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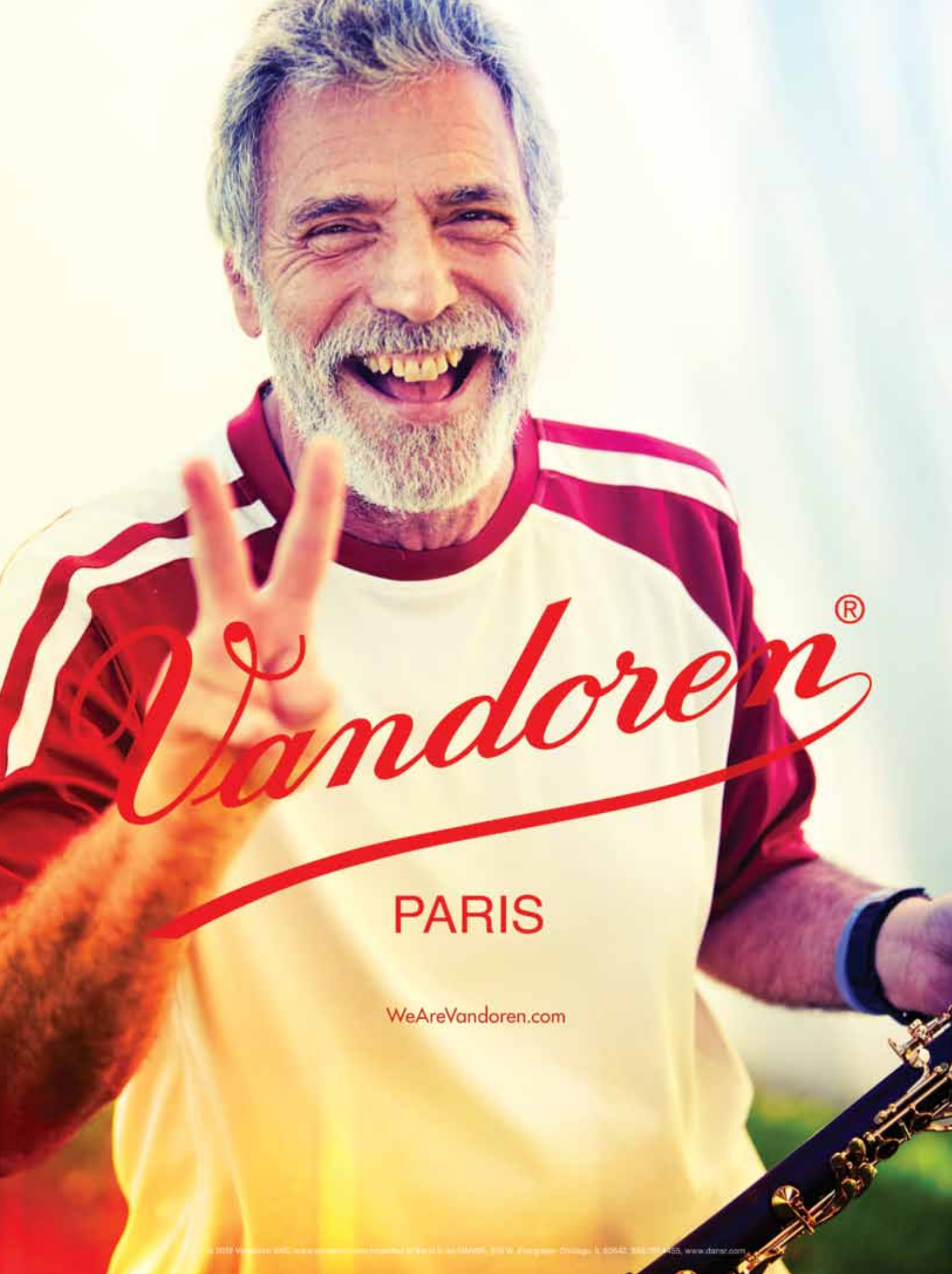
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JULY 2012 inside

ON THE COVER

Jack Bruce performing with Spectrum Road at Dimitriou's Jazz Alley in Seattle, Feb. 11, 2011 (Photo: Rick Kent)

On the cover, from left: Spectrum Road members John Medeski, Cindy Blackman Santana, Vernon Reid and Jack Bruce. Cover image shot by Jimmy and Dena Katz in New York City.

