Lionel Loueke. This may be *Radio Music*, but watered-down it isn't. If anything, *Radio Music Society* should stand as proof that 2011's upset winner of the Best New Artist Grammy award has no intention of resting on her golden laurels—or doing what anybody expects her to do.

Joining the likes of Carrington and Loueke on the album is a wide and talented variety of Spalding's adoptive musical family. Drum legend (and new NEA Jazz Master) Jack DeJohnette plays on three tracks, adding groove and gravity to the wistful "Vague Suspicions," which somehow manages to gracefully address the difficult topic of civilian war deaths, wrapping the subject matter up amidst a fluidly evolving harmonic tapestry. Joe Lovano's sax improvisations dance with Spalding's vocals on a re-imagined interpretation of the Stevie Wonder song "I Can't Help It." Longtime Spalding keyboardist Leo Genovese adds melodic sparks and controlled chaos to nearly every track. At one point, his synth arpeggios help the dreamy "Cinammon Tree" swell into an almost psychedelic-rock jam toward the song's end, before the track descends into a string-and-trumpet section reminiscent of Spalding's 2010 breakthrough album, *Chamber Music Society* (Heads Up/Concord). Singers are also well represented, with Algebra Blessett trading fluid lead vocals with Spalding on "Black Gold," and Gretchen Parlato and

Becca Stevens adding syncopated backing figures to the funky angularity of "Radio Song."

Busy as Spalding's life has been—she refers to her New York apartment as "Hotel Spalding" because she's so rarely there—she found time to sit down in a West Village cafe to discuss the roots of *Radio Music Society*, the importance of chosen family, working with her musical heroes, and how sometimes even the most bizarre of stories can inspire the sweetest of improvised solos.

DB: You wear a lot of different hats on *Radio Music Society*—producer, lyricist, composer, arranger and musician. Do you see those as separate roles?

Esperanza Spalding: The overarching objective is to reveal the song, to try to realize whatever potential is lying dormant in the piece. You reach for tools as you need them, at whatever stage in the revealing process you're in. It's like working as an archaeologist: You dig bones out of the dirt, then you talk to a specialist to package and ship them to the museum, then you talk with the curators, saying, "No, I really think it should be part of this exhibit." And at the end of the day, you get to go with your kids and look at the skeleton in the museum. Those job titles are made up after the fact. When you're there, it's like, "Let's do this."

A lot of the songs on *Radio Music Society* deal with serious topics, but they don't feel preachy. How do you write something that has



From left: Jack DeJohnette, Terri Lyne Carrington, Esperanza Spalding and Joe Lovano

social meaning but feels cool and uplifting at the same time?

I'm going to quote my teacher, Thara Memory, who helped with conducting and horn arrangements for the album. He once told me that whatever you do, the main thing is to tell the truth in all ways—how you feel about something, how you really think something sounds. As long as you don't think that you're the genius and that the general public are the dummies—and as long as you know that it's probably the other way around—you're set. You don't want to find out the hard way that they're the geniuses and you're the dummy. I found that to be really helpful.

Just like in anything, showing is more powerful than telling. That's tricky when you're dealing with lyrics. Any good joke is one where you don't give away the punchline. You leave enough of a surprise at the end that everybody can partake in the awe of getting the joke.

How did the idea for the videos come about?

Originally, I thought this album would be much more heavily jazz-based, and that it would be helpful for the person who isn't super-familiar with jazz to see something that could symbolically invite him or her into this dialogue, this play that happens in jazz music. Then the music evolved [laughs] but I still liked the idea of videos! You can watch the album, hear the music and see all of these little stories that connect throughout, or if you're walking or driving, you can just listen like an audio album. So it's kind of a video album. Since the resources were there, I thought: Why not see what it's like to have a visual companion with every part of the music?

How are *Chamber Music Society* and *Radio Music Society* related?

Before I went off to record *Chamber Music Society*, I had already siphoned off two sets of material, so there was the *Chamber Music Society* material, which I decided to do first, and then this other collection of songs. I originally wanted to do a double record and now realize that would have been completely impossible, so it's a good thing we did two separate albums instead.

How would you describe the musical relationship between the albums?

Intimate and bombastic, or introverted and extroverted. *Chamber Music Society* draws its force from its intimacy. If you're introverted, even though you can be gregarious in public, you recharge from being quiet and alone, whereas extraverts, even if they may be quiet in their one-on-one relationships, draw energy from being around a lot of people in public situations. I see *Chamber Music Society* as the introvert and *Radio Music Society* as the extravert.

When did you write all of the material for *Radio Music Society*?

The most recent song, "Vague Suspicions," I finished in May [2011]. All of the rest are two-to-five years old. Composing a song and finishing an arrangement are very different things, though. Many of the songs had lyrics and basic form, but when I had nailed down who was going to play on what and started listening at rehearsals, that's when final arrangements were solidified.

For most composers, the writing process is continual and you're always working on music, but there comes a time when you have to commit to song ideas, and that point was when I decided to do this double record idea, *Chamber Music Society* and *Radio Music Society*. I don't even remember where most of the songs were written, but I do remember that point of thinking that my repertoire over the last couple years boiled down into these two categories.

Do you remember where you came up with "Radio Song"?

I was doing an Us Five tour and had agreed to a silly bet with [singer] Algebra [Blessett] that I was going to write a song every day. I like those kinds of challenges amongst friends, as it gives you a deadline and someone to be accountable to. So I went to my room in London before a sound check, pulled out the electric bass and started playing this little bass line. I also came up with a lyric that isn't actually what the song is about anymore. The bet sort of disintegrated after that, but I guess the purpose of it was to come up with that song.

You have some amazing collaborators on this album—Jack DeJohnette on drums, for example. What does it mean to you be part of such a talented musical family?

My relationship to that family is everything. How can I describe what it means to sit and talk with Jack about his family, his ancestry, how the Native American music of his ancestors relates to his approach to playing the drums? It means something indescribable that I've internalized, and that's become part of my musical mind as I make my own music. We really are the sum of all the parts—and at least musically, I'm a manifestation of my amazing teachers like Jack.

Can you talk about Joe Lovano's contributions to the album?

I was really nervous when he came to the studio. He's like my guru. I feel like I want to kiss his feet, since I have so much admiration for him as a musician and a person. Having him on my record was, in a way, too much, too intense and overwhelming a gift.

When he came to the studio, I didn't realize that he hadn't received the charts for the music. He was playing on the song "I Can't Help It" and he was coming in cold. So we listened a couple of times and I told him, "These are the places where I'm imagining this interplay," and so on. Two takes and he nailed it.

How so?



His feel, phrasing and use of space were amazing. He completely channeled the intention of the song and brought it to such a higher level. Not that I expected any less, but it was incredible to see him do it, especially with a totally different style of music than what he normally plays.

The arc for "I Can't Help It" is funny—it goes really big, then it comes down, and then it goes up again. Usually a song has a continual arc or peaks in the middle before coming back down. In the two times Joe was able to listen, he heard that arc and felt it during his playing. He goes up into a super-high register on the tenor sax, sailing over the top with the arc of his solo, and meets us again on the way down. To be able to intellectually or intuitively feel that and make that decision is brilliant.

What was it like working in the studio with Terri Lyne Carrington?

At the end of one day in the studio, I was totally burned out and drained, and Terri told me that she wanted to re-record one drum part. I didn't really think we needed it, but she kept urging me to let her do another take. At that moment, she was burned out, too, but she was so into the success of this project and so committed to every detail being as excellent as it could be that she wanted to try again.

What did you think?

At the time, I wasn't sold. Like mixing engineers say, at some point your ears get tired and you can't tell what's going on anymore. When I lis-

tened later, though, I knew that she was right. I was so glad she pushed me and wouldn't let me say no. It would have been much easier for her to have just left—she'd already done her part and it already sounded great!

That was a beautiful manifestation of her love and commitment, and things like that happened on many occasions. She actually did post-production editing on a lot of the music before the record went to the mix. Again, that's a testament to her support and belief in the project, her willingness to put all of that time in. That sort of editing is not easy to do.

What about Leo Genovese?

Leo is an infinite spring of creativity. He comes in with incredible, quirky, weird, freaky, exotic, exciting ideas, and my job in the studio is putting down a track for the train to go on. I can say, "Leo, can you do something really spacey, maybe throw a delay on your sound?" He'll go, "Ha-ha!" and pull out some toys, plug in and go for it.

On "Cinnamon Tree," there are some synth lines that I wrote into the arrangement, this part where the lines are in fourths moving in parallel up and down on the choruses. Leo has analog synthesizers that sound so warm and beautiful, and they remind me of a reed instrument. The idea was to have them double the sax and trumpet, and from that starting point, he just kept evolving and growing his part.

How did Leo's perspective play into the vibe of the album as a whole?

He's an incredibly diverse musician. He plays many instruments, and a lot of what he does borders on avant garde and free. He considers himself a sound artist more than a piano player, but he's studied harmony, theory, songwriting and everything else. Put him in a context that's theoretically closer to singer-songwriter forms, and you're inviting this breath of the unknown into the known. His presence brings the outside in.

That paradigm applies to the whole CD—you have accessible singer-songwriter forms with more complexity and "unknown" elements inside them. Did you arrange these songs down to the last detail, or leave more of an open framework?

The most pre-arranged tune was "Cinnamon Tree." Everything in there was pretty much written out, but the umbilical chord was cut after that song. "Radio Song" is pretty pre-arranged too. Beyond the groove, though, everybody can comp and play how they want to, and we slowly pare it down from there. For Daniel Blake's [saxophone] solo in "Radio Song," I gave him a story to try to depict in his playing and he went for it.

What was the story?

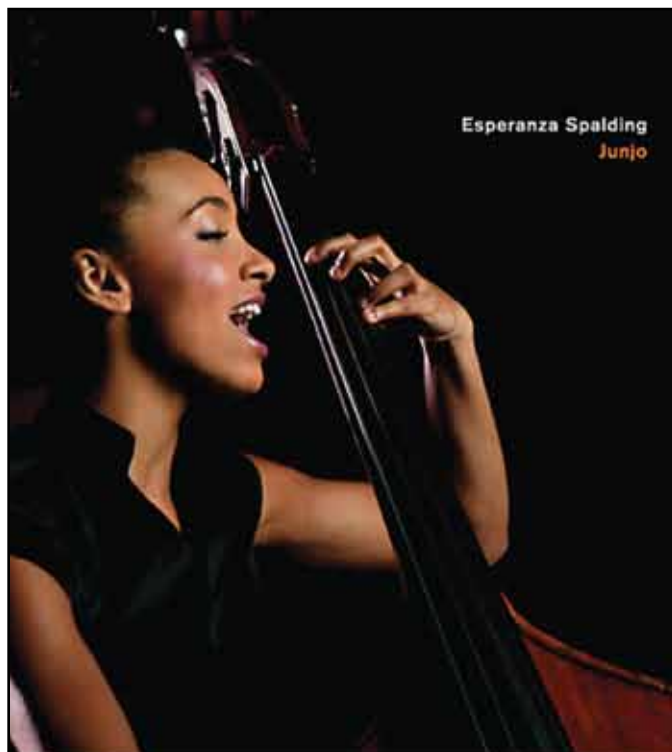
I think told him it was a children's book with an unhappy ending [laughs]. Actually, I don't quite remember. He was another phenomenal musician, totally as wide as you want anybody to be music-wise. Even if he played "in" for his way of playing, along with it, he'd bring the implications of a whole lot more.

When you're performing onstage or in the studio and it's your turn to play a solo, do you have similar stories going through your head?

To be totally honest, this is changing for me now. It could be a story, and not a vague story—say, the story of someone dying and feeling what it's like to be eaten by worms and sensing themselves being in every worm that's eating and spreading out in the soil; then being eaten by a bird and feeling what it's like to be digested and become blood cells and flying; and then to be the wife of the person who died, and seeing that bird eat at the birdfeeder that the dead husband put up in the yard. That story has a full circle somehow. For me, and for many people, it helps to follow whatever story to its natural endpoint.

What other strategies do you use?

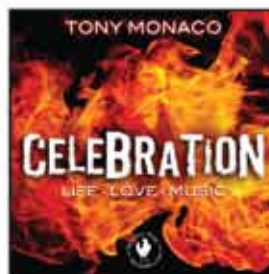
Sometimes, you try to think of absolutely nothing. You trust that you have enough musical information in your arsenal, that drawing from what you hear from other instrumentalists, you can just be a conduit to let this culmination of what everyone else is playing manifest in one line that goes through your solo and captivates the listener. Somehow you're the message



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bearer, in that moment, of the intention of the whole band.

There are a lot of smaller tools that ultimately make the same effect. You can come at it from a more technical place, thinking about augmentation or diminution, repetition or inversions, things like that. You can look at it like a fractal—musically, you're doing what a fern leaf does. You're unfolding a pattern in a way that it becomes something new, but has similarity and continuity to it.

How did all of this apply to your work on the new CD?

All of those specific techniques exist so what you play sounds like a story. In the moment of just wanting to feel free in the studio—and knowing that what I play is going to be on a record forever—I'm trying to not think too much, to get out of the way of my brain, and really send forth something that's better than I can intellectually put together. It's not always going to sound great and a lot of it is trial and error. Sometimes what you play can be the best and truest thing you can do, even if it sounds ugly to someone else.

Tori Amos told me she sometimes literally has to change shoes to help her shift from a "Tori-the-artist" perspective to a "Tori-the-producer" perspective. Was that sort of leap easy for you on *Radio Music Society*?

What she does is really smart, and getting the perspective you need to produce can be a challenge. It can always feel myopic—"I know I wrote that violin line, but the truth is that we probably don't need it." But I remember putting it in, so it's hard to have the distance to cut it out.

How do you get that distance?

For me, it's not shoes. It's time. A week later, you've lived a week longer and have a week's distance. And friends—having lots opinions from people who you trust to honestly share with you what they're hearing. When somebody says something true, you can sense it, even if it's difficult to hear. The process for this album has been like throwing out a bunch of information on a canvas and then asking my friends to help me bring back the white. "Erase something here. If you just add a second blue line there, it looks like a cow," or whatever.

In a 2010 *DownBeat* interview, you told a story about how you turned to Wayne Shorter to help you resolve a musical disagreement with Gil Goldstein. How do you know which jazz master to listen to when?

It's a dance between listening to people and also knowing when to listen to nobody and follow your own intuition. Your ideas might just be coming from a place that's so uniquely your own that nobody else can have an opinion on it. That's the childish side of creative people—"I want to do it *my way*!" You need to listen all the time, but knowing when not to act on what you've heard can be a fine balance.

How do you know when people like Gil and Wayne are right?

I'm sure they're right! But for the sake of the experience that we all get to go through that makes us better artists, sometimes you owe it to yourself to slam yourself against the wall and discover that, really, you can't walk through that wall. I'm all for the experience, the good and the bad. Having great guides helps, but it's also about making a lot of mistakes and learning from them.

You play a lot of electric bass on this album.

SOCIETY COLLABORATORS

DownBeat contributor Michael Gallant asked some of Esperanza Spalding's collaborators to describe working with her.

Drummer Jack DeJohnette

■ **Esperanza's impact on the jazz world:** Every now and then, somebody comes through who really lights up and re-energizes the improvisational world of jazz. She is one of those energies, those bright lights that comes on the scene. She has been opening lots of doors and widening the path of creative artistry through her work. She's totally outside the box. She works inside the traditions of the music, but reshapes it to her own concept. It's really refreshing.

■ **Growth from *Chamber Music Society* to *Radio Music Society*:** She's raised the bar coming from *Chamber Music Society* to the new album. The artistry and quality of her work—singing, playing, arranging—is just going up. The music is fresh, unpredictable, and I think it's accessible. I hope this record will be a gateway to open things up for other performers to stretch out a little more as well.

■ **Building a relationship with Esperanza:** She's very smart, very curious and very aware of the social, economic and ecological changes going on in the world. We have great conversations. Musically, she's also very curious. If I ask her if she's heard such-and-such thing, like a groove from Earth, Wind & Fire, she'll go check it out. She digests it and will use it somewhere. Overall, she's very warm, spiritual and confident.

■ **Bridging generations through music:** Because of Esperanza, there's this meeting, which I think is very healthy, between younger and older musicians—an exchange and a bridge where we create hybrid music that carries the concepts of creativity and thoughtful artistic change to a really high level of quality.



JIMMY AND DEMA KATZ

Keyboardist Leo Genovese

■ **Meeting Esperanza:** I met her about 10 years ago at Berklee [College of Music in Boston]. We had some classes together, and we played together in school. In '05 or '06, we did our first little tour in Brazil. Even when I first met her, she was already an amazing bass player and an amazing singer. When she sings, plays, works or practices, she does it with all of her heart.

■ **Collaborating in the studio:** It's always a great education to see her work in the studio or in a live context. She has a great way of getting her musicians to play what she hears in her head, and she knows exactly what she wants. But at the same time, she's great at balancing that with letting you follow your own creative process and do your own thing. Her album is the result of a lot of work, and I thought she did an amazing job. I'm just proud to be a part of it.



CHARLES PERCIBAS

Vocalist Becca Stevens

■ **Collaborating on *Radio Music Society*:** She has such a strong musical vision, which was inspiring when I was working in the studio with her. She knows exactly what she wants, but she also has an ability to leave room for collaboration and to let things still feel like a musical playground.

■ **Expectations for the recording session:** Esperanza told us that there weren't any demos or charts, so I didn't even know what I'd be doing when I went in. She'd told Gretchen [Parlato] that it would be sort of a village vibe, where Esperanza sings the chorus, then a village of people would come in and sing behind her. But I had no idea what kind of songs they'd turn out to be.

■ **Improvising in the studio:** I was surprised that she allowed a lot of time during our recording day for me and the other singers to put our own ideas into the melting pot. We even wrote some background lines together—we would go around in a circle, and one person would improvise a line, then the next person would go, until we got to something she really liked, and then we'd record it. Other times, she'd have it all planned out in her head, and we'd learn the parts by ear: "Becca, sing this. Gretchen, sing this. Go!" She brings a lot of trust into it, letting you do your thing with the line she gives you.

■ **Esperanza as a performer:** She is a force. She's such a beautifully well-balanced artist, and just being around her and being her friend is inspiring. For me, her performance is the perfect balance of powerful singer, powerfully brilliant instrumentalist, and she has that quality—she pulls energy out of the sky through her body, and it comes blasting out of her heart. She's such an outstanding performer to watch, and to collaborate with.



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My justification for playing more electric bass is that the songs ask for it. Live is where the songs really come to life, so over the next year-and-a-half, that's my catalyst for focusing on electric bass, trying new things at the gig.

What does the electric give you that the acoustic doesn't?

Something about it feels more fluid. It's not as accurate for me as when I'm playing upright, but the notes feel more pointed, and there's more space somehow between each note for me to arrive at the right place. This project gives me

the opportunity to explore a certain type of writing and playing that includes electric bass—and *Chamber Music Society* worked the same way.

You're learning to play piano as well.

I'm starting to study piano seriously. I don't know what it is about that instrument, but it brings musical concepts and theory to life, and I feel like the world is opening up to me. My teacher is Janice Scroggins, and she plays on "Hold On Me." She comes to jazz from blues, ragtime and spirituals, and she has a really different approach.

How so?

Our first lesson was on voice leading. She brought in this book of hymns and told me that all of these ideas that we have about piano harmonies, especially in jazz, came out of four people singing together and moving in the most logical way for the voice. When you play a C7 chord, it's not just a chord—it's four melodies played at the same time, and you should be able to hear the lines of the tenor, soprano, alto and bass moving through the music harmonically, like four voices singing around the piano. Thinking about voice leading like that was a revelation to me.

Has your creative life changed since receiving the Grammy award for best new artist?

Life is always changing, but I don't feel any sort of ominous presence of having received a Grammy in my day-to-day creative life. More people have become aware of me, and media outlets that have a broader viewership have given me opportunities to be seen, thanks to the award. And when I go to play a gig, people will come when they wouldn't have before. Those are the main ways that there's a difference. But I'm the same amount of busy.

That sounds like a pretty stable and positive transition.

In some ways, [the Grammy] is just a statue sitting on my bookshelf in Austin, Texas, and I'm doing everything I was planning on doing this year anyway [laughs]. But people have taken the headline of giving me a Grammy and run with it, making up incredible concepts and anecdotes about it. But that's other people's talk.

I'm not into the idea of trying to satisfy what other people want all the time. There's a balance of catering to what you think someone would enjoy, and in art, that's inevitable. You get on stage and try to make what you play easier for an audience to experience—but ultimately, to do something of value, it has to come from a place of genuine belief and love. That's the main driving force in what I'm doing, what I intend to do in the future and what people around me do.

Can you elaborate?

I'm a bass player, and I will always gladly apply all of my creative powers to bringing someone else's musical vision to life. But when it's my own band and my own project, that's where I get to explore my own desires and bring my own dreams to life, using all the rules of music that theoretically make your art more accessible to the listener. You take something completely not real yet and fold it into something that can be shared and, for the sake of sharing, you try to find ways that the other person can understand as clearly as possible what you're trying to recreate, present, or expose.

So those are my motivations in art and music. People are going to say many things, and I can't do what I can't do, but I'll be glad to do all that I can do!

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Gil Evans, late 1950s

GIL EVANS

Forever Cool

To celebrate the centennial of Gil Evans' birth, DownBeat examines the composer/arranger's legacy and continuing impact

By Stephanie Crease

Gil Evans was a musical alchemist. In his later years, when conducting his wild orchestra from the piano, he looked like a conjurer—white hair shining, a thin arm raised skyward, his entire frame leaning toward the music. For those fortunate enough to work with him or see him perform, the image is indelible. For everyone else, Evans' recorded works will be around for generations.

This year marks the centennial of Evans' birth, and his legacy is everywhere. The innovative bandleader, composer and arranger was a synthesist whose work integrated elements from virtually all genres of music. A perfect example surfaced recently on a digital sampler released by the Global Jukebox label. It is a modal melody played on penny whistle recorded by the musicologist Alan Lomax in some remote corner of Spain in the early 1950s. Sound familiar? Trumpet legend Miles Davis played this melody note for note as the introduction for "Pan Piper," one of Evans' scores for *Sketches Of Spain* (1960), one of his and Davis' masterworks. Anytime you hear a flute, French horn or other orchestral instrument in a jazz setting—a lot of that started with Evans. Mashing up rock rhythms with bebop lines, synthesizers and sear-

ing electric guitars—Evans again. He was a master of color and texture who was equally skillful at orchestrating feelings—haunting, joyful and everything in between.

Evans' career reaches back to the early years of the swing era and forward into the amazing body of work he created until his death in 1988. He was born in Canada in 1912, and grew up in the Pacific Northwest and California. As a teenager in Stockton, Calif., Evans was enthralled by the records and live broadcasts of Louis Armstrong, Fletcher Henderson, Duke Ellington and many others. Through the popularity of the small dance band Evans formed in the early 1930s, he became the arranger for popular singer Skinnay Ennis in 1936, which led him to working with the prominent arranger Claude Thornhill before and after World War II.

Evans settled in New York City in 1946, and his basement apartment near 52nd Street became a meeting place for some of the brightest young jazz musicians on the scene, including Davis, Lee Konitz, Dizzy Gillespie, George Russell, John Lewis and Gerry Mulligan. Charlie Parker often used the place to sleep, and people filtered in and out day and night.

Evans' unusual writing for the Thornhill band had a particular attraction for his younger friends. His arrangements of Parker's "Yardbird Suite" and "Anthropology" created a buzz; so did his reworkings of Mussorgsky's *Pictures At An Exhibition* and pieces by de Falla. "What I was doing with Thornhill had a certain sound," Evans said in 1986. "It had all those French horns for one thing, no vibrato and the impressionist harmony. It fit bebop so well."

The musical discussions at Evans' place led to the formation of the short-lived Miles Davis Nonet, and several arrangements written for the group by Davis, Evans, Lewis, Mulligan and John Carisi. Capitol Records recorded them as singles in 1949–'50. The tracks were compiled and reissued in 1954 and again in 1957 as the now-classic album *Birth Of The Cool*.

Evans and Davis' first project inspired a life-long friendship, and it planted the seeds for their subsequent collaboration on the albums *Miles Ahead* (1957), *Porgy And Bess* (1958), *Sketches Of Spain* and other works.

But while Davis' ascent as a jazz star rose through the 1950s, Evans scuffled for a few years. He had a great reputation in New York's bustling studio scene, but he was known to be a slow writer, which undoubtedly prevented him from getting more work. Evans' long career can be viewed as a shadow play of obscurity and high visibility. He once described himself as "the world's greatest example of the fact that fame and fortune are not synonymous." More than anything, Evans was a totally dedicated artist. He worked on music constantly—whether a gig or recording was forthcoming or not.



Evans performing in 1986

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Starting in 1957, Evans recorded a string of studio albums as a leader that showed the huge scope of his work, as did several live albums released during the '70s and '80s. He tailored his scores for soloists such as Cannonball Adderley, Kenny Burrell, Steve Lacy, David Sanborn, Wayne Shorter and Phil Woods. A stream of extraordinary musicians made up Evans' sections: Paul Chambers, Johnny Coles, Eric Dolphy, Budd Johnson and Elvin Jones, to name a few. From the late '50s on, Evans often had a rehearsal band that included the best players in the city. In a 1999 conversation, Lacy said, "For Gil, there were no departments in music. These were very exciting arrangements played by some of the best musicians in New York, who at that time could be coerced into coming and rehearsing for nothing because the music was so good."

Evans' influence casts a wide net. Maria Schneider worked as his copyist and then his assistant from 1985 until he died. She subsequently conducted *Miles Ahead*, *Sketches Of Spain* and other Evans works at Carnegie Hall and European concert halls. She has composed pieces for soprano Dawn Upshaw, the St. Paul Chamber Orchestra, and more recently the Australian Chamber Orchestra, as well as new compositions for her namesake orchestra. "When I was working with Gil, at a certain point I realized how devoted he was to developing his own voice," Schneider explained. "A big part of that was that he surrounded himself with musicians who were serious about bringing his vision to life. I realized that I needed to do the same for myself. Gil inspired me so much; so did Bob Brookmeyer—they were searchers, they learned by listening, by transcribing, by studying on their own. When you are around people who are so much 'their own people' in their music, you feel like, 'Wow—I want that for myself.'"

For those who worked closely with Evans,

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music was just one part of his influence. Lacy said Evans was “intellectually curious, nonstop. He was always open to hearing something that he hadn’t heard before, thinking thoughts he’d never thought before, reading things he’d never read before.” Evans also had a tight-knit family with his wife, Anita, and their two sons, Noah and Miles, who clambered under the piano as youngsters and helped haul instruments around.

Saxophonist David Sanborn met Evans in the early 1970s and performed with him for several years at the start of his own career. Sanborn

was living in Woodstock, N.Y., and was friends with baritone saxophonist Howard Johnson, who was working with Evans at the time. Johnson knew that Evans was always on the lookout for good musicians, and needed an alto player. “Howard suggested I come to the city to check out the band,” Sanborn recalled. “So I went one night, thinking I was going to a rehearsal or an audition. I showed up at this place downtown, and it was a gig! I asked Gil if we were going to rehearse, and he said, ‘No, no, you’ll be OK—you’ll hear everything.’ So, there I am playing

this music, most of which I had never even heard before. I realized quickly that the whole situation was pretty loose, but in a really good way.”

The band was a mix of old and young musicians. Johnson and Lew Soloff had been in it for a few years, and Sanborn sat next to tenor players Billy Harper and George Adams (who was also playing with Charles Mingus). At times, there were two or three guitarists and keyboard players, and two or three percussionists. “I was thrilled to be there and to be around Gil, who was one of my idols,” Sanborn continued. “Gil

TRUE BELIEVER

On a hot August day last year, 20 musicians gathered in a rehearsal studio with feeble air conditioning in New York City. The group was a Gil Evans-esque assemblage: jazz and classical musicians, studio players and specialists in unusual instruments like tabla and tenor violin. They were there for three days of rehearsal, to be followed soon after by three days of recording. They were preparing 12 arrangements by Evans that had been painstakingly refurbished by Ryan Truesdell, a composer/arranger himself, who got bit by the Evans bug when he was in his early 20s. In the last few years, thanks to the Evans family (who allowed Truesdell complete access to Evans’ manuscripts) and a lot of detective work, Truesdell has pieced together more than 50 Gil Evans scores. Most of them were rarely (or never) performed or recorded; a couple of them are different versions of better-known works. The music spans almost 30 years—there are scores written for Claude Thornhill’s band in the 1940s and Evans’ originals of the late 1960s. Once Truesdell realized he had a critical mass of music, he decided to bring this treasure trove to light. His album *Centennial: Newly Discovered Works Of Gil Evans* will be released on the Artists Share label on May 13, which would have been the legendary composer/artist’s 100th birthday.



During the process, Truesdell was reminded that Evans was deliberate in his choice of players, always. When performing this music, every musician in the room is important. Truesdell premiered some of this music in the winter of 2011 with the handpicked Eastman School of Music Chamber Jazz Ensemble (directed by Dave Rivello), with Phil Woods as soloist. The musicians who play on *Centennial* include saxophonists Steve Wilson and Donny McCaslin, trumpeter Laurie Frink, bassist Jay Anderson, drummer Lewis Nash and pianist Frank Kimbrough. None of them had performed Evans’ music before.

“Playing all this music gave us a new respect for the musicians Gil worked with—it is so technically challenging,” said Wilson. “The phrasing is very unique to Gil—that tripped us up more than a few times. We found a lot of the ‘Gil DNA’ in the later pieces like ‘Punjab’—oh, listen to that blend! You really had to be subservient to it.”

Along the way, there were many unforeseen logistical problems. For the Thornhill scores, Truesdell needed to round up hat mutes for the trombone section. That part actually wasn’t too difficult. But Evans intricately scored the use of the mutes; sometimes different mutes had to be put on and taken off within the same measure. Truesdell said, “We couldn’t figure out how the trombonists could do it.” So, he studied photos of 1940s dance bands, and found out they had music

stands with special clips, making it easy for the trombonists to switch from one mute to the other. Since the clips aren’t offered in any catalog nowadays, Truesdell found a metalworker to fabricate them.

Then there was issue of locating a tenor violin for “Punjab,” an Evans composition from the 1960s that had been recorded but was never released. A loan of one of these rare violins fell through, and Truesdell located another one just two days before rehearsals started.

Truesdell will keep up this musical mission with several performances over the next few months: The Gil Evans Project ensemble will perform at the Jazz Standard in New York in May and the Newport Jazz Festival in August. Truesdell and the Eastman Chamber Jazz Ensemble will perform an even wider range of Evans’ music at this year’s Umbria Jazz festival in Italy, taking place in July.

Maria Schneider, an acclaimed composer/arranger and Evans’ former assistant, attended the *Centennial* recording sessions. She is thrilled that all this music will finally be heard. “For the recording, everyone—from the engineer to the musicians—felt privileged to be a part of this project and really put themselves into it. They all really respected Ryan’s work. The fact that this all came together this year, Gil’s centennial year, is a great coincidence. It’s a fantastic birthday present.”

—Stephanie Crease

was not what you would call a taskmaster. He just didn't want to tell anybody what to play—sometimes to the extreme. I don't think that you can separate who he was from how he dealt with the band.

"When I moved to New York a couple of years later, I didn't have a place to live. Gil invited me to stay in his loft. It was a great life experience. People stopped by all the time. We were working at the Village Vanguard on Monday nights. We went to Europe. I sensed in Gil very little of what we normally call ambition. He just wanted to write music that was true to him, truthful music. It's a difficult thing to articulate—like trying to describe lightning to someone who has never seen it."

The band's visibility grew in the spring of 1983, when it started playing on Monday nights at Sweet Basil in Greenwich Village. There were some members—like Johnson, Soloff and trombone player Tom Malone—who'd been with Evans for more than 15 years; others had joined more recently. There was a flux of talent. With synthesizers and saxes, French horn and tuba, the band roared through new renditions of Evans' earlier arrangements and performed haunting versions of themes from *Porgy And Bess* and *The Threepenny Opera*.

Arranger/composer Gil Goldstein—who has worked with Michael Brecker, Pat Martino, Pat Metheny and Esperanza Spalding—started playing keyboards with the Evans orchestra in 1982. His keyboard was often perched on the back of the grand piano, and Evans would confide in him. Goldstein recalled that their conversations centered on "all things arranging, about the philosophical nature of arranging." He added, "That is really what I learned from Gil, and who he was as a person. He tried to get the most from his players. He didn't want them to just look at the notes. He would reconfigure things for different instrumentation or different voicings. He reinterpreted his own pieces and kept the ball rolling forward. Gil didn't like to repeat himself."

Goldstein said that everything he writes is "a tribute" to Evans, and his working methods today reflect the approach of his mentor: "Everybody who plays a line that Gil wrote has a certain freedom and flexibility in the way to play it. I am trying to expand the tradition of the writing he started."

Most of Evans' original compositions are experimental sonic landscapes like "Proclamation" or "Waltz" (from *The Individualism Of Gil Evans*, 1964). On "La Nevada," which Evans recorded in 1959 and again in 1961, the structure became more open-ended, allowing more room for improvisation. Over time, his sources kept broadening, and his repertoire included arrangements of tunes by Mingus, Jimi Hendrix, Thelonious Monk and by his own musicians. Yet, other than the few pieces Evans composed for *Sketches Of Spain* and *Miles Ahead*, and the one original he wrote for *Porgy And Bess*, his own compositions were rarely performed or recorded, which didn't give him much of an

income from composer royalties. In the '50s and '60s, Evans and other arrangers received a flat fee for their work. Goldstein thinks a strong case could be made for copywriting arrangements such as Evans', thus allowing them to earn royalties, when the resulting works are so wholly unique and essentially "recomposed."

James Darcy Argue's Secret Society is one of the most attention-getting large ensembles on the scene today. Like the Evans orchestra of the 1980s, Argue's big band is no warhorse from another era. One key aspect of Evans' work that Argue finds so powerful is the way Evans integrated acoustic and electric textures. "He has

unison lines played by a flute and a crazy analog synthesizer, or electric bass and tuba," Argue noted. "Those kinds of hybrid acoustic-electronic textures are really appealing for anyone who is trying to make a big band sound relevant and contemporary." Argue, too, is continually exploring ways to make music that is largely composed also have a "liberating, spontaneous spirit."

Relevant and contemporary, spontaneous—those are qualities that make Evans' music jump off the page and link it to the present. His music has a flexible and timeless quality. It's easy to imagine arrangers studying his works continuously for the next 100 years—and beyond. **DB**



JIMMY OWENS

Seeking Justice

By Geoffrey Himes | Photo by Stephanie Myers

For better or worse, jazz artists build their reputations mostly through recordings. There are many other ways to leave the jazz art form in better shape than you found it—by composing for it, arranging for it, writing about it, creating festivals for it, developing a local scene for it, educating youngsters in it, traveling overseas to spread it, and improving the conditions for the people who play it—but, historically speaking, these contributions have not built a lasting reputation the way that landmark recordings have.

The NEA Jazz Masters program has worked hard to correct this imbalance. The National Endowment for the Arts has given these lifetime achievement awards to a number of people with relatively low recording profiles: local scene-makers Von Freeman, Cleo Brown and Danny Barker; arrangers Tom McIntosh, Gunther Schuller, Melba Liston and Bill Holman; journalists Nat Hentoff and Dan Morgenstern; festival founder George Wein; manager John Levy; and educator David Baker.

Jimmy Owens—who received the 2012 A.B. Spellman NEA Jazz Masters Award for Jazz Advocacy on Jan. 10—has released only six albums under his own name. The best of them, *The Monk Project* (IPO Recordings), was released last fall after his selection had already been announced. His name might not be familiar to the casual jazz fan, but he's known to his fellow musicians as a terrific trumpeter and flugel-hornist on a session or a live date, an underrated composer and arranger, a pioneer in jazz education and the one guy you can always count on to stand up for musicians when it comes to fair pay, health care and copyright issues.

"Jimmy's done some very important stuff in seeking justice for jazz musicians," says Kenny Barron, who played piano on Owens' first, third, fourth and sixth albums. "He's always holding meetings to inform musicians about their rights,

to let them know they're eligible for pensions."

"When Jimmy was my teacher at the New School, he gave us many pearls of wisdom about how to make more money in such a hard industry," says Marcus Strickland, who played tenor sax on *The Monk Project*. "He gave us a lot of examples from his own life and from his colleagues' lives. He laid out the things we had to do to get a union pension, to control our own publishing and to incorporate as a business—all the things young musicians don't think of. He made sure it was burned into our minds. We were thinking differently after that class."

In the '70s, before Strickland was even born, Owens sported the best afro in jazz, an astonishing black nimbus that could hold its own with Esperanza Spalding's. These days, however, Owens has a gleaming bald dome, upon which his bushy black eyebrows float like Groucho Marx's, reflecting a similar, skeptical wit.

He sinks into the sofa of his spacious, eighth-floor apartment in Manhattan's Flatiron District, the payoff for taking the business of music seriously. On the walls are works by some of the biggest names in Southern African-American outsider art: Jimmy Lee Sudduth, Mose Tolliver and Mary Proctor. When Sudduth paints a rooster in red shoes leaping into the night sky, he's taking an old blues motif and giving it a newly exalted feeling. When Owens is playing jazz, wheth-

er it's his own compositions, Thelonious Monk's or Thad Jones', he's doing much the same thing.

"When I was 13 or 14," he says, "the blues was the first thing I wanted to play. I wanted to play the records I was hearing—Miles' 'Walkin'' and 'Bags' Groove.' When I heard J.J. Johnson play 'Misterioso,' when I heard Nat Adderley hit that double-high C on that track, it had a tremendous amount of feeling, a blues feeling. We listened to those players and we knew we had to play the blues—the blues spelled 'j-a-z-z.'"

Owens gets up from the couch and walks over to a wall covered in vinyl records and pulls out an old 78. It's a picture disc with a young white couple jitterbugging on the "She's Funny That Way" side and a young white trio swinging on the "Dizzy's Dilemma" side; at the bottom of each picture is the small, dark face of trumpeter Charlie Shavers, whose recording it actually was. Owens holds the still-gleaming 1946 Vogue disc tenderly, recalling that when his father came home from his post office job, he'd ask the 3-year-old Jimmy what record he wanted to hear, and Jimmy would always say, "Charlie Shavers!"