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Preservation Hall Jazz Band's Ben Jaffe (left) and Freddie Lonzo

Forward & Backward

Jazz marches ahead while occasionally glancing back. Part of the marvel of jazz is that it can be simultaneously forward-thinking and retro-leaning. Jazz players push the art form forward into the progressive future while still acknowledging and building on the music's rich history and traditional sounds.

This duality is evident in two stories in this issue, both involving New Orleans, the birthplace of jazz. In our feature on the Preservation Hall Jazz Band (see page 34), writer Jennifer Odell examines how this ensemble has kept traditional jazz alive while also remaining wildly creative through unique collaborations.

On April 30, in ceremonies in New Orleans—and in dozens of countries—thousands of people gathered to celebrate the inaugural International Jazz Day, officially recognized by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) as a way to nurture dialogue and foster cooperation. (See our coverage on page 16 of The Beat.) UNESCO Goodwill Ambassador Herbie Hancock, who participated in International Jazz Day events in both the Crescent City and New York City during the momentous day, spoke passionately about the power of jazz to cross cultural boundaries.

This year's events were a terrific start. But that's all they were—a start. Let's begin planning right now to make International Jazz Day in 2013 an even greater success. Think about it for a second—a special day, recognized around the world, devoted to jazz. It's an awesome concept. By raising awareness of this new event, we can promote meaningful dialogue and help introduce new listeners, both young and old, to the transformative world of jazz.

So, what can *you* do? Begin by starting a conversation with a co-worker or neighbor about International Jazz Day. Let's make sure that everyone, everywhere, begins to associate the date April 30 with a celebration of jazz.

If you're musician, make sure you get a gig on April 30 (even if it's a free one) and inform your audience that it is a unique day. If you're an educator, work with your school's administrators to organize events in which musicians can talk to students about jazz and discuss concepts learned on the bandstand that are applicable to everyday life. If you're a student, let your teachers know that you want to participate in or organize a jazz concert or panel discussion.

All these activities can serve as a forum to discuss the cooperative and improvisational aspects of human interaction. We've already seen such forums succeed. Through the efforts of the U.S. State Department, bassist Ari Roland is one of many musicians who travel the world as a jazz ambassador, playing concerts and promoting dialogue. Roland recently told me, "Jazz is the ultimate vehicle for bringing people together." Roland has watched this happen over and over in numerous countries.

Still, there are people who are resistant to jazz. I never get upset when someone says, "I don't like jazz." Here's my standard response: "Jazz is a big umbrella. Perhaps you just haven't heard the right *kind* of jazz yet. What type of music do you like? Tell me a couple of artists you love, and maybe I can introduce you to a jazz artist that you'll enjoy." Then the person starts talking about his or her favorite music. Then I talk about my mine. The next thing you know, we're standing on common ground. I may not have instantly converted this person into a jazz fan, but at least I've hinted at the dangers of trafficking in generalities, and perhaps opened up someone's mind just a tiny bit. It's a start, and it could lead to bigger things.