"My dad wasn't a musician," Owens explains, "but he played the greatest music for me and my two older sisters: Duke Ellington, Billie Holiday and Louis Armstrong. I remember he'd pick me up in his arms and dance with me, and I'd watch us in the mirror. I'm sure those records



got the trumpet in my ear.”

They did more than that. They instilled a pride in African-American culture that wouldn't accept second-class treatment—nor an abandonment of the blues feeling that united that culture. This strong sense of self-esteem informed not only his playing and composing but also his teaching and organizing. That dignity ran deep because it had so often been reinforced by personal encounters with great black artists growing up.

He remembers coming home one day when he was 11 or 12 and telling his parents, “Langston was telling us stories today.” “Langston who?” they asked, and he replied, “Langston Hughes.” That didn't mean much to a fifth grader, but it sure impressed his parents. It seems that Hughes had a sister on Owens' block (on 168th Street) in the Bronx, and the writer used to gather the neighborhood kids together to test out his “Simple” stories on them. One day Hughes pointed at a man who was walking up Prospect Avenue in a fur coat even though it was a boiling-hot July day. “You see that man?” Hughes asked the youngsters. “That's a great musician. That's Thelonious Monk.”

Owens began playing the trumpet at age 13, and two years later his father took him down to Small's Paradise in Harlem to see the hottest trumpeter around: Miles Davis. While his dad was at the bar, little Jimmy walked over to bandstand and checked out Davis' trumpet. Someone sat down at the piano and asked, “You play the trumpet, kid?” Owens looked up; it was Davis himself, who said, “Play something.”

“I stuck my mouthpiece in Miles' horn and played ‘Walkin’,” Owens recalls. “I had a good sound even then because I'd been studying with Donald Byrd in the Bronx. Miles said, ‘That's pretty good,’ and when Bill Evans came on stage, Miles said, ‘Bill, did you hear this kid play? Play it again.’ I played it again and soon the whole band—Miles, Evans, Trane, Cannonball, Paul Chambers and Jimmy Cobb—was playing along. Years later, I asked Jimmy if he remembered that day and he said, ‘That was you? Don't bullshit me. Yeah, I remember that day. It was my first week on the gig; Philly Joe Jones is in the bar, and I'm playing behind some kid.’”

It was Byrd who recommended Owens for the Newport Youth Band, a New York-based teenage big band supported by the Newport Jazz Festival and run by Marshall Brown. In 1959 and '60, Owens got to play with such fellow teenagers as Eddie Daniels, Eddie Gomez, Ronnie Cuber, Andy Marsala, Michael Abene and Larry Rosen at jazz festivals in Newport, Boston, Washington and Pittsburgh; they even recorded three albums on Coral Records. Owens learned a lot in that band—how to read, how to blend, how to solo—but the business lessons were equally important. Brown made all his teenagers join the union and taught them how to handle their money and protect their rights. Byrd emphasized the same things.

In 1964, a 20-year-old Owens was working in trombonist Slide Hampton's band, but the jazz scene was suffering one of its periodic slumps, as clubs folded in the face of competition from

the Beatles and Motown. It was then that Owens stumbled across a new book, Sidney Shemel and M. William Krasilovsky's *This Business of Music*. “I opened it up,” Owens recalls, “and it had all the answers to all the questions we'd had to learn by hard knocks. That book changed the lives of jazz musicians.” Soon Owens was studying that book like the Bible and preaching from it like an evangelist.

“I found out that the system as it was set up did shit for musicians,” he says. “When I studied the history of music and saw Irving Mills' name next to Duke Ellington's on all those songs, even though Duke wrote them, I knew that was wrong. So when I signed with Atlantic Records in 1967, they wanted me to put my songs in their publishing company. I said, ‘No, I'll put them in my own publishing company.’ I was trying to organize other artists, because I knew if I helped others, it would help me in the long run.”



“One time we were doing a benefit for Bobby Timmons, one of the many musicians I knew who died and couldn't pay for the hospital or funeral. I said to Jamil Nasser, ‘This shit has got to stop; we shouldn't have to play a benefit every time someone dies.’ Soon after that, Jamil and I were on the board of the Jazz Foundation, whose main mission was raising money for the jazz archives at the [New York Public Library's] Schomburg Center. Jamil spoke up and said, ‘Instead of helping the dead, let's help the living.’ We got the board to change its whole philosophy from preserving history to preserving life by setting up the Jazz Musicians Emergency Fund.”

To supplement that fund, Owens organized a network of doctors who each agreed to take care of two jazz musicians for one year for free. He persuaded all the bandleaders he knew to start paying into the union so their musicians would be able to retire with a pension. Rather than wait around for performing opportunities to improve, Owens joined Reggie Workman, Stanley Cowell, Warren Smith and Don Moore to form the non-profit group Collective Black Artists in 1969. The group offered jam sessions, workshops and classes such as Owens' course on the music business. The organization formed its own big band, the CBA Ensemble, and launched a series of con-

certs at Town Hall where the ensemble would back up musicians not usually heard in a big-band context, including Art Blakey, Ahmad Jamal, Max Roach and Archie Shepp.

As Owens confronted the challenges of keeping a non-profit group afloat, he realized that jazz needed to get a larger share of the government funding that went overwhelmingly to classical music in those days. To change that situation, he served as a jazz panelist for the National Endowment for the Arts and the New York State Council on the Arts off and on between 1972 and 2009. “When I came into the NEA,” he points out, “we had \$850,000 for jazz, folk and ethnic music for the whole United States. We increased the money for jazz alone to \$2,500,000.” Owens also worked for the Jazz Foundation of America, Jazzmobile, the Massachusetts Arts & Humanities Foundation, the Thelonious Monk Institute and Local 802 of the American Federation of Musicians.

If all this labor organizing made record companies and clubs less eager to hire Owens as a bandleader, it made his grateful peers all the more eager to hire him as a trumpeter and composer. Billy Taylor recruited him for a lucrative gig as the house band for “The David Frost Show” on TV. He became a key member of the New York Jazz Repertory Company. He played live shows and recording dates with Taylor, Shepp, Charles Mingus, Dizzy Gillespie, Billy Harper, Gary Bartz, Herbie Mann, Gerald Wilson and Bill Barron. He matured into a distinctive voice on the trumpet and especially the flugelhorn.

“The flugelhorn got typecast as a ballad instrument,” Owens says, “but I found I could play it in a lot of situations. Anything that didn't require you to play high, loud and fast could fit the flugelhorn. Because of its longer tubing, the flugelhorn almost sounds like a reed instrument, even though it's brass. It can add a lot to situations where you wouldn't expect it.”

“Jimmy has a really beautiful sound on the flugelhorn,” Barron says. “He adds a tartness and sassiness to the flugelhorn so it doesn't get too sweet. Because of that, he could play it not just on ballads but on mid-tempo stuff, too. Because it has a softer, more mellow tone, the flugelhorn can blend like a saxophone.”

Owens had been a founding member of the Thad Jones-Mel Lewis Orchestra, so it made sense that IPO Records asked him to head up a tribute to Jones in 2004. Owens was in the middle of writing a lot of music at the time, so he declined the arranging job (which went to Michael Patterson) but agreed to fill Jones' role as trumpeter and flugelhornist on the two albums that resulted: 2005's *One More: Music Of Thad Jones* and 2006's *One More: The Summary—Music Of Thad Jones, Vol. 2*. William Sorin, the head of IPO, was so impressed with Owens that he asked the trumpeter if he had a recording project he'd like to do. Owens immediately said, “Monk.”

“Monk is a melody player,” Owens points out. “It's just that his melodies are different than what other people were playing at the time. When you

hear him with Bird and Dizzy and he takes a solo, it doesn't sound like Charles Parker or John Birks; it sounds like Monk. So that was my dilemma in preparing *The Monk Project*: Did I want to do the songs like Monk did them? I realized that I'd been playing all these songs my entire career. I started out playing them like Monk did, but I gradually changed them around to suit how I heard them. I decided I'd do the album how I'd been playing those songs, not as Monk had."

Owens picked his musicians before he wrote the arrangements because he believes in the Ellington philosophy that you write for the person, not the instrument. He recruited his old friends Barron (the two had been co-leaders on the 1967 album *You Had Better Listen*), drummer Winard Harper and tuba player Howard Johnson. He filled out the lineup with three younger players: Strickland, bassist Kenny Davis and trombonist Wycliffe Gordon.

"Jimmy arranged the music in very interesting ways," Strickland says. "He turned 'Let's Cool One' into a waltz, which changed it a lot. Monk's music is already based on some strange syncopations even in 4/4 time, and to change that to 3/4 made it even stranger. On Monk's records, you're used to hearing a piano trio with one saxophonist—whether it's Charlie Rouse, Johnny Griffin or John Coltrane—so adding the brass makes you hear those tunes in a new way. It gives it more of a chamber-music feel with a different kind of attack."

Strickland wasn't the only former Owens student on the project. Owens had also invited Eyal Vilner and Jack Ramsey to each do one arrangement for the 10-track disc. They were

ready for the assignments, because Owens had always stressed the importance of the blues in every class he has taught over 22 years at the New School, and his goal on *The Monk Project* was to bring out the blues element in Monk's music.

"To me, Monk was a very down-home musician, very emotional," Owens says. "He's playing the blues—not the same way Hank Crawford did but in a Monk way. Each note means something. A lot of young players may mean something with their first and seventh notes, but the notes in between are just thrown in there. If Monk plays seven notes, he'll mean each one. It's inter-

esting to me that Monk, Dizzy, Trane and Lou Donaldson all came from this small area along the North Carolina/South Carolina border and all developed the blues in their own special way."

Owens grew up in the Bronx, but from the time Langston Hughes pointed out Monk passing through the neighborhood, from the time Owens sat in with Miles and Trane at Small's, from the time he and his father danced around the living room to Charlie Shavers' "Dizzy's Dilemma," Owens was immersed in a blues culture transplanted from the South, a culture worth devoting your life to, a culture worth fighting to protect. **DB**

Rounded Sound

When Jimmy Owens was still in high school, he went into Giardinelli's music shop in New York and spotted a strange-looking flugelhorn on the wall. "What's that?" he asked, and the clerk handed him the German-made Alexander flugelhorn. Owens played it and was surprised when it went "wah" instead of "bap." He saw that the horn had rotary valves instead of the usual piston valves, which gave it a rounded sound, more like a French horn. Owens gave the man \$100 for the horn on the spot.

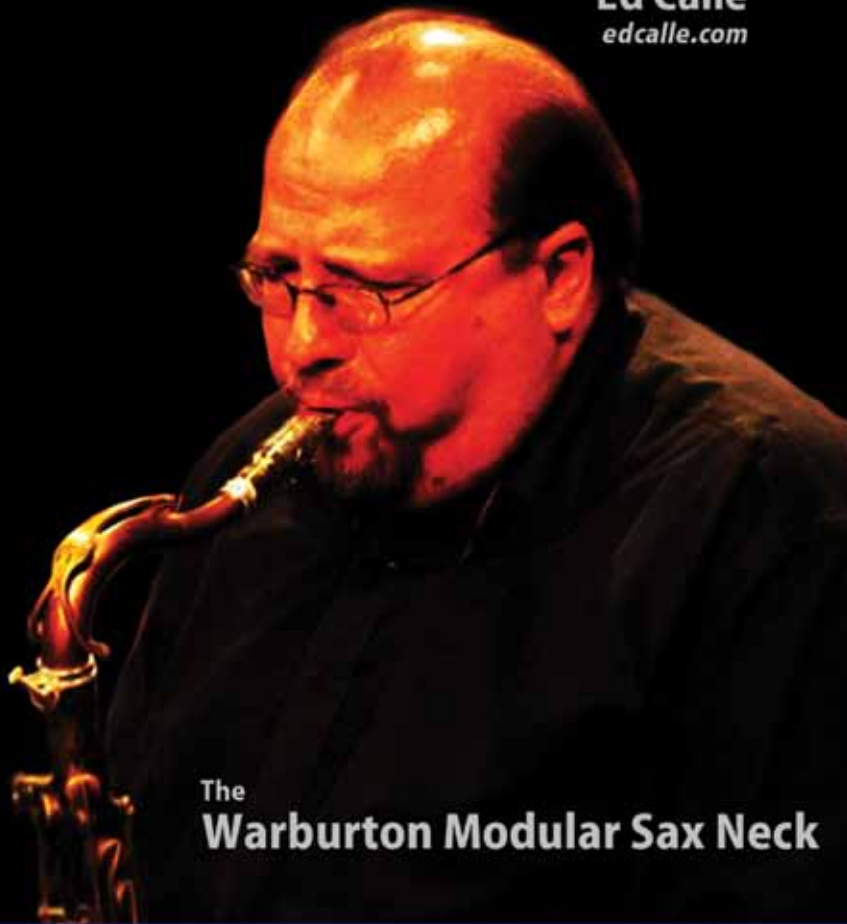
Today Owens hands a visitor his latest Alexander flugelhorn and says, "Squeeze it, but not too hard." The visitor presses on the bell and is surprised how easily it gives way. "That's because the metal is so thin; that's what makes it vibrate so much." This horn is a custom model with a fourth valve to increase its lower range.

"The flugelhorn has a much deeper sound than a trumpet," Owens says. "Most trumpet players double on the flugelhorn, but they don't really play the flugelhorn. They try to play the trumpet on the flugelhorn."

—Geoffrey Himes

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Stefano Bollani at Luz de Gas in Barcelona, Nov. 12, 2011

STEFANO BOLLANI

Points of Arrival

By Ted Panken | Photo by Michael Weintrob

Stefano Bollani does not do soundchecks. “I always try not to have a sound in my head before playing,” the 39-year-old Italian pianist explained at Barcelona’s El Gran Havana Hotel, a few hours before a solo recital at Luz de Gas, the final event of Umbria Jazz Festival’s week at last November’s edition of the Voll-Damm Barcelona International Jazz Festival.

“I don’t want to know how the sound is on stage or in the place. So I don’t go to the theater before the concert. I just go on stage and play.” He elaborated the point. “Being alone at the soundcheck is so sad,” he joked. “That’s one reason, but also I want to be surprised. I don’t want to know that the piano has a problem or a good characteristic, because then you think, ‘Wow, this piano is playing well, but only when you play it softer, so let’s make a list of how I can play softly all night.’”

“Usually I am telling a joke or talking about some other subject—not thinking about the music—until the moment I begin. Then I forget everything. That’s free time. My phone is off. Nobody is asking me questions or proposing things. Nobody is interviewing me. I am doing the thing I wanted to do since I was a child. I have two kids. I am never home, so I feel guilty because they don’t have a normal father. But when I’m playing, I know it’s my job, so I’m cool. I’m in the right place at the right moment. People are buying a ticket for me; I’m playing for them. I chose to come here. You chose to listen to me. It’s perfect.”

It was time to go. Dressed in an untucked black shirt, jeans and sneakers, his gray-fleck-

ed hair tied back and a week’s worth of stubble covering his face, Bollani picked up his backpack and walked briskly to the elevator, passing several open rooms in which Umbrian representatives sat in their undershirts, glued to CNN, hoping to catch the resignation of Italian Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi.

Later, at Luz de Gas, after Bollani had finished two tunes, an audience member called out that the deed was done. “This is going to be a very special night,” Bollani said, “because as you know, we have very sad news. We’ll just have to go on without him.”

Bollani instantly stated the melody of “If I Should Lose You.” He launched his improvisation at jet tempo, à la Conlon Nancarrow, crisply articulating every note. He transitioned to a rubato section, abstracting the harmony to its limits before working back into the theme. Suddenly, he chugged out a relentless walking bass line in the Jaki Byard–Dave McKenna manner, supporting high-velocity, horn-like lines that included an “I Found A New Baby” quote. He offered a pluck-the-strings sidebar, crossing the hands (variations by the left; bass figures by the right), executing Cecil Taylorisms with extravagant gestures. Some repeated treble

notes coalesced into a portentous, impressionistic melody that gradually morphed into “For Once In My Life,” upon which he built a rollicking, swinging statement that transpired over another pendulum-steady bass line.

The “Arrivederci, Berlusconi” theme continued when, after a pause, Bollani abstracted “Goodbye Porkpie Hat,” limning the melody with the right hand juxtaposed with more laugh-provoking atonal harmonics on the strings. This morphed into “Angel Eyes,” on which, after a rumbly, low-end climax, he decrescendoeed to a gentle theme statement, returning to the strings for the last chorus. Bollani played Michael Jackson’s “Billie Jean” medium up, repeating “she was more like a beauty queen” in different voices, counterstating with Bud Powell–Art Tatum references. Pretending to forget the lyric, he fixated on the “kid is not my son” section, which he addressed as an aria. He interpolated the lyrics of “Old Devil Moon” and “Dream A Little Dream Of Me,” then laid out a series of reharmonized permutations that concluded with “Blackbird.”

After two more songs—“After You’ve Gone,” done as an old-school saloon stomp, and “Kingston Town,” treated as a gentle

waltz—Bollani took requests, which included “Cavaquinho,” “When You Wish Upon A Star,” “Tico Tico,” “The Girl From Ipanema,” “Norwegian Wood” and “Für Elise.” He cogitated over his list and developed an ingenious, structurally connected collage, at various points singing in a French accent and emulating a flamenco singer. Then, after an ovation, he filleted Berlusconi one more time with “There Will Never Be Another You,” propelling his variations—to which he scatted a falsetto counter-melody—with yet another surging bass line.

“Every jazz musician will say to any interviewer that you’ve got to tell your own story,” Bollani had said earlier in the day. “I love when the story is full of things. Our lives are full of nice moments and sad moments—there’s a funny situation, then one of us is dying on the floor so it’s suddenly tragic, you call the police but they aren’t coming, so it’s funny again. Life is changing all the time. Some jazz music today is like the Sea of Tranquility, trying to develop the same feeling for 60 minutes. My life is not like that; I cannot tell this kind of story.”

Bollani’s communicative flair, his penchant for addressing serious improvisation as quasi-populist performance art, is the primary source of his popularity in Europe, the reason why, since 2007, he has hosted the much-listened-to “Il Dottore Djembe” on Italy’s NPR equivalent, Rai-3, and, more recently, a TV spinoff. This quality comes through at his solo concerts and more recent piano duos with Martial Solal, Antonello Salis and Chick Corea, where he generates an erudite flow that is at once hilarious and poignant, buffo and nuanced, elemental and complex. Some might see Bollani’s predisposition to skip from one reality to the next as bespeaking superficial clownishness, but it’s more accurate to say that it denotes an exhaustive breadth of reference.

“Stefano doesn’t make a distinction of ‘There’s one world here, and another there,’” said drummer Jeff Ballard, who has performed on several Bollani projects since 2009. “He has an incredible command of styles—everything is available at once, and out it comes. His thought process moves at incredible velocity, whether he’s performing or just hanging out. When I was touring with him, he’d sing one Italian song after another in the dressing rooms, saying, ‘Check out the harmony of this; see how this goes.’ He’s a natural performer and a virtuoso.”

“Comedians are usually very well-prepared,” Bollani had said earlier of his modus operandi. “But I am not preparing the funny part. It’s something I feel at the moment. If I have somebody with me, I am using musicians on the stage. Otherwise, I am using the audience. A lot of listeners, not necessarily jazz fans, tell me they get a feeling that I am having joy and want to share it. Jazz can be a kind of magic circle that some people feel they cannot enter. That’s not good for jazz music, or any kind of art.”

As jokes were the topic, Bollani mentioned

that, on “Dottor Djembe,” he and co-host Mirko Guerrini pre-record fake music to present to their guests, mostly Italian musicians, with whom they perform live and discuss contemporary jazz, some of it by one or another of the numerous “musicians” of their invention—composers, pop singers, instrumentalists—whose biographies appear in a book/CD (*Lo Zibaldone Del Dottor Djembe*).

“If you don’t know what you’re listening to, you might think we’re talking seriously—until somebody starts laughing,” Bollani said. “There’s a scat singer called Tex Plosion, and on our recording he scats until he explodes—it’s a point of departure to talk about how dangerous

“A lot of people study Keith Jarrett, Chick Corea and McCoy Tyner without considering that they are not points of departure in piano history, but points of arrival.”

jazz can be and not to play too many notes. We have a contemporary French-German composer named Jean-France Camenberg who did a seven-hour opera in Berlin called *Sisyphus And Tantalus*. For the whole time, Sisyphus sings, ‘I am pushing the stone,’ and Tantalus sings, ‘I need the water.’ The moment Tantalus reaches the water is exactly the moment when Sisyphus is able to throw the stone, which hits Tantalus on the head and kills him, ending the opera.

“I have Duck Ellington, a guy who found a female duck that he uses to sing all the Duke Ellington repertoire. It’s very stupid, so stupid that the guest isn’t expecting it. Most of our guests said, ‘I can’t say anything about that.’ ‘Why? Didn’t you like it? Don’t you like jazz music?’ ‘I do, but ...’ Very funny.”

Bollani related that he and Chick Corea “did lots of jokes” during the free-flowing duo concert at Umbria Jazz Winter 2009 that produced *Orvieto* (ECM)—he described it as “feeling like one piano player with four hands.” However, the jokes do not appear on the recording. “I’m not mad about humor on records,” Bollani said. “A good piece of music works when you listen to it forever, but not a joke.”

Indeed, humor is not a prominent compo-

ment of Bollani’s eclectic discography, which includes several solo piano recitals, a dozen encounters (including two duos) with trumpeter Enrico Rava, six standards dates for the Japanese market and presentations of his original music by three different trios, a quintet and a 40-piece orchestra. The jokes are also tamped down on *Carioca* (Universal), Bollani’s exploration of a broad array of Brazilian flavors; on the 50,000-unit-seller *Rhapsody In Blue* (Decca Classics), on which Bollani and conductor Ricardo Chailly present a vivid interpretation of the Gershwin classic; and on *Big Band!* (EmArcy), a 2011 project on which the NDR Big Band—with Bollani on piano—performs Norwegian arranger Geir Lysne’s reworkings of five Bollani compositions from the early ’00s.

“Geir chose the pieces, and I came in after the band had learned them,” Bollani explained. “I didn’t recognize them. I love that everything sounded new, that he used them to build different atmospheres. I use my compositions to build something different each night, which is how music keeps herself alive.” He quoted surrealist writer Andre Breton’s bon mot, “Beauty is the casual encounter on the table of the typewriter and an umbrella.”

He continued: “You take different things, shake them and see what comes out—the post-modern idea. That’s what I like in jazz. Take a melody by the Beach Boys and place a chord from a Prokofiev sonata; start with a standard, ‘My Funny Valentine’ or ragtime, and go some other place. It’s playing with language, like working with characters in a novel.

“On some of my own compositions, the principle is funny—we miss a bar or jump to another key, and that’s clear. A lot of people did this, from Raymond Scott to Frank Zappa. But lots of them are not funny until I play them; the pianist Bollani is funnier than the composer Bollani. Actually, I am a tremendously serious composer. The pieces are never eight bars or 16 bars or 32 bars—always 43. There’s a little Stefano Bollani inside the big one that wants to be original. He is saying, ‘OK, this song is nice, but it sounds like a standard or it sounds a little corny—let’s put in a bar more.’ I’m so serious that I would write only ballads, if I could. I have to force myself to write something light.”

Born in Milan and raised in Florence, Bollani internalized his everything-is-grist-for-the-mill approach early on, playing the piano along with albums by Fats Domino, Nat “King” Cole and Jerry Lee Lewis from his father’s extensive collection of ’50s pop, from which he also assimilated the lyrics of the Great American Songbook. He learned Italian *musica leggera* (light music) as well through recordings by Renato Carosone and Celentano. At 11, the aspiring young singer enrolled in Florence’s prestigious Luigi Cherubini Conservatory (he would graduate with honors in 1993) and also encountered local pianists Luca Flores and Mauro Grossi, who gave him hands-on instruction in the codes of jazz and blues. At 12, he fell

hard for Art Blakey's *Night At Birdland* album and became a devotee of hard-bop. As his teens progressed, Bollani expanded his horizons, absorbing "the real masters"—Martial Solal, Ahmad Jamal, Bud Powell, Bill Evans, Keith Jarrett, Teddy Wilson and Earl Hines.

"Ragtime and stride piano is the sound of joy to me—even the ballads, except for things like 'Lotus Blossom' by Strayhorn," he said, singing the melody. "In fact, as soon as they get melancholic, they sound European. But I love the joyful part of jazz, which is probably coming from Africa."

Apart from the ebullient feel of the earlier styles, Bollani cited the technical skill required to play them. "These guys had amazing character," he said. "When Teddy Wilson played with Gene Krupa or Nat Cole with Buddy Rich, they had no bass, and they often had no amplification—they had strong hands, big hands. When Bud Powell started playing mainly as a horn player with the right hand and no chords in the left hand, then that became the book. But I discovered a lot of people in jazz history, before and after Bud Powell, who think of the piano as an orchestra, which it is. I can play 50 notes at the same time if I want. So why should I force myself to solo only with the right hand? It's OK, it's an idea, but that's one thing you can do. But as a piano player, you can't only practice on that. A lot of people study Keith Jarrett, Chick Corea and McCoy Tyner without considering that they are not points of departure in piano history, but points of arrival. If that's how you start, you miss their process in getting to that point, and you'll be an imitation of them."

Bollani's strongly typed tonal identity is fully apparent on *Orvieto*, a trans-stylistic tour de force on which he and Corea improvise interactively through American and Brazilian songbook and jazz standards, a blues and several scratch inventions. "I immediately knew that I could go anywhere with Chick," Bollani said. "Usually one person solos and the other comps, and vice-versa, but here no one is driving—no roles are played for more than a few bars, then we start over. I told myself to be careful about quoting him, but it didn't feel like the Chick Corea I knew in my youth. It's just music."

Rava, who hired Bollani in 1996, was a key figure in helping him gain the confidence to develop his mature conception. "When I was a teenager playing in clubs and theaters with my trio, people were silent, listening," Bollani recalled. "This meant that I was developing a music that was closer to art than entertainment. In 1995, when I'd been mostly playing keyboards with [Italian pop singers] Irene Grandi and Jovanotti, Rava joined our trio as a guest. Later, he told me that if I turned down a long tour with Jovanotti, he could find gigs for us that summer. It was maybe seven concerts, but that was enough."


"After the first set on my first concert with him, he asked, 'Why aren't you playing?' 'I'm playing.' 'No, you're playing a little of what you

can do—maybe you are shy.' 'Well, it's you, it's Aldo Romano, so I leave the space.' 'No. I called you because you have to fill the space.' Enrico always tried to get from me what I wanted to do."

Whatever Bollani chooses to do in the future, being funny will remain in the mix. "If I like you, I can joke with you; I can play with you," he said. "Otherwise, I'll probably be more serious, because I cannot be free to laugh. I'm not iconoclastic, though probably people feel I am. I'm not laughing against something. Usually, I like the persons I'm making fun of."

Serious fun is important. If you take yourself too seriously, you should die. Why play the piano after Keith Jarrett and Martha Argerich? Just jump from the window. Why make children? Why make love? You know you're going to suffer about that in a few hours, a few days. One member of a couple is going to die first. You can't do anything if you think negatively. I cannot imagine a life without self-irony. Otherwise I couldn't stand myself.

"But I am very serious about music. I can't do anything else. I've never worked. I'm not a practical man. I am really saved by the music." **DB**



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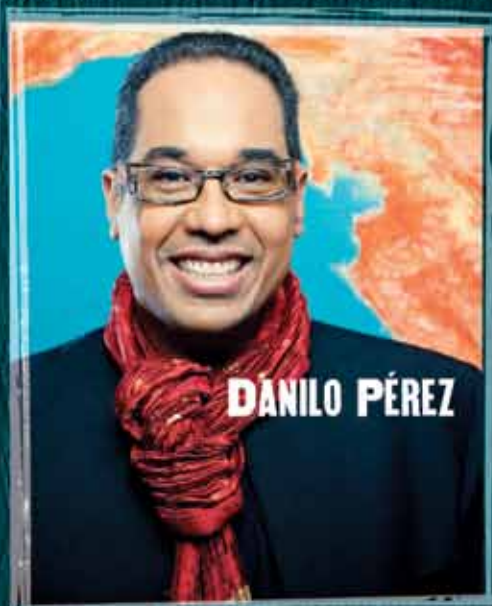
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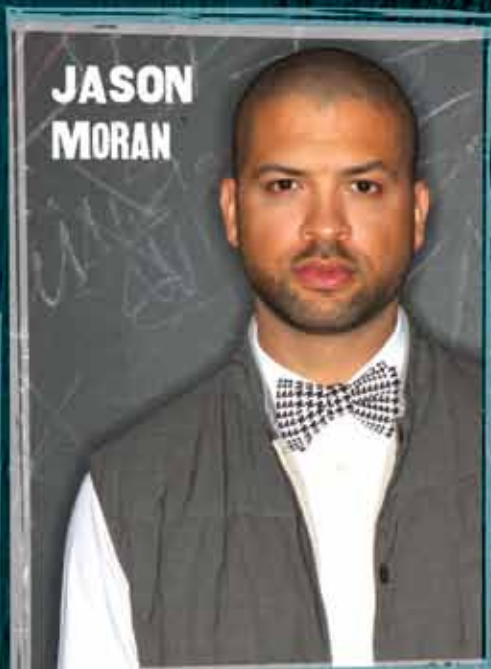
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Xavier Davis (left), Don Byron, Brad Jones, DK Dyson and Pheeroan akLaff

Don Byron New Gospel Quintet *Love, Peace, And Soul*

SAVOY JAZZ 17858

★★★

It was a James Cleveland tune that initially opened my ears to the particulars of “new music” back in 1977. Lester Bowie’s 5th Power band took “God Has Smiled On Me” through the wringer, bending the melody and squeezing the rhythm in myriad ways. Something similar happens with Don Byron’s latest outing. Re-imagining gospel nuggets by Thomas Dorsey and Rosetta

Tharpe, the clever bandleader brings a big dollop of verve to tunes that were born in passionate performance in the first place. The progressive demeanor that’s marked Byron’s work from the get-go reinvigorates the classics and personalizes the action.

Exclamation is a gospel cornerstone, so the notion that “Highway To Heaven” kicks off the program with the enthusiasm of a show-stopping outro tune tells you something about Byron’s dedication to dynamics. The quintet doesn’t try to sustain such hopped-up testifying, but contours the album’s arc while pro-

viding a well-designed breadth. Tharpe’s “Beams Of Heaven” is taken as a jaunt, as if all roads led to the Pearly Gates. DK Dyson, a stalwart of the New York jazz/r&b scene, brings a breeziness to bear on the lyrics. A moment later, with Byron shooting clarinet whirls into the air while tempering the action with a light dissonance on “Hide Me In Thy Bosom,” she demonstrates how a vocal performance can be both formal and familiar.

The band brings plenty of swagger to the table. With the boss tootling on tenor, pianist Xavier Davis, bassist Brad Jones and drummer Pheeroan akLaff catch

the spirit with a splashy ease, which gives guest guitarist Vernon Reid a minute to freak out. There’s a snug fit between the vocalists and the ensemble, with the latter lifting the former even when they stray a bit.

—Jim Macnie

Love, Peace, And Soul: Highway To Heaven; When I’ve Sung My Last Song; It’s My Desire; Sham Time; Consideration; Take My Hand, Precious Lord; Beams Of Heaven; Hide Me In Thy Bosom; Himm; I’ve Got To Live The Life I Sing About In Song; Didn’t It Rain; When I’ve Done My Best (73:50)

Personnel: Don Byron, E-flat, B-flat and bass clarinets, tenor and baritone saxophones; DK Dyson, vocals; Xavier Davis, piano, backing vocals; Brad Jones, electric and acoustic bass, background vocals; Pheeroan akLaff, drums; Brandon Ross, electric and acoustic guitars (4, 7); Vernon Reid, electric guitar (11); Dean Bowman, lead vocals (5); Ralph Alessi, trumpet (5); JD Parran, baritone saxophone (5).

Ordering info: savoyjazz.com



Igor Butman Orchestra *Sheherazade's Tales*

BUTMAN MUSIC 74008

★★★★

Among the peace dividends that arrived with the end of the Cold War was Russian bandleader and tenor saxophonist Igor Butman. He has since traveled with top American players, and his fine orchestra partners with arranger Nick Levinovsky for a link-up with Rimsky Korsokov.

Levinovsky's transposition of Korsakov's *Sheherazade* from Russian classical to American swing at first recalls Billy Strayhorn's reimagining of *The Nutcracker* for Duke Ellington. But such jazz-classical cross-dressing may well have

begun with an earlier piece by Korsakov, whose "Song Of India" hit pay dirt for Paul Whiteman and Tommy Dorsey. Levinovsky's is not the first to have transplanted *Sheherazade* into big band soil. Sonny Dunham did a nice job of Anglicizing the suite into a nutshell in 1945. But Levinovsky deals with all four parts. His vocabulary is generally straight-ahead big band swing—nothing edgy or experimental and with a smart balance between brass and reeds. Tempos are medium fast most of the way, and it all works well. Part one is the most concise and fully composed with no solos. Part two introduces a cameo by soprano Kathy Jenkins, who solos and joins in the sections. She sets the royal ambience of the caliph's court before the 20th century gets things moving. Butman solos with authority on tenor, then guitarist Peter Bernstein. Part three begins on a note of menace before retreating into a long string of solos, including guest Sean Jones, who tosses about 24-karat sparkle.

Levinovsky draws on other Russian folk material for the preceding pieces. "Dark Eyes" is a little disappointing. Too many long-winded fanfares turn the piece into a waiting room with too much ornate furniture. —*John McDonough*

Sheherazade's Tales: Dark Eyes; Coachman, Don't Rush the Horses; Caravan; Sheherazade. (78:34)

Personnel: Pavel Zhulin, Alexander Berenson, Alexander Sakharov, Vadim Eilenkrig; Sean Jones (1-3, 6), trumpets; Pavel Ovchinnikov, Alevina Polyakova, Nikolay Shevnikov, James Burton, trombones; Igor Butman, Denis Shvaytov, Konstantin Safyanov, Dmitry Mospan, Alexander Dovgopoli, reeds; Anton Baronin, piano; Peter Bernstein (1-3, 6), guitar; Vitaly Solomonov, bass; Eduard Zizak, drums; Kathy Jenkins, vocal.

Ordering info: cdbaby.com



Johnathan Blake *The Eleventh Hour*

SUNNYSIDE 1304

★★★★

For an actively gigging drummer like Johnathan Blake, who works regularly in support of folks like Tom Harrell and Kenny Barron, the urge to get out front could be egoistic or musical. In Blake's case, the impetus is clearly the latter. He's been on the scene for a long time, helping elevate other folks' music, in the process building a cadre of exceptional colleagues, including this quintet.

Blake's compositions on *The Eleventh Hour* have a clear fingerprint, one that puts the drummer in a central, but never overshadowing, position. Take "Time To Kill," which has a soft, hip melodic theme played by poised alto saxophonist Jaleel Shaw and guest trumpeter Harrell. Pianist Robert Glasper—who replaces regular quintet member Kevin Hays on three tracks—and bassist Ben Street play the short underlying harmonic loop, with Blake's breezy, ultra-relaxed rims and cymbals whooshing along like water through a sluice. "Rio's Dream" revels in the tart combination of Shaw and tenor Mark Turner, Street again clearly demarking the song's formal contours, the drummer busily accreting energy and momentum underneath. It's not aggressive in its construction, but it has gentle surprises, unexpected turnbacks and redirects, which are lines in said fingerprint.

If you want to hear Blake stir the pot, there's no better track than Harrell's "Blue News," a beautiful cooker, this time with the bassist in a more strictly propulsive, less surveyor-like role. A couple of tracks use serial techniques, albeit lushly; "No Left Turn" apparently adapts John Coltrane's tone row from "Miles' Mode," and "Clues" runs the melody of Thelonious Monk's "Evidence" in a retrograde inversion. —*John Corbett*

The Eleventh Hour: The Eleventh Hour; Rio's Dream; Blue News; Dexter's Tune; Time To Kill; Of Things To Come; Freefall; No Left Turn; Clues; Carvas. (68:04)

Personnel: Johnathan Blake, drums; Jaleel Shaw, alto saxophone; Mark Turner, Tim Warfield (8), tenor saxophone; Tom Harrell (3, 5); Grégoire Maret (1, 10), harmonica; Kevin Hays, Robert Glasper (1, 5, 10), piano; Fender Rhodes; Ben Street, bass.

Ordering info: sunnysiderecords.com

Steve Turre *Woody's Delight*

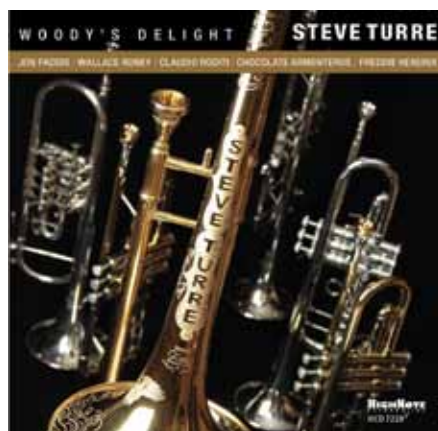
HIGH NOTE 7228

★★★★½

The first time I saw Steve Turre, he was playing with this album's namesake, Woody Shaw. The band projected a soulful gravity that made it clear their project was serious and spiritual, if also joyful. John Coltrane helped establish this stance, but for Turre it also came from Rahsaan Roland Kirk, with whom Turre played, too. The vibe has a lot to do with the way overtones resonate in modal and polytonal harmonies, but also the buzz that comes from multidirectional drumming.

With Shaw in mind, but not exclusively or obsessively, Turre has put together a tribute that nods to his former boss' spirit—including his preference for a trumpet/trombone front line—while featuring his original compositions.