So mark your calendar. April 30 will be a great day to start some new conversations. **DB**

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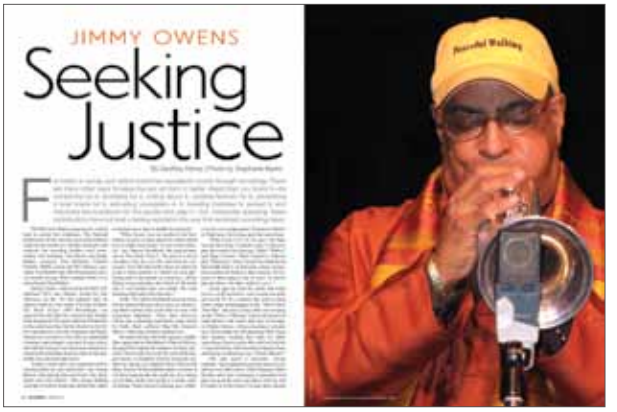
Owens' Impact



Around 1967, somewhere in New York City, arriving from Canada and thirsty for jazz, I stepped into a club—the name of which I no longer remember—and I heard a young trumpeter. He sounded good and his name remained in my memory, surfacing every once in a while in DownBeat. Therefore, I was happy to see a feature on Jimmy Owens ("Seeking Justice," May) and very interested to see how writer Geoffrey Himes clearly showed that a life in jazz is not necessarily one of fame and glitter. Through Owens' altruism, he has given much to other musicians in the form of advice on health care, pension and copyright issues. In the article, Owens' autobiographical stories—hearing Charlie Shavers on a 78 rpm record at age 3, and as a teenager, meeting Miles Davis—showed his humanity. His ability to raise funds for jazz is exemplary. And earning the admiration of fellow musicians, such pianist Kenny Barron, for his unique sound on the flugelhorn indicates that Owens is on top of his art.

VICTOR SNIECKUS
KINGSTON, ONTARIO
CANADA

Originals vs. Standards

Like many contemporary musicians, this young man Alex Lopez doesn't seem to have a clear idea of the basic elements of jazz (Players, May). He states, "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."

First of all, the pop/rock worlds have nothing to do with jazz. Secondly, both jazz and Great American Songbook standards are basic elements of our music. Third, most contemporary young jazz musicians' compositions are normally quite volatile, to say the least. They're forgotten overnight or never played by anybody except their composers—whereas jazz and Great American Songbook standards will be played, for sure, until doomsday.

ADRIANO PATERI
MILAN, ITALY

Mighty Mentors

There have been many significant mentor-disciple relationships in jazz history (First Take, February). We could talk about the beautiful and melancholic relationship between pianist Bill Evans and bassist Scott LaFaro, broken only two weeks after that legendary *Sunday At The Village Vanguard* in 1961. Also, well-known, successful artists like Art Blakey and Charles Lloyd made it possible for a young, unknown guy called Keith Jarrett to build the first fundamental pieces of his stellar career.

There is another artist who should be remembered in this sense: a young guy who arrived in New York City to study at the prestigious Juilliard School but decided to choose different mentors, particularly Charlie Parker. Brilliant and foolish, Parker represented all the 52nd Street bad habits, but even a few notes of his sax were worth more than an entire year of music classes. Years later, when the young trumpeter became a legend himself, he decided to be the cornerstone to generations of musicians. Without him as a mentor, the careers of many players—Wayne Shorter, Chick Corea, Herbie Hancock, John McLaughlin, Kenny Garrett (and many more)—would have been significantly different. And for this huge contribution, I can only say: Thanks, Miles.

MARCO SAGLIANO
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CLAUDIO OLIVEIRA
SÃO PAULO, BRAZIL

Corrections

- In the May issue, a description of France's Jazz à Foix festival incorrectly implied that Ira Gitler booked talent for the fest.
- In the Student Music Awards section of the June issue, a photo caption misidentified trombonist Coleman Hughes.