Turre comes not just to mourn, but also to celebrate, as his uptempo title tune makes clear. So does the light and easy Count Basie tempo of "Something For Sweets." But the darker tunes have the most impact: the mournful blend of trumpet and trombone on "In Retrospect" and the Charles Mingus-level pathos of "Adios Mi Amigo," a slow-motion bolero for Ruiz that features Turre's masterful plunger technique. Another high point comes with the deep-slung



waltz groove of "3 For Woody," with Turre's assertive solo a high point. Davis functions as a kind of glue on an album that features too many different combinations of players to be cohesive, though who can complain when his counterpart is Luis Perdomo, who fills out the rhythm section on three tracks. —*Paul de Barros*

Woody's Delight: Woody's Delight; Something For Sweets; In Retrospect; Luna; Annette's For Sure; Adios Mi Amigo; Manny's Mambo; 3 For Woody; Brother Bob. (67:20)

Personnel: Steve Turre, trombone, shells; Jon Faddis (1, 2), Wallace Roney (3, 4), Claudio Roditi (5, 6), Chocolate Armentero (7), Freddie Hendrix (8, 9), trumpet; Xavier Davis (1-4, 8, 9), Luis Perdomo (5-7), piano; Aruan Ortiz, Fender Rhodes (4); Buster Williams (1-4), Andy Gonzalez (6-7), Corcoran Holt (8, 9), Nilson Matta (5), bass; Dion Parson (1-4, 8, 9), Duduka Da Fonseca (5, 6), drums; Jimmy Delgado (6), George Delgado (7), conga; Jimmy Delgado (7), timbales; Pedro Martinez, bongos, campana (7); Duduka Da Fonseca, berimbau (5).

Ordering info: jazzdot.com

The Hot Box

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

Don Byron <i>Love, Peace, And Soul</i>	★★★	★★★★½	★★★	★★
Igor Butman Orchestra <i>Sheherazade's Tales</i>	★★★★	★★½	★★★	★★½
Steve Turre <i>Woody's Delight</i>	★★★★	★★★★½	★★★	★★★★½
Johnathan Blake <i>The Eleventh Hour</i>	★★★★½	★★★★	★★★	★★★★½

Critics' Comments

Don Byron New Gospel Quintet, *Love, Peace, And Soul*

Don Byron is the skeptic in this flock. The true believer is DK Dyson, who flexes most of the old-time holy muscle and makes Byron sound game but flinty. Different shades of spirituality, but when the rafters move, he clings to a conservatory decorum. Byron's more at ease on tenor and barí, but his quirks are part of his charm. —John McDonough

Brilliant variety show of sanctified music: earth, funk, fire and spirit approached multifariously. That the house band features Jones and aLaff is a big plus; Xavier Davis sure sounds fine. Soul stirrer DK Dyson is a fab complement for Byron—clarinet spot on as usual, he also hits it hard on saxophones. —John Corbett

How tiresome Don Byron's clinical genre dissections have become! Reading what he has to say about music is illuminating, but these by and large passionless, slapdash executions aren't much fun at all. Is he daring us to challenge DK Dyson's pitch problems or his inappropriate insertion of the shrill clarinet into gospel music? —Paul de Barros

Igor Butman Orchestra, *Sheherazade's Tales*

A handful of impressive individuals and guests here, but Levinovsky's arrangements have an all-too-forward, slick, often kitschy feel. The classical-meets-jazz premise is a throwback to the 1950s. —John Corbett

Must've been a fair amount of rehearsal going down before this. The big band romps and stomps, flagging its sizable swagger at every turn. That kind of unity is absent from lots of large ensemble dates, and though the charts are a tad predictable for my tastes, the performances rock. —Jim Macnie

Were it not for the patently excellent musicianship on display here, this earnest, jazzin'-the-classics project feels so much like a clichéd throwback—somewhere between '70s Woody Herman and Friedrich Gulda. But the more glaring problem is that the excellent solos by Sean Jones, James Burton, Peter Bernstein and Butman do little to advance the compositions. —Paul de Barros

Steve Turre, *Woody's Delight*

Turre in excellent form in tribute to his extensive work with Woody Shaw. But there's actually little focus on Shaw. Starts strong with Faddis, who references Diz, Sweets and, of course, Faddis. Music remains engaging, though, with smart solo work wrapped in some crisp, cushy ensembles. —John McDonough

Turre and company hunkered down in the comfort zone, feting the trombonist's former boss with evident pleasure. No big chances, no wild pitches. In the main it's a mainstream, Messenger-ish affair, but little to turn heads. —John Corbett

Beautifully carved hard-bop variations by the trombonist and his colleagues. I'm into Roney's heartache and Roditi's lyricism myself. The way the leader blends his bone with his guests' horns is a total pleasure. At some points they have the chemistry of a working band—no small feat. —Jim Macnie

Johnathan Blake, *The Eleventh Hour*

Moves through good but unremarkable cuts before coming to "Clues," a moderately stunning little duet by Shaw and Turner with Blake firing away behind. Based on Thelonious Monk's "Evidence," it's the most audaciously mischievous turn of the CD. Fine guest spots and consistent rapport always, but little to turn heads. —John McDonough

He's trying to cover a lot of ground in a little time, but instead of feeling chintzed by his forward motion, I'm thinking he's come up with some clever little portraits that are filled with possibilities. From Maret's harp to the Shaw/Turner front line, there's an arranger's feel in the air as well. —Jim Macnie

The dry, blunt, snackety sound young jazz drummers are getting these days speaks to the influence of hip-hop, and while I love the nervous undercurrent, sometimes it feels harsh. But it's not so much Blake's drums that stand out on this no-nonsense album as Jaleel Shaw's keening alto and Tom Harrell's exquisite trumpet lines. Blake's "Evidence"-like tune "Clues" suggests his writing may be something to anticipate more of, too. —Paul de Barros



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Ben Wendel *Frame*

SUNNYSIDE1308
★★★★½

Saxophonist and bassoonist Ben Wendel wrote the music for his second album, *Frame*, in the process of moving from Los Angeles to New York. In the midst of his move one of his closest relatives passed away, adding stress to an already tough transition. Feelings of uncertainty and anticipation pervade the album, which consistently displays a high level of musicianship and craft in the compositions and performance. Many of the album's tracks employ complex rhythms and meters that contain shifting and at times unpredict-

able accents. Wendel's solos show him to be a deliberate and methodical improviser adept at building logical statements, many of which seem to pose questions with elusive answers. These characteristics slowly build tension that is rarely released. This is not necessarily a bad thing.

Wendel, who surrounded himself on this date with several close collaborators, including bassist Ben Street and drummer Nate Wood, is an immensely gifted and creative player. His command of the tenor is impressive: His playing is extremely fluid, especially in the upper register, where his sound is reminiscent of Mark Turner. Wendel glides over the churning complexity in the rhythm section with ease. The title track features some of Wendel's most aggressive blowing, and Dizzy Gillespie's "Con Alma," the album's only non-Wendel-penned piece, is a hauntingly dark duet with pianist Gerald Clayton. On the polyrhythmic "Backbou," Wendel displays his bassoon chops and his rare ability to play the instrument in a jazz idiom. "Leaving" is one of the album's more optimistic tracks, with Wendel transcending the anxiety of stepping into an uncertain future. —Chris Robinson

Frame: Chorale; Clayland; Con Alma; Backbou; Jean And Renata; Blocks; Frame; Leaving; Julia. (61:16)
Personnel: Ben Wendel, saxophones, bassoon, melodica; Gerald Clayton, piano (1, 2, 3); Tigran Hamasyan, piano (4, 6, 7); Adam Benjamin, piano (1, 4, 6, 7); Fender Rhodes (8, 9); Nir Felder, guitar; Ben Street, bass; Nate Wood, drums.
Ordering info: sunnysiderecords.com

Erik Deutsch *Demonio Teclado*

HAMMER & STRING 02
★★★★½

An original voice, Erik Deutsch returns to the studio with a new lineup to tackle soulful retro grooves that dance in and out of fusion and classic jazz motifs.

As on his 2009 effort, *Hush Money*, the influences here are diverse. "Funky Digits" slowly burns its way towards a Booker T. Jones vibe, with an eighth-note triplet melody that could as easily be a cousin to "Green Onions" as it is a nod to Steely Dan. "Creeper" sifts through variations on a concept developed by the electric and steel guitars, balancing out the driving grooves that permeate most of the disc with an atmospheric breeziness. "DDT" picks up the electronic feedback-fueled realm where "Creeper" left off, eking an oddball darkness out of exchanges that evoke Ozzy Osbourne on a jazz trip. The album title's demons are more pensive than burning, though, prone to extended guitar slides and slowly climaxing echo chambers.

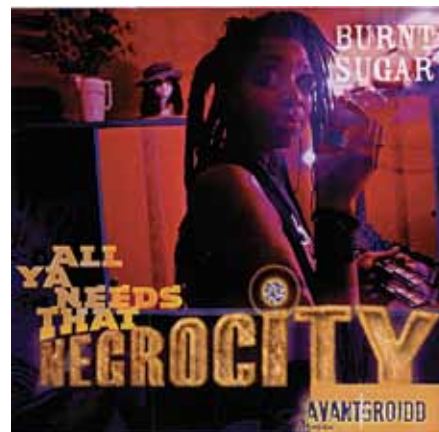
Other highlights include a phenomenal re-imagination of Neil Young's "Don't Let It Bring You Down," where squeaks and spacey howls build up to a burning pedal steel solo, and "Future Burger," which squeezes a James



Brown groove through the angular improvisations and iterations of Deutsch's evident love of fusion.

Although Deutsch is known as a sideman to Charlie Hunter, the groovy, Hunter-esque "Sleep Talkin'" and "Getting Nasty" are less memorable than tracks that combine out-there fusion references with avant-garde changes. Perhaps now that Deutsch's proven his strong skills, he'll be better served exploring more of the unknown realms of his unique creative voice. —Jennifer Odell

Demonio Teclado: Getting Nasty; Funky Digits; Creeper; Dot; Sleep Talkin'; Don't Let It Bring You Down; Lover's Eyes; Future Burger. (60:44)
Personnel: Erik Deutsch, keyboard; Tony Mason, drums; Glenn Taylor, steel guitar; Brandon Seabrook, guitar; John Gray, trumpet; Ben Rubin, bass (3, 4, 5, 6, 7); Jeff Hill, bass (1, 2, 7, 9); Jens, tambourine (1).
Ordering info: hammerandstring.com



Burnt Sugar *All Ya Needs That Negrocity*

AVANTGROIDD 2011
★★★★

Burnt Sugar, the provocative aggregate that was doing mashups before the term was even coined, returns with its most accessible offering. Greg Tate, the group's ringleader, still emphasizes textual ingenuity and controlled cacophony but the results are less murky and less derivative. During the band's early years, Tate's fascination with P-Funk, Miles Davis' *Bitches Brew* and Butch Morris' conductions often got the best of the ensemble, making the music loud and quizzical but wanting for a distinctive sound beyond its influences. By moving to the center and at times concentrating more on durable songs, Burnt Sugar is inching its way into its own thing.

That said, the disc begins with two intriguing makeovers: an Afro-Cuban take on James Brown's "Cold Sweat" and a noir-ish romp through Astor Piazzolla's "I've Seen That Face Before (Libertango)." In both instances, Burnt Sugar tucks in its penchant for sonic aggression and allows the songs to reign. In turn, Mazz Swift's haunting violin and Maya Azucena's dramatic singing on the latter shine.

From there, things get hazier as Azucena and vocalists Abby Dobson and Lisala Beatty swap lead on the frontline, alternating between phantasmagorical singing to spoken-word erotica. The rotating cast of drummers and bassists gives the music an insistent, slow-roiling sensation, especially on "Claudine," which becomes an ideal vehicle for tenor saxophonist Harald Kisiedu. Vijay Iyer showcases his rhythmic flair on the afrobeat-inspired "Bliques Haff Moor Funn" and the avant-reggae dub "Blique Stategems."

—John Murph

All Ya Needs That Negrocity: The Cold Sweat Variations; I've Seen That Face Before (Libertango); Burning Crosses; The Guru's Lover; Claudine; Bliques Haff Moor Funn; Whut Rough Beast? (a); Whut Rough Beast? (b); Bliques Stategems; Throne Of Blood 33 1/3 (Encrypted Vernacular); Blood Music. (61:15)
Personnel: Maya Azucena, Abby Dobson, Lisala Beatty, vocals; Rene Akan, Andre Lassalle, Thom Loubet, Ben Tyree, guitar; Trevor Holder, Meret Koelher, Oasim Naqvi, Swiss Chris, drums; Mazz Swift, violin; Bruce Mack, synth/percussion; Vijay Iyer, Myles Reilly, piano; David Smoot Smith, trombone; Lewis Flip Barnes, trumpet; Avram Ferer, Harald Kisiedu, tenor saxophone; Micah Gaugh, alt saxophone; Moist Paula Henderson, baritone saxophone; Michael Veal, soprano saxophone; Mikel Banks, freak-a-phone; Greg Tate, loops, guitar.
Ordering info: burntsugarindex.com



The Clarinet Trio

4

LEO RECORDS 622

★★★★

BassX3

Transatlantic

LEO RECORDS 625

★★½

German reed player Gebhard Ullmann's discography is a bit like a Lazy Susan. As it rotates, some of his projects that might have seemed dormant are brought back to the fore.

This time, The Clarinet Trio and BassX3 are grabbing the spotlight again with two recordings that could not be further apart, the only common denominators being Ullmann's use of the bass clarinet and nods to Ornette Coleman.

Since its inception, The Clarinet Trio has only had one change in personnel, and the current version has had enough touring opportunities to become impressively tight, 4 being arguably their best testimony to date. Ullmann, Jürgen Kupke and Michael Thieke have reached a level of communication hard to surpass, which allows them to perform masterful acrobatics and instantaneous role-swaps.

Their music is steeped as much in European folklore as in the jazz tradition. Their lines dance and join in a joyous carnival of sounds, and the occasional stridence is always exhilarating.

Additional depth is created by the instruments' back-and-forth motions from the background to the foreground. And unpredictable turns keep preventing Ullmann and his cohorts from staying in a comfort zone. Amid such industriousness, they do have their share of reflective moments, either serene or probing.

Humor and glee are not on the menu of BassX3, another trio more interested in exploring the dark side of the universe. The band that pits Ullmann against a pair of bass players (Chris Dahlgren and Clayton Thomas) has also only experienced one personnel change. On the other hand, its lineage with jazz is much more tenuous, and the closest the trio comes to jazz is "Ornette's Closet" carried by

Ullmann's sway.

The title track of *Transatlantic* is a drone supported by a low vibration and broken into three parts. Guttural and moving at a snail's pace, its third part (which runs just under 20 minutes) can either test one's patience or numb the mind.

The other pieces bring a bit more drama and contrast with Thomas' and Dahlgren's use of various objects adding a percussive touch. On "The Epic," Ullmann breaks into frantic spasms over a violent pulse provided by the basses, while both "The No Piece" and "Berlin

Is Full Of Lonely People" feature a mysterious and almost soothing bass flute with nordic undertones floating over stark, harsh and even brutal interjections from the strings.

—Alain Drouot

4: May 5; Blaues Viertel; Collectives #13 #14; Homogenous Emotions; Catwalk Münzstrasse; Waters; Kleine Figuren #1; News? No News!; Geringe Abweichungen von der Norm; Kleine Figuren #1 (Variation); Kleine Figuren #2. (51:10)

Personnel: Jürgen Kupke, clarinet; Michael Thieke, alto clarinet, clarinet; Gebhard Ullmann, bass clarinet.

Transatlantic: Transatlantic (Part One); The Thing; The No Piece; The Epic; Transatlantic (Part Two); Ornette's Closet; Berlin Is Full Of Lonely People (Part One); Berlin Is Full of Lonely People (Part Two); Transatlantic (Part Three). (63:11)

Personnel: Gebhard Ullmann, bass clarinet, bass flute; Chris Dahlgren, double bass, objects; Clayton Thomas, double bass, objects.

Ordering info: leorecords.com



ECM

Steve Kuhn *Wisteria*

Steve Kuhn
piano
Steve Swallow
bass
Joey Baron
drums

New Album Available May 1st



Greg Abate *Horace Is Here*

RHOMBUS 7104

★★★

Saxophonist Greg Abate dubs his album and its tasty and Silver-y title track “Horace Is Here,” a phrase with multiple potential meanings. Of course, the immediate reference is a bow to the album’s tribute to the great Horace Silver, the kindly hard-bop king. But Horace is “here,” too, in the sense of his pervasive influence on jazz of the past 60 years, in terms of his real book-bound songbook and his imprint as a pianist-composer-bandleader with a sense of mission, and heart.

Abate, who plays assuredly on tenor, alto and soprano here, leads the fittingly quintet-sized session—recorded in Maine in 2004 and just recently released. The saxophonist is in good company, with trumpeter Claudio Roditi joining

him on the front line and the bass-drums foundation of the Bostonians Marshall Wood and Artie Cabral keeping the rhythm section in swinging, hard-bop-cred check.

Abate and band touch the right bases on *Horace Is Here*, from such acknowledged classics as “Nica’s Dream” and “Song For My Father” to lesser-known gems, including the opening “Mayreh” and “Silver’s Serenade.” Abate adds and subtly rethinks re-harmonizing possibilities in his arrangements, paying respects to Silver while injecting personalizing notes. Roditi supplies his subtlety and warmth—and heat, to suit—as well as the intriguing arrangement on “Nutville,” true to the spirit of the piece, with some fresh ideas and syncopated accents in the agreeable mix. The album’s all-important pianist role is played robustly by the late Hilton Ruiz, who tragically died in a mysterious accident in New Orleans in 2006, two years after this session.

On the balladic side, the band stretches out languidly over a 10-minute version of “Peace,” Silver’s classic contribution to the jazz ballad oeuvre, opening in an introspective mode with bassist Marshall Wood’s lyrical solo melodic statement. Different dynamics bump upward toward the set’s end, with the signature nastified riff and medium slink-swing of “Filthy McNasty.”

The uptempo yet fluid urgings of “Quicksilver” close an altogether engaging set of music in tribute to one of jazz’s once and future architects.

—Josef Woodard

Horace Is Here: Mayreh; Horace Is Here; Nica’s Dream; Song For My Father; Nutville; Silver’s Serenade; On The Road; Peace; Filthy McNasty; Quicksilver. (73:00)

Personnel: Greg Abate, alto, tenor and soprano saxophones; Claudio Roditi, trumpet; Hilton Ruiz, piano; Marshall Wood, bass; Artie Cabral, drums.

Ordering info: rhombus-records.com

Hal Galper Trio *Trip The Light Fantastic*

ORIGIN RECORDS 82602

★★★★

Pianist Hal Galper’s overhauled piano approach, which he calls “rubato,” is in full effect on his latest trio outing, *Trip The Light Fantastic*. Galper’s partners, bassist Jeff Johnson



and drummer John Bishop, are perfectly suited for rubato playing, which involves stretching and manipulating tempo, form, harmony and meter. Melodies are often disguised and deconstructed, time and phrasing are morphed like clay, transitions evolve—they are not cued. Central to the group’s approach is the relaxing of inhibitions and the willingness to embrace and follow the paths spontaneity presents. Each player simultaneously fills the soloist and accompanist roles.

While the Galper trio’s aesthetic isn’t new, the high level of integration and communication it displays is rare and quite thrilling to experience, both on record and in person. The group

tension, propelling the music forward. Galper restates the head, the group slips into a coda, builds steam, goes sideways and lets the tune melt into the ether. Galper’s “Get Up & Go” begins with short, punchy, dissonant tone clusters before settling into a medium swing. Bishop, whom Galper favorably compares to Rashied Ali, briefly moves his ride cymbal out of and then back into time, anticipating the tune’s sojourn into a dense thicket.

—Chris Robinson

Trip The Light Fantastic: Alice In Wonderland; Babes Of Cancun; Get Up & Go; Guess I’ll Hang My Tears Out To Dry; Suspension; Trip The Light Fantastic; Be My Love. (44:14)

Personnel: Hal Galper, piano; Jeff Johnson, bass; John Bishop, drums.

Ordering info: origin-records.com



Gianluigi Trovesi/ Gianni Coscia

Frère Jacques—Round About Offenbach

ECM 2217

★★★½

Broadway musicals have been a source of jazz repertoire for so long, nobody gives an album of show tunes a second thought. Operetta, not so much.

Gianluigi Trovesi’s love letter to Jacques Offenbach—composer of *La Belle Hélène*, *Les Contes d’Hoffmann* and other light classic favorites—is therefore an unexpected delight. Working with accordionist Gianni Coscia, Trovesi has merged his own ideas with Offenbach’s to create a series of miniatures that either quote from the composer or offer melodies effervescent enough to pass for something he might have written. Trovesi’s writing is both melodic and episodic, allowing plenty of room for his ideas to play out before moving to the next melodic nugget, and the solos maintain character so effectively that it can be hard to hear when composition ends and improvisation begins.

As for how much Offenbach the listener needs, suffice it to say that if you can conjure the image of a chorus line lifting their skirts to dance the can-can, you’ll recognize the theme bubbling beneath “Galop ... trotterellando,” and will marvel at the witty transformations Trovesi and Coscia work with it.

Other themes will take more familiarity and effort to ferret out, but not to worry. Trovesi and Coscia play off one another like a pair of stand-ups—the sly, jocular clarinet riffing as the accordion plays it straight—and even if you don’t get every joke, you’re still guaranteed to be amused.

—J.D. Considine

Frère Jacques—Round About Offenbach: Sognando Hélène/ Ouil! C’est une rêve; Ah! Que les hommes sont bêtes/Mon dieu, mon dieu; Piff, paff, pouff/La Duchessa nei caraibi; Tangoffenbach; Ah! Vivre deux/L’eccentrico inventore; Et moi?/No, tu no; La voix; Parton le barcarole; Beguine del fauno; Sei italiano/No! ... Je suis Brésilien; La Duchessa della Czarda; C’est une grande chanson d’amour; Galop ... trotterellando; Le jugement de Paris/ Ma! Non sol; Dedicated to Hélène and her little birds; Metamorfosi ... Pour séduire; Minuetto/Olympia; Ouverture/Un Americano a Troia; Epilogue. (74:23)

Personnel: Gianluigi Trovesi, piccolo, alto clarinet; Gianni Coscia, accordion.

Ordering info: ecmrecords.com

Empirical: Shaney Forbes (left), Lewis Wright, Nathaniel Facey, Tom Farmer



British Invasion Renewed

With Empirical's second album *Out 'N' In* in 2010, the London quartet paid homage to Eric Dolphy, playing up the sound of *Out To Lunch* through mostly original compositions that employed the reedist's wild intervals. They sound more like themselves on *Elements Of Truth* (Naim 168: 56:57 ★★), a record that addresses the band's affinity for a rigorous New York sound engendered by Tim Berne and Steve Lehman. Most of the craggy themes were written by bassist Tom Farmer, who plays the complex grooves in lockstep with drummer Shaney Forbes, yet most of the heavy lifting comes courtesy of acerbic alto saxophonist Nathaniel Facey and vibist Lewis Wright.

Ordering info: naimlabel.com

On their second duo album, *Places And Other Spaces* (Edition 1028: 65:14 ★★½), pianist Andrew McCormack and saxophonist Jason Yarde serve up 11 melodically generous conversations that range from ethereal, Keith Jarrett-like introspection to rhythmically dynamic dances. On a piece like "Hill Walking On The Tynderside," the pianist delivers driving vamps a la the titular McCoy Tyner, while Yarde slaloms between the patterns with precision and exuberance, while "Spanish Princess" ripples with a romantic classical-like theme. I'd prefer more grit, but there's no missing the impressive rapport these two have.

Ordering info: editionrecords.com

There's nothing polite about *Two Falls & A Submission* (BoWeavil 44: 61:10 ★★½), the first new recording in more than a decade by three of England's most devoted and ferocious free-jazz practitioners: drummer Paul Hession, saxophonist Alan Wilkinson and bassist Simon H. Fell. The trio subscribes to a particularly bruising style echoing Peter Brötzmann, marked by fierce overblowing, lacerating tones and frenetic rhythm. Wilkinson continues to be a marvel on baritone, ranging from gut-rumbling honks to upper-register squeals that could raise the dead.

Ordering info: boweavilrecordings.com

Tenor saxophonist Mark Hanslip is busy

figure on the London scene, a co-founder of the Loop Collective and a member of bands like Outhouse and Twelves, but on *Dosados* (Babel 1192: 42:13 ★★★★★) he plays improvised duets with the superb Spanish drummer Javier Carmona. There are some flinty, aggressive exchanges here, but more often than not the sound is beautifully cooperative, with Hanslip uncorking elegant but lean post-bop phrases marked by great rhythmic variation, adept motivic variation and a lush, billowy tone—sometimes spiked with a nicely pinched finish—and Carmona serving up a symphony of movement, feeding his partner with ever-shifting accents and a wide dynamic range. They give Steve Lacy's "Deadline" a brief reading, but the rest of the improvised material is just as compositional in execution.

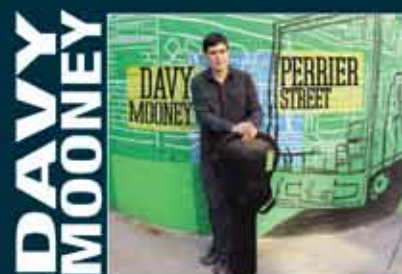
Ordering info: babellabel.co.uk

The members of Barrel—violinist Alison Blunt, violinist and violist Ivor Kallin and cellist Hannah Marshall—named themselves "because we scrape," and on *Gratuitous Abuse* (Emanem 5020: 79:06 ★★★) there's no doubting fidelity to the moniker. Three extended improvisations—along with a short one titled "Soft Porn & Hard Cheese"—alternate between ferocious, striated bowing and tangled double-stops, delivered in dense, high-volume frenzies and more subdued patches of ghostly harmonics.

Ordering info: emanemdisc.com

Pianist Alexander Hawkins reaches a dazzling new apex on *All There, Ever Out* (Babel 1196: 52:08 ★★★★★). He wrote most of the nine pieces here, but his improvisational core is on display, with the sextet treating his loosely swinging, fragmented themes as jumping-off points. There's a sonic richness to the blend of his piano with the clean electric guitar sound of Otto Fischer and the glowing marimba tone of Orphy Robinson tripping and sliding over drummer Javier Carmona, cellist Hannah Marshall and bassist Dominic Lash. The group perfectly balances form and freedom

Ordering info: babellabel.co.uk



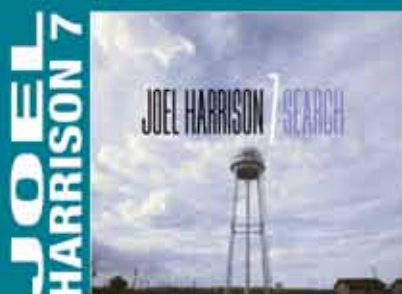
PERRIER STREET

SSC 1303 / in Stores March 27

Like most New Orleans natives, guitarist/vocalist Davy Mooney has a special tie with his hometown. Through ups and downs, his experiences in the city have groomed him and have remained an important part of his development, both musically and emotionally. Mooney pays tribute to all that New Orleans has given him on his new recording, *Perrier Street*. The program blends elements of folk and jazz and features some talented contributors, including saxophonist John Ellis, pianist Jon Cowherd and drummer Brian Blade.



Available on
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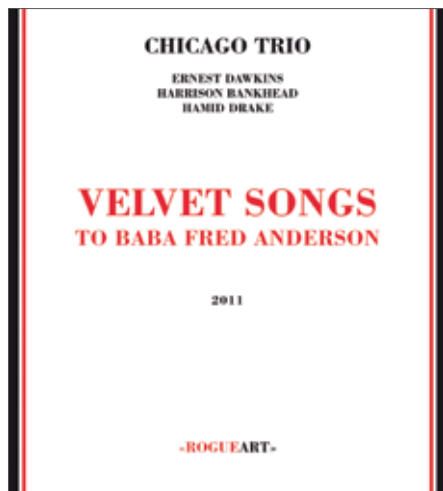
SEARCH

SSC 1300 / in Stores March 27

On this project, Harrison chose to broaden his compositional scope to include a more classical influence, most notably by scoring strings into his arrangements. The extended piece "A Magnificent Death" deals with the challenge of meeting and accepting death as the piece echoes a dying friend's voice figuratively and literally. The all-star ensemble performs a moving program of original compositions along with a couple of remarkable arrangements of Olivier Messiaen and The Allman Brothers Band.



Available on
iTunes



Chicago Trio *Velvet Songs—To Baba Fred Anderson*

ROUGEART 0030

★★★★½

Saxophonist Fred Anderson inspired dedication—both to one's art and to free expression. Ernest Dawkins alludes to that in his brief notes to this 2008 recording at Anderson's Velvet Lounge in Chicago, and the collective trio he shares with Harrison Bankhead and Hamid Drake pushes its exploration of dark, pulsing and tumbling sonic energy to the point of exhaustion.

Although recorded two years prior to

Anderson's death, the two discs are suffused with feeling for him, and there is a decidedly spiritual air about the performances. "Astral Projection" and "Sweet 22nd Street"—a tribute to the site of the recording—are typical, starting with Dawkins' plaintive, searching soprano or tenor, and then building to ecstatic release. In a rarer, celebratory vein, "Down 'N The Delta" channels "When The Saints Go Marching In" with Dawkins playing two saxes simultaneously, rocking a riff that Bankhead and Drake keep churning behind him.

Dawkins is an exceptionally percussive player, which makes the trio so powerful. Drake is recognized for his connection with bassist William Parker, but his hookup with Bankhead is, perhaps, even tighter. They roar on "Moi Tre Gran Garcon" and "One For Fred" and fuse spirals on "Peace And Blessings (To Fred)," which features a dark arco chant from Bankhead's cello.

As Anderson taught, collective improvisation goes where the muse takes the players, and in the moment they are not always the best editors of their own work. *Velvet Songs* is discursive to a fault, and several of the longer pieces seem aimless at points.

—James Hale

Velvet Songs—To Baba Fred Anderson: Disc One: Astral Projection; Sweet 22nd Street (The Velvet Lounge); You Just Crossed My Mind; The Rumble; Peace And Blessings (To Fred); Down 'N The Delta (56:53). Disc Two: Jah Music; Galaxies Beyond; Woman Of Dairtur; Waltz Of Passion; Moi Tre Gran Garcon; One For Fred (69:59).

Personnel: Ernest Dawkins, soprano saxophone, alto saxophone, tenor saxophone, percussion; Harrison Bankhead, bass, cello; Hamid Drake, drums, frame drum.

Ordering info: rogueart.com



Stefano Battaglia Trio *The River Of Anyder*

ECM 2151

★★★★

Ever listen to a record and feel like you want to sail away, but, for some reason, you can't let go of the music? This dual quality exists with the Stefano Battaglia Trio's *The River Of Anyder*. The disc follows his other strong efforts, like 2010's duet with percussionist Michele Rabbia, *Pastorale*, and the quintet/quartet double-disc *Re: Pasolini*.

The longer tracks have a tendency to enhance the suite-like quality of *The River Of Anyder*, intimating there's no hurry, that for all their virtuosity, Battaglia, bassist Salvatore Maiore and drummer Roberto Dani are not about chops or speed or even groove or tempo. Battaglia, in his notes, refers to this music—all composed by the pianist—as "uninfluenced by the sophistication of contemporary music" ... "a kind of music before the idioms." The trance-like quality one can find with these modal pieces may hearken back to a time long ago, but in spades.

One could say *The River Of Anyder* is in need of more pivots like the ones found inside the 15-minute "Sham-bha-lah." This is a brief episode that offers a welcomed transition without sounding "contemporary," despite the relatively jazzy run in seven they play. This aspect is refreshing, in part, because this kind of movement gives us another look at Battaglia's novel and utterly delightful lyricism. Indeed, *The River Of Anyder* could be heard as a kind of chaste exercise in melodic restraint, the quietude of a song like "Anagoor," so delicate and so undulating, invoking a religious hymn or anthem, Maiore's crawling, weightless arco solo perfect to the mood. Likewise, the aptly titled "Ararat Prayer," which returns us to that now-familiar dance trance but also gives us another rare pivot, thus making it as much a song as a prayer.

Mulling it over, *The River Of Anyder* is as much a soundtrack to and for the imagination, given all the literary and historical allusions.

—John Ephland

The River Of Anyder: Minas Tirith; The River Of Anyder; Ararat Dance; Return To Bensalem; Nowhere Song; Sham-bha-lah; Bensalem; Anagoor; Ararat Prayer; Anywhere Song. (79:15)

Personnel: Stefano Battaglia, piano; Salvatore Maiore, double-bass; Roberto Dani, drums.

Ordering info: ecmrecords.com

Noah Kaplan Quartet *Descendants*

HATOLOGY 688

★★★★½

During the previous decade the young saxophonist Noah Kaplan studied at New England Conservatory under the tutelage of microtonal master Joe Maneri, and on his first album as a leader there's no mistaking the lessons he learned from him. Still, the reedist doesn't ape his mentor. The superb band here puts Kaplan's curved, sobbing, nicely astringent lines into sharp contrast with a more pointillistic, choppy attack. Drummer Jason Nazary (perhaps known best as the Howitzer force in the relentless quartet Little Women) and electric bassist Giacomo Meregga lay down an appealingly nubby foundation, filled with jagged peaks and valleys and dynamic fits and starts. Guitarist Joe Morris—a guy who played masterfully with Maneri, blending in to that striated sonic ooze without surrendering his instantly recognizable sound—functions expertly as a bridge between rhythm section and saxophonist, knitting intricate tendrils of harmonic ambiguity, carving out space with lines that amble and weave and, on a piece like "Rat Man," dropping almost funky chords.

Kaplan's compositions cover a nice range: The aforementioned "Rat Man" has a driving,



almost martial sense of propulsion that brings out a halting, rhythmic quality in his otherwise fluid lines. "Wolves" is open and episodic and allows the band to shape-shift for 11 gripping minutes. And the zigzagging, vaguely bluesy contours of "Esther" give the band diverse platforms to interact upon. On previous recordings Kaplan has experimented with classical songs in Dollshot and jammed with Dave Tronzo, always finding interesting settings for his microtonal approach.

—Peter Margasak

Descendants: Pendulum Music; Descent; Esther; Rat Man; Wolves; Untitled. (48:31)

Personnel: Noah Kaplan, tenor and soprano saxophones; Joe Morris, guitar; Giacomo Meregga, electric bass; Jason Nazary, drums.

Ordering info: hathut.com

Plainspoken, Ferocious & Radiating

Little Joe Ayers: *Backatchya* (Devil Down 005 51:21 ★★★½)

Formerly a long-term member of Junior Kimbrough's band, Ayers comes naturally to the tension that underpins his plainspoken vignettes about sour, suspicious or contented love. The retired electrician has mastered the alpha and omega of Mississippi hill country blues even though he's just a loyal subject looking up to the pantheon of deceased greats Kimbrough and R. L. Burnside. Whether covering the Muddy Waters-identified "Two Trains Running" or submitting his own "Do The Romp," there's plenty of life in his weathered-in-texture singing voice and in his elemental guitar playing. Believe the man when he exclaims, "I want to boogie till the break of day."

Ordering info: devildownrecords.com

Barrence Whitfield & The Savages: *Savage Kings* (Munster 306 33:47 ★★★½) Whitfield's recent studio reunion of his original ferocious pack—guitarist Peter Greenberg, bassist Phil Lenker and three new faces—points to the early 1980s, when the singer screamed like the second coming of Little Richard while rolling around on the sticky floors of clubs. These days, Whitfield packs more experience and wisdom in his big voice than before, and he remains capable of soaring into a madman's falsetto in an instant. The unearthing of good obscure r&b songs is as welcome as ever—"You Told A Lie," for instance, comes from Chicago soul singer Johnny Sayles. Only the Lenker ballad "Hold Me Close," eluding the singer's full grasp, is a throwaway. The newfangled Savages don't have the primal rock 'n' roll vigor of their predecessors (whose old eponymous album just got reissued by Ace, the British label), but they're fine fun all the same.

Ordering info: munster-records.com

Heritage Blues Orchestra: *And Still I Rise* (Raisin' Music 1010; 48:56 ★★★½) Singers-guitarists Bill Sims Jr. and Junior Mack, veterans operating in New York, and Sims' talented daughter Chaney on vocals handle field hollers, spirituals and classic blues with down-to-earth grace, using just the right mixture of incantation and percussion to keep the threat of bad tidings at bay. Sometimes employing a horn section, they're as special as the Holmes Brothers, their neighbors.

Ordering info: heritagebluesorchestra.com

Oz Noy: *Twisted Blues, Volume 1* (Abstract Logix 032; 52:50 ★★) On his latest studio album, New York guitarist Oz Noy—who's



Little Joe Ayers

CANDICE NOLLA

worked with Phoebe Snow, Chris Botti and many more—offers his take on the blues and jazz merger with confidence in his technical prowess. Covering Thelonious Monk's "Light Blue" and "Trinkle Tinkle" and The Meters' "Cissy Strut," the program filled out with five original songs, the Israeli native clinically provides extraneous guitar detail that works to the detriment of any blues narrative. It sounds counterfeit, except when organist John Medeski triggers a heap of soulfulness playing the aforementioned Louisiana r&b hit.

Ordering info: abstractlogix.com

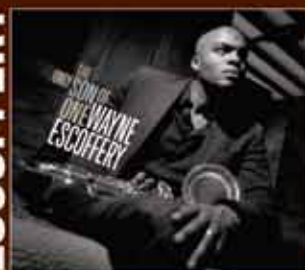
Fiona Boyes: *Blues For Hard Times* (Vizztone 206; 57:38 ★★★½) Deft and radiating energy throughout her fifth release, Boyes sings the lyrics to her songs and to classics owned by J. B. Lenoir and Gary Davis as if she really understood what the words meant. Also, the Australian bends notes out of her guitars with genuineness, staying true to form and her own personality. Six of 16 tracks find Boyes performing well alone in the Austin studio; on the rest, colleagues like upright bass player Larry Eisenberg and drummer Frosty Smith tuck their humble contributions into the Southern roots music without fuss. Her success treating "Jesus Took Possession," originally penned by Down Under's Chris Wilson, suggests she has a good bluesy gospel album in her.

Ordering info: vizztone.com

Tiny Legs Tim: *One Man Blues* (TLT Productions 001; 43:07 ★★) It's impossible to find even specks of insight existing in the fey vocals and electric guitar of this curiously named Belgian. He's a decent craftsman, sincere in intentions, but unable to transcend his Delta influences playing originals and, oh no, "Ramblin' On My Mind." When in the Flemish city of Ghent, hear Tiny Legs Tim perform in a nightclub.

Ordering info: tinylegstom.com

WAYNE ESCOFFERY



THE ONLY SON OF ONE

SSC 1320 / in Stores April 10

Wayne Escoffery's *The Only Son of One* will be his first recording of all original music and is inspired by his childhood in London. This music chronicles the emotional, psychological and spiritual journey of a young boy. Performing the music is Wayne's new quintet featuring pianist Orrin Evans, bassist Hans Glawischig, drummer Jason Brown and Miles Davis alumni, keyboardist Adam Holzman. James McBride ("The Color of Water") wrote the liner notes. The photography is by French Jazz photographer Philippe Levy-Stab.



Available on
iTunes

ARUÁN ORTIZ



SANTIARICAN BLUES SUITE

SSC 1302 / in Stores April 10

Santiarican Blues Suite is an extended piece written for the original ballet *Pagan O Not* performed by the José Mateo Ballet Theater in celebration of the company's 25th anniversary. Like Ortiz, the company's founder and artistic director José Mateo hails from Santiago de Cuba. The music and ballet are composed in a way that presents the evolution of Afro-Cuban dance in Oriente from the arrival of the Haitian immigrants to the present, portraying festivities still in practice using Haitian music and dance as their foundation.



Available on
iTunes



Jessica Lurie Ensemble *Megaphone Heart*

ZIPAI MUSIC 2012

★★★★½

Before reading anything about this music from the attached press release, my first thoughts were about how *Megaphone Heart* is full of stories. This was true as much for the instrumentals as for the songs with lyrics. Multi-instrumentalist Jessica Lurie and her ensemble have put together one hell of a program. Sure enough, it turns out it is chock full of stories.

Bassist/co-producer Todd Sickafoose has helped make for a sonic atmosphere that's full, fat even, ripe with all manner of instrumental

combinations. The music evokes many images, dreams and times, as when a kind of latter-day Jethro Tull emerges with the thoroughly arranged yet free-flowing "A Million Pieces All In One." Lurie's piercing flute and catchy vocals contrast with guitarist Brandon Seabrook's snappy banjo playing, the band driven from behind by drummer Allison Miller's tasteful clobbering. The title track also shares some of Seabrook's varied banjo playing, this time with more expressive Lurie vocals but at a slower, more measured pace—the banjo giving the music an almost 19th-century vibe. The backstory to this song is about love, loss and death, and you can hear Lurie's autobiography not just in the lyrics but in how she orchestrates everything, the moods of the music changing to reflect change in life itself.

It's too bad the CD doesn't include Lurie's comments on each of the songs, which refer to actual stories. The stories are as diverse as the music, ranging from a 2008 flood that invaded Cedar Rapids, Iowa ("Once"), love and longing ("Zasto," "Same Moon") to a Balkan-inspired rock piece in 11/8 that has as an inspiration Macedonian reed player Ferus Mustafov.

—John Ephland

Megaphone Heart: Steady Drum; A Million Pieces All In One; Bells; Megaphone Heart; Same Moon; Maps; Der Nister; Zasto; Boot Heels; Once. (57:42)

Personnel: Jessica Lurie, alto, tenor, baritone saxophones, flute, voice, megaphones; Brandon Seabrook, guitar, banjo, tape recorder; Erik Deutsch, piano, electric piano, organ; Todd Sickafoose, acoustic bass; Allison Miller, drums, percussion; Marika Hughes, cello.

Ordering info: jessicalurie.com

Mark Mosley *TLC*

MARK MOSLEY RECORDS 02

★★½

Shoddy production has long marred otherwise decent jazz discs, especially those that tip over onto the more groove-oriented side of the equation. It's unfortunate here, because underneath the icky synth-strings, sustained chords and canned rhythm tracks on too many songs is some otherwise credible playing. As a guitarist, Mark Mosley fashions a warm sound and melodic, blues-based approach that recall George Benson, though Mosley is more inclined to strum languid phrases than hot licks.

Mosley is capable of writing tuneful songs with hooky melodies. Such is the case on the swinging "The Real," one of the few tunes not burdened by subpar production. Here, he lets his musicianship shine against a stripped-down backdrop of piano, bass and drums. His quiet-storm-flavored "TLC," with its gentle backbeat and comely melody, would have been way more enticing had they come equipped with an actual string section instead of the drab keyboard gloss. The fast-paced "Carnival In San Juan" loses some of its steam because of, once again, cringe-inducing synth chords, as well as leaden rhythmic undertow.

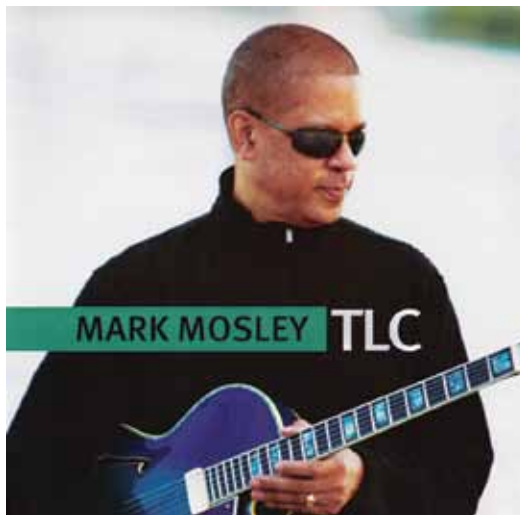
TLC being self-released and produced is duly noted, as is the financial toil of truly capturing the classic CTI Records sound with more expert sound engineers and more seasoned players. But those acknowledgements can't acquit all of the disc's dicey moments.

—John Murphy

TLC: Good Vibes, Sweet Love, The Real Deal, TLC, Misty, A Night In Baltimore, Divine Order, House Party, Fontana, Carnival In San Juan, Quantum Leap. (56:55)

Personnel: Mark Mosley, guitar, bass, vocals; Clayton McLendon, rhythm guitar (6); Buddy Williams, drums; Demetri "Meechie" Richardson, drums; Stanley Banks, bass; Gary Grainger, bass (4, 9); James King, upright bass (3, 5); Ron Anthony, bass and vocals; Ezra Brown, alto saxophone; Freddie Hendrix, trumpet; Mark Williams, trombone; Moe Daniels, keyboards; Onaje Allan Gumbs, keyboards and piano (3, 6); Steve Kroons, percussion.

Ordering info: guitaristmarkmosley.com



Tord Gustavsen Quartet *The Well*

ECM 2237

★★★★

When employed appropriately, space helps music create a simple beauty. If injecting room between notes and letting each sound decay into nothingness is too basic, however, entire albums can become monotonous. On *The Well*, pianist Tord Gustavsen toes this line wonderfully, creating quiet elegance that has just enough playfulness to keep things interesting.

Even the pith track names—like "Playing," "Circling" and "Inside"—reflect that simplicity and ease. There are no long solos; instead, after melodies, the music drifts toward improvisation, floating back to the composed head when appropriate. And even though this is a quartet record, not every musician is in on the proceedings constantly. For Gustavsen, it's more crucial for instrumental combinations to serve the music.

Rarely does the group get above a mezzo forte or build frenetic musical energy that leads to a climax of cymbals and saxophone. Tore Brunborg's tenor saxophone is usually presented throughout the album as another layer of soft sound, his breathy subtone creating an ethereal background to Gustavsen's deliberate play. When he does move above a dull roar into the upper register of his instrument, the contrast with the rest of the album creates a heady effect. Bassist Mats Eilertsen echoes Gustavsen's reserved demeanor, and traffics not in arco tones and careful pizzicato notes.

Gustavsen's quartet has been working in its current form since 2009, when it released *Restored, Returned* with singer Kristin Asbjørnsen, but the pianist has played with drummer Jarle Vespestad in a trio format since 2003's *Changing Places*. This familiarity lets the ensemble create intimate music that sounds fresh without having to rely on musical affectations or even rising above a whisper.

—Jon Ross

The Well: Prelude; Playing; Suite; Communion; Circling; Glasgow Intro; On Every Corner; The Well; Communion, var.; Intuition; Inside. (53:13)

Personnel: Tord Gustavsen, piano; Tore Brunborg, tenor saxophone; Mats Eilertsen, bass; Jarle Vespestad, drums.

Ordering info: ecmrecords.com

Homegrown Soul

Archival releases promising to unveil “lost treasures” by unfamiliar artists beg a cynical question: If the material is so noteworthy, why did it escape the larger public’s ear? Indeed, the music on such hyped reissues often fails to live up to the fascinating stories surrounding their creation. A spate of collections focusing on homegrown soul largely corrects that imbalance.

The three-disc **Boddie Recording Company: Cleveland, Ohio** (Numero Group 035; 60:00/45:40/60:02 ★★★★★½) documents the highlights of a shoestring-budget business that remained in various states of operation from 1958 until 1993. Responsible for issuing nearly 300 albums and 45s, pressing more than a million copies of records and recording 10,000 hours of tape, the mom-and-pop shop stands as the longest-running label in Cleveland’s history despite not registering a single provincial hit. Operating out of a studio housed in a converted dairy barn and constructed out of scrap parts, electronics whiz/television repairman Thomas Boddie opened his doors to burgeoning local artists, area church gospel groups, traveling musicians and everyone in between. Divided according to the imprint on which they were originally issued—Boddie’s Soul Kitchen, Luau and Bounty designations helped the owners organize according to genre—the 57 tracks span an eclectic array of hoot-and-holler gospel to pleading teenage r&b and rough-hewn blues-funk.

Lou Ragland recorded and developed his interest for studio work at Boddie. “Going to be a big wheel,” he boasts on “Big Wheel.” Backed by an enthusiastic horn section and effervescent choir, the crooner testifies like a ambitious young man determined to break out of Cleveland’s seemingly undefeatable regional prison. As made clear on the triple-disc **I Travel Alone** (Numero Group 042; 43:42/51:20/49:48 ★★★★★), name-on-the-marquee success never arrived. Yet relative obscurity didn’t prevent him from exploring stylistic transformations rooted in well-coiffed black soul. The singer, songwriter, guitarist and producer dabbles in multi-layered harmonic work with Volcanic Eruption, bottom-shaking funk in Hot Chocolate and massively arranged ensemble pieces credited to his own name but assisted by a legion of Ohio pros on 1978’s *Understand Each Other*. Ragland hocked the latter work from the trunk of his car when he finally left Ohio for Los Angeles in early 1980.

Located 30 miles west of Cleveland, Lorain attracted a wave of Puerto Rican migrants in the late 1940s due to abundant manufac-



Lou Ragland

turing jobs. Distilling its native country’s Latin soul and Afro-Cuban elements, and mixing them with ’70s era disco, funk, psychedelia and rock, the rotating cast captured on **Los Nombres** (Asterisk 9 36:55 ★★) channels barrio sounds sans the grit. Mainstay Willie Marquez’s voice isn’t entirely enough to cover up for the syrupy vibes and second-rate Santana knock-offs.

Richard Pegue was an American original. Famous for his tenures on iconic Chicago soul radio stations WVON and WGCI—and a composer of locally recognized advertising jingles—the writer/producer/arranger’s golden ear for melody graces **Eccentric Soul: The Nickel & Penny Labels** (Numero Group 039 69:07 ★★★★★), a compilation of sides he cut for his cottage imprints from 1967 through 1973. Every single here went out of print weeks after its initial release. Luscious background vocals, high-pitched strings, dramatic arches and classy percussive accents inform a majority of the tunes. Many pay homage to Pegue’s doo-wop upbringing. Grandiose albeit restrained, nuggets such as Jerry Townes’ balladic “Never More” and the South Shore Commission’s groove-throwing “Shadows” call out for rotation on a dusty program.

Ordering info: numerogroup.com

Wendy Rene agreed to play her last show along with Otis Redding & the Bar-Kays on the same weekend that the legends’ plane crashed en route to a concert. In an abbreviated career full of near misses, that was the best luck the Memphis native enjoyed until being sampled by Wu-Tang Clan and covered by Alicia Keys decades later. **After Laughter Comes Tears** (Light In The Attic 080 63:00 ★★★★★) collects all her mid-’60s Stax and Volt singles. Serving anguish, regret and melancholy up raw, her ravishing and lively voice straddles desperate heartache and confident declaration.

Ordering info: lightintheattic.net

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Chick Corea *The Continents*

DEUTSCHE GRAMMOPHON 16441

★★★

This may be the year of Chick Corea. On the occasion of his 70th birthday, he is issuing tons of ambitious content, all of which bears his brand. That crisp attack on the keys and his distinctive marriage of bop, Bela Bartók, blues, Bill Evans and Latin-inflected swing reaffirm that he is as vital as he has ever been.

The flip side to that is through setting high standards, he opens himself to more critical examination. And so listening to *The Continents*, particularly the first disc in this two-CD package, can increase a sense of unease, for as much craft as there is in Corea's

ambitious meditation on our planet's land masses, it can lead to a sense that his technique can outweigh the artistic essence of his accomplishment.

Corea is a unique talent in the context of jazz in its totality. This makes it understandable why you could fast-forward to almost any part of this six-movement composition and, after just a few seconds, identify its source as Corea. Pull back for a broader perspective, though, and these many moments that reflect his essence hang together only tenuously. If you check out each of these sections without registering their titles, the relationship between the purported subject and the actual substance of the work is generally unclear. What exactly is African about "Africa," for example? Marcus Gilmore's drumming, which impeccably matches Corea's score, underscores written accents and phrases while maintaining that same structure of freedom and swing that branded Elvin Jones'



later work with John Coltrane. There were African references in that catalog, so perhaps that's the intention—but Gilmore lays down very similar grooves in particular during solos on "Europe." It's actually more rewarding to appreciate Corea's inventiveness if not distracted by their titles. Each movement stands on its own, but when invited to listen instead for sections that trigger preconceptions, those foreshadowings can distract rather than enhance the experience. With the title "Antarctica," who wouldn't anticipate writing that suggests frigid stillness and empty white horizons? Instead, it ends with an orchestral part that hops and skips like Christopher Robin through a British garden.

The second CD offers a radically different scenario, in which the quintet blows

smoothly and satisfyingly through a couple of standards. Corea's arrangement of "Blue Bossa" is especially effective, with the kind of rich re-harmonization that distinguishes his approach to familiar tunes and an inversion of the rhythm feel so that it kind of stumbles rather than flows and yet does so with exquisite sensuousness. There's also an abundance of solo piano improvisations, which in lesser hands might seem indulgent but as rendered by Corea have the same integrity and dimension he has always summoned in this format.

—Bob Doerschuk

The Continents: Disc One: Africa; Europe; Australia; America; Asia; Antarctica (71:44). Disc Two: Lotus Blossom; Blue Bossa; What's This? Just Friends; Solo Continuum 31; Solo Continuum 42; Solo Continuum 53; Solo Continuum 64; Solo Continuum 75; Solo Continuum 86; Solo Continuum 97; Solo Continuum 108; Solo Continuum 119; Solo Continuum 1310; Solo Continuum 1411 (67:38).

Personnel: Chick Corea, piano; Steve Davis, trombone; Tim Garland, reeds; Hans Glawisch, bass; Marcus Gilmore, drums; Steven Mercurio, conductor; members of Harlem String Quartet, Imani Winds.

Ordering info: deutschegrammophon.com



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Ferit Odman
Autumn In New York

EQUINOX 16

★★★★

Istanbul native Ferit Odman possesses a pure, sparse, sweet drumming style that is subtle in intent and thoroughly musical. Surrounding oneself with New York City ringers for a second recording might seem like a quick way to get attention, but Odman does much more than that. His arrangements, production, drumming and leadership bring the best out of these musicians, even when playing what is basically classic hard-bop styled material.

Odman's light touch and sizzling energy allow the soloists to project individuality in each song, the drummer acting as kind of a magic genie applying the proper shading and textures for each moment. That they sound like a well-oiled road band only adds to overall beauty and urgency of *Autumn In New York*. Vincent Herring has never sounded better than on a lush reading of "My Ideal." Anthony Wonsey is equally compelling here, gracefully soloing as Odman gently stirs the soup. James Williams contributes two tracks, "Alter Ego" and the brightly burnished "Changing Of The Guards," which features tightly knit ensembles and scalding Latin sections and an exciting solo from Terrell Stafford.

—Ken Micallef

Autumn In New York: Step Lightly; Alter Ego; Autumn In New York; The Soulful Mr. Timmons; Hindsight; My Ideal; Changing Of The Guard. (45:55)

Personnel: Ferit Odman, drums; Terrell Stafford, trumpet; Vincent Herring, alto saxophone; Anthony Wonsey, piano; Peter Washington, bass.

Ordering info: equinox-music.com



Frank Walton Sextet
The Back Step

SELF RELEASE

★★★★½

Chicago trumpeter Frank Walton has been off the jazz scene for a while, and his salvo on Lance Bryant's funky title track shows he couldn't wait to wax this sextet.

This studio date came about alongside the late pianist James Williams' trio engagement with bassist John Lockwood and percussionist Yoron Israel in Boston in 2001. Williams was a mainstay with Art Blakey in the late '70s and knows how to kick a horn-heavy frontline. Though the head is a little tentative on "The Move (Part 1)," workmanlike, John Coltrane-ish tenor saxophonist Lance Bryant digs in before another nimble, enthusiastic contribution from the leader. Philadelphia altoist Jaleel Shaw, better known since tenure with Roy Haynes, drops a corkscrewing solo, inspiring Williams before Lockwood's measured bass precedes energized fills from Israel. Walton turns "Old Folks" over to Williams' trio and the evocative tray-card photo hints how he is feeling it. The tempo is perfect and Williams takes a lovely cadenza before the groove of Joe Henderson's "Mamacita" reintroduces the sextet. Again, Bryant is straight to action with rhythmic motifs à la Henderson, before Walton delivers smears and half-valve notes between fluid runs.

—Michael Jackson



The Back Step: The Back Step; The Move (Part 1); Old Folks; Mamacita; The Move (Part 2). (50:13)

Personnel: Frank Walton, trumpet; Jaleel Shaw, alto sax; Lance Bryant, tenor sax; John Lockwood, bass; James Williams, piano; Yoron Israel, percussion.

Ordering info: cdbaby.com/cd/frankwalton

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Dave Brubeck Foursquare

This set is about as square as one can get. **The Dave Brubeck Quartet: The Columbia Studio Albums Collection: 1955–1966** (Columbia/Legacy 8697938812 ★★★★★½) is compact and cubical with 19 CDs containing around 12 hours of music. Nine of the titles here are on CD in the United States for the first time, with bonus tracks scattered throughout. Unfortunately, the annotated booklet, while doing a good job of listing the details, omits liner notes.

Signed by producer George Avakian in 1953, Dave Brubeck (with his quartets in tow) would go on to make 19 studio albums. The story begins with *Brubeck Time* in 1954 (released in '55). Playing mostly standards (like “Jeepers Creepers”), Brubeck wasted no time getting all-original programs in the can, starting with *Jazz Impressions Of The U.S.A.* He continued this theme, with an entry into international influences with *Jazz Impressions Of Eurasia*. But *Dave Digs Disney* in 1957 was a reversion to a more conventional formula, a concept repeated with *Southern Scene* in 1959, which featured Brubeck’s arrangements of songs by Stephen Foster along with original material.

It wasn’t until 1959’s *Gone With The Wind* that the personnel solidified into the classic quartet of Brubeck on piano with alto saxist Paul Desmond, drummer Joe Morello and bassist Eugene Wright. As with the *Disney* program, *Wind* was all covers, with more music reflective of the tradition and a prelude of sorts to *Southern Scene*, recorded later that year. But it wasn’t long before the inevitable took place with Brubeck’s crossing the divide to combine jazz with orchestral maneuvers. The leader started slow with brother Howard Brubeck’s four-movement *Dialogues For Jazz Combo And Orchestra* in 1960. Then there were large-canvas covers of Brubeck material with *Brandenburg Gate: Revisited*, ending with Brubeck going full-bore with the wildly expansive “Elementals” from *Time Changes*. In each case, there are interesting, novel moments as Brubeck found ways to combine his love of European classical music with jazz, Tin Pan Alley and the blues. Indeed, Brubeck’s iconoclastic stamp is undeniable even as he submerges the rest of the quartet in these sometimes heady, choppy waters.

And then there was the preoccupation with time—perhaps starting with Desmond’s “Take Five,” the tune in 5/4 that heralded the band’s odd-time signature and would remain a staple point of departure to the end. Heard on the classic *Time Out* album, the hugely popular



Dave Brubeck

“Take Five” served as a kind of template (and maybe excuse) for further excursions, leading to *Time Further Out* and *Countdown: Time In Outer Space*, *Time Changes* and ending with a kind of swan song with the appropriately titled *Time In*. By this point in 1965, the band had essentially owned the idea of “time” and, it appeared, had nothing more to say on the subject. With other hits like “Blue Rondo A La Turk,” “It’s A Raggy Waltz” and “Three To Get Ready,” Brubeck and company loosened things up and maybe expanded the jazz canon. Indeed, with Morello leading the charge on such potential novelty tunes like “Castilian Drums” and “Unsquare Dance,” the appeal the band had with fans restless for more innovative music that still swung, or at least had connection to the jazz tradition, seemed limitless.

Unfortunately, for the author of “Take Five,” these time experiments always seemed to be more to his boss’ (and Morello’s) liking. While Desmond enjoyed the experimentation that was Brubeck’s wont, the altoist most likely longed for the sweet swing of those early sides, perhaps best heard on their live jazz-on-campus college dates for Fantasy and Columbia. Along with their commercial appeal, *Jazz Impressions Of Japan* and *Jazz Impressions Of New York* in 1964 almost seemed like a kind of bequest from Brubeck to Desmond for all his years hanging tough playing slightly off-balanced tunes like “Eleven Four,” “Unisphere” and “World’s Fair.” Starting with composer Matt Dennis and “Angel Eyes” and continuing on to Richard Rodgers, Lorenz Hart and Oscar Hammerstein II with *My Favorite Things*, the group ended their studio recordings with an album’s worth of material of Cole Porter standards with *Anything Goes*. By that time in the mid-’60s, these guys more than proved they didn’t need grand concepts or odd time signatures to get over.

Ordering info: legacyrecordings.com

DB



Catherine Russell *Strictly Romancin’*

WORLD VILLAGE 468101

★★★★

No one can accuse singer Catherine Russell of being lazy. She’s chosen a bouquet of swing-era and older trad songs that few jazz vocalists touch these days. Their common denominator seems to be that they’re vehicles she can swing in an easy, almost subliminal manner.

Russell sings these songs straight—no scat or improvisational flights for her. She doesn’t have to fill up space with nonsense, and she’s happy to turn the floor over to her musicians. Some fine ones join her, including trumpeter Jon-Erik Kelso, trombonist John Allred and reedist Dan Block. Versatile pianist Mark Shane especially shines on Sister Rosetta Tharpe’s “He’s All I Need.”

Russell is a fine rhythm singer: Duke Ellington’s “I’m Checkin’ Out” jumps just right. She’s also a good balladeer: Ivory Joe Hunter’s “Don’t Leave Me” shows her blues timbre.

Russell’s earthy alto strains at some of the higher notes of “Wake Up And Live,” but Lil Green’s sexually provocative “In The Dark” probably hasn’t had such an effective interpretation since Charles Brown last walked among us. Bravo to Russell for caressing Henry Nemo’s quietly evocative “I Haven’t Changed A Thing.”

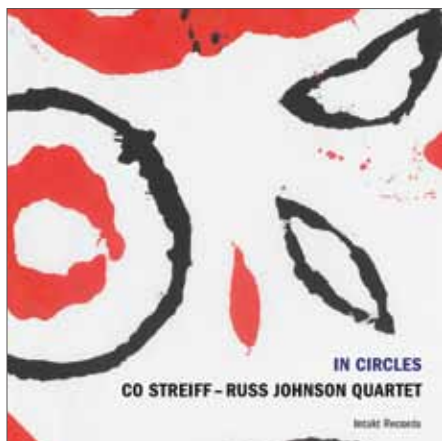
By no means is every selection a gem. “Satchel Mouth Baby” was never anything but a trifle, and Russell can’t make it something it isn’t. Likewise, “Everybody Loves My Baby” doesn’t lend itself to interesting interpretation. And Harold Adamson’s “Everything’s Been Done” is a little wordy for swinging.

—Kirk Silsbee

Strictly Romancin’: Under The Spell Of The Blues; I’m In The Mood For Love; Wake Up And Live; Ev’ntide; Romance In The Dark; I’m Checkin’ Out; Goom’bye; No More; Satchel Mouth Baby; Everything’s Been Done Before; Don’t Leave Me; I Haven’t Changed A Thing; Everybody Loves My Baby; He’s All I Need; Whatcha Gonna Do When There Ain’t No Swing? (47:52)

Personnel: Catherine Russell, vocals, arranger; Aaron Weinstein, violin (13); Jon-Erik Kelso, trumpet, arranger (6); John Allred, trombone; Dan Block, clarinet, alto saxophone; Andy Farber, tenor saxophone, arranger (1, 4, 7, 12); Matt Munisteri, guitar, banjo, vocals; Mark Shane, piano; Joe Barbato, accordion (2, 9); Lee Hudson, bass; Mark McLean, drums.

Ordering info: worldmusicvillage.com



Co Streiff-Russ Johnson Quartet *In Circles*

INTAKT 195

★★★★

American trumpeter Russ Johnson and Swiss saxophonist Co Streiff have a strong musical rapport. All seven tunes—three by the former, four from the latter—feature extended themes and improvisations with both players blowing together.

They only occasionally deliver tight unison figures; more often than not they simultaneously shape melodies with an appealing looseness and a kind of sweet-sour tonal contrast, while at other times they revel in some high-wire counterpoint. On the opener, “Short Outbreak,” it takes about four minutes before the band breaks open for lyric solos from Johnson and Streiff, and both of them are more restrained and measured than their work during the elaborate, rigorous head.


The tunes suggest an affinity for the golden era of hard-bop—with buoyant, bristling melodies and surging swing grooves joyously sculpted by woody-toned bassist Christian Weber and limber yet explosive drummer Julian Sartorius—while some of the multi-linear horn action harks back to glory days of West Coast jazz. Following a raucous opening of striated trumpet flatulence and nicely sharp alto squawks, Johnson’s “The Loper,” which seems like a subtle homage to the way Lee Morgan named tunes after their rhythmic thrust, turns into a bluesy burner that sounds like a deep hat-tip to Charles Mingus’ “Fables Of Faubus.” “Farks Larks” has the stop-start spryness of an Ornette Coleman classic. Despite drawing inspiration from the past, this is no retro trip. The frontline sounds thoroughly contemporary in its phrasing and timbre, while the rhythm section has a dazzling elasticity and a feel for color that’s also here and now.

—Peter Margasak

In Circles: Short Outbreak; In Circles; Five Dark Days; The Loper; Tomorrow Dance; Farks Lark; Confession. (62:05)
Personnel: Co Streiff, alto and soprano saxophones; Russ Johnson, trumpet; Christian Weber, bass; Julian Sartorius, drums.
Ordering info: intaktrec.ch

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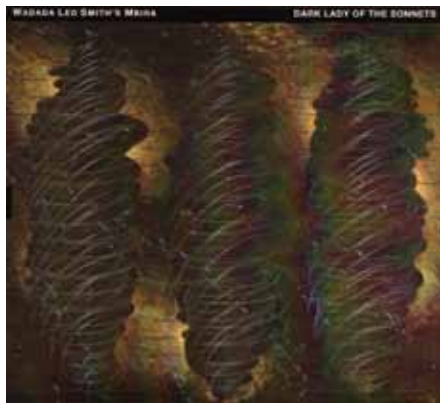
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Wadada Leo Smith's Mbira *Dark Lady Of The Sonnets*

TUM RECORDS 023

★★★★

F. Scott Fitzgerald's assertion that "there are no second acts in American lives" certainly doesn't hold true when applied to Wadada Leo Smith. Not only has the trumpeter and composer been more productive over the last 15 years than he was in the first half of his recording career, he's been engaged in a wider range of activities, writing for large ensemble (the Silver Orchestra), improvising in small ones (the Golden Quartet and Mbira), and continuing to explore the possibilities of electric music (first with Yo Miles!, and currently with Organic).

Of these outlets, Mbira is probably the most

distinctive, if only because the trio includes the pipa player Min Xiao-Fen. Pipa is a four-stringed Chinese lute, and Min, who was classically trained in Nanjing, augments her background in traditional music with work in both contemporary classical and improvisational music.

What's most impressive about her playing here is the sheer range and power she's able to summon. "Zulu Water Festival" opens with her playing a unison line with Smith, and even though the line is high and assertive, the pipa holds its own, matching the trumpet's power before receding into a more delicate rhythmic figure. And even that is impressive, as Min's control of timbre affords her almost as much coloristic range as Pheeroan akLaff's drumming.

Smith and akLaff have a long history together that dates back to the mid-'70s, so it's no surprise that the two have such a strong connection here. It isn't just a matter of kinetic energy, either; akLaff's drumming often seems to ground and complete Smith's playing, providing context through rhythm and texture.

Not that Smith is the only beneficiary—akLaff's accompaniment of Min's vocal on the Billie Holiday-inspired title tune is especially moving—but when those two hit their stride, as on "Mbira" and "Blues: Cosmic Beauty," the result is invigorating in the extreme.

—J.D. Considine

Dark Lady Of The Sonnets: Sarah Bell Wallace; Blues: Cosmic Beauty; Zulu Water Festival; Dark Lady Of The Sonnets; Mbira. (56:13)

Personnel: Wadada Leo Smith, trumpet and flugelhorn; Min Xiao-Fen, pipa and voice; Pheeroan akLaff, drums.

Ordering info: tumrecords.com

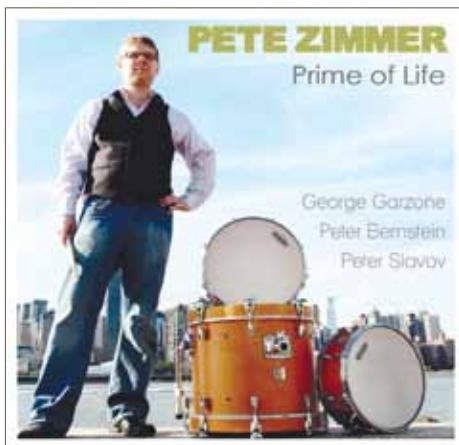
Pete Zimmer *Prime Of Life*

TIPPIN RECORDS 1101

★★★

Inexplicably, drummer Pete Zimmer opens his fifth recording as a leader, *Prime Of Life*, with a lackluster Latin song that reeks of low expectations. He quickly corrects this with "One For GG," a brisk, straightahead groover that gives the wonderful George Garzone and Peter Bernstein plenty of workout space. Zimmer's solo here is a study in rehearsed, albeit flowing, ideas that perfectly set up his ensemble's return. Throughout *Prime Of Life*, there's an overall sense that we're hearing a club date with master musicians. The arrangements, almost exclusively of Zimmer's material, are safe, if enthusiastic, and everyone sounds fully involved, if not particularly excited. Zimmer extends a nicely floating feel on "Carefree," the soloists performing colorfully (particularly Garzone) while the drummer adds gentle jabs and breezy punctuations, creating a pleasing sense of swing. Garzone's "Strollin' Down Bourbon Street" sounds as it was recorded at noon to an empty club. There's no juice, no heat, no sense of fire regardless that it's a mid-tempo swinger.

"T.T.T." is thankfully just the opposite, a



swing/Latin high-flyer with tight ensemble figures and a frenetically delicious Latin section. Garzone totally cools it here, and Bernstein raises the odds even higher. Zimmer's ride cymbal darts like sizzling popcorn, inspiring Bernstein to explore well beyond the harmonic confines of the song. Except for the excellent soloists, *Prime Of Life* ultimately lacks a sense of grit, of life-lived passion and, most importantly, experience.

—Ken Micallef

Prime Of Life: Prime Of Life; One For GG; Tranquility; Carefree; Strollin' Down Bourbon Street; T.T.T.; Night Vision; Almost Home; The Three Petes. (55:22)

Personnel: Pete Zimmer, drums; George Garzone, tenor saxophone; Peter Bernstein, guitar; Peter Slavov, bass.

Ordering info: tippinrecords.com



Pat Mallinger Quartet *Home On Richmond*

PJM JAZZ

★★★★

From Oscar Peterson and Maynard Ferguson to Brad Mehldau and Joel Frahm, there's a great tradition of high school friends going on to have impressive musical careers and even perform together.

Saxophonist Pat Mallinger grew up in West St. Paul, Minn., while pianist Bill Carrothers is a native of the greater Minneapolis area. Having met in the McDonald's All Star High School Jazz Ensemble, the pair have played together throughout the years and reunited for this live date at Chicago's Green Mill.

As co-leader of Sabertooth, Mallinger has held down a Saturday night slot at the legendary club since 1992. So there's definitely a home-field advantage at play in terms of comfort level.

A take on Charles Lloyd's "Third Floor Richard" opens the album. The band is immediately both locked in and loose, as the bandleader's spry tenor tone sets the bar for a high-energy set.

An uptempo take on Charlie Chaplin's "Smile" follows, highlighted by an explorative Carrothers solo that fluidly unfolds over four and half-plus minutes.

One of two Mallinger originals, the title track glides atop George Fludas' elegant brushwork, while the four carry the spirit of late-era Coltrane while playing his "Living Space." The deep loveliness of "Snowbound" confirms Mallingers' strength as both a composer and a ballad player, with Carrothers' quiet quoting of "White Christmas" perfectly punctuating it at the end.

With the tracks from nine to just under 14 minutes, the group stretches out on each of the half-dozen numbers—a well-balanced live program that translates nicely as a recorded document.

—Yoshi Kato

Home On Richmond: Third Floor Richard; Smile; Home On Richmond; Living Space; Snowbound; Nagasaki. (69:10)

Personnel: Pat Mallinger, alto, tenor, soprano saxophones; Bill Carrothers, piano; George Fludas, drums; Dennis Carroll, bass.

Ordering info: patmallinger.com

Gil Scott-Heron's Final Testimony

"One of the things that was evident to me way back when I'd gotten into John Coltrane's music was that you had to keep reaching. I think when you stop reaching, you die." Those are powerful words from Gil Scott-Heron considering the profound gifts the poet, author, musician and activist shared with the world. His social anthems like "The Revolution Will Not Be Televised" not only elucidated the plights and resilience of black Americans but were progenitorial inspiration for hip-hop's modern messengers. His posthumously published ***The Last Holiday: A Memoir*** (Grove Press) shows that his impact may have been even greater than what's been generally understood.

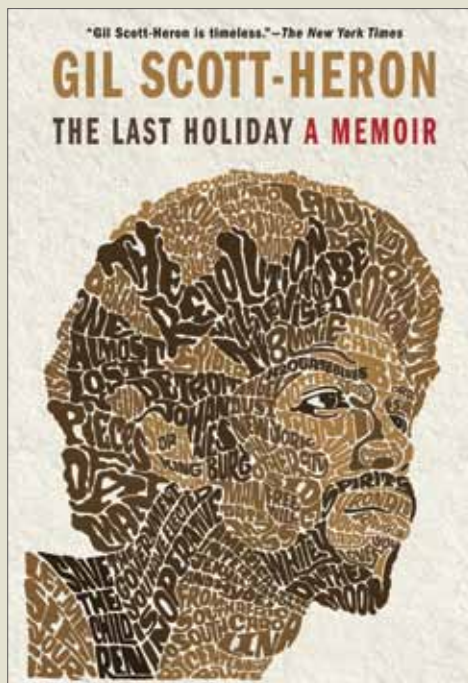
The book's title refers to Scott-Heron's experiences as the opening act of Stevie Wonder's 1980 tour, which primarily served to champion a national holiday for Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Scott-Heron's account of the headliner is touching and humble, as he reminds readers that "somehow it seems that Stevie's efforts as the leader of this campaign has been forgotten. But it is something that we should all remember."

Scott-Heron devotes much of the book to his 20s, and his fiercely confident mother and grandmother—women who endearingly impelled him throughout his life. His views of America were undoubtedly shaped by being raised in the Jim Crow South. These two women also gave young Scott-Heron tremendous insight as to what was possible, evidenced by his becoming a critically acclaimed novelist and recording artist before his college graduation.

His highly inspiring accounts of time spent at Lincoln University, turning down his first book publishing offer and his ingenious method of gaining a writing fellowship at John Hopkins University are some of the occurrences that make *The Last Holiday* a page-turner. Fans of Scott-Heron's music will appreciate details shared about his relationship with long-time collaborator Brian Jackson, whom he credits throughout the book, describing him as both friend and essential and talented partner.

Recalling the studio session to record "Lady Day And John Coltrane," he writes, "All I'd had for that song at first was a bass line and a chord thing with it. I never would have been able to really hook up that progression properly if Brian wasn't there ... I didn't know anything about suspended fourths and all that."

Although appropriately credited for his influence on hip-hop, Scott-Heron seems most purely connected to jazz, writing, "I had an affinity for jazz and syncopation, and the poetry



came from the music." His mentions of Miles Davis are noteworthy: He adored him as a cultural figure. Scott-Heron's words are boyishly charming as he tells stories about first hearing a Fender Rhodes on Davis' *Miles In The Sky*, or how meeting Michael Jackson some years before he would make a surprise appearance on the 1980 tour was "not as electric" as meeting the trumpet icon. Scott-Heron also must have admired Davis' band. Asked whom he wanted to work with on what would become the seminal *Pieces Of A Man*, by veteran producer Bob Thiele, Scott-Heron's wish list of Davis' former sideman Ron Carter—along with such jazz stars as Hubert Laws and Bernard Purdie—was materialized.

There are a few frustrating points in the book in terms of resolution. Readers may be left wondering what happened to his relationship with Jackson, or why he grazes over the last 20-some-odd years of his life, making little to no mention about his personal yet public struggles. It's hard to tell if this is a matter of editing, or Scott-Heron exercising his right to let the reader in on as much as he is willing to divulge. Either way, the areas that he chooses to delve deep are well worth the read and diminish any gaping.