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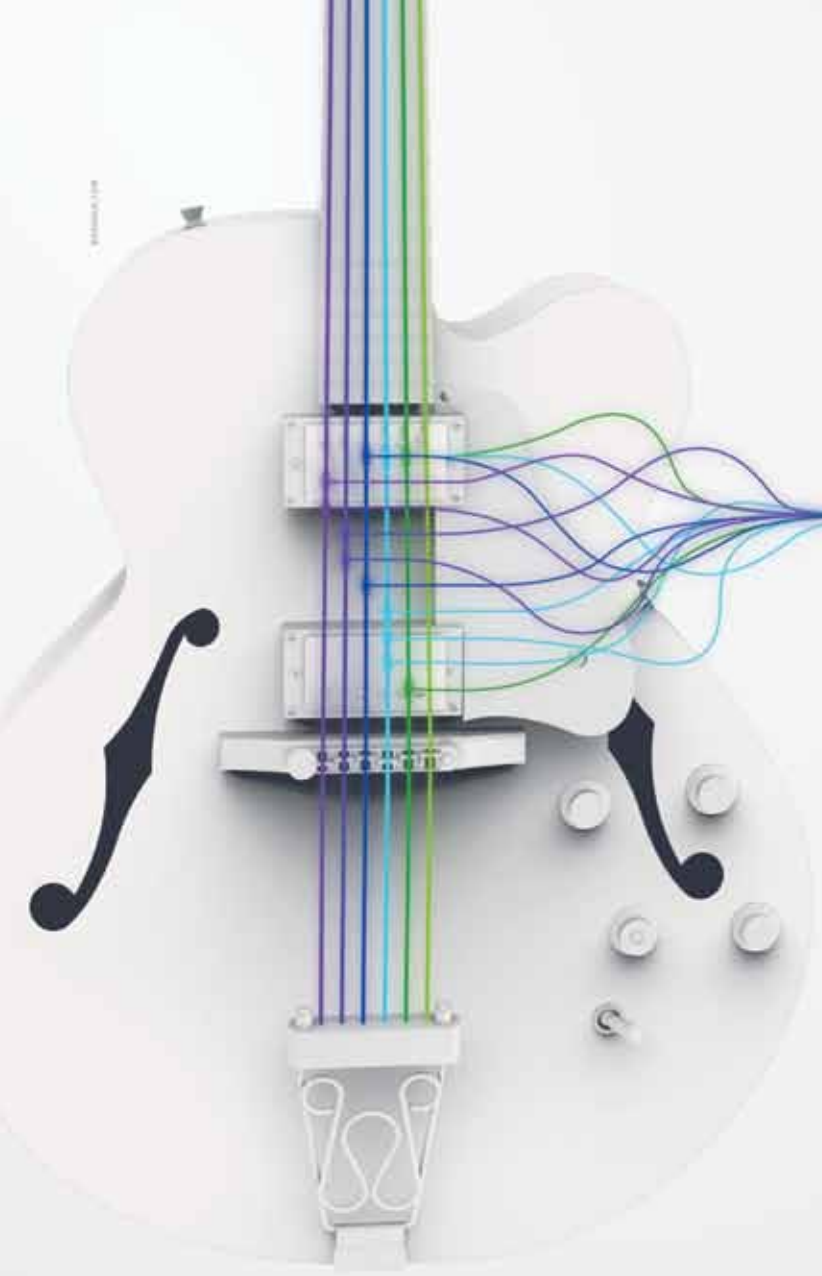

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The Beat

Inside

Creating Waves

NPR's JazzSet *Program Celebrates 20 Years*

JazzSet, NPR's nationally syndicated jazz program, hit the 20-year mark earlier this year. Hosted by award-winning vocalist Dee Dee Bridgewater, *JazzSet* transports listeners weekly to festivals, clubs and performing arts centers around the country and highlights premiere concerts within the jazz community.

The show premiered in 1992 with Branford Marsalis as its first host. Along with its predecessor program, *The American Radio Jazz Festival*, and Marian McPartland's *Piano Jazz* radio show, *JazzSet* inaugurated an era described as "a golden age of jazz radio" by the show's producer, Becca Pulliam, of WBGO–FM (Newark, N.J.). Over the last two decades, *JazzSet* has captured countless performances and highlighted a panorama of live jazz that few broadcast entities can match. Pulliam, along with Technical Director Duke Markos, have presented concerts from Roy Haynes, Dianne Reeves, Kurt Elling, Michael Brecker, Paquito D'Rivera, Christian McBride and numerous others.

JazzSet is known for its monthly broadcasts from the Kennedy Center, and Pulliam credits the late jazz "ambassador" Dr. Billy Taylor with much of the show's fundamental success. "Dr. Taylor was very important to jazz on NPR in the late '70s and '80s." Pulliam said. "He became involved with the Kennedy Center with his series *Billy Taylor's Jazz At The Kennedy Center*, and he was also the artistic advisor for all of the shows they put on. They wanted to get some of those concerts on the air, and I think that's because Dr. Taylor really believed in radio. It launched a lot of great events that were then offered to *JazzSet*, like the Mary Lou Williams Women In Jazz Festival in the late '90s."

"He championed the music and also the women in the music," said Bridgewater, who, in addition to hosting the last 10 years of *JazzSet*, inherited Taylor's hosting gig for the Women In Jazz festival.

JazzSet began broadcasting online in 2007, in tandem with the launch of NPR Music, garnering an international audience. Additionally, the program has been broadcast from international stages such as the Montreal Jazz Festival and North Sea Jazz Festival.

"*JazzSet* gives the jazz community the opportunity to hear artists in a live setting and some artists whom one wouldn't ordinarily be able to hear," Bridgewater said. "I love doing the show because it allows me to discover artists, and it's just a joy to hear the music, and I love being a part of the NPR family."

Plans are under way to present shows featuring both Marsalis and Bridgewater as part of the 20th anniversary season.

Dee Dee Bridgewater

MELISSA KUPPERS/NPR

"I hope and believe that what it does is create a world which ... isn't physical but maybe spiritual, where people can get inspiration to support the live music scene wherever they are," Pulliam said. "Jazz may not be huge in any particular center, but if you add it all together, on a scale of human effort and imagination and love, it adds up to something which is way beyond the sum of each part. I want *JazzSet* to demonstrate that."

—Angelika Beener

Riffs


Rudy Linka

DAVID PEIFAN

Bohemian Rhapsody: Guitarist Rudy Linka, president of the Bohemia Jazz Festival, scored a victory in the Czech Supreme Court against another jazz festival that was infringing on his festival's name, which is internationally copyrighted. This year's Bohemia Jazz Festival takes place July 10–22 in nine cities and towns across the Czech Republic: Prague (three days), Plzen, Domažlice, Olomouc, Ostrava, Brno, Tábor, Ceské Budejovice and Prachatice. Confirmed headliners include Dave Holland with Kevin Eubanks and Craig Taborn; Dee Dee Bridgewater Quartet; Mike Stern/Richard Bona Quartet featuring Dave Weckl; Trilok Gurtu; and ensembles from Spain, Germany, Turkey, Austria, Denmark, Sweden, Holland, Poland, Australia and Czech Republic. All concerts are free to the public.

Espy Goes Green: Esperanza Spalding presented the world premiere of her "Endangered Species" sand animation film at the National Mall in Washington, D.C., to coincide with Earth Day on April 22. The video, a track from Spalding's new release *Radio Music Society*, was shown to more than 250,000 people on three Jumbotron video screens. "Endangered Species" was also simulcast online through the Earth Day Network. Spalding's April 22 concert at the Orpheum Theater in Boston was also part of the bassist's Earth Day program.

New Direction: The trustees of Jazz at Lincoln Center have hired Greg Scholl, a former NBC Universal executive with a background in digital music distribution, to manage the nonprofit arts institution in the role of executive director. Scholl replaced former director Adrian Ellis, who resigned in January.

Louie Lives: A rare 1971 recording of Louis Armstrong performing at the National Press Club in Washington, D.C., has been released as a digital download and CD. The 1971 LP, which was recorded approximately five months before the iconic trumpeter's death, includes