Although Scott-Heron passed away on May 27, 2011, at the age of 62, he will be remembered as one who never stopped reaching, and through this memoir, for the man who "didn't want to get stuck doing just one thing," that reach may become longer than ever. **DB**

Ordering info: groveatlantic.com



On his new CD, *Chora Baião*, pianist/composer Antonio Adolfo and his quintet chose to focus on the Brazilian music styles *choro* and *baião*—specifically, the works of two brilliant and innovative composers, Chico Buarque and Guinga, alongside Adolfo's own compositions.

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STEVE LEHMAN New Music Rebel

By Ken Micallef | Photo by Willie Davis

The small study in Steve Lehman's Brooklyn apartment resembles that of most jazz musicians: an alto saxophone case leans into a corner, a poster of Jackie McLean adorns a wall, a desk holding rare Mosaic box sets of Lee Morgan and Anthony Braxton and a MacBook stands in front of a window overlooking a courtyard. But the books that overflow Lehman's shelves are far from typical. Difficult titles, many in French, reflect this Columbia University doctoral candidate's direction and interests: *Music And The Racial Imagination*, *The Psychology Of Time*, *A Generative Theory Of Tonal Music*, *Landing On The Wrong Note* and *Duration And Simultaneity*. Yes, Steve Lehman is a nerd.

Lehman's intellectual bona fides are certainly in order. He studied spectral composition techniques under renowned French composer Tristan Murail. Lehman's computer and programming investigations at Columbia's Computer Music Center (CMC) follow the lineage established by Milton Babbitt, Luciano Berio, Wendy Carlos and Edgar Varèse, all of whom worked at CMC, the oldest center for electro-acoustic music in the United States.

Lehman's 2009 release, *Travail, Transformation And Flow* (Pi), bears the fruit of his computer explorations, its music arranged and expressed in innovative structures that can shake up conformist jazz expectations. And when he's not recording or performing with Fieldwork (with like-minded pioneers Vijay Iyer and Rudresh Mahanthappa) or his octets or trios, Lehman composes chamber pieces for the International Contemporary Ensemble (ICE).

But if you think Lehman is simply an egghead with an alto, you're wrong. *Dialect Fluorescent* (Pi), his second trio record (after *Interface*, Clean Feed, 2004) and 11th album overall, is a visceral, often churning session showcasing not only original material but, unusually, compositions by John Coltrane ("Moment's Notice"), Duke Pearson ("Jeannine"), Jackie McLean ("Mr. E"), and Lesley Bricusse and Anthony Newley ("Pure Imagination"). Recorded with bassist Matt Brewer and drummer Damion Reid, *Dialect Fluorescent* is a torrid, wrestling match of an album. Lehman's parched-sounding alto drives the trio through gripping, odd-meter play, frenetic improvisations and radical reworkings of older music—some classic, some obscure, but all delivered with an intensity and gritty funkiness. (The trio was the

only act to perform anything resembling a standard at New York's recent Winter Jazzfest.)

Like his hero Charlie Parker, Lehman—forever a curious seeker—finds himself balancing intellectual pursuits with the physicality of jazz.

"I always feel torn," Lehman says. "My intellectual credentials are maybe overemphasized. I feel compelled to highlight other aspects of what I do, but at the same time it's important to emphasize that Charlie Parker was a super intellectual and had an insatiable intellectual curiosity. I can't mention myself in the same breath as him, but he was a big role model.

"Jackie McLean was also curious intellectually [Lehman studied concurrently with McLean and Anthony Braxton from 1997 to 2001]. Coltrane as well. Sometimes it's hard to unpack all of that because the context is so different. Here I am about to get my doctorate at Columbia, and that seems like the main difference: Musicians connected to jazz have access to more different paths and resources now. I studied with Tristan Murail; Parker sought out Edgar Varèse. That's an important symbolic marker for me. It reminds me of the path I am on, and I feel it's consistent with my musical heroes."

"Steve has really developed his own improvising language," pianist Iyer says. "He can hold his ground very well in a straightforward context, but he has an inventive vision as an improviser. His new trio CD exemplifies that really well. And the way he puts things together as a composer is really creative and original. He's not just a saxophonist, but someone with a large vision of what music can be. He's always pushing himself, too, in terms of integrating microtonal language and different rhythmic concepts and harmonic ideas. It's highly innovative and also very

grounded. Music isn't about making things that sound pretty. But it's about developing and testing new ideas, not only about music but the fundamentals of human experience."

Dialect Fluorescent works as a seamless performance, sweltering improvisations a constant. After a mournful sax intro, "Allocentric" tumbles onto the stage, Reid and Brewer kicking a rhythm with over-the-bar-line, nearly spastic unisons as Lehman swirls notes above. A lengthy vamp marks "Moment's Notice," its melody (warmly allayed by Lehman) only stated tersely at song's end. Reid sparks the trio with his dry drum tones and blazing rhythmic attacks akin to jarring explosives at a church service. "Foster Brothers" (a term coined by one critic to describe Lehman and saxophonist Mahanthappa) again showcases Lehman's unique rhythmic concept. As Lehman squawks a birdlike staccato melody, Brewer and Reid exhort a flowing unison march of pointed jabs that recall a hip-hop programmer insanely finger-tapping an Akai MPC.

"Jeannine" is played as a swinging, traditional reflection, Reid's brushes swirling a storm. "Pure Imagination" descends à la Elvin Jones with Coltrane, the lovely melody altered by Lehman's scorched-earth tone. "Fumba Rebel" is funkily complex, and "Mr. E" ends the set with a sense of release, the intricate rhythmic language giving way to pure blowing. But the challenging complexity of the music remains after Lehman's music goes silent.

"There is a common thread rhythmically, in all of the original pieces—a fairly elaborate and constantly changing rhythmic grid," Lehman explains. "In 'Allocentric,' we explore the idea of having repeating bar lengths that last four beats, but where the internal subdivisions and the sense



of tempo change from bar to bar. Sometimes it'll be a long-long-short rhythm in the space of two big beats. And then we might have three longs and a short in that same span of time. If you go from one to the other, and then to four longs and a short, you get this kind of push and pull. But the bar length stays the same, so you're at the threshold of something being rhythmically consistent but also rhythmically very dynamic."

Lehman's rhythmic grids often sound like a piece of metal being pulled and bent nearly to the breaking point. The sense of tension and dynamics within his compositions is endlessly fascinating, tugging at the ear like an uncontrollable itch.

"Usually when you see a chart, you might have a chord for two beats then another chord for four beats," Reid explains, "whereas in Steve's compositions, the chord will start on what drummers know as the kicks or the hits. So the 'and' of 3 will be where the chord starts. It's imperative not only that everyone know the rhythmic elements of the piece but also the harmonic ele-

ments because the chords start in those key places. It's not like if you missed a hit you could play the chord on the second beat or on the third beat and still be in time. The rhythm is connected to the harmony. He also uses a lot of mixed meters in his compositions."

Lehman's material runs the gamut metrical-ly, and often in the same song (though that's more common to *Travail*, *Transformation And Flow* than *Dialect Fluorescent*).

"The meters will go from 4/4 to 3/4 to 2/4 to 5/4 to 9/8 to 7/8," Reid continues. "And he'll explore compound meters: 3/4 plus 5/16, 2/4 plus 7/16. He's experimenting with meters and notations that most drummers will only see in contemporary classical music. The rhythmic information he puts in those bars is the blueprint he wants you to follow so that the rhythm and the harmony are connecting in a different way. That makes his compositions unique."

Lehman is part of a New York clique that includes Iyer and Manhattappa, Tyshawn Sorey,

Mark Shim and Jonathan Findlayson. These musicians think beyond the box but remain enthralled by jazz tradition, issuing new music at a feverish rate, as though they're pressing toward the light while mad spirits nip at their heels.

"When I think about what connects us," Lehman reflects, "the musicians I want to work with have spent a lot of time getting comfortable with and internalizing the music of Charlie Parker, Bud Powell and Fats Navarro and have that repertoire available to them. But they are also really excited about the work of Henry Threadgill and Andrew Hill and Anthony Braxton, for example. They don't have conceptual limitations in terms of what music they get excited about. The attitude is, 'Let's do whatever we can to make music that's meaningful to us, whether we're drawing from hip-hop or contemporary classical music.' As long it feels like it's connected to what we're doing as players and we can draw from the legacy of the jazz tradition, then I can get excited about it."

DB

A Jazz Flutist's Approach to Diminished Scales

Understanding the relationship between chords and scales is fundamental to the jazz player. Thinking of scales as horizontal chords offers a linear and more melodic way of hearing the changes than do arpeggios. Practicing scales and scale-based patterns develops both our harmonic sense and our ability to think in all 12 keys, all while improving technique. But while scales can expand what we hear, think and play, we should think of them as tools, and not as the actual music. The ability to simply run scales over a set of changes isn't the goal, whereas cultivating an intuitive and personal approach to improvisation is.

Although I don't consider myself a pattern player, I still dig practicing scales and am always looking for new ways of tastefully integrating them into my playing. I'd like to share some of my ideas about the construction and application of the diminished scale, along with a few exercises from my *Jazz Flute Practice Method* book.

I'll start with a quick review of the chord/scale theory. Chords are built from the bottom up on a series of thirds—root, third, fifth and seventh in the first octave, and the three upper extensions (ninth, 11th, 13th) in the second. By moving the upper extensions down an octave, these seven notes will form a scale when placed in a stepwise sequence. With the diminished chord, however, the series of minor thirds simply repeats itself in the second octave, producing no upper extensions to place between the root–third–fifth–seventh in the first octave. How then is a diminished scale constructed? The answer lies in the tritone, the interval that divides the octave in half.

Within one octave, a series of minor thirds will produce two conjunct diminished triads, each joined together at the tritone. Example 2 shows how a five-note diminished scale based on a diminished triad would be constructed. Here's the method: Play the first five notes of a major scale, root to fifth, ascending and descending; lower the third to form the five-note scale of a minor triad; lower the fifth to form the five-note scale of a diminished triad; repeat this three-step process beginning at the tritone. If we then join the C and G \flat diminished triad/scales together (Example 2), it forms the eight-note whole-step/half-step diminished scale pattern, the scale that corresponds to the diminished chord.

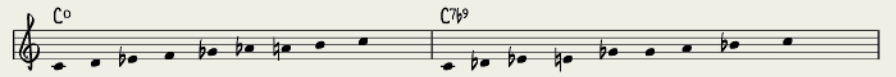
Using this method as a practice tool helps to internalize the pattern. Modifying the triad and scale, by going from major to minor to diminished, seems logical and may be more intuitive, and therefore easier to assimilate, than simply



Example 1



Example 2



Example 3



Example 4 – Note Pairs



Example 5



memorizing a whole-step/half-step pattern. Once the diminished pattern has been mastered in all keys, invert the scale, making it into the half-step/whole-step pattern (see again Example 2). I refer to it as the “diminished dominant scale.” This scale, which corresponds to dominant seventh chords, or more specifically the $V7\flat 9$ chord, is used more frequently than the whole-step/half-step pattern in jazz.

In Example 3, a closer look at both the diminished chord and scale reveals several interesting relationships, all musically relevant for soloing. The half-/whole-step pattern is, in fact, the stepwise sequence of two diminished arpeggios, a half step apart. And check out how a $C7\flat 9$ is equivalent to a $D\flat 9$ diminished chord ($D\flat 9$) with a C bass. That’s because the third, fifth and seventh of both the $C7$ and $D\flat 9$ are the exact same notes. Because of this relationship, any inversion, fragment, or pattern based on the diminished chord built over the flat nine works over the dominant seventh.

The symmetrical nature of the diminished scale can be useful in creating practice patterns. As shown in Example 4, the diminished chord is made up of four minor thirds; these minor thirds

divide the octave into four equal parts. By dividing the eight-note scale into four pairs of notes, with each note-pair starting on a successive chord tone of a diminished arpeggio, combinations of note-pairs can be put together to form various melodic patterns. Coming up with different patterns is a great way to internalize both the sound and feel of the diminished scale.

The type of note-pair is what differentiates the whole-/half-step diminished scale from its inverted counterpart, the diminished dominant scale. Specifically, the diminished scale note-pairs are whole steps ascending/half steps descending; the diminished dominant scale note-pairs are half steps ascending/whole steps descending. This all becomes useful information, once our ears and fingers fully absorb it.

Since the $V7\flat 9$ patterns usually start on one of the chord tones from either of the adjacent diminished chords (refer to Example 3), it makes sense to woodshed diminished arpeggios. Being able to play all three diminished chords in any inversion is exactly what will facilitate playing these types of patterns. After the arpeggios, work through several note-pair-based patterns. Then introduce major thirds, fourths and even tritones

into the mix. Check out some of these patterns in Example 5. The first one is all about the $V7\flat 9$ note-pairs. The second pattern zigzags its way down the diminished dominant scale by inserting major thirds between the note-pairs. The third one stacks fourths on the ascending, then descending, diminished arpeggio. In the final pattern, a half-step note-pair masks a pattern of ascending tritones, again based on the diminished arpeggio. Always be sure to practice everything in all 12 keys ... and repeat, repeat, repeat.

The best way to understand any musical relationship is to put it to practical use. Although I tend to use patterns more as a practice tool than when soloing, there’s no doubt that chord-/scale-based patterns have become an integral part of the jazz language, both in and out of the practice room. **DB**

ALI RYERSON IS AN INTERNATIONAL RECORDING ARTIST, AUTHOR AND EDUCATOR. WITH A CAREER SPANNING OVER FOUR DECADES, SHE HAS RELEASED NEARLY TWO DOZEN RECORDINGS. FORMER JAZZ CHAIR OF THE NATIONAL FLUTE ASSOCIATION AND FOUNDER OF NFA JAZZ FLUTE BIG BAND, RYERSON'S ANNUAL JAZZ FLUTE MASTER CLASS CELEBRATES ITS 10TH YEAR IN AUGUST. SHE IS A BRIO! ARTIST AND CLINICIAN FOR GEMEINHARDT. HER JAZZ FLUTE PRACTICE METHOD IS AVAILABLE AT JAZZBOOKS.COM AND ALIRYERSON.COM.

PHOTO BY J. BARRY O'ROURKE

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The Quest for *THE* Saxophone Mouthpiece

“There’s an inner musical tree that grows in each and every one of us.” —Dexter Gordon, as the character Dale Turner in the 1986 film *Round Midnight* (Warner Bros.).

This quote is so eternally true for those of us who search for musical gratification beyond imitation of our idols. But in our search, it is often our equipment that hinders our “tree” from flourishing and bearing the personal results that encourage us on to artistic heights yet attained. Your horn(s) of choice are an important factor in this task, but even more crucial in this endeavor is the “golden spike” that fuses human and instrument together in the perpetual dance of artistic expression: the quest for *THE* perfect mouthpiece.

My personal journey began very early, primarily because of three major factors: 1) the equipment of the pros seen on album covers, TV performances and magazines; 2) trying to play along with my musical heroes on my student equipment with varying results at best; 3) advertisements from this very magazine touting the virtues of pro mouthpieces and the featured artist’s equipment list (horns, mouthpiece and reeds) that was provided at the conclusion of the article. All of these factors compelled me to start searching for new mouthpieces to help me get my personal sound concept together.

I assigned my mouthpieces in three distinct categories: 1) concert band/classical; 2) stage band/jazz; 3) extreme blaster/jazz, avant-garde. During the mid-’80s through the early ’90s, my mouthpieces in the those categories for soprano, alto, tenor, baritone/bass saxes were:

- Soprano: Yanagisawa HR #5, Couf/ Runyon #5, Dukoff D8;
- Alto: Berg Larsen HR 85/2, Meyer HR #8, Berg Larsen metal 110/0, Dukoff D8;
- Tenor: Berg Larsen HR 100/2, Berg Larsen metal 95/2, Dukoff D8 and S9;
- Baritone/Bass: Berg Larsen HR 110/1, Berg Larsen metal 120/1, Dukoff D10.

Divine intervention occurred on Labor Day weekend 1988 in the person of Hamiet Bluiett, who was in town to play the Montreux–Detroit Kool Jazz Festival. After expressing grievances about my current bari setup to him, he loaned me his personal Lawton metal 7-star B to compare. Whoa—I couldn’t stop playing this free-blowing piece! It increased my power and extended my altissimo range, yet it gave depth to the core sound of the baritone. I told Bluiett of these virtues I experienced in playing the Lawton, and he gave me the mouthpiece. I was floored and grateful all at the same time.

I asked myself, “Wow, if the Lawton baritone piece can do this, then the soprano, alto, tenor must be just as good, right?” About two years later, Julius Hemphill would make a similar ges-



ture for me with soprano, alto and tenor Lawtons. Count Basie baritonist John Williams sent metal and hard-rubber Lawtons to me, thereby completing my first set of unified mouthpieces—which with a little leveling of the table produced similar results for the rest of my saxophones. Since my Lawton unification of 1990, I’ve dabbled with other mouthpieces by Dave Guardala, Phil Barone, Gary Sugal and the like, and for me nothing will ever touch the power, joy and the totality I feel every time I play my Lawtons. But each one of my heroes would say something like, “You gotta keep your chops strong, because if you don’t play these mouthpieces, they’ll get the better of you!”

Playing my Lawtons has provided me with a template with which saxophonists can objectively search for the proper mouthpieces:

Self-Examination

It’s important to take a good listen and ask yourself if your current equipment might be holding that “inner tree” hostage and stunting its growth. It could be time to make a change. Don’t be afraid to be brutally honest with yourself. You are always your worst critic, but if used constructively, self-examination could turn out to be your salvation.

Horns Tight

I don’t think anything could be more detrimental to a first impression during a mouthpiece trial than a maladjusted horn. It behooves you to make sure your axe is regulated prior to undertaking such a serious task.

Outer Research

If you’re determined to replicate a musical hero’s equipment as a starting point to your own musical happiness, then do the research online or in books as to what their gear of choice is/was. This could narrow down the searching time for you, but never say, “I don’t want to try this, so-

and-so didn’t play on this, etc.” Keep an open mind to different options.

Music Store and/or Private Seller

Find music stores and/or a private seller with a vast selection of mouthpieces and tryout rooms. I recall the Woodwind & Brasswind in New York had great tryout rooms, each with sound systems complete with tuners and a CD playback/record that allowed you to take your comparisons home to listen to at a later time. I find the bigger the selection, the greater your journey will be.

Helping Materials

A player must have a plan to set a comfort zone that’s ideal for comparing pieces on an equal footing. Far too often I see posts online where folks are comparing horns and/or mouthpieces and don’t play the same passages for the listener to make an informed decision. The things that can help provide such a comfort zone include play-along CDs and method books with exercises that provide the player with a constant environment that will enable him to judge all mouthpieces fairly and come to an informed conclusion. If you have a person whose opinion you highly respect, that is certainly a plus. It is also essential to have an abundance of your favorite reeds with you—too often we play a mouthpiece for a while and switch to the next mouthpiece using a waterlogged reed, thus robbing us of the first impression we’re accustomed to getting with a fresh reed on the table.

Time

The most supreme commodity in this endeavor is time. Time set aside to take full advantage of the options available at the store or collector. Time for long tones to be played and scrutinized for intonation, fullness and ease. Time to let the embouchure rest and come back tomorrow or the next allotted time. Time to listen to that “inner tree” to hear if these tools will indeed aid in bringing in the harvest of the song that is you.

I sincerely hope that this has been helpful in what can be a very tedious and sometimes discouraging process. But with continued honesty and diligence, the player’s inner tree will bear for the world to feast. I am truly blessed to have my family, musical teachers and other mentors (past and present) who were honest with their words and charitable with their equipment, and who continue to help fuel the journey.

Peace, love and long tones.

DB

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Joshua Redman's Forward-Looking Tenor Saxophone Solo on 'If By Air'

On the first recording by the collaborative ensemble James Farm, released in 2011, saxophonist Joshua Redman contributes three compositions. On his uptempo waltz "If By Air," the soloists play over a different form than the melody, though it incorporates many of the same harmonies. Redman plays a remarkable solo in which he uses some concepts worth examining.

First, let's look at his use of half steps. In the bebop scale, there is a half step placed between the root and the flat seventh (or between the major seventh and the sixth, if you prefer to think of it that way). We hear Redman using this in measure 10, where he starts on the flat seventh, goes to the root and then plays the major seventh on his way back down to the flat seventh; in measure 44, where from the flat ninth he goes to the root, seventh and then flat seventh; and in bar 59, where he ends the measure with root-seventh-flat seventh. There's also measure 24, where he cleverly skips playing the root and starts on the seventh, working his way through the flat seventh on his way to the sixth.

But there are other ways in which Redman uses the same half-step idea that don't utilize the traditional bebop scale. In measure 40, we have what appears to be an E \flat bebop scale, but on an F7 chord. Three measures later he plays what could be perceived as a C bebop scale, but this is on a B \flat 7. This is especially curious since it includes an A natural that could clash with the B \flat 7, but in the next bar he both starts and ends the measure on the flat seventh.

Another example of creative use of the bebop scale occurs in measure 32, where the major third is used to connect the fourth and minor third on the G \flat 7. He does the same thing on the A7 chord in measure 36. Since these are both dominant chords, with a tendency to resolve down a fifth, Redman's lines could be heard as bebop scales off of the harmonies that these chords would resolve to, which the A7 does in the next measure. It makes it sound as if Redman is anticipating the upcoming chord change.

Throughout his solo, Redman plays notes and phrases that relate not so much to the harmo-

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ny of the moment but instead to the chords that are coming up. The first instance happens early on, in measure 4. Though he had already played the fourth on this chord in measure 2, with his climb up the Ionian scale, halfway through measure 4, one bar before the chord change, he inserts a sharp fourth, producing a Lydian flavor. But the B natural also sets up the Em7 coming up, especially with the G and E emphasized early in the bar, spelling out the triad.

He uses the same idea to a more extreme effect in bar 12 by playing a D blues lick. But the chord at this moment is a D \flat 7. This lick doesn't fit this harmony so well, but it does foreshadow the D chord coming up in the subsequent bar.

We hear a simpler manner of applying this in measures 35 and 60, where Redman uses the final beat of the measure to start playing the next

harmony. The C# and A at the end of the G major chord in measure 45 are the root and third of the A7 in the next bar. Likewise, the F# at the end of bar 60 is the third of the upcoming D.

Also poignant is how Redman exits the solo. In measures 53–54, we hear a direct quote from the melody. The solo continues after this, but in measures 58, 60 and 62 the melody is implied with the notes that occurred on those chords, though with different rhythms. After Redman's solo ends, he does the reverse and inserts soloistic licks into the melody. Blurring the lines between what is composed and what is improvised makes for a novel way to finish his solo. **DB**

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



Brio! Ali Ryerson Autograph Series Flute

Smart Design, Great Sound

As a present for my seventh birthday, I received my first flute: an open-hole student model Gemeinhardt. I graduated to a 3SS model in high school. So I (and probably a lot of other players) have a sentimental spot in my heart for the Gemeinhardt brand. When I got the chance to play and review a brand-new Gemeinhardt model designed by a jazz flutist, I was thrilled.

The Ali Ryerson Autograph series is the latest addition to the Brio! line of flutes by Gemeinhardt. It uses the Brio! B3 model as a base but employs a number of unique and very significant changes inspired by the great jazz flutist Ali Ryerson, who as design consultant worked with a fabricator/master flute maker to create her own model.

I try every new professional-level flute I can get my hands on, and there is a glut of extremely good instruments in the marketplace these days. But from the moment I first held this flute I was thrilled by its feel in my hands. The keywork from top to bottom has a more compact and accessible feel than any flute I have ever played. The right-hand pinky setup (E-flat, C-sharp, C, B) is amazing. Slightly smaller keys and tighter positioning make the foot joint on this model incredibly fast and easy to play. After just a few scales I was impressed with how much less finger movement was required to get around this flute. I use a lot of trill-key and half-hole finger-

ings in the third and fourth octaves on Latin jazz and Charanga gigs, and it was much faster than what I am accustomed to.

As impressed as I was with the Ali Ryerson model's playability, the sound knocked me out even more. In the loudest situations, I was able to pump an immense amount of air into the flute, and the volume and size of the sound seemed limitless. I also used it on a few recording sessions and, whether blending with other woodwinds at a whisper level or rockin' with a high-intensity solo on a hip-hop tune, this flute totally killed.

The Ali Ryerson Autograph series flutes range from \$5,500 to \$8,500 MSRP depending on options desired and metals used. This puts the price of the base model slightly higher than the Brio! 3, if you want a rough idea what it might cost from an online retailer. The base model is all 925 silver (head, body, foot and all keywork) with white gold springs. The thin-wall (.014) headjoint (also of Ryerson's design) on my test model had an optional gold riser and lip plate.

If you're in the market for a new flute, there is a ton of great product to choose from, but make sure you try the Ali Ryerson Autograph model Brio! by Gemeinhardt. Its design and sound really set it apart.

—Steve Eisen

Ordering info: gemeinhardt.com

Eastman 52nd Street Alto, Tenor Saxophones

Pro Models, Vintage Styling

Andreas Eastman's 52nd Street alto (EAS652RL) and tenor (ETS652RL) saxophones are professional instruments designed to resemble vintage horns from the golden era of jazz. Constructed of aged brass, the unlacquered saxophones have a truly vintage appearance, complete with a "52nd Street" engraving that suggests New York's thriving bebop scene of the 1950s.

But what really sets these horns apart is their incredible response in all registers from low to high, not to mention their big, fat sound, especially on the low end. A larger bell and rolled-style tone holes contribute to the sonic qualities of these instruments, which would sound right at home on any classic Blue Note side. They offer a rich mixture of overtones that, during play-testing, allowed me to create a variety of moods and colors on both the alto and tenor models.

Professional features of the 52nd Street saxophones include a high F-sharp key, adjustment screws for both the upper and lower stacks, adjustable palm key heights and double-braced low C, low B and low B-flat keys. High-quality Italian leather pads ensure the best possible seal, while metal resonators provide a nice tonal boost and a slight edge.

Like a good vintage Selmer Mark VI, the 52nd Street alto model is definitely suitable for lead playing in either repertory or modern ensembles. The tenor version proved to be great for both soloing and section playing. Intonation on both horns was among the best I've experienced with new vintage-style saxophones. Both horns are constructed solidly and have nice, even keywork.

The 52nd Street alto and tenor offer a good alternative to Eastman's 640 series professional horns, which have a more focused sound quality and modern appearance. Overall, these are a great choice for jazz saxophonists who like to look to the past for inspiration.

—Ed Enright

Ordering info: eastmanmusiccompany.com



Theo Wanne Mantra Tenor Saxophone

Quantum Leap in Tone, Design

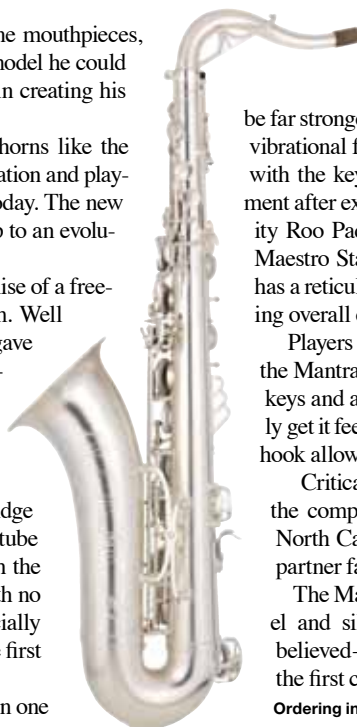
In creating his company's innovative line of saxophone mouthpieces, Theo Wanne studied every type of vintage and new model he could get his hands on. Wanne has taken the same approach in creating his company's first saxophone, the Mantra tenor.

The Mantra combines the huge sound of vintage horns like the Conn Chu Berry and the Selmer Mark VI with the intonation and playability of the finest modern saxophones on the market today. The new model integrates 30 innovations and features that add up to an evolutionary leap in instrument design and tonal efficiency.

In play-testing, the Mantra lived up to Wanne's promise of a free-blowing saxophone that resonates with the best of them. Well adjusted and featuring a soft and definite action, it also gave the feeling of being in complete control of the instrument's keywork.

Crucial to the Mantra's tonally complex and highly responsive tone is its neck tube, which has nothing soldered to it except the octave pip, so dampening is utterly minimized. The octave key rides on cartridge ball bearings and is completely isolated from the neck tube and brace. The Mantra's neck tenon is tapered to match the body tube taper, resulting in a large and lively sound with no interruptions in the airstream. The horn sounded especially fat on the low end. It has a constant conical bore from the first tone hole all the way to the last.

The Mantra has too many design innovations to list in one



review, but several important ones come to mind after spending a few days getting to know the instrument. Its bell-to-body brace is constructed to

be far stronger than a traditional brace while allowing for maximum vibrational freedom. The low C and B/B-flat key guards are inline with the key arms, assuring the key cups stay flat and in adjustment after extended use. The saxophone is outfitted with high-quality Roo Pads (made from kangaroo skin) that are installed with Maestro Star resonators. The entire interior of the horn and neck has a reticulated finish that creates a boundary layer of air, increasing overall efficiency in the airstream.

Players who like to tweak their horns can have a field day with the Mantra. It features an adjustable stack height, adjustable stack keys and adjustable side keys, so you or your technician can easily get it feeling just right. The instrument's angled triple neckstrap hook allows for three mounting positions.

Critical designs, parts and assembly of the Mantra are done at the company's factory in Washington and at Music Medic in North Carolina; other manufacturing is done at Theo Wanne's partner factory in Taiwan.

The Mantra is available in honey lacquer, vintified, black nickel and silver finishes. These horns have to be played to be believed—if you're a serious tenor saxophonist, check one out the first chance you get.

—Ed Enright

Ordering info: thewanne.com

Sopranoplanet 'Missing Link'

Custom-Made Piece

Sopranoplanet has created a soprano saxophone mouthpiece that combines characteristics of the best so-called "slant signature" Otto Links and the rare squared-oval design of the early J.J. Babbitt Otto Links. The company custom-makes the mouthpieces based on what kind of horn and reeds you play and what kind of soprano sound you're looking for, according to Sopranoplanet's Joe Giardullo.

When I said that I play a Yanagisawa curved soprano, use Vandoren ZZ #2.5–#3 reeds and strive for a Wayne Shorter-like tone, he crafted a mouthpiece just for me. And, wow—does this piece play.

My personal Missing Link has a .059-inch tip opening with a medium facing length. It helps me achieve a dark, breathy sound by dampening the reed with my lower lip, and a slightly brighter tone by increasing the airflow and decreasing the contact my lip makes with the reed—all without sacrificing the distinctly sax-like core sound of my horn.

I also found that extreme dynamics are possible with my Missing Link. I can put a ton of air through the mouthpiece, and it keeps opening up to new volume levels and tonal possibilities the more I play it.

Giardullo will tailor your piece to suit your needs. The company's dedication to customer satisfaction makes these mouthpieces more than worth their surprisingly affordable price.

—Ed Enright

Ordering info: sopranoplanet.com



Vandoren V16 Soprano Saxophone Mouthpiece

Tonal Depth, Uniform Quality

Inspired by the sound of great jazz players from the 1950s to the present, Vandoren's V16 ebony soprano saxophone mouthpiece offers depth, power and fullness while providing accuracy of pitch and easy articulation.

The V16 produces great harmonics that will do wonders for your soprano's tone. It offers excellent projection, a rich dynamic range and a homogenous, powerful sound. Overall, this is a fine professional mouthpiece that's priced significantly lower than many of the high-end models players have been turning to lately.

The V16 is available in three tip openings for soprano. The S6, with a medium tip opening and a medium-long facing length, is the easiest of the three to play. The S7 is more open with a medium-long facing and a slightly richer tone quality. The S8 is even more open with a medium-long facing, giving it extreme power in all registers. My favorite was the S6, which had a centered tone and worked well with #3 Vandoren Java filed (red box) soprano reeds. This particular piece would also work well in a classical setting; the S7 and S8 are more suited for jazz and pop. All three models benefit from the uniform production quality Vandoren mouthpieces are known for.



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Protec's neoprene alto/tenor saxophone neckstraps are now available in three lengths: 20, 22 and 24 inches. Each strap features a thick, non-bouncing neoprene neck pad and non-slip adjustment mechanism. They're available with a close-ended metal hook or Protec's patented Quick Release hook.

More info: protecmusic.com



METALLIC BEAUTIES

Sax Dakota recently released the Dakota XG Type alto and tenor saxophones in two custom metallics. The new models feature hand-rubbed antique bronze throughout and a matte black body with silver-plated bell, bow and neck, contrasted with 18-karat gold keys, key cups, key guards and trim. Both models include stainless steel key rods, low-profile key cups and tempered black oxide springs. More info: saxdakota.com

BRIGHT LIGHT

Mighty Bright has brought the Encore LED to its line of modern lights for musicians. Inspired by Mighty Bright's popular orchestra light, the Encore is a sophisticated, compact, six-LED light equipped with two brightness controls to match venue needs. It clips onto any music stand. More info: mightybright.com



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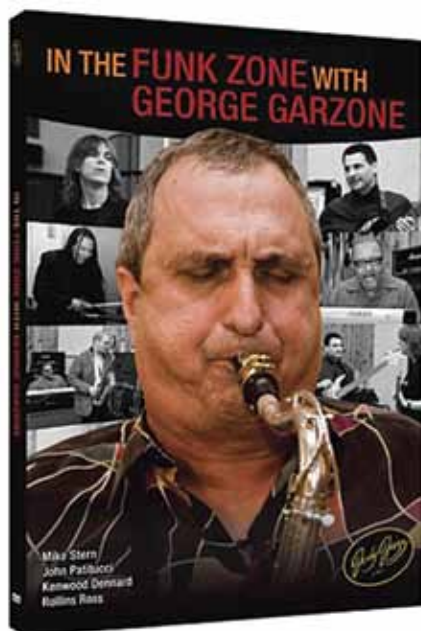
Rico is now offering its Reserve Classic B-flat clarinet reeds and alto saxophone reeds in 25 packs. Ideal for busy band directors, music teachers and performing artists, the Reserve Classic reeds feature increased warmth and lightened projection.

More info: ricoreeds.com



SOPRANO SIGNATURES

Légère Reeds has introduced a Signature series model for soprano saxophone. Designed to exacting specifications, the synthetic reeds deliver depth and warmth and are ideal for elite players. The Signature series reeds are available in quarter strengths. **More info:** legere.com



ZONE OF FUNKINESS

JodyJazz has rolled out the DVD *In The Funk Zone With George Garzone*, which teaches players of all instruments how to use the minor pentatonic scale for simple to advanced soloing techniques—in the most groove-oriented way possible. Tenor saxophonist Garzone provides many examples, and viewers have the opportunity to play along. **More info:** jodyjazz.com

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EAST

Kennedy Center's Mary Lou Williams Women in Jazz Festival

Washington, D.C.

May 9–12

This festival's Emerging Artist Workshop spotlights promising female musicians between ages 18–35. In the style of Williams herself, participants receive a broad education in the art of swing, including discussions on swing, melody and harmony. The event culminates in some stellar performances on the Kennedy Center's Millennium Stage.

Lineup: TBA. Last year's lineup included Jalal, Jamie Baum Septet, Tia Fuller Quartet and Peggy Stern.

More info: kennedy-center.org

Pittsburgh JazzLive International Festival

Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania

June 1–3

During the sprawling JazzLive crawl, patrons venture through downtown Pittsburgh's cultural district to 30 venues boasting 140 musicians and multiple summer stages. An artist market, international cuisine and a diverse lineup characterize this memorable Three Rivers event.

Lineup: Lalah Hathaway, Jeff "Tain" Watts, Andy/Jerry Gonzalez and Fort Apache Band, Average White Band, Monty Alexander, Sean Jones Quintet, Clayton Brothers, Robert Glasper Trio, Poochie Bell, more.

More info: pittsburghjazzlive.com

Michael Arnone's Crawfish Fest

Augusta, New Jersey

June 1–3

The Sussex County Fairgrounds transform into Bourbon Street during this three-day Louisiana-themed, Mardi Gras-style party. The 23rd anniversary festival brings forth a wild parade of authentic Big Easy music, Cajun cooking, workshops and camping.

Lineup: Ivan Neville's Dumpstaphunk, The Malone Brothers, Grayson Capps & The Lost Cause Minstrels, Dr. John and The Lower 911, more.

More info: crawfishfest.com

DC Jazz Festival

Washington, D.C.

June 1–10

More than 50 venues across the nation's capital play host to this fest, which includes a Kennedy Center date,



Jazz in July

performances at the Howard Theatre and a day of jazz designated specifically for families.

Lineup: Dianne Reeves, Toots Thielemans, The Brass-A-Holics with special guest Chuck Brown, Paquito D'Rivera, Monty Alexander, David Sanchez, Anat Cohen, Etienne Charles, Eddie Palmieri, Jerry Gonzalez and Fort Apache, more.

More info: dcjazzfest.org

Burlington Discover Jazz Festival

Burlington, Vermont

June 1–10

Cruises on Lake Champlain and educational events are dotted throughout 10 days of concerts in Burlington's hotspots, bars and restaurants. The repertoire is vast, from big names in blues to New Orleans brass and Latin jazz up-and-comers.

Lineup: Bonnie Raitt, Dianne Reeves, Christian McBride & Inside Straight, Ninety Miles, Lee Konitz, Trombone Shorty, Vijay Iyer, Tim Berne/Snake-oil, Craig Taborn, Donny McCaslin, Mary Halvorson, more.

More info: discoverjazz.com

Vision Festival

New York, New York

June 11–17

The 17th edition of Vision commemorates the life and career of saxophonist Joe McPhee within the confines of Big Apple hotspot Roulette. Panel discussions, an AUM Fidelity 15th anniversary celebration are on the docket for festivalgoers, as is a free performance at Campos Plaza Playground.

Lineup: Thing, Angels Devils and Haints, Kneebody, Mark Dresser Quintet featuring Rudresh Mahanthappa, Hamid Drake Ensemble, Dave

Burrell Eternal Unity, Rob Brown, Marshall Allen/Henry Grimes, Sheila Jordan Project, Trio3 Workman/Cyrille/Lake, Roy Campbell, Dunmall/Shipp, Joelle Leandre, Kidd Jordan, New Sax Ensemble, more.

More info: artsforart.org

Central Pennsylvania Friends of Jazz Festival

Harrisburg, Lancaster and Grantham, Pennsylvania

June 13–17

Now its 32nd year, the state capital festival brings a variety of diversions to the Harrisburg Hilton over a span of three days. An al fresco JazzWalk dining experience, a riverboat cruise and various workshops rank highly among the many festivities throughout the event.

Lineup: TBA.

More info: cpjf.org

New Jersey Jazz Society Jazzfest

Morristown, New Jersey

June 16

The Garden State festival offers up a bevy of tributes, along with areas to purchase CDs and records and outdoor activities. It all goes down in air-conditioned comfort at the College of Saint Elizabeth, which is easily accessible by public transit.

Lineup: Emily Asher's Garden Party, Harlem Renaissance Orchestra, Eddie Monteiro & Shades of Brazil, Swingadelic: Tribute to the Three Louies, Jon Burr Trio Presents Stephane Grappelli Tribute with Jonathan Russell and Howard Alden featuring Lynn Stein, Andy Farber's Swing Mavens with Champian Fulton, Tony DeSare Trio.

More info: njjs.org

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Syracuse Jazz Fest

Syracuse, New York

June 22–23

Cuse's free annual fest celebrates its 30th anniversary year with a diverse roster of smooth jazz, gypsy rhythms and pop headliners. Patrons can frequent an expansive selection of concessions while watching a firework show or participating in legend-lead master classes.

Lineup: Kenny G, Donovan, Average White Band, Billy Vera Big Band, Gregory Porter, Cyrille Aimee & Diego Figueiredo, Mingo Fishtrap, Jaimoe's Jasssz Band.

More info: syracusejazzfest.com

Xerox Rochester International Jazz Festival

Rochester, New York

June 22–30

Year 11 of this East End mainstay fest includes more than 250 performances at 17 venues over the course of nine days. Customize your festival experience by purchasing one of several ticketing packages, such as the Club Pass, and pick and choose between various funk, blues and vocal jazz headliners.

Lineup: Norah Jones, Diana Krall, Zappa Plays Zappa, Steve Martin, Trombone Shorty, Govt Mule, Jimmie Vaughan, Christian McBride, Roy Haynes, Raul Midon, Eliane Elias, Tom Harrell, Mike Stern, Nicholas Payton, Ninety Miles, Terje Rypdal, Bergen Big Band, more.

More info: rochesterjazz.com

Paulie's New Orleans Jazz n' Blues Festival

Worcester, Massachusetts

June 23–24

John & Son's Urban Festival Grounds set the scene for a wealth of Crescent City musical talent. The fifth run of Paulie's boasts blues talent that ranges from the obscure to raucous brass band party music.

Lineup: Tab Benoit, Eric Lindell Band, Mem Shannon & The Membership, Sonny Landreth, Bonerama, Honey Island Swamp Band, Royal Southern Brotherhood, Anders Osborne, Billy Miso & Restless Natives w/ Big Chief Juan Pardo of the Golden Commanche Mardi Gras Indians, Jumpin' Johnny Sansone, The Roadkill Orchestra.

More info: baevents.com/pauliesnolabluesandjazzfestival/index.html

Freihofer's Saratoga Jazz Festival

Saratoga Springs, New York

June 30–July 1

Southern-style barbecue, art exhibi-



JOSHUA REDMAN

Saxophonist Joshua Redman continues to tour with multiple groups, including a duo with pianist Brad Mehldau, a trio with bassist Rueben Rogers and drummer Greg Hutchinson, the collective James Farm with pianist Aaron Parks, bassist Matt Penman and drummer Eric Harland, and his Double Trio with Penman, Rogers, Hutchinson and drummer Brian Blade. Major festival appearances this summer include a trio set at the St. Lucia Jazz Festival on May 9 and a guest spot with the Bad Plus at the Twin Cities Jazz Festival on June 30.

tions and artist autograph sessions are prevalent at this fest, which kicks off at the Saratoga Performing Arts Center. Freihofer's delivers a lineup of heavy hitters and easy listens.

Lineup: Maceo Parker, Diana Krall, Trombone Shorty & Orleans Avenue, Chris Botti, Esperanza Spalding, Arturo O'Farrill Afro Latin Orchestra, Mingus Big Band, Yellowjackets, Hiromi Trio Project, Christian McBride & Inside Straight, more.

More info: spac.org/jazzfest

Briggs Farm Blues Festival

Nescopeck, Pennsylvania

July 6–7

This two-day fest is now in its 15th year, and regularly packs an onsite campground and two stages of live music onto the rolling hills of Briggs Farm. There are back-porch blues and rootsy folk amid delta-style grub, free hayrides and an avenue of local artisans.

Lineup: Bernard Allison, Eddie "The Chief"

Clearwater, Mooreland & Arbuckle, The Alexis P. Suter Band, Chris Beard, Rory Block, The Butterfield Blues Band, Linsey Alexander.

More info: briggfarm.com

North Atlantic Blues Festival

Rockland, Maine

July 14–15

The main street of Rockland closes to traffic in lieu of this weekend fest, which is in its 19th year. National blues performers and local favorites comprise a sturdy repertoire who perform in more than 20 of the town's large-scale theaters or intimate coffee shops. A tribute to Koko Taylor is included in the mix.

Lineup: Rand Oxford Band, Albert Castiglia, Royal Southern Brotherhood with Cyril Neville, Mike Zito, Devon Allman, Charlie Wooton, Mean Willie Green, Rick Estrin & the Nightcats, Tab Benoit, Charlie A'Court, Mark LaVole & Dave Keller, Anthony Gomes, Ana Popovic, John Mayal, more.

More info: northatlanticbluesfestival.com

Maryland Summer Jazz Festival

Rockville, Maryland and Washington, DC

July 14–27

During its eighth season, this Rockville-based festival continues to focus on the educational side of jazz, serving up workshops and regular jazz jam sessions. The festival culminates in performances by a combination crop of eager students and seasoned pros brought full-circle by Artistic Director Jeff Antoniuk.

Lineup: Tom Baldwin, Peter BarenBregge, Wade Beach, Alison Crockett, Ingrid Jensen, Marty Morrison, Matthew Stevens, Jeff Antoniuk.

More info: marylandsummerjazz.com

Jazz in July

New York, New York

July 17–25

Once again, Bill Charlap assumes the role of artistic director during this unique fusion of music and culture. The 92nd Street Y has been the sight of various jazz legend celebrations, tributes to great composers and Latin and bebop explorations. Freddy Cole also returns with his quartet for a collaborative performance with Ernie Andrews and Charlap's Trio.

Lineup: Ernie Andrews, Barbara Carroll, Freddy Cole, Dick Hyman, Jay Leonhart, Houston Person, Bucky Pizzarelli, Rene Rosnes, Sachal Vasandani, The Count Basie Orchestra, more.

More info: 92y.org/jazz

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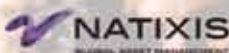
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KoSA International Percussion Workshop

Castleton, Vermont

July 24-29

Director Aldo Mazza and a faculty of master percussionists deliver a hands-on drum education experience succeeded by a variety of afternoon and evening concerts by both faculty and students. Located at Castleton State College, the six-day event covers a globally diverse drum curriculum.

Lineup: Alex Acuna, Glen Velez, Virgil Donati, Aldo Mazza, Bernard Purdie, Marcus Santos, Richie Garcia, more.

More info: kosamusic.org

Pennsylvania Blues Festival

Palmerton, Pennsylvania

July 27-29

After 21 years, the former Pocono Blues Festival still maintains a sturdy repertoire of 15 national blues acts on two stages over the course of two days. Situated in the scenic Blue Mountain ski area, the festival offers chairlift rides and soul food amidst jam sessions that go on throughout the evening.

Lineup: The Brooks Family Blues Dynasty featuring Lonnie, Ronnie & Wayne Baker Brooks, Billy Branch & The Sons of Blues, more.

More info: skiblueumt.com

Caramoor Jazz Festival

Katonah, New York

July 28-29

The Mediterranean backdrop of the Venetian Theater once again sets the scene for the 19th edition of this roster of chart-toppers. Jazz producer Jim Luce has upped the ante this year with a range of jazz vocalists and a bevy of Grammy winners.

Lineup: Gretchen Parlato, Kenny Barron, Dee Dee Bridgewater, Roy Haynes Fountain of Youth, Pat Metheny Unity Band with Chris Potter, Antonio Sanchez, and Ben Williams.

More info: caramoor.org/festival/jazz

Litchfield Jazz Festival

Goshen, Connecticut

August 10-12

Saxist Gary Smulyan assumes the coveted role of artist-in-residence for the 17th anniversary of this prestigious festival. Throughout the weekend, Smulyan will lead a variety of clinics and talks alongside a brand new opening night jazz party and a musical salute to George Coleman.

Lineup: The Four Freshmen, Vince Giordano and The Nighthawks, Helen Sung Trio, Ambrose Akinmusire, Gary Smulyan and Eric Alexander,



PAT METHENY

A 19-time Grammy award winner Metheny, has no shortage of accolades, but the guitarist can add another line to his resume as he presents his latest brainchild, the Unity Band, a enticing triumvirate of talent that features bassist Ben Williams and saxophonist Chris Potter. He'll return to Monterey Jazz Festival (September 21) with the group but will also be making other appearances with another duo of tempting must-sees: bassist Christian McBride and drummer Jack DeJohnette.

Dirty Dozen Brass Band,

Miguel Zenón Quartet, more.

More info: litchfieldjazzfest.com

Newport Jazz Festival

Newport, Rhode Island

August 3-5

The newly non-profit Newport Jazz Festival returns to its charming New England locale with an arsenal of talent and a charity gala. Patrons can purchase two-day ticket packages and catch Bill Frisell's presentation of the John Lennon songbook.

Lineup: Pat Metheny, Jack DeJohnette, Joe Lovano & Dave Douglas, James Carter Organ Trio, Christian McBride, Darcy James Argue, Jason Moran & the Bandwagon, Miguel Zenon, Ambrose Akinmusire, 3 Cohens, more.

More info: newportjazzfest.net

Scranton Jazz Festival

Scranton, Pennsylvania

August 3-5

Now in its ninth year, Scranton's signature fest features performances within various sects of jazz at a number of downtown venues, including the historic

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Bill Charlap, artistic director

Mon, Jul 16, 8 pm

JAZZ PIANO MASTER CLASS

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

Tue, Jul 17, 8 pm

SONG & SOUL: ERNIE ANDREWS & FREDDY COLE

Freddy Cole, vocals & piano / Randy Napoleon, guitar / Elias Bailey, bass / Curtis Boyd, drums / Ernie Andrews, vocals / Bill Charlap, piano / Houston Person, tenor sax / Peter Washington, bass / Kenny Washington, drums

Wed, Jul 18, 8 pm

TIME REMEMBERED: THE MUSIC OF BILL EVANS

Bill Charlap, piano / Renee Rosnes, piano / Steve Nelson, vibes / Greg Gisbert, trumpet / Dave Stryker, guitar / Scott Colley, bass / Joe La Barbera, drums

Thu, Jul 19, 8 pm

AN ENCHANTED EVENING: THE SONGS OF RICHARD RODGERS

Bill Charlap, piano / Barbara Carroll, piano & vocals / Sachal Vasandani, vocals / Warren Vaché, cornet / Jon Gordon, alto sax / John Allred, trombone / Jay Leonhart, bass / Sean Smith, bass / Tim Horner, drums

Tue, Jul 24, 8 pm

PIANO SUMMIT: DICK HYMAN & BILL CHARLAP

Dick Hyman, piano / Bill Charlap, piano / Sandy Stewart, vocals / Ken Peplowski, clarinet / Harry Allen, tenor sax / Jay Leonhart, bass / Willie Jones III, drums

Wed, Jul 25, 8 pm

DRUMS AROUND THE CORNER: THE JAZZ MESSAGE

Lewis Nash, drums / Kenny Washington, drums / Joe Magnarelli, trumpet / Jimmy Greene, tenor sax / Michael Dease, trombone / Bill Charlap, piano / Renee Rosnes, piano / Peter Washington, bass

Thu, Jul 26, 8 pm

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

More info: scrantonjazzfestival.org

Belleayre Music Festival

**Highmount, New York
August 3-11**

Atop Belleayre Mountain in the Catskills is New York's showcase of tributes and new configurations outside of the city. A loving tribute to Lionel Hampton ranks among the festivities in this music-loving ski town, which is two-and-a-half hours from Manhattan.

Lineup: Ed Palermo's Frank Zappa Little Big Band, Tribute to Lionel Hampton featuring Diane Schuur and Jason Marsalis, Harris & Blackout, Pat Metheny Unity Band, more.

More info: belleayremusic.org

Provincetown Jazz Festival

**Cape Cod, Massachusetts
August 11 and 13**

Spectators can saunter between Provincetown Town Hall and Contuit Center for the Arts during the eighth annual run of this Cape Cod standby. No matter the venue, Provincetown is sure to deliver a raucous time.

Lineup: Sharón Clark, Paul Carr, Chris Grasso, Alex Brown, Joe McCarthy, Zach Brown, Steve Ahern, Bruce Abbott, Debra Mann, Alan Clinger, Fred Boyle, Ron Ormsby, Bart Weisman, and Tedi Marsh.

More info: provincetownjazzfestival.org

The Many Colors of a WOMAN

**Hartford, Connecticut
September 8**

The highly anticipated 25th

year of this New England platform for female artists emphasis women composers in jazz this time around. The one-day event offers spectators a broad education in contemporary jazz but also pays homage to the greats.

Lineup: Nicki Mathis' Afrikan Am Jazz New Millennium All Stars, Rozanne Levinne, Antoinette Montague, Dotti Anita Taylor, Deborah Weicz, Mark Whiteage, more.

More info: themanycolorsofawomanincorporated.webs.com

Delaware Water Gap Celebration of the Arts

**Delaware Water Gap, Pennsylvania
September 7-9**

This off-the-beaten path haven for jazz heads serves up a fest that is celebrating 35 years in 2012. Its not uncommon for festivalgoers to spot a few NEA Jazz Masters performing—or strolling—down historic Delaware Ave. during this go-to event.

Lineup: Phil Woods, Bob Dorough, Dave Liebman, Jazz Artists Repertory Orchestra, COTA Cats, Bill Goodwin, Urbie, Kathy and Jesse Green, more.

More info: cotajazz.org

Berklee BeanTown Jazz Festival

**Boston, Massachusetts
September 29**

From Columbus Avenue to Massachusetts Avenue and Burke Street, the Berklee BeanTown Jazz Festival has delighted concertgoers with a host of jazz, Latin, blues, and groove acts along Boston's South End. This year's theme celebrate women in jazz, but there's also more than 70 vendors and activities for families, too.

Lineup: TBA. Past performers include Joshua Redman, more.

More info: beantownjazz.org

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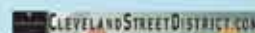
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Artist(s) subject to change.

COLLABORATIVE ART

Detroit Jazz Festival Looks Ahead with new Artistic Director

More than 100 people are onstage, and for a few minutes, all but two of them are silent. Those two are pianist Alvin Waddles and bassist Marion Hayden, the latter of whom sows plaintively at the strings to accent the pianist's heavy pauses as they feel their way through a stunning rendition of Duke Ellington's "Reflections In D." The tranquility of this long moment is a calm eye in the raucous, celebratory storm of the Detroit Jazz Festival's first Community Series event of the year, devoted to the sacred music of Ellington. Soon, the 100-voice choir is back up and singing, the band is swinging, and there's a crazy momentum happening. Duke made this music near the end of his life, but this version of the song feels like a beginning.

And that's what it is. On an entertainment calendar, the 2012 Detroit Jazz Festival might appear to be merely a four-day event, taking place over the Labor Day weekend (Aug. 31–Sept. 3). In reality, those weekend concerts are the culmination of a year-round program of educational and scholarly events, workshops and performances. The Ellington tribute, staged at Detroit's Orchestra Hall, was the first public event of the 2012 festival, and it kicked things off to a rousing start.

"We do a lot in the community before the festival—it's not just a four-day event. It really is a cultural happening in the city of Detroit," says Chris Collins, who took over as the festival's artistic director last November. Collins is the first active jazz musician to hold the position, and he is putting his own stamp on the festival, now in its 33rd year.

"Being an active musician, my programming approach is a little different," he explains. "I think of things in terms of the music first, and how interesting you can make the combinations. A festival is not a club date, or a casual performance—it's an opportunity for something very special to happen. Our Sunday night headliner is Wayne Shorter. He's a defining, foundational figure in the development of jazz. So to make that message clear, that entire day will be building to Wayne's performance."

Among the artists playing in the build-up to Shorter's set are Joe Lovano and Dave Douglas (in their Shorter-inspired quintet Sound Prints), as well as a specially assembled big band playing commissioned arrangements of Shorter tunes. "Each piece will feature a soloist from elsewhere in the festival," says Collins. "There will be video elements, and then at the end, Wayne will perform. We want to show the facets of Wayne, and we want to show how he's changed jazz with his artistry."

Collins comes by his history-oriented approach to festival programming naturally. He has taught jazz history at Wayne State University for nearly 20 years, and he has been steeped in the music since he spent a summer in his childhood with his tenor saxophone, trying to learn to play "Desafinado" like Coleman Hawkins.

"The underlying themes of the entire festival are the art of collaboration and the mentor-disciple relationship," he says. "Being a jazz musician is about giving of yourself. It's about collaboration with your bandmates and the student-master dynamic—whether it's in formal education or cats who play jam sessions every night in clubs and the



Detroit Jazz Festival's Duke Ellington Community Series event

CORRELL LAMBERTSON

young guys who come to be mentored by them. This is how jazz has always been passed on. It's a language that one generation gives to the next."

That view of the music is well represented in the scheduled slate of events. In May, there will be a workshop on collaboration in film scoring, highlighted by Joe LoDuca and festival performer Terence Blanchard, in which a day of educational events will build to a public performance.

On June 1, for the first time, the festival will collaborate directly with the Detroit Symphony Orchestra. The program includes the North American premier of two pieces for orchestra and jazz quartet by American composer James Hartway and Italian composer Carlo Boccadoro. Collins is a member of the Detroit Torino Jazz Quartet with Sean Dobbins, Emanuele Cisi and Furio DiCastri, and their performance with the orchestra will be synchronized with time-lapse photography.

Other programs will combine performances and education. The family of late drummer J.C. Heard will present the latest iteration of the well-established educational program Jazz Week at Wayne. An August 24 show with three female vocalists and a big band at the Eleanor & Edsel Ford House will offer the opportunity for three young, jazz-focused singers to win a chance to perform with the band.

All these events will help drum up enthusiasm for the Labor Day weekend concerts. Collins takes great pride in this year's lineup. "We've never brought this many significant artists together before," he says.

The performers include Sonny Rollins, Pat Metheny with Chris Potter, Wynton Marsalis, Chick Corea and Gary Burton with strings, Lovano and Douglas, and a separate set by Lovano with his wife, singer Judi Silvano. Other artists in the lineup are Blanchard, Fred Hirsch, the Donald Harrison Quintet, Tom Harrell, Randy Brecker, Lew Tabackin, Charles McPherson, Bill Stewart and Brian Lynch.

Saxophonist Steve Wilson will pay tribute to Charlie Parker's sessions with strings, and David Berger will conduct a second tribute to Ellington. The Preservation Hall Jazz Band will perform with other New Orleans musicians, while a tribute to Art Blakey will feature numerous players who passed through his band, including Detroit-born trombonist Curtis Fuller and bassist Peter Washington. Lewis Nash will handle drums for the set.

The festival remains free, as always. "I remember as a kid, going down to Hart Plaza, and seeing guys I never could have seen other-

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MIDWEST

Tri-C JazzFest Cleveland, Ohio

April 19-29

The 33rd annual Tri-C fest will celebrate all things Cleveland, at venues spread across the town. On hand will be legends, burgeoning talent and three generations of great women. Bringing jazz education to the forefront once again, this year will feature Education Days/The DownBeat Invitational with the Tri-C JazzFest High School All-Star Alumni band featuring Robert Hurst, Terrell Stafford, Matt Wilson. Also there's Showtime at High Noon: "Swing Kids," and a master class with NEA Jazz Master Jack DeJohnette.

Lineup: David Sanborn and Trombone Shorty, Diana Krall, Aretha Franklin, the Paul Samuels 4, A Tribute to Nina Simone, Esperanza Spalding, more.

More info: triczazzfest.com

Glenn Miller Festival Clarinda, Iowa

June 7-10

For the 37th time, a fellowship of jazz fans head to the legendary bandleader's birthplace to pay homage to the man himself. The festival celebrates all things Alton Glenn Miller, from tribute stage shows to picnics and historical displays, including tours of the Glenn Miller Birthplace Museum and Home.

Lineup: TBA. Past performers include The World Famous Glenn Miller, Orchestra, United States Airforce Noteables.

More info: glennmiller.org

Chicago Blues Festival Chicago, Illinois

June 8-10

With the legendary Mavis Staples headlining this year's festival, Chicago's new mayor will, no doubt, be on hand to help celebrate the largest free-admission blues festival in the world, not to mention the largest of all Chicago's music festivals. Grant Park, located on the Windy City's beautiful lakefront, will be the setting for upwards of a half-million music-loving fans, enjoying music from the fest's four stages for this, their 29th.

Lineup: Texas Johnny Brown and Floyd Taylor, with tributes to friends of the festival who have recently departed: David "Honeyboy" Edwards, Pinetop Perkins, Hubert Sumlin and Willie "Big Eyes" Smith, ascelebration of Lightnin

Hopkins, Koko Taylor, Muddy Waters and Howlin' Wolf.

More info: chicagobluesfestival.us

Ravinia Festival Highland Park, Illinois June 9-Sept. 9

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

Lineup: Esperanza Spalding, Sergio Mendes, Diana Krall, John Pizzarelli, Santana, Al Green, Earth, Wind & Fire, Dr. John, Tedeschi Trucks Band, Jimmy Cliff, more.

More info: ravinia.org

Summer Solstice Jazz Festival East Lansing, Michigan June 22-23

Two extraordinary evenings of jazz in the heart of downtown East Lansing, featuring outdoor jazz cafes, a family area and much more. SSJF is free.

Lineup: Wycliffe Gordon, Niki Haris, assorted national, regional and local jazz performers.

More info: eljazzfest.com

Twin Cities Jazz Festival Saint Paul, Minnesota June 28-30

Minnesota's largest jazz festival con-

verges on the historic Lowertown district for the 14th year, offering free concerts on two Mears Park stages in what will be their biggest festival ever.

Lineup: The Bad Plus with Joshua Redman, Francisco Mela, Delfeayo Marsalis Octet, others. Mela, Marsalis and Redman will also conduct workshops at nearby McNally Smith College during the festival.

More info: hotsummerjazz.com

Elkhart Jazz Festival Elkhart, Indiana June 22-24

This year marks the Elkhart Jazz Festival's 25th year of presenting diverse lineups that feature over 90 performers, playing everything from traditional gypsy swing and Delta blues to New Orleans and Dixieland brass. Elkhart once again will present music at six separate downtown venues.

Lineup: Bobby Lewis, Alfonso Ponticelli & Swing Gitan, Bucky Pizzarelli & Ed Laub, Blue Sky 5, Alejo Poveda's Latin Quintet, Davina And The Vagabonds, Joan Collasso Quartet, The Four Freshman, more.

More info: elkhartjazzfestival.com

Mississippi Valley Blues Festival Davenport, Iowa June 29-July 1

In its 28th year, this Mississippi Valley Blues Society-produced concert week-end features about 30 leading bands and



Twin Cities Jazz Festival



Umbria Jazz 12

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For more info & tickets:

healdsburgjazzfestival.org

solo performers in LeClaire Park, on the banks of the mighty Mississippi.

Lineup: Kenny Neal, Guitar Shorty, Johnny Rawls, Earnest "Guitar" Roy, Liz Mandeville & Donna Herula, Super Chikan, Sugar Ray & The Bluetones, more.

More info: mvbs.org/fest

Iowa City Jazz Festival

Iowa City, Iowa

June 29–July 1

Every year held in the heart of downtown Iowa City, this popular free festival features well-known national and international acts on the main stage. Three side stages feature artists who represent the youth, college and local arenas.

Lineup: Kevin Mahogany & The Iowa Jazz Orchestra, Robert Glasper Experiment with Bilal, Heath Brothers Quartet, Mumbo Jumbo: A Tribute To Paul Motian, with Matt Wilson, Chris Cheek, Mat Maneri, Steve Cardenas and Thomas Morgan, more.

More info: summerofthearts.org

Sioux Falls Jazz & Blues Festival

Sioux Falls, South Dakota

July 26–28

In addition to three days of live music on two stages, this family-friendly jazz cornerstone hosts a summer jazz camp for budding musicians and a Yankton Trail Park 5K. This free festival celebrates its 21st anniversary this year.

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

More info: jazzfestsiouxfalls.com

Columbus Jazz & Rib Fest

Columbus, Ohio

July 20–22

The annual competition for the area's best finger-licking 'Q celebrates its 33rd year at the downtown riverfront on three stages and hosts a surplus of glory-seeking rib-burners from 10 states and Canada, along with a variable smorgasbord of national and international jazz fare. For a sample of regional musical flavor, head to the Jazz Cafe, which serves up the hottest local jazz acts.

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

More info: hottribscooljazz.org

Prairie Dog Blues Festival

Prairie du Chien, Wisconsin

July 27–28

It's their 15th annual. Arrive via boat,



BILL FRISELL

The mind-bending guitarist's recent projects include the band album Floratone II, the John Lennon tribute All We Are Saying and The Great Flood, a film for which he performs the score live. His Newport Jazz Fest gig on Aug. 4 will be a salute to Lennon with collaborators that include Jenny Scheinman and Greg Leisz.

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

Lineup: Tinsley Ellis, Devon Allman's Honeytribe, Bobby Rush, Grady Champion, The Jimmys, Reverend Raven & The Chain Smokin' Altar Boys, more.

More info: prairiedogblues.com

Bix Beiderbecke Memorial Jazz Festival

Davenport, Iowa

August 2–5

For its 41st run, this popular Quad City gathering relives its humble origins, recreating its first lineup with a slew of Bix fest vets. This hotbed of traditional jazz brings back some of the festival's original performers at some of Bix's old stomping grounds.

Lineup: Manny Lopez Big Band, Jim Cullum's Jazz Band, "The Future of Jazz" with Dave Bennett, Dave Block, Josh Duffee and Andy Schumm, Dave Bennett Quartet, more.

More info: bixsociety.org



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Lansing Jazzfest Lansing, Michigan

August 3-4

Drawing nearly 15,000 people annually, the 17th edition promises an even greater lineup of artists amid the artistic ambience of Old Town's gallery row. Three stages, with a food court and craft vendors, the festival asks each of the artists to play an original composition never played at previous festivals.

Lineup: Tim Cunningham, Etienne Charles, John Douglas, fo/mo deep, more.

More info: jazzlansing.com

Chicago Jazz Festival

Chicago, Illinois

August 30-September 2

The 34th Annual Chicago Jazz Festival is the city's longest running lakefront music festival and a Labor Day Weekend tradition. The festival is free and features four stages of jazz performances in Grant Park. Other jazz events are planned for the nearby Millennium Park and Chicago Cultural Center during the weekend.

Lineup: TBA online beginning May 1.

More info: chicagojazzfestival.us

Detroit International Jazz Festival

Detroit, Michigan

August 31-September 3

The 33rd annual Detroit Jazz Festival will set sail once again with its annual fundraising cruise. Subtitled "We Bring You the World," the 2012 season will celebrate world influences on jazz, as well as its influence on the world. As is the tradition at the festival, Detroit's significant jazz legacy will be front and

center. Terence Blanchard is the 2012 artist in residence.

Lineup: Sonny Rollins, Pat Metheny with Chris Potter, Wynton Marsalis, Chick Corea, Gary Burton, Joe Lovano, Dave Douglas, Judi Silvano, Fred Hirsch, Donald Harrison Quintet, Tom Harrell, Randy Brecker, Lew Tabackin, Charles McPherson, Bill Stewart.

More info: detroitjazzfest.com

Saint Louis Art Fair

St. Louis, Missouri

September 7-9

Held in the central business district of downtown St. Louis, this year's festival continues to present music over three days. The repertoire ranges from electric blues to swing.

Lineup: TBA. Last year's performers included the Gene Dobbs Bradford Blues Experience, Jeremiah Johnson Band, Swing DeVille, Sheldon Jazz Quintet and Rusty Nail.

More info: culturalfestivals.com

Indy Jazz Fest Indianapolis, Indiana

September 10-15

The Crossroads of America is also one of the nation's most promising jazz niches. Patrons will not only learn about the rich musical history of Indy. They'll also be immersed in an summer series of concerts and several educational workshops and classes.

Lineup: TBA. Last year's lineup included Yellowjackets, Rufus Reid, Spyro Gyra, George Benson, Trombone Shorty, Melvin Rhyne and others.

More info: indyjazzfest.net

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Blues At the Crossroads

Terra Haute, Indiana

September 14–15

This two-day party, celebrating its 12th year, takes place outdoors on 7th and Wabash with a host of blues and beyond headliners, with local food vendors and a beer garden.

Lineup: TBA.

More info: bluesatthecrossroads.com

World Music Festival

Chicago, Illinois

September 21–27

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

Lineup: TBA.

More info: worldmusicfestivalchicago.org

Hyde Park Jazz Festival

Chicago, Illinois

September 29–30

Throughout the afternoon and late into the night, this historic neighborhood will host the sixth anniversary of this festival that brings in more than 150 musicians

to 13 venues in and around the University of Chicago/Hyde Park area. Expect a mix of the city's veterans and new talent, as well as national stars.

Lineup: TBA. Last year's performers included Ari Brown, Bethany Pickens, Corey Wilkes, Don Byron, many others.

More info: hydeparkjazzfestival.org

Edgefest

Ann Arbor, Michigan

October 31–November 3

Edgefest remains Michigan's perennial hot spot for the avant garde. Again, the focus will be on multi-instrumentalists who blend classical music and jazz. Also, the community-wide Edgefest Parade on Saturday with area musicians and Edgefest artists.

Lineup: Rudresh Mahanthappa's Indo Pak, Jason Hwang's Edge, Taylor Ho Bynum Sextet, Leo Wadada Smith & Ten Freedom Summers, Mary Redhouse, Ben Allison's Strung Trio (with Steve Cardenas and Jenny Scheinman), Fred Van Hove, Ed Sarath and Timescape, more.

More info: kerrytownconcerthouse.com/index.php/events/edgefest



ROBERT GLASPER

The Robert Glasper Experiment—featuring keyboardist Glasper, drummer Chris Dave, bassist Derrick Hodge and multi-instrumentalist Casey Benjamin—will be on tour in support of its new genre-bending CD *Black Radio* (Blue Note). Gigs include the Toronto Jazz Festival on June 25 with special guest Bilal (who appears on *Black Radio*), as well as the North Sea Jazz Festival on July 6.

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SOUTH

Savannah Music Festival

Savannah, Georgia

March 22–April 7

This multi-genre festival—which embraces jazz, pop, classical, blues, world music and more—takes place in 12 venues throughout Savannah's Historic District.

Lineup: Jon Faddis Quartet featuring Terell Stafford and Sean Jones with Brian Blade's Fellowship Band, Brad Mehldau/Joshua Redman Duo, Hello Pops! with Wycliffe Gordon Quintet, Piano Showdown with Kenny Barron, Aaron Diehl, Cedar Walton and Kevin Bales, Marcus Roberts Trio, Jeff Clayton Quartet.

More info: savannahmusicfestival.org

French Quarter Festival

New Orleans, Louisiana

April 12–15

This fest bills itself as the largest free music festival in the South, with over 800 local musicians, more than 65 New Orleans restaurants, and two areas for kids. The festival offers shuttle service and a free app for smartphones.

Lineup: Bone Tone Brass Band, Trombone Shorty & Orleans Avenue, Chubby Carrier and the Bayou Swamp Band, Rockin' Dopsie Jr. & the Zydeco Twisters, Banu Gibson & the New Orleans Hot Jazz, The Dukes of Dixieland, Wanda Rouzan and A Taste of New Orleans, more.

More info: fqfi.org/frenchquarterfest

Festival International de Louisiane

Lafayette, Louisiana

April 25–29

Set in downtown Lafayette, this free fest celebrates the French cultural heritage of southern Louisiana, with its combination of French, African, Caribbean and Hispanic influences. The fest includes six music stages, street musicians and animators, arts and crafts boutiques, art galleries, cultural workshops, international cooking demonstrations and a world music store.

Lineup: Robert Randolph & the Family Band, Sonny Landreth, Gary Clark Jr., Red Stick Ramblers, Shawn Sahm & members of the Texas Tornados, Vagabond Swing, Pine Leaf Boys, Seun Kuti & Egypt 80, Savoy Family Cajun Band, Catherine Planet, Joel Savoy's Honky Tonk Merry-Go-Round Essentially Ellington Festival jazz band winner, more.

More info: festivalinternational.com

Clearwater Jazz Holiday



Hill Country Harmonica

Waterford, Mississippi

May 18–20

An intensive two-and-a-half-day blues harp workshop with 20 classes, multiple jam sessions and evening concerts in the middle of the rustic Mississippi Hill Country at the Foxfire Ranch, Hill Country Harmonica is a learning and entertainment experience where you'll be taught by, and jam with, some of the world's most famous blues harp players while immersing yourself in hill country culture and lore. All are welcome, from the absolute beginner to the professional players looking to add to their chops and their guests.

Lineup: Living Blues Legend Billy Branch and the Sons of Blues, Mitch Kashmar, Phil Wiggins, Dr. Robert "Feel Good" Potts, Adam Gussow, Jimi Lee, Brandon Bailey, Todd Parrot, Deak Harp.

More info: hillcountryharmonica.com

Jacksonville Jazz Festival

Jacksonville, Florida

May 24–27

At this street festival, which takes place in downtown Jacksonville, highlights include the Jacksonville Jazz Piano Competition; Art in the Heart, a juried art show and craft sale; Wine Down Brew Town tastings; Generation Next, a youth talent competition; Jazz Brunch; and midnight jazz jams

Lineup: Sonny Rollins, Chick Corea/Stanley Clarke/Lenny White Trio, Patti Austin with the Jacksonville Symphony Orchestra, Trombone Shorty & Orleans Avenue, Poncho Sanchez and his Latin Jazz Band featuring Terence Blanchard, Karrin Allyson.

More info: jaxjazzfest.com

Spoletto Festival USA

Charleston, South Carolina

May 25–June 10

This year marks the 36th season of Spoleto Festival USA, which features two full weeks of music (including jazz, blues, classical, bluegrass), theater and dance taking place at various venues throughout the city.

Lineup: Mavis Staples, k.d. lang, Joy Kills Sorrow, Cécile McLorin Salvant, Jake Shimabukuro, Virginia Rodrigues, Rebirth Brass Band, David Peña Dorantes, Renaud Garcia-Fons.

More info: spoletousa.org

Atlanta Jazz Festival

Atlanta, Georgia

May 26–28

The 35th-annual event takes place in Atlanta's historic Piedmont Park, which features three stages: Mainstage, International Stage and the Beer Garden Stage. A late-night jazz jam held Sunday evening at the Loews Atlanta Hotel features a jam session with musicians of all ages. Master classes and conversations with recognized jazz legends take place during the festival, and a KidZone includes face painters, arts and crafts and interactive play for all.

Lineup: TBA.

More info: atlantafestivals.com

Eureka Springs Blues Weekend

Eureka Springs, Arkansas

May 31–June 3

This fundraiser for The Blues Foundation's HART Fund and Turpentine Creek Wildlife Refuge features free blues in Basin

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sonny rollins

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**chick corea, gary burton
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Spring Park, plus headliner shows in the Auditorium, Barefoot Ballroom, Turpentine Creek Wildlife Refuge, and music in clubs all over town.

Lineup: Ruthie Foster, Tommy Castro, Kenny Neal, Michael "Ironman" Burks, Lazy Lester, Marquise Knox, Hadden Sayers, The Cate Brothers, The Super Reverbs featuring RJ Misco and Jeremy Johnson, Nathan Aronowitz.

More info: eurekaspringsblues.com

Virginia Blues and Jazz Festival

Hot Springs, Virginia

June 15-17

All events for this three-day festival take place on indoor and outdoor stages on the grounds of the first-rate Garth Newel Music Center.

Lineup: Catherine Russell, Bert Carlson Quartet, Honey Island Swamp Band, Grupo Fantasma, The Robert Cray Band, New Orleans Brunch with The Honey Island Swamp Band (unplugged).

More info: vabluesfest.org



From left: John Medeski, Vernon Reid, Cindy Blackman and Jack Bruce

SPECTRUM ROAD

As a hat tip to iconic jazz drummer Tony Williams, Cream bassist Jack Bruce has concocted quite the tantalizing supergroup: Drummer Cindy Blackman, Living Colour guitarist Vernon Reid and pianist John Medeski are taking their shared Williams fandom and a brand new debut album to the festival circuit. See the versatile collective at North Sea Jazz Festival this year, at Bonnaroo



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Satchmo Summerfest

New Orleans, Louisiana
August 2-5

This free fest takes place in the Louisiana State Museum's Old U.S. Mint in the French Quarter, and is dedicated to the music and legacy of its native son Louis Armstrong.

Lineup: TBA. Past performers include Kermit Ruffins and the Barbecue Swingers, Tremé Brass Band, the Soul Rebels Brass Band, Jeremy Davenport, Glenn David Andrews and Miss Sophia Lee.

More info: satchmosummerfest.com

Houston International Jazz Festival

Houston, Texas
August 3-5

Now in its 22nd year, the festival makes use of both the Bayou Music Center and the Red Cat Jazz Café in Houston. Produced by the non-profit Jazz Education Inc., the festival features performances by student ensembles as well as established local, national and international talent.

Lineup: Rachelle Ferrell, Hiroshima, Summer Jazz Workshop All-

Stars, more TBA.

More info: jazzeducation.org

Jazz'SAlive Festival

San Antonio, Texas
September 22-23

Co-sponsored by San Antonio Parks Foundation and the City of San Antonio, the 29th edition of this festival takes place in Travis Park. The free two-day festival features national, regional and local musicians. Jam sessions happen late-night at St. Anthony Hotel's Peacock Alley until 2 a.m. A dinner gala with live auction takes place on the eve of the festival, Sept. 21.

Lineup: TBA.

More info: saparksfoundation.org/jazzsalive.html

Amelia Island Jazz Festival

Fernandina Beach, Florida
October 7-14

Founded in 2001, the Amelia Island Jazz Festival is very young as far as music festivals go. But this festival has come a long way in a short time and shows strong potential to become a world-renowned musical event. This year's fest will feature Blues Night, Latin

Night, workshops, clinics, jam sessions and a free park concert. Concerts take place primarily at the Omni Amelia Island Plantation, plus other local venues.

Lineup: David Benoit, Spyro Gyra, The Dynamic Les DeMerle Band with Bonnie Eisele and special guest, Doug Cameron, more TBA.

More info: ameliaislandjazzfestival.com

Clearwater Jazz Holiday

Clearwater, Florida
October 18-21

The white sandy beaches of Coachman Park in downtown Clearwater become home to this four-day fall gathering, now in its 33rd year. The festival offers music and art against the backdrop of warm breezes, brilliant sunsets and the Gulf of Mexico. Mainstream jazz is usually featured along with a healthy dose of Latin music.

Lineup: TBA. Past performers have included George Benson, Bela Fleck and the Flecktones, Al Di Meola, Kevin Mahogany, Herbie Hancock, Manhattan Transfer and Buckwheat Zydeco.

More info: clearwaterjazz.com

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Telluride Jazz Celebration

ROCKY MOUNTAIN

Greeley Blues Jam Greeley, Colorado

June 8

Northern Colorado's blues jamboree brings mainline acts and back porch blues to local taverns and restaurants. The Island Grove Regional Park Arena serves as the center of ceremonies.

Lineup: TBA. Last year's lineup included Robert Randolph and Trampled Under Foot.

More info: greeleybluesjam.com

Jazz Aspen Snowmass June Festival Aspen, Colorado

June 22–July 7, Aug. 31–Sept. 2

The Benedict Music Tent is the setting for various mainstream jazz acts, but ski bum jazz lovers can check out lesser-known talent at the area's many small venues.

Lineup: The Dukes of September (Donald Fagen, Michael McDonald, Boz Scaggs), Chris Botti, more.

More info: jazzaspensnowmass.org

Salt Lake City International Jazz Festival Salt Lake City, Utah

July 13–15

Great music, fabulous staging, sound and lighting, delicious food, and extraordinary crafts and arts adorn Salt Lake's Washington Square for the 12th year of this festival. The University of Utah is ground zero for musical clinics and talks.

Lineup: TBA. Past artists have included Yellowjackets and Kurt Elling.

More info: slcjazzfestival.org

New Mexico Jazz Festival Albuquerque and Santa Fe, New Mexico

July 13–29

Now in its 7th year, the two-city extravaganza brings NEA Jazz Masters and several vocal jazz pros across city limits. The annual Nob Hill Summerfest in Albuquerque's Historic Route 66 neighborhood takes place on July 21.

Lineup: Kurt Elling, Jon Hendricks, Dianne Reeves, Sheila Jordan, more.

More info: newmexicोजazzfestival.org

New Mexico Jazz Workshop Summer Music Festival Albuquerque, New Mexico

June 4–August 11

This festival, which takes place on Fridays and Saturdays, bills itself as a showcase of "salsa, jazz & blues under the stars." The Albuquerque Museum Amphitheater in the Old Town district delivers a Great American Songbook revue of female vocalists and a tribute to the late Etta James.

Lineup: TBA.

More info: nmjazz.org

Telluride Jazz Celebration Telluride, Colorado

August 3–5

In addition to three days of world-class musicians, festivalgoers can take in the scenery of 13,000-foot peaks during the day and 100-year-old intimate theaters at night. Attendees will enjoy a tribute to New Orleans complete with Mardi Gras-style parade throughout the weekend.

Lineup: Roy Hargrove, Victor Wooten, Soulive, Funky Meters, Roberta Gambarini, Astral Project, Marco Benevento Trio, Soul Rebels, more.

More info: telluridejazz.org

Vail Jazz Party Vail, Colorado

August 30–September 3

The 18th edition of programming presents eight shows and over 24 hours of music to concert fans at the Vail Marriott Mountain Resort. Multimedia tributes to Ray Brown, Dave Brubeck and Dizzy Gillespie, along with instrumental workshops from B-3 organist Bobby Floyd and trombonist Wycliffe Gordon, prove to be noteworthy highlights.

Lineup: Clayton Brothers Quintet, Jeff Hamilton Trio, James Carter, Benny Green, Houston Person, Warren Wolf, Bobby Floyd, more.

More info: vailjazz.org



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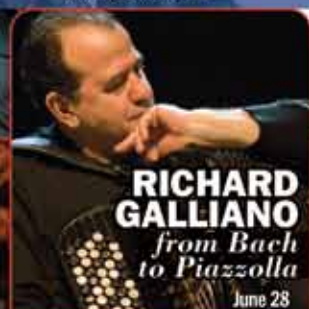
June 27-28



STANLEY CLARKE

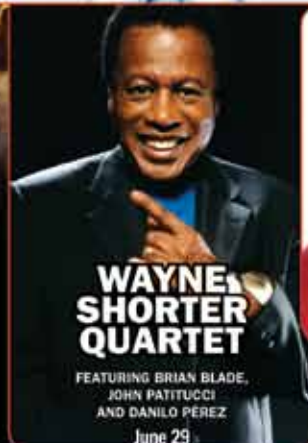
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Stanley Clarke Band



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LIZA MINNELLI

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June 29



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July 7



**FLAMENCO HOY
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Reno Jazz Festival

Reno, Nevada

April 26–28

The University of Nevada plays stomping ground for this star-studded showcase, which celebrates its monumental 50th anniversary this year. It's also rife with educational opportunities, including clinics and competitions.

Lineup: Joe Lovano with The Collective, Mingus Big Band.

More info: unr.edu/rjf

Paradise Valley Jazz Party

Phoenix, Arizona

April 21–22

Shelly Berg assumes the role of guest of honor at this year's soiree, where 15 hours of blues, straightahead and big band swing will be performed over two days. A recreation of the Quintette Hot Club du France will resurrect all things Gypsy jazz for eager festivalgoers at the Musical Instrument Museum.

Lineup: Brian Torff, Paul Keller, Dwayne Dolphin, Don Vappie, Marty Ashby, Stan Sorenson, Lewis Nash, Roger Humphries, Butch Miles, Marvin Stamm, Claudio Roditi, Bill Waltrous, Jay Ashby, Houston Person, Lew Tabakin, Don Menza, more.

More info: paradisevalleyjazz.com

Ballard Jazz Festival

Seattle, Washington

April 18–21

The Brotherhood of the Drum percussion showcase ranks highly for spectators at this Northwest fest, as does the popular Sunset Tavern Guitar Summit, which features Bobby Broom, Tim Young and John Stowell this year. As always, the Puget Sound mainstay caps off the festivities with the Jazz Walk and an enticing Swedish pancake brunch.

Lineup: Bobby Broom Trio, Orrin Evans Quartet, more.

More info: ballardjazzfestival.com

Juneau Jazz and Classics Music Festival

Juneau, Alaska

May 4–19

More than 6,000 patrons congregated at this Alaskan capital city festival, which boasts a lineup of Grammy-winning blues and jazz artists but also ventures into the classical realm. Multiple venues, from office-building atriums to auditoriums and boats, give way to busy dance floors and workshops over the course of 16 days.



Lineup: Taj Mahal Trio, Lavay Smith & Her Red Hot Skillet Lickers, Paul Rosenthal, Yoni Levyatov, Barney McClure, more.

More info: jazzandclassics.org

Sacramento Music Festival

Sacramento, California

May 25–28

Formerly the Sacramento Jazz Festival and Jubilee, this Northern California Memorial Day weekend event has undergone a transformation. While the fest is still organized by the Sacramento Traditional Jazz Society, its repertoire will veer more toward nationally known mainstream acts. It still maintains a vast menu of tributes, dance music and rockabilly, as well as its educational mission of introducing students to the classics.

Lineup: Bob Ringwald, Bob Draga, Allen Vaché, Russ Phillips, Jason Wanner, Best of Swing Quartet, Mick Martin and the Blues Rockers, Dave Bennett and the Memphis Boys, more.

More info: sacmusicfest.com

Bellevue Jazz Festival

Bellevue, Washington

May 30–June 3

The 5th annual Eastside showcase of revered national talent, local musicians and high school all-stars returns to downtown Bellevue with both free and ticketed performances. Shows range from concerts at the Theatre at Meydenbauer Center to tableside sets in downtown bars and hotels.

Lineup: The Clayton Brothers Quintet, Booker T. Jones, Hubert Laws Quintet, more.

More info: bellevuejazz.com

Healdsburg Jazz Festival

Healdsburg, California

June 1–10

Now in its 14th year, this fest offers high-

caliber straightahead players, Dixieland brass and wine tastings. Makeshift concert halls of note include the Hotel Healdsburg and Rodney Strong Vineyards, along with the Raven Theater and Barndiva.

Lineup: Roy Haynes Quartet, Sheila Jordan Duo, Vijay Iyer Trio with guest Graham Haynes, Kenny Burrell, Freddy Cole, Michele Rosewoman Trio with guest Julian Priester, Shotgun Wedding, more.

More info: healdsburgjazzfestival.com

Playboy Jazz Festival

Los Angeles, California

June 16–17

Bill Cosby resumes his duties as master of ceremonies for the 34th edition of this revue of celebrity-speckled performances. This year's lineup brings a hearty combination of big band, classic names and Latin flavor to the confines of the Hollywood Bowl, which annually transforms into a who's who of jazz fans.

Lineup: Christian McBride Big Band, Ramsey Lewis Electric Band, Robin Thicke, Preservation Hall Jazz Band, Keb Mo, Terri Lyne Carrington's Mosaic Project, Spectrum Road, Boney James, Sheila E., Sharon Jones & The Dap Kings, The Soul Rebels, Global Gumbo All-Stars, more.

More info: playboyjazzfestival.com

Jazz at the Bowl

Los Angeles, California

June 27–September 5

A Miles Davis celebration serves as the opening fanfare of this Hollywood Bowl series, which delivers exclusive performances by some of the genres' biggest names. Among the highlights this year is the farewell tour of the Neville Brothers and a "Celebrating Peace" evening with Herbie Hancock.

Lineup: The Neville Brothers Farewell Tour,



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More info: hollywoodbowl.com

Monterey Bay Blues Festival

Monterey, California

June 22-24

The 27th edition of this blues-infused street soiree takes place on three stages at the 22-acre Monterey County Fairgrounds. A full spectrum of traditional and electric blues is readily available, as is a variety of food and concession vendors.

Lineup: TBA. Last year's lineup included Mavis Staples, Magic Slim and the Teardrops, Freddie Jackson,

Ruthie Foster and others.

More info: montereyblues.com

Sunset Jazz at Newport Newport Beach, California

July 11-September 19

The folks behind the Newport Beach Jazz Party deliver a sterling Wednesday-night series of straight-ahead jazz in the rose garden of the Newport Beach Marriott Hotel and Spa.

Lineup: TBA.

More info: westcoastjazzparty.com

Safeway Waterfront Blues Festival

Portland, Oregon

July 4-8

For the 25th anniversary of this Willamette River gala, festival coordinators deliver 20-plus artists as well as evening boat cruises. It's also the Oregon Food Bank's largest fundraiser, and patrons donate cans of food along with a modest entrance fee.

Lineup: Steve Miller Band, Charlie Musselwhite, Curtis Salgado, Otis Taylor Banjo Project, Roy Rogers and the Delta Rhythm Kings, more.

More info: waterfrontbluesfest.com

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www.jazzajuan.com



Austria
Jazz Fest Wien
June 25 – July 8
www.viennajazz.org



Finland
Pori Jazz Festival
July 14 – July 22
www.porijazz.com



France
Jazz à Vienne
June 28 – July 13
www.jazzavienne.com



Belgium
Gent Jazz Festival
July 5 – 14
www.gentjazz.com



Italy
Umbria Jazz
July 6 – 15
www.umbrijazz.com



Norway
Molde International
Jazz Festival
July 16 – 21
www.moldejazz.no



Spain
Festival de Jazz
de Vitoria-Gasteiz
July 16 – 21
www.jazzvitoria.com



Holland
North Sea Jazz Festival
July 6 – 8
www.northseajazz.com



Turkey
Istanbul Jazz Festival
July 3 – 19
www.caz.iksv.org



Canada
Festival International
de Jazz de Montreal
June 28 – July 7
www.montrealjazzfest.com



Canada
Vancouver International
Jazz Festival
June 22 – July 1
www.vanjazzfest.ca



Switzerland
Montreux Jazz Festival
June 29 – July 14
www.montreuxjazz.com



USA
Monterey Jazz Festival
September 21 – 23
www.montereyjazzfestival.org



USA
Ravinia Festival
Summer 2012
www.ravinia.org



USA
Newport Jazz Festival
August 3 – 5
www.newportjazzfest.net



UK
London Jazz Festival
November 9 – 18
www.londonjazzfestival.org.uk

Fairbanks Summer Arts Festival

Fairbanks, Alaska

July 15–28

Local celebrity pianist Barney McClure conducts clinics on improvisational theory, jazz combo, jazz piano, and jazz vocal with combos, joined by percussionist Diamond Fuller. Collectively, the group will also conduct a big band workshop throughout the two weeks in the evenings.

Lineup: Greta Matassa, Barney McClure, Clipper Anderson, Brad Boal, Ron Veliz, Diamond Fuller, Brad Dutz.

More info: fsaf.org

Jazz Port Townsend Workshop and Festival

Port Townsend, Washington

July 22–29

One of the nation's longest running jazz workshops brings a wealth of guest artists to Fort Wordern State Park for daily

and individualized coaching in theory and performance, along with some heavy-hitting big band shows and master classes. John Clayton annually delivers with intensive combo labs and world-class instructional opportunities.

Lineup: John Clayton Clarence Acox Jr., George Cables, Jeff Clayton, Dawn Clement, Chuck Deardorf, Dena DeRose, Bruce Forman, Wycliffe Gordon, Benny Green, Randy Halberstadt, Johnny Mandel, Sherrie Maricle, Kelby MacNayr, Gary Smulyan, Terrell Stafford, Jay Thomas, Jiggs Whigham, Matt Wilson and Martin Wind.

More info: centrum.org/jazz

Port Townsend Acoustic Blues Festival

Port Townsend, Washington

July 29–August 5

The Centrum at Fort Warden

State Park—a gathering place for artists—sponsors a week of country blues. Hopeful under-round talent matches with instrument masters in front of a beautiful mountain backdrop.

Lineup: TBA. Last year's lineup included Corey Harris, Otis Taylor, Orville Johnson and Nat Reese.

More info: centrum.org/blues

San Jose Jazz Summer Fest

San Jose, California,

August 10–12

The 23rd year of SoCal's primetime jazz showcase has amped up its staging options, offering five outdoor and seven indoor stages to house its bevy of something-for-everyone artists. Festival sightseers can tailor their program to their own preference by navigating a vast club crawl around San Jose.

Lineup: TBA. Last year's lineup included Trombone Shorty & Orleans Avenue, Mavis Staples, Dave Koz, Arturo San-

doval, Ramsey Lewis and His Electric Band, Miguel Zenón Quartet, Dena DeRose Trio, Sophie Milman, Mark Hummel's Blues Harmonica Blowout, B-Side Players, Karabali, Grady Champion, more.

More info: jazzfest.sanjosejazz.org

Idyllwild Jazz in the Pines

Idyllwild, California

August 25–26

From straightahead jazz to danceable swing and blues rhythms, the 19th edition of this California fest is sure to delight festivalgoers. More than 50 artisans display their handiwork in the Festival Marketplace, and zydeco tunes can be heard from the festival's French Quarter region.

Lineup: TBA. Last year's lineup included Big Bad Voodoo Daddy, Oreo Divaz, Gregory Porter, Denise Donatelli, Idyllwild Arts

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More info: idyllwildjazz.com

San Francisco Jazz Festival

San Francisco and Oakland, California

September 21–December 2

The 30th anniversary run of SFJazz's premier event brings high-profile musicians to multiple jazz venues throughout the city. Genre-crossing heroes are also included.

Lineup: TBA.

More info: sfjazz.org

Monterey Jazz Festival

Monterey, California

September 21–23

The world's longest continually running jazz festival celebrates its 55th year with over 500 artists on eight different Monterey Fairgrounds stages. NEA Jazz Master Jack DeJohnette is a showcased artist this year, and a stellar roster of main-stage instrumentalists of all kinds complement smaller-ticket artists on indoor and outdoor stages.

Lineup: Esperanza Spalding, Pat Metheny Unity Band with Chris Potter, Antonio Sanchez and Ben Williams, Jack DeJohnette Special Trio with Pat Metheny and Christian McBride, Trombone Shorty, Dee Dee Bridgewater, Ambrose Akinmusire, Benny Green, Lewis Nash, Melody Gardot, Eddie Palmieri, Gordon Goodwin's Big Phat Band, Robert Randolph, Bill Frisell, Mulgrew Miller Trio, Catherine Russell, Ninety Miles featuring Stefon Harris, Nicholas Payton and David Sanchez, more.

More info: montereyjazzfestival.org

Angel City Jazz Festival

Los Angeles, California

October 5–14

Occurring over two weekends in October, this relative newcomer to the festival scene presents an "Artist And Legends" theme, where today's influential artists pay tribute to their legendary mentors. It's a program of creative, cutting-edge jazz speckled throughout six different venues, including a finale at the John Anson Ford Amphitheatre.

Lineup: Ambrose Akinmusire, Myra Melford, Mark Dresser, more.

More info: angelcityjazz.com

Oregon Coast Jazz Party

Newport, Oregon

October 5–7

The former Jazz at Newport event has undergone a name transformation, but still guarantees a workshop-intensive program nestled on the Pacific Coast. At this year's event, some seasoned vets are returning along with some new names on the bill.

Lineup: Clayton Brothers Quintet, Graham Dechter, Denise Donatelli, Wycliffe Gordon, Jeff Hamilton, Atsuko Hashimoto, Bill Mays, Ken Peplowski, Chuck Redd.

More info: oregoncoastjazzparty.com

Earshot Jazz Festival

Seattle, Washington

October 12–November 4

The Earshot Jazz Festival presents over 250 musicians in more than 60 concerts and events in clubs, concert halls, and community centers all around Seattle. The festival also includes rare jazz films, photo and art exhibits, literary readings, commissions, residencies, and all-ages educational programs.

Lineup: TBA. Past performers have included Erik Friedlander and Henry Threadgill.

More info: earshot.org



JUN 27

A Celebration of Miles Davis

Marcus Miller "Tutu Revisited" • Miles Electric Band

Kind of Blue: Jimmy Cobb's "So What" Band

JUL 11

Ray Charles: Genius + Soul = Jazz

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Dee Dee Bridgewater, BeBe Winans, SPECIAL GUESTS

Count Basie Orchestra

AUG 1

The Neville Brothers Farewell Tour

Trombone Shorty & Orleans Avenue

Roddie Romero & the Hub City All-Stars

AUG 8

Duke Ellington Orchestra FEATURING Brian McKnight

Kenton's 100th - the Stan Centennial Orchestra

Tierney Sutton, special guest

AUG 15

Rubén Blades • Eddie Palmieri Salsa Orchestra

AUG 22

Anita Baker • Esperanza Spalding

AUG 26

SMOOTH SUMMER JAZZ

Men of Soul STARRING Jeffrey Osborne, Peabo Bryson AND Freddie Jackson

White Hot Summer Groove FEATURING

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AUG 29

Celebrating Peace WITH Herbie Hancock, Wayne Shorter,

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Festival de Musique Actuelle de Victoriaville

Victoriaville, Quebec

May 17–20

FIMAV is well-known for its experimental offerings. In its 28th year, the festival provides 19 live performances. John Zorn debuts two world-premiere performances.

Lineup: Ensemble Supermusique, Phil Minton, Wadada Leo Smith, Matana Roberts, Bill Laswell, Muhal Richard Abrams, more.

More info: fimav.qc.ca

World Guitar Festival

Rouyn-Noranda, Quebec

May 26–June 4

The eighth run of the World Guitar Festival takes into account a lineup of experienced jazz axemen in addition to some classic rock mainstays and blues giants.

Lineup: Doobie Brothers, Grand Funk Railroad, George Thorogood, Straight No Chaser, more.

More info: fgmat.com

TD Winnipeg International Jazz Festival

Winnipeg, Manitoba

June 14–23

Festivities in this culturally rich prairie city culminate with a weekend-long series Old Market Square shows in the historic Exchange District.

Lineup: TBA. Last year's lineup included Wynton Marsalis, Robert Glasper, Trombone Shorty and Gary Burton.

More info: jazzwinnipeg.com

TD Ottawa International Jazz Festival

Ottawa, Ontario

June 21–July 1

Just inside the National Arts Centre and in the spacious outdoor setting of Confederation Park, Canada's capital features stage-igniting headliners and off-center jam sessions.

Lineup: Dave Holland, Kenny Barron, Esperanza Spalding, Trombone Shorty, Ninety Miles, Branford Marsalis, Robert Glasper, Bill Frisell, more.

More info: ottawajazzfestival.com

Edmonton International Jazz Festival

Edmonton, Alberta

June 22–July 1

This original Canadian fest always establishes Edmonton as a Canadian music epicenter. Venues include the legendary Yardbird Suite and the Winspear Centre.



TD Toronto Jazz Festival

Lineup: Eliane Elias, Wayne Shorter Quartet, Mike Stern, more.

More info: edmontonjazz.com

TD Toronto Jazz Festival

Toronto, Ontario

June 22–July 1

Various locations throughout this stylish metropolitan area host a potpourri of free and ticketed shows. The lineup ranges from Louisiana sounds to guitar icons.

Lineup: George Benson, Trombone Shorty, Esperanza Spalding, Tedeschi Trucks Band, Bill Frisell, Mike Stern, Roy Hargrove, more.

More info: torontojazz.com

TD Vancouver International Jazz Festival

Vancouver, British Columbia

June 22–July 1

Between its 1800 artists and 300 shows at more than 30 venues, Vancouver has garnered a reputation for cultivating the best local improvisers and U.S. talents.

Lineup: George Benson, The Avett Brothers, Spectrum Road, Trombone Shorty, The Preservation Hall Jazz Band, Balkan Beat Box, more.

More info: coastaljazz.ca

SaskTel Saskatchewan Jazz Festival

Saskatoon, Saskatchewan

June 22–July 1

Hip-hop and indie rock fuse with the tones of vocal jazz greats and funkadelic standbys on two riverfront stages and indoor stages amid the rustic touches of the Saskatchewan greenery and countryside.

Lineup: Wayne Shorter, Bill Frisell, Dianne Reeves, Feist, Michael Franti, Robert Randolph, The Roots, more.

More info: saskjazz.com

TD Victoria International JazzFest

Victoria, British Columbia

June 22–July 1

The West Coast of Canada event houses

nearly 100 acts on a variety of outdoor stages and hotels, from bayou tones to sterling vocalists.

Lineup: George Benson, Chris Botti, Dianne Reeves, Preservation Hall Jazz Band, Trombone Shorty, Wayne Shorter, Robert Randolph, Eliane Elias, more.

More info: jazzvictoria.ca

Festival International de Jazz de Montreal

Montreal, Quebec

June 28–July 7

Interesting configurations of heavy-hitting players dominate this Quartier des Spectacles fest in downtown Montreal. Must-see events include concert offerings by Stanley Clarke.

Lineup: Norah Jones, James Taylor, Melody Gardot, Spectrum Road, Richard Galliano, Stanley Clarke, Wayne Shorter, Esperanza Spalding, Eliane Elias, more.

More info: montrealjazzfest.com

TD Halifax Jazz Festival

Halifax, Nova Scotia

July 6–14

The main fest site is situated on a pleasant waterfront locale and is surrounded by downtown concert halls and clubs. Completing the program are a creative music series and children's rhythm workshop.

Lineup: Sophie Milman, Chris Tarry Group, Michael Occhipinti, more.

More info: halifaxjazzfestival.ca

Vancouver Island MusicFest

Courtenay, British Columbia

July 6–8

New to MusicFest's offerings are exclusive festival podcasts with exclusive interviews. The lineup packs indie rockers, folksingers and blues giants onto one hefty bill.

Lineup: Emmylou Harris, k.d. lang, The Sheepdogs, Buffy Sainte-Marie, Matt Anderson, more.

More info: islandmusicfest.com

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Brampton Global Jazz & Blues Festival

Brampton, Ontario

August 9–12

Downtown Brampton becomes a multi-disciplinary hotbed of international artist concerts, jam sessions and matinees during this four-day event. While the mission of fest organizers Art of Jazz is to introduce a world of musicians to patrons, it also emphasized the importance of music education.

Lineup: TBA.

More info: artofjazz.org

Edmonton Blues Festival

Edmonton, Alberta

August 24–26

The Heritage Ampitheatre and Hawrelak Park accommodate a roster of performers who have won 45 Blues Music Awards and are nominated for 15 this year.

Lineup: Duke Robillard, Charlie Musselwhite, Angela Strehli, Tracy Nelson, Victor Wainwright, more.

More info: bluesinternationaltd.com



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RUDRESH MAHANTHAPPA

Catch groundbreaking alto saxophonist Rudresh Mahanthappa on tour this summer in support of his latest release, *Samdhi* (ACT Music & Vision). Mahanthappa kicks off the summer festival season with an appearance at Latvia's Rigas Ritmi Festival on April 27 with an electro-acoustic quartet that includes guitarist David Gilmore, bassist Rich Brown and drummer Gene Lake performing an edgy and soulful synthesis of kinetic jazz, Indian influences and percolating electronic

The Guelph Jazz Festival

Guelph, Ontario

September 5–9

This world-class, three-day program highlights creative improvised music. The festival also offers an educational colloquium of intimate workshops, panel discussions and keynote talks.

Lineup: Nils Petter Molvaer, Fred Frith, Colin Stetson, Ben Grossman, Muskox, Ernesto Cervini.

More info: guelphjazzfestival.com

Pender Harbour Jazz Festival

Pender Harbour, British Columbia

September 14–16

The 16th run of this ambient seaside festival offers free performances, from big band swing jaunts to the more avant garde, at small coastal venues.

Lineup: Liali Biali Trio, Hot Club of Detroit, Jill Townsend Big Band, Cory Weeds Band, more.

More info: phjazz.ca

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Medeski, Martin and Wood with saxophonist Bill Evans

A DECADE OF JAZZ, BLUES AND BEACHES AT RIO DAS OSTRAS

Set in one of Brazil's most beautiful seaside cities, surrounded by 15 beaches, the Rio das Ostras Jazz and Blues Festival is an idyllic musical affair. This year's event, taking place from June 6–10, marks the festival's 10th anniversary and will feature a first-class program of artists, including Kenny Barron, Billy Cobham, David Sanborn, Mike Stern with Romero Lubambo, Armand Sabal-Lecco, Roy Rogers, the Orleans Street Jazz Band and others. The free concerts will take place on four stages located on separate beaches, each boasting its own distinctive natural beauty.

Located 170 kilometers from Rio de Janeiro, Rio Das Ostras means "Oyster River." Produced by Azul Productions and sponsored by the city's department of tourism, industry and commerce, the festival evolved from monthly jazz shows in 2001–2002 that garnered enthusiastic responses. Noting the music's positive effect on the cultural life of the city (which previously lacked the international musical reputation of places like Rio de Janeiro, Bahia or São Paulo) and a resultant increase in tourism, the festival started in 2003.

Today, the Rio das Ostras Jazz & Blues Festival is considered the largest of its kind in Brazil and Latin America. It has grown markedly from 2003, when 5,000 people attended concerts by mostly local artists. For the 2005 edition, which hosted Kenny Garrett, Nnenna Freelon, John Scofield, Mike Stern, Richard Bona, Egberto Gismonti, Wagner Tiso and Magic Slim, there were only two stages, with the main stage on the beach. "Today we have the same structure as the great festivals of the world, a place for 25,000 people, 15 local restaurants from the city, 10 local handcrafters showing and selling their artifacts and the House of Jazz with an exhibition, workshops and presentations of local musicians," says Stenio Mattos of Azul Productions. "All this without losing the charm of being outdoors. We've created two more stages, so we have shows around the city all day and night. It grew to 120,000 [attendees] in 2011."

Garrett remembers, "When I played there, we had a great time. The audiences are very enthusiastic about the music, and there's also a lot of their own music there and the Brazilian culture."

Drummer Duduka DaFonseca of Trio da Paz, a native of Rio de Janeiro now living in New York, recalls, "I was there several years ago [in 2007] with [pianist] Dom Salvador, [saxophonist] Dick Oatts and the Brazilian bassist Sergio Barrozo Neto. Nana Vasconcelos was there that year, too. We played in two places—in the main arena, which is a big

area like the Newport Jazz Festival, and then a smaller stage near the beach. Everything was so good. They'd have these fantastic buffets with Brazilian food."

Anna Sala of AMS Artists, who was at the fest in 2007 representing Ravi Coltrane, speaks highly of the event and its producers. "It's a great festival for the musicians to play," she says. "The stages are outside, and the shows are free and open to the public. It's a lovely locale with beautiful beaches and some great restaurants, and they're lovely people to work with—very committed to bringing the highest quality music."

Producer Stenio Mattos notes that providing high-quality music for free to all sections of the population is only one of the goals of the festival. In addition to increasing the economic vitality of the region through growing tourism, the festival has worked to encourage the study of music by young people of Rio das Ostras through its music school.

"The Kuarup Youth Orchestra, which performs the opening concert of the festival every year accompanied by a great Brazilian musician—Paulo Moura, Mauro Senise and Egberto Gismonti among them—has played around Brazil, as well as in Germany and Spain," Mattos explains. "We've also founded a Luteria [school for the construction of musical instruments] with students from public schools of the city. They build 250 instruments each year, all sold during the festival. A partnership with Universidade Federal Fluminense has led to the creation of a course in cultural production, aiding in the dissemination and implementation of new cultural events in the region. We've also instituted the project Rio Das Ostras Jazz & Blues O Año Todo, conducted throughout the year with monthly free concerts."

Drummer Billy Martin of the band Medeski, Martin and Wood—which played last year's festival with guest saxophonist Bill Evans—lauds the locale. "I loved that gig," Martin said. "It was a small stage on a little rock island. Bill, Medeski, Wood and I also did some nice swimming together."

Brazilian guitarist Romero Lubambo—DaFonseca's bandmate in Trio da Paz—will be making his third festival appearance in 2012. "The setting is incredible," he says. "Such a beautiful city, two hours from downtown Rio de Janeiro, with stages right on the beach. And I'm performing again in Rio das Ostras this year, this time with the Mike Stern–Romero Lubambo project. I'm very happy to go back there and play for those beautiful people in those fantastic surroundings. It's a truly great festival."

—Russ Musto

Tony Bennett

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EUROPE

International Jazz Festival Bern

Bern, Switzerland

March 13–May 19

Whether you're attending a ticketed evening at world-famous house of music Marian's Jazzroom or taking in the fresh air during free outdoor concerts at Hotel Innere Enge, you're bound to find something to enjoy at this Swiss showcase of international jazz and blues acts.

Lineup: Anat Cohen Quartet, Benny Green, Lenny Andrade and Romero Lubambo Duo with Claudio Roditi, Steve Coleman and Five Elements, Monty Alexander Quartet, Grace Kelly Quintet with Phil Woods, James Carter Organ Trio, Wycliffe Gordon, Manhattan Transfer, more.

More info: jazzfestivalbern.ch

Jazzfestival Basel

Basel, Switzerland

April 19–May 6

The Swiss jazz organization Offbeat lives up to its name, presenting a variety of underground artists, but also including big timers, tributes and small combos.

Lineup: Branford Marsalis Group, Chano Dominguez, Madeleine Peyroux, Vein with Dave Liebman, Lars Danielsson Quartet, Céline Bonacia Trio, John Abercrombie & Marcus Copland Quartet, George Gruntz, Trilok Gurtu Quartet, Medeski Martin + Wood, Amadou & Mariam, Birié Lagrène, more.

More info: jazzfestivalbasel.ch

Ulrichsberger Kaleidophon

Ulrichsberg, Austria

April 27–29

Jazzatelier presents the 27th edition of its estival, featuring 12 concerts with 40 musicians. In addition to the program of improvised music, Isabella Wintschnig will showcase her photographic works.

Lineup: Olaf Rupp, Matthias Mueller, Rudi Fischerlehner, Una Casa, Susanna Gartmayer, Philipp Quehenberger, DD Kern, The Apophonics, No Business for Dogs, Annelie Gahl, Udo Schindler, Margarita Holzbauer, Harald Lillmeyer, Paul Hubweber & Takuro Mizuta Lippit, more.

More info: jazzatelier.at

Barclays Cheltenham Jazz Festival

Cheltenham, England

May 2–7

Located about two hours outside of Lon-



North Sea Jazz Festival

don, Barclay's offerings combine burgeoning local talent with international mainstream acts. The scenery at Montpellier Gardens is complemented by a cinema, coffeehouse and an interactive music lab.

Lineup: Bill Frisell, Jeff Williams, Chris Potter, John Taylor, Paloma Faith, Marcus Miller, more.

More info: cheltenhamfestivals.com/jazz

Moulin Blues Festival

Ospel, Limburg, the Netherlands

May 4–5

Year 27 of this popular Dutch festival incorporates North American and European talent onto one stellar bill, which will include a salute to Etta James.

Lineup: Jon Amor Blues Group, RJ Mischo, JD McPherson, The Pete Blues Band, Lightnin' Guy, Tiny Legs Tim, John F. Klaver Band, Ben Prestage, Israel Nash Gripka, Moreland & Arbuckle, more.

More info: moulinblues.nl

New Conversations–Vicenza Jazz

Vicenza, Italy

May 4–12

For Vicenza Jazz's 17th edition, a combo of modern giants and classic acts grace the stages of this quaint town, including Teatro Olimpico, the world's oldest indoor theater, as well as Panic Jazz Café. This year's theme is "Far Est: from Marco Polo to Thelonious Monk."

Lineup: Trilok Gurtu, Rudresh Mahanthappa Samdhi, Uri Caine, Ernst Reijseger, Nguyen Le, Paolo Fresu, Roswell Rudd, Danilo Rea, Martux, Orchestra del Teatro Olimpico, Ron Carter, Stefano Battaglia, Elio e le Storie Tese, Annie Whitehead, Franco D'Andrea, Kenny Barron, Mulgrew Miller, more.

More info: vicenzajazz.org

Estoril Jazz

Estoril, Portugal

May 11–20

The Casino Estoril Auditorium exhibits mainstream jazz talent in a seaside town near Portugal's capital.

Lineup: Ambrose Akinmusire Quartet; Roberta Gambarini Quartet; Scott Hamilton Quartet; Miguel Zenón Quartet; Stefon Harris Quartet.

More info: projazz.pt

Trondheim Jazz Festival

Trondheim, Norway

May 9–13

This fest plays host to the 2012 Jazz Summit, which attracts jazz musicians and educators. Panels, workshops and discussions are on the docket, where prominent figures in jazz discuss the genre's current state.

Lineup: Bernhoft, Allan Holdsworth, Stacey Kent, Ambrose Akinmusire

More info: jazzfest.no

Natt Jazz

Bergen, Norway

May 23–June 2

Held in single, multi-space building in the port of Bergen, one of Norway's most beautiful cities, Natt Jazz (Night Jazz) is an action-packed festival that ranges from the best in jazz, world music, and rock from Scandinavian and beyond.

Lineup: Kurt Elling Quintet, Goran Bregovic Wedding and Funeral Orchestra, Esperanza Spalding, Soko Steidle, Silje Nergaard, Joh Pattitucci Trio, Farmers Market, Arve Henriksen, John Escreet Trio, Bad Plus, more.

More info: nattjazz.no

Moers Festival

Moers, Germany

May 25–28

This year marks the 41st anniversary of the festival that may be best known in America

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for its live recordings of progressive jazz and new music artists of the 70s and 80s—like Fred Anderson and Anthony Braxton. The event that spawned this creativity carries on with a dynamic mixture of artists.

Lineup: Gunter Hampel European-New York Quintet, Tanya Tagaq, Carla Bley Trio, Ingrid Laubrock Anti-House, Andrew D'Angelo DNA Big Band, Joseph Bowie's Defunkt 'n' EU Soul & James "Blood" Ulmer, Erik Friedlander, Rocket Science, more.

More info: moers-festival.de

Iford Festival 2012

Branford on Avon, England

June 8–9, August 10–11

The award-winning Peto Garden at Iford Manor provides a unique setting for two weekends of jazz performances and seated cloister shows.

Lineup: The Amigos, The Songmen, Swing Commanders, Ian Shaw, Zing Zong, Eclipse Fusion, more.

More info: ifordarts.co.uk

Kerava Jazz Festival

Kerava, Finland

June 14–June 17

Finland's premier jazz fest accommodates various gospel acts but also includes sjazz

mainstays and Scandinavian talent.

Lineup: TBA. Past performers have included the Louis Sclavis Quintet, Other Dimensions in Music, Sidsel Endresen & Håkon Kornstad Duo.

More info: personal.inet.fi/yhdistys/keravajazz/index2.htm

Ascona Jazz Festival

Ascona, Switzerland

June 21–July 1

The fest features about 20 daily concerts, with a New Orleans theme. About half of place on 8 stages in bars, restaurants, and hotels (often on outdoor terraces), while the others take place in the evening on the lakeside. Night owls can attend the jam sessions that go on until dawn. This edition, which carries the name "Sophisticated Lady", aims at emphasizing the role of female musicians.

Lineup: Irma Thomas, Germaine Bazzle, Pewee Ellis, Champion Fulton, Wycliffe Gordon, Rhoda Scott & Lady Quartet, Jon Faddis, Bria Skonberg, Emma Pask, Niki Haris, Gunhild Carling, Davina & the Vagabonds, Herlin Riley, Warren Vaché, Nicki Parrott, Regeneration Of New Orleans Brass Band.

More info: jazzascona.com

Jazz in Ramadan

Istanbul, Turkey

June 24–August 14

Patrons make the pilgrimage to Sultanahmet locales to experience a hearty mix of Turkish classical music and traditional Middle Eastern music. The festival coordinators seek to create a program that not only embraces cultural unity and peace, but also exposes music fans to new talent.

Lineup: TBA. Last year's lineup included Anouar Brahem Quartet, McCoy Tyner Trio with Gary Bartz and Ahmad Jamal.

More info: ramazandacaz.com

Jazzfest Wien

Vienna, Austria

June 25–July 9

Jazzfest Wien brings an onslaught of international jazz performers to venues once frequented by Beethoven and Mozart, including the Vienna State Opera, Town Hall, Konzerthaus and others. This year's lineup is particularly diverse.

Lineup: Charles Bradley, Eric Burdon & The Animals, Terez Montcalm, Bobby McFerrin, Melody Gardot, John Scofield, Ambrose Akinmusire, Sharon Jones & The Dap Kings.

More info: viennajazz.org

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Jan Lundgren – Artistic Director

www.ystadjazz.se

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Photo by Greg Gorman



Photo by Muga Muga

Ljubljana Jazz Festival

Ljubljana, Slovenia

June 28-30

The Ljubljana Festival has always been impressively programmed and wide ranging. The venues range from clubs to a sizable amphitheater. This year's line-up was curated with the help of Pedro Costa, the owner of Portugal's great Clean Feed label.

Lineup: Joe McPhee & Ingebrigt Håker Flaten, Adam Lane's Full Throttle Orchestra, Jure Pukl's Abstract Society Featuring Damion Reid, Dee Dee Bridgewater, Peter Evans, Ibrahim Maalouf, the Cherry Thing, John Scofield Hollowbody Band, more.

More info: ljubljana jazz.si

Jazz A Vienne

Vienne, France

June 28-July 13

Vienne is by and large one of the most anticipated festivals in Europe, with its 32nd edition expecting a draw of more than 160,000 patrons. France's first jazz festival has transitioned into a five-day homage to both classic artists and future talent, both of which perform on four main stages. Herbie Hancock, Miles Davis and Ray Charles are all legendary festival alum.

Lineup: The Amazing Keystone Big Band, Bobby McFerrin, Chick Corea, Fred Wesley, Tigran Hamasyan, Al Di Meola, Pat Metheny, Melody Gardot, Hugh Laurie, Trombone Shorty, Bela Fleck, Oumou Sangaré, Fatoumata Diawara, Esperanza Spalding, Aurore Quartet, Gulia Valle 5tet, Ambrose Akinmusire, Terry Gregory Porter, Tony Bennett, McCoy Tyner, more.

More info: jazzavienne.com

JazzBaltica

Schleswig-Holstein, Germany

June 29-July 1

Swedish trombone player, singer and composer Nils Landgren is taking over as artistic director of the fest. The festival also has a new home: right beside the Baltic Sea, at the Evers-Werft shipyard.

Lineup: TBA. Last year's lineup included Pat Metheny, Vijay Iyer, Apex, Donny McCaslin and others.

More info: jazzbaltica.de

Montreux Jazz Festival

Montreux, Switzerland

June 29-July 14

The 46th year of this Swiss highlight fest delivers a hybrid roster of great jazz, blues

and rock. Ten of the 12 venues are free, all of which attract a total of more than 230,000 visitors annually.

Lineup: TBA. Last year's lineup included Carlos Santana, B.B. King, Sting and Paul Simon, Tommy LiPuma, Natalie Cole and Marai Gadu.

More info: montreuxjazz.com

Istanbul Jazz Festival

Istanbul, Turkey

July 3-19

This cosmopolitan event brings international stars and newcomers together in stadiums and small venues throughout the city. A repertoire of fusion greats and local flavor is the usual recipe on Istanbul's highly cultural program.

Lineup: TBA. Last year's lineup included Stanley Clarke, Chick Corea and others.

More info: iksv.org

Kongsberg Jazz Festival

Kongsberg, Norway

July 4-7

With a name similar to the Sonny Rollins classic named for the two, this "Silver City" mining town exhibits a four-day lineup of eclectic artist a mere 90 miles from Oslo. While the Scandinavian festival





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Tedeschi Trucks Band	Karrin Allyson
Mike Stern	Francois Houle
Robert Glasper	Gretchen Parlato
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Soul Rebels	Canadian Jazz Quartet
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Trombone Shorty	Peter Appleyard
	Spectrum Road
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serves up an array of international artists, its claim to fame is its expert focus on Norway's best musicians.

Lineup: Sharon Jones and the Dap-Kings, Vijay Iyer, Atomic, the Thing with Agusti Fernandez and Peter Evans, Joe McPhee & Evan Parker, Led Bib, Fredrik Ljungkvist, Lizz Wright and Raol Midón, John Y+Tilbury, Getatchew Mekuria & the Ex, more.

More info: Kongsberg-jazzfestival.no

Gent Jazz Festival

Gent, Belgium

July 5-14

Once again, the medieval-style port city off-sets its traditional architecture with a lineup of fusion and contemporary names. The festival annually presents the D'jango D'Or Awards to standout European musicians.

Lineup: Fabrice Alleman New Quartet, Dave Douglas and Joe Lovano Quintet, Lawrence Fields, James Genus, Joey Baron, Wayne Shorter. More.

More info: gentjazz.com

Birmingham International Jazz & Blues Festival

Birmingham, England

July 6-15

The majority of the 170 performances offered at the 50 venues in the Birmingham region are free, and range from freewheeling rockabilly jams to danceable swing tunes.

Lineup: The Star City Swing Session, Greg Abate, Len Skeat, Art Themen, Tipitina, Roy Forbes, 52 Skidoo, Digby Fairweather, The Crazy World of Becky Brine, Dave Moorwood's Rascals Of Rhythm, The Jazz Ramblers, Alan Barnes, Bruce Adams, Millennium Eagle Jazz Band, Dixie Ticklers, Remi Harris Trio, Bob Hall & Dave Peabody, more.

More info: birminghamjazzfestival.com

Copenhagen Jazz Festival

Copenhagen, Denmark

July 6-15

This walkable fest boasts more than 1000 concerts over the course of 10 days. With more than 100 venues to choose from and a repertoire of A-listers and up-and-comers, it's on the list of jazz fans worldwide, including savvy locals.

Lineup: TBA. Previous years have included Keith Jarrett, Sonny Rollins, Bunky Green, Charles Lloyd, Gary Burton.

More info: jazz.dk

Umbria Jazz Festival

Perugia, Italy

July 6-15

The highly anticipated Umbria Jazz Festival celebrates its 39th anniversary with performances throughout a wealth of op-



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What's her next move? That's the question on everyone's mind as the most talked-about artist in jazz hits the road behind *Radio Music Society*, a terrific album that's even better suited to outdoor stages than its predecessor, the breakthrough disc *Chamber Music Society*. Catch her at fests like New Orleans Jazz & Heritage (May 3), Ottawa Jazz (June 27) and Blue Balls in Lucerne,

eratic venues, including the Arena Santa Guiliana mainstage, Teatro Morlacchi and Oratorio Santa Cecilia. The "Back to Bass" tour is among the many highlights of these ticketed shows.

Lineup: Sonny Rollins, Wayne Shorter, Pat Metheny, Enrico Rava, Chick Corea, Stefano Bollani, Hamilton de Holanda, John Scofield, Joe Lovano, Dave Douglas, Melody Gardot, more.

More info: umbriajazz.com

North Sea Jazz Festival

Rotterdam, the Netherlands

July 8-10

This three-day northern European festival draws a large crowd to the Rotterdam Ahoy venue, mostly due to its jazz, blues and pop offerings on 15 different stages.

Lineup: Van Morrison, Spectrum Road, Robert Glasper Experiment, Gregory Porter, Joe Lovano-Dave Douglas Quintet, Macy Gray & David Murray Blues Big Band, Ahmad Jamal, Pat Metheny, Dave Holland, Tony Bennett, Janelle Monáe, Hiro-mi, Wayne Shorter Quartet, McCoy Tyner Trio with Ravi Coltrane.

More info: northseajazz.com

Nice Jazz Festival

Nice, France

July 8-11

Like its ever-expanding history of artists, Nice never fails to redevelop in concept and configuration. Its shows at the Théâtre de Verdure have become exceptionally versatile.

Lineup: Mike Stern & Didier Lockwood, John McLaughlin & the 4th Dimension, Roberta Gambarini, Michael Legrand, Anthony Joseph and the Spasm Band, Roy Hargrove, Macy Gray, Ahmad Jamal, more.

More info: nicejazzfestival.fr

Jazz à Juan

Juan-les-Pins, France

July 12-21

One of the oldest international festivals, Juan à Juan presents its 52nd edition of this program, based around the seaside Gould Theatre. This year, jazz guitarists are front-and-center, as is former emcee Bobby McFerrin.

Lineup: Sonny Rollins, Bobby McFerrin, Sylvain Luc, Biréli Lagrène, Mike Stern, Philip Catherine and Richard Bona, André Dédé Ceccarelli, Troc, more.

More info: jazzajuan.fr

Aarhus Jazz Festival

Aarhus, Denmark

July 14-21

Approximately 200 concerts are scheduled throughout eight days, all of which occur in the center of Aarhus. In its 24th year, this fest aims to not only add more venues, but also expand its program, which includes Latin and world music.

Lineup: TBA. Past acts include Esperanza Spalding, Jason Moran, Mike Stern and Dee Dee Bridgewater.

More info: jazzfest.dk

Pori Jazz Festival

Pori, Finland

July 14-22

Norah Jones headlines the 47th edition of the festival on the main Kirjurinluoto arena. From Finnish popular names to jazz first-timers, the roster at this coastline festival is vast and genre-bending.

Lineup: Norah Jones, Robert Randolph and the Family Band, The Northern Governors, Honey B. & the T-Bones with M. Numminen & Pedro Hietanen, more.

More info: porijazz.fi

Festival de Jazz de Vitoria-Gasteiz

Vitoria-Gasteiz, Spain

July 16-21

The Basque region delights with intimate cabaret-style venues and numerous

age-old local theaters. This year's lineup brings attention to new configurations from established superstars.

Lineup: Sonny Rollins, Pat Metheny Quartet, Joe Lovano & Dave Douglas Quintet, Joshua Redman & The Bad Plus, Esperanza Spalding, Fred Hersch Trio, Stefano Bollani Trio, The Soul Rebels, Sweet Honey in the Rock, Ambrose Akinmusire, Tigran Hamasyan, more.

More info: jazzvitoria.com

MoldeJazz

Molde, Norway

July 16-21

Now in its sixth decade, Mode Jazz is the Norwegian standard. The festival offers a progeam that gravitates toward an audience of younger jazz enthusiasts. The lineup combines mainstream, legacy, and avant-garde jazz artists with a selection of mainstream pop and soul acts. Norwegian keyboardist Jon Balke is this year's artist-in-residence.

Lineup: Wayne Shorter Quartet, John



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Scofield Hollowbody Band, Sweet Honey in the Rock, Susanna Wallumrød & Giovanna Pessi, Norah Jones, Ambrose Akinmusire, Budos Band, Keith Rowe & John Tilbury, the Necks, Nils Petter Molvaer Trio, more.

More info: moldejazz.no

Heineken Jazzaldia San Sebastian, Spain July 19–23

The 47th annual coastline festival presents big name jazz artists to the medieval Plaza Trinidad and state-of-the-art Kursaal Auditorium during ticketed shows. Talent also performs seaside with free shows at the Zurriola Beach.

Lineup: Bobby McFerrin & Yellowjackets, Jimmy Cobb, Antony & the Johnsons, Kenny Barron, Melody Gardot, Mulgrew Miller, Eric Reed, Sharon Jones, Terje Rypdal, Marc

Ribot, Madeline Peyroux, more.

More info: heinekenjazzaldia.com

Siena Jazz Festival Siena, Italy

July 24–August 7

Prominent Italian and American figures in jazz instruct enthusiastic students in an intensive, multifaceted workshop setting. A finale of concerts within the beautiful Siena countryside combine hopefuls and instructors onstage.

Lineup: TBA. Past performers have included Miguel Zenón, Eddie Henderson, George Garzone.

More info: sienajazz.it

Jazz a Foix Foix, France

July 23–29

Ira Gitler doesn't cut corners with this 12-year-old series, but he does serve up some major league names in jazz. The festival, located in the southwest mountains near the Spanish border, appropriately

delivers on Latin elements as well as local fare.

Lineup: Harold Mabern, Bobby Watson, Tchavolo Schmitt, Champion Fulton, Jerry Gonzales, Eric Le Lann, Dany Doriz, Steve Kuhn.

More info: jazzfoix.com

Langnau Jazz Nights Kupferschmiede, Langnau Switzerland July 24–28

This Swiss festival is workshop-intensive with teachers such as Marcus Strickland, David Gilmore and others conducting interactive classes all weekend long. There are also off-festival events going on in the city's Viehmarktplatz town square.

Lineup: Dave Holland New Quartet, John Scofield and the Hollowbody Band, Geraldine Laurent Quartet, John Patitucci Trio feat. Chris Potter & Adam Cruz, Lucerne Jazz Orchestra feat. Dave Douglas, Marcus Strickland Quartet, David Kikoski Trio feat. Eric Revis & Nasheet Waits, more.

More info: jazz-nights.ch

Jazz in Marciac Marciac, France July 27–August 15

Marciac celebrates its 35th year as an all-encompassing, significant European event. The all-day music is enjoyable no matter what time fest-goers tune in, and the rustic rural setting of the French countryside makes for an even more relaxing event.

Lineup: Sonny Rollins, Wynton Marsalis, more.

More info: jazzinmarciac.com

Ystad Sweden Jazz Festival

Ystad, Sweden

August 2–5

A brief ferry ride from Danish jazz hotspot Copenhagen, this rising Swedish jazz festival brings attention to up-and-coming Swedish artists but also recognizes out-of-town touring acts, including a Billie Holiday tribute by Dee Dee

Bridgewater. Artistic Director Jan Lundgren added an additional day of programming last year—resulting in more than 30 performances—and the popularity of Ystad has stayed constant ever since.

Lineup: TBA. Last year's lineup included Herb Geller, Richard Galliano, Enrico Pieranunzi, Paolo Fresu, Toots Thielemans.

More info: ystadjazz.se

Gouvry Jazz & Blues Festival Gouvry, Wallonia, Belgium August 3–5

The Gouvry weekend delegates the Saturday of the fest as a day of bebop jazz and Sunday as a day for blues. During the three-day event bustling with 27 different shows from both European and American artists, patrons can partake in delicious homestyle beer on the northern border of Luxembourg.

Lineup: TBA. Last year's lineup included Ricky Ford, Michael Legrand, David Sanchez, Bernard Allison and more.

More info: gouvry.eu/madelonne

Jazz Em Agosto Lisbon, Portugal August 3–12

This year the festival carries on the change to present concerts every night for the duration of the ten-day festival, with less events nightly. As usual, the program brings together leading lights in European and American jazz and free improvisation.

Lineup: Sunny Murray/John Edwards/Tony Bevan, Led Bib, Misha Mengelberg & Evan Parker, Matthew Shipp Trio, Marilyn Crispell & Gerry Hemingway, Ingebrigt Håker Flaten Chicago Sextet, eRikm, Das Kapital, more.

More info: musica/gulbenkian/pt/jazz

Jazz Festival Willisau Willisau, Switzerland August 22–26

Now in its 38th year, this festival allows patrons to camp in



medieval Willisau while taking in a program that combines classic and modern jazz.

Lineup: TBA.

More info: jazzfestivalwillisau.ch

International Jazz Festival Saalfelden Saalfelden, Austria

August 23–26

Salzburg has always been a centerpiece for musicmaking. Over four days, it boasts 31 performances on five stages with a fine repertoire of avant garde artists.

Lineup: Martin Philadelphy, Jamie Saft, Ken Vandermark, Gerry Mulligan, more.

More info: jazzsaalfelden.com

Oslo Jazz Festival Oslo, Norway

August 13–18

The folks at Oslo Jazz provide 70 concerts using nearly 16 open air and indoor venues in the centre of Oslo, including the new opera house on the waterfront and Oslo's wonder-

ful 17th century cathedral. Approximately 25 of the concerts are free annual.

Lineup: Tony Bennett, more.

More info: oslojazz.no

Akbank Jazz Festival Istanbul, Turkey

October 4–21

Turkey's premier jazz celebration occurs for the 22nd year throughout downtown Istanbul at a variety of venues, from the large-scale Lutfi Kirdar Concert Hall boasting festival mainstays to the cozy Babylon.

Lineup: TBA. Last year's performers included Arild Andersen, Charles Lloyd, Avishai Cohen, Robert Glasper Experiment, Carmen Souza, Vijay Iyer.

More info: akbanksanat.com/jazz_festival

Stockholm Jazz Festival Stockholm, Sweden

October 5–7

After a successful run last

year at Skansen, the festival's new location, the folks at Stockholm jazz aim to please crowds of r&b, rock and jazz fans with a dose of versatile programming. This year will be the 29th edition of the fest, which has been moved later in the year for a brisk fall experience.

Lineup: TBA. Last year's lineup included Robert Glasper, Cassandra Wilson, Lagaylia Frazier and Jan Lundgren Trio, and Niklas Barno with Je Suis!

More info: stockholmjazz.com

JazzFest Berlin Berlin, Germany

November 1–4

This self-proclaimed "capital city" of jazz serves up a four-day extravaganza of tightly scheduled programming that ranges from the progressive to a stock of American artists. Its recent focus has shifted toward discovering local talent but functions as a forum

for all European artists.

Lineup: TBA. Past performers have included Rudresh Mahanthappa, Terence Blanchard and Peter Erskine.

More info: berlinerfestspiele.de/jazzfestberlin

London Jazz Festival London, England

November 9–18

The former subsidiary of the once-thriving Camden festival has matured into a massive 10-day festival. Its emerging New Audience scheme exposes patrons to a amalgamation of classic performances, BBC broadcasts and burgeoning talent in the confines of London's historic performance halls.

Lineup: TBA. Past performers have included Sonny Rollins and Robert Glasper.

More info: londonjazzfestival.org.uk

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OTHER INTERNATIONAL

Melbourne International Jazz Festival Melbourne, Australia

June 1–10

Melbourne's themed festival offerings include a Modern Masters series, which showcases the capabilities of seasoned jazz pros such as Dee Dee Bridgewater and McCoy Tyner, a Jazz Futures showcase of soon-to-bes and a club session jam. The Melbourne Symphony Orchestra joins forces with jazz greats during the Metropolis series.

Lineup: McCoy Tyner Trio feat. José James & Chris Potter, Dee Dee Bridgewater featuring Patti Austin, Hiromi, Terence Blanchard, Dr. Lonnie Smith Trio, Robert Glasper Experiment, more.

More info: melbournejazz.com

Rio Das Ostras Jazz and Blues Festival

Rio Das Ostras, Brazil

June 6–10

Azul Productions celebrates a decade of Brazilian and international flavors with its 10th anniversary presentation of indoor and outdoor performances, many of which take place in St. Peter's Square. Venues such as Lagoon Iri, Turtle Beach and Costazul command the attention of music-seekers, who can indulge in the festival's beachfront culinary offerings.

Lineup: David Sanborn, Billy Cobham, Mike Stern & Romero Lum-bambo, Kenny Barron, Armand Sabal-Lecco, Duke Robillard, Cama de Gato, Celso Blues Boy, more.

More info: riodasostraszazzeblues.com

Jamaica Ocho Rios International Jazz Festival

Ocho Rios, Jamaica

June 9–17

Jamaica's busiest port city, Kingston, isn't the only place where visitors can absorb island-infused reggae, jazz and big band sounds. There are also stages in Port Antonio, Ocho Rios, vacation hotspot Negril and Treasure Beach as well. This year marks the 50-year anniversary of the country's independence.

Lineup: Skatalites, Leslie Butler (organ) The Jamaica Big Band, Tony Gregory, Myrna Hague.

More info: ochoriosjazz.com



Savassi Festival

Belo Horizonte, Minas Gerais, Brazil

July 18–30

For its 10th anniversary, Kenny Werner was commissioned to compose a new work for band and orchestra. The world premiere of this work functions as the festival's grand opening.

Lineup: Kenny Werner Trio, Ari Hoenig Quartet, Scalandrum, A Gafieira de Paulo Moura.

More info: savassifestival.com.br

Red Sea Jazz Festival

Eliat Harbor, Israel

July 30–August 2

Established in 1987, this festival, which occurs on the banks of the body of water that gave it its name, is known for providing a unique listening experience rife with Israeli talent. The three venues—the Arena, Hall and Jazz Club—are of differing sizes, providing guests with varying ambiances amid pool parties and celebrations.

Lineup: TBA. Past performers have included Stefon Harris, Danilo Pérez and Gary Burton.

More info: redseajazzeilat.com

Nisville Jazz Festival

Nis, Serbia

August 16–19

An old fortress in the city of Nis serves as a house of all things swing and big band, but doesn't disappoint with a lineup of well-known artists.

Lineup: Jean Luc Ponty Band, Brussel Jazz Orchestra ft. Mario Joao & Davind Linx, Lydian Sound Orchestra, Osibisa, Opus 5, Jamaladeen Tacuma & Joseph "Joe" Bowie, more.

More info: nisville.com

Curacao North Sea Jazz Festival

Piscadero Bay, Curacao

August 31–September 1

Seventy-thousand visitors flock to the Lesser Antilles annually to witness a far-reaching spectrum of Caribbean-influenced r&b and jazz acts. World music is always a prominent factor for programmers, who coordinate a hybrid of genres.

Lineup: Carlos Santana, Rubén Blades, Buika, Paquito D'Rivera Septet, Joshua Redman with Aaron Parks, James Farm, more.

More info: curacaonorthseajazz.com

Caribbean Sea Jazz Festival

Oranjestad, Aruba

October 5–6

The tiny island of Aruba is a tropical alcove for over 6,500 jazz fans to congregate each year. In its sixth year, this getaway locale amps up its Cas Di Cultura Plaza offerings with three stages, a top-quality food court and an art gallery.

Lineup: Chaka Khan, more.

More info: caribbeanseajazz.com

Kathmandu Jazz Festival with Mark Cantor

Kathmandu, Nepal

November 1–8

The capital city of Nepal has garnered a reputation for great jazz over 10 years. Hosting a hodgepodge of workshops for players of all skill levels, the peak-filled "Jazzmandu" locale features a Peace Parade as well as an expanded musical showcase in the city of Pokhara.

Lineup: TBA. Past performers include Peter Rowan and Manose.

More info: jazzmandu.org

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They may have released their sophomore album, *For True*, just last year, but multi-instrumentalist Troy "Shorty" Andrews and his raucous brass band, Orleans Avenue, are no strangers to the festival scene. The Crescent City favorites will take their funk-infused, second line sounds to the Midwest for the Tri-C Jazz Festival (April 13), to the Florida panhandle for Jacksonville Jazz Festival (May 26) and across the Atlantic for the Strasburg Jazz Festival (July 5).



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Dominican Republic Jazz Festival

Sosua and Cabarete,
Dominican Republic
November 2-4

Last year's fest paid homage to jazz's greatest female vocalists, but 2012's festivities center around the genre's most prolific guitarists.

Lineup: TBA. Last year's lineup included the Puerto Varas Jazz Sextet, Ismael Miranda and Tutti Druyan.

More info: drjazzfestival.com

Festival de Jazz de Montevideo

Montevideo, Uruguay
November 16-20

The Teatro Solis and Sala Zitarrosa venues set the scene for the 5th anniversary of Uruguay's highly anticipated jazz celebration. Festivities include workshops and jam sessions.

Lineup: Sara Serpa Cuateto, Alain Jean-Marie Trio, Giovanni Mirabassi Trio, Banda Sinfónica de Montevideo, more.

More info: jazztour.com.uy

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Canada



The Legacy of David Baker at 80

David Baker was doing what he's been doing at Indiana University for the past 45 years: teaching. Miles Davis' "Walkin'" was playing on the overhead speakers for his "History Of Jazz And Soul" class. Suddenly, as Baker stepped around the piano, he fell and broke his hip. In the ensuing rush to help, an associate instructor moved to shut off the music when Baker yelled, "Don't stop it! J.J. [Johnson] is the next soloist!"

Even a broken hip and an 80th birthday on Dec. 21 can't stop Baker from carrying out his lifelong mission of being a musician-educator. Three weeks after his fall, he was back in the classroom, the owner of a brand-new titanium hip. Baker's recovery was the latest in a series of challenges that he's overcome for much of his life. Like fellow trombonist Johnson, Baker graduated from Indianapolis' Crispus Attucks High School, which was then a segregated school. While there, he honed his chops on the famed Indiana Avenue scene while studying at Indiana University in the early 1950s. He and the members of his local hard-bop group attended the legendary Lenox School of Jazz in Massachusetts in 1959 under the tutelage of pianist George Russell, resulting in classic Russell-led records such as 1960's *At The Five Spot* (Decca) and *Stratusphunk* (Riverside).

In 1962, Baker won DownBeat's New Star award in the trombone category, but a jaw injury from a serious car accident forced him to give up the instrument. After switching to cello, Baker delved more deeply into teaching and was named head of Indiana University's new jazz studies department in 1966. At the time, Baker was the only faculty member. Now, the nine-person department is considered a model for programs around the country. Jazz education—considered a dubious pursuit when Baker undertook it—"has never been healthier," he said. "You've got all of these camps, all of these schools. I want to be a part of that legacy as long as I'm living."

Many of the students who graduated from IU's jazz program during Baker's tenure have gone on to become professional musicians and educators: trumpeter Randy Brecker, saxophonist Ralph Bowen, bassist Bob Hurst, pianists Michael Weiss and Jim Beard and drummer Shawn Pelton. "[Baker's] energy, commitment and enthusiasm for everything he was doing was just contagious," Beard recalled.

"He's so charismatic, has such a great sense of humor and teaches with a lot of love involved," Pelton added. "He taught us all to really respect the tradition, but he also planted seeds about how the music was always going to have to grow and go forward. I feel like he gave us all a hatchet to tear down all the walls, so that matter where you



were, you felt like you could push further."

Jazz pianist and educator Monika Herzig, who wrote the new biography *David Baker: A Legacy In Music* (Indiana University Press), cited Baker's self-authored study books as significant contributions to jazz education. "He codified so much jazz knowledge, putting it into a form so that it's easily structured and can be taught in classes," Herzig said. "As a teacher, he can look at you and identify very quickly exactly what it is that you need, and pinpoint your weakness and strengths."

Fellow IU jazz educator Brent Wallarab arranged some of his former teacher's big band music for the album *Basically Baker* and said he's amazed by Baker's dedication. "Even at the age of 80, he still tweaks and modifies his syllabus and curriculum, always thinking about how to do something more effectively,"

Baker's influence extends beyond the campus and his considerable body of literature. For the last 20 years, he's led the Smithsonian Jazz Masterworks Orchestra. "David and the SJMO have led the way in demonstrating how rich and compelling the great repertoire of jazz history is, and how relevant and exciting it can be for today's audiences," said John Hasse, music curator for Smithsonian American.

But teaching is the one thing Baker can never give up. "I love being a part of a legacy that is the constant change that we call jazz," he said. "I love being around young people. I can't think of anything much more honorable than teaching young people to be decent, to be successful. Teaching is such a sacred act. To show somebody about life ... I teach under jazz, but what I teach is living."

—David Brent Johnson



Mingusology: On Feb. 19, the winners of the 2012 Charles Mingus High School Competition at the Manhattan School of Music were announced in combo and big band categories. The 10-school competition also commemorated what would have been Mingus' 90th birthday. Trumpeter Adam O'Farrill from New York City's LaGuardia High School received the Mingus Scholarship to attend the MSM. Details: msmnyc.edu

Technica Ability: Audio-Technica endorser Mindi Abair commemorated the 50th anniversary of the microphone company by donating her performance honorarium from a Jan. 19 NAMM Show concert to the Berklee College of Music Five-Week Summer Performance Program. The funds will cover the tuition of one student throughout the duration of the camp. Abair is an alumnus of Berklee.

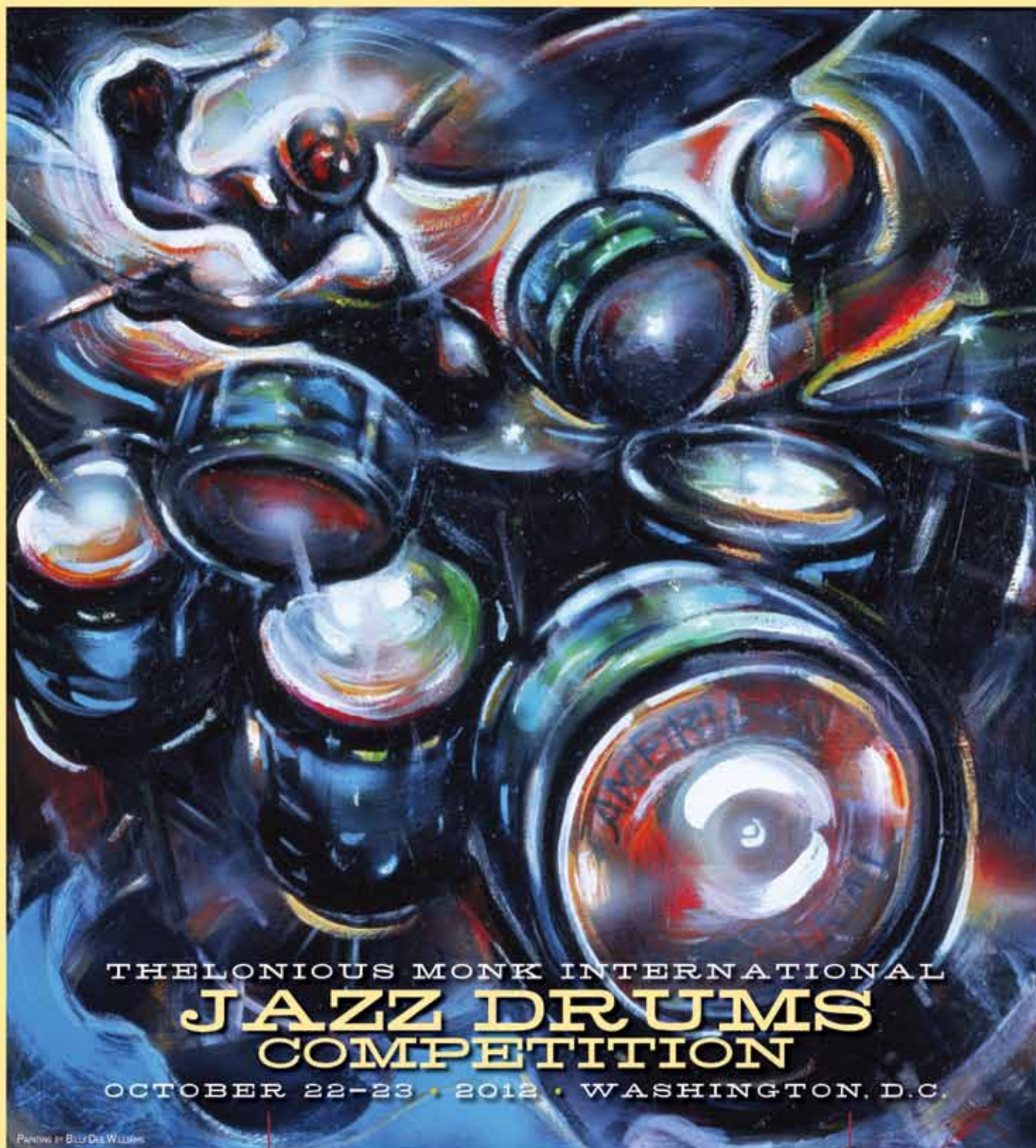
Details: a-t.com

Silver Anniversary: Jim Widner is celebrating the 25th anniversary of both his weeklong jazz camps as well as his big band. Widner—who, along with an all-star roster of Stan Kenton big band alumni, immerses his campers in jazz concepts such as improvisation, theory and ear training—will conduct camps this year from June 10–15 in St. Louis and June 17–22 in Omaha, Neb.

Details: umsl.edu; unomaha.edu

Bass Lesson: Bassist Rufus Reid visited Oberlin Conservatory on March 8–10 to work with students and conduct composition workshops and master classes. During his visit to the conservatory, Reid also performed with the Oberlin Jazz Ensemble. Details: oberlin.edu

Label Endorsement: The estate of Atlantic Records founder Ahmet Ertgun has donated more than \$41 million to the humanities department at Oxford University. The gift is the largest in the department's history and will go toward the creation of 15 graduate scholarships as well as lectures and concerts. Details: ox.ac.uk



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David Binney

Alto saxophonist David Binney has been one of New York's most influential, forward-thinking conceptual movers and shakers over the last two decades. He augmented his voluminous discography last year with the albums *Graylen Epicenter* (Mythology) and *Barefooted Town* (Criss Cross Jazz).

Jon Irabagon

"Oddjob" (*Outright!*, Innova, 2008) Irabagon, alto saxophone; Russ Johnson, trumpet; Kris Davis, piano; Eivind Opsvik, bass; Jeff Davis, drums.

It sounded like Steve Coleman, or someone influenced by him. But that solo intro had stuff I haven't heard Steve do, and the tune and arrangement don't sound like what Steve would write. So I'm confused. On a technical level, I dug all that fast horn stuff together, and I liked the microtonal and overtone things—the split notes—on the saxophone intro. For the playing, 5 stars; the composition, 3½ stars. [after] I was thinking of that other band Jon is in—Mostly Other People Do The Killing—which I've never really heard. Jon studied with me at one point, but he didn't sound like that then.

Bunky Green

"It Could Happen to You" (*Another Place*, Label Bleu, 2004) Green, alto saxophone; Jason Moran, piano; Lonnie Plaxico, bass; Nasheet Waits, drums.

At first I thought it was Bunky Green, but then it went a little left. Bunky's thing is to play standards, disregard the changes for a little while, and then back in and out of them, which was happening here, but then it went more into the free-jazz sound than I've ever heard Bunky do. I'm trying to guess who it would be. I was thinking Sonny Simmons, but I've never heard him play with that much technique. 3 stars.

Francesco Cafiso Quartet

"Angelica" (*Angelica*, CamJazz, 2008) Cafiso, alto saxophone; Aaron Parks, piano; Ben Street, bass; Adam Cruz, drums.

Initially, I thought maybe Jaki Byard playing alto, before the saxophonist plays all that fast stuff, which puts it into a different era, a different technical thing. I'm stumped. It's a calypso song by Ellington, with a happy vibe, sometimes goofy, but loose and fun, with a great spirit. I liked the whole rhythm section, and really dug the piano solo. 3½ stars. [after] I've heard about him, but never heard him. What confused me was his fast line playing, which was a bit clichéd, but it's sometimes typical of the scene in Italy.

Buffalo Collision

"2nd of 4 > 10:8&Change" (*Duck*, Screwgun, 2008) Tim Berne, alto saxophone; Ethan Iverson, piano; Hank Roberts, cello; Dave King, drums.

Henry Threadgill? But there's a lack of composition, and I usually think of Henry as composing something. I wouldn't normally put this music on, but if I was playing it, it would be really fun. I like the spirit. I know exactly what they're feeling when they're doing it because I've done so much of that kind of thing. 3½ stars. [after] If it was something that Tim composed, I'd have gotten it in a second. Also, it was recorded very ambient; Tim's sound is muffled, darker than I'm used to hearing. It wasn't my favorite Tim Berne, but I love so much by him.

Logan Richardson

"Open Doors" (*Ethos*, Inner Circle, 2008) Richardson, alto saxophone; Mike Pinto, vibraphone; Greg Ruggiero, guitar; Chris Tordini, bass; Tommy Crane, drums.

Miguel Zenón. It's not Miguel? Wow. It sounds like him. [after] After the first few notes, I'm pretty sure it's Logan Richardson, whom I like very much, with Mike Pinto on vibes. Logan is one of the few new young alto players I really enjoy listening to. He has a lot of technique, and he's going for something new, with passion—he's playing music.



He's a good composer, and a very good person. 4½ stars.

Miguel Zenón

"Villa Palmeras" (*Esta Plena*, Marsalis Music, 2009) Zenon, alto saxophone; Luis Perdomo, piano; Hans Glawischignig, bass; Henry Cole, drums; Hector "Tito" Matos, Obanliu Allende, Juan Gutierrez, percussion.

That's definitely Miguel, with Luis, Hans and Henry Cole playing drums. What can I say? 5 stars. It's very macho technically, which sometimes can be bad, but it's so passionate; there's so much music there. I've played enough with Miguel over the years, and know all the guys, and know that's where it's coming from. The arrangement, the writing, the percussion—it's really well done and exciting.

Roscoe Mitchell/David Wessel

"For Oliver Johnson (Parts 1 And 2)" (*Contact*, RogueArt, 2002) Mitchell, alto and soprano saxophones; David Wessel, electronics.

I love the way he just ended on the tonic, after all that. Initially I was thinking Evan Parker, but he usually has a lot more pyrotechnical things going. A wild guess—Vinny Golia and Alex Cline. 4½ stars. For free playing and totally improvising, they got into some amazing sound stuff. Very musical. And the energy! He was circular breathing, and he sustained that energy for a long time. I liked where they went through the soprano and all that light sound. I was hoping at some point he'd put more air through the horn so I could have a chance at guessing who it is. Then he switched to alto, and there it was. Maybe I should get it from that, but I can't. I'm going to guess it's just one other person, doing a lot of things. I heard sitar and tabla and autoharp and synth. It certainly wasn't boring, even though it was long. [after] I don't know David Wessel, but the way he framed what Roscoe was doing was beautiful. In free improvisation, I listen for some sort of instant composition, and those two are really adept at it. Roscoe is definitely leading, but the way David Wessel surrounded him—how he switched instruments, some of the harmonic things he got into around Roscoe's notes—was beautiful. Independent ideas, but totally related to what Roscoe is doing. **DB**

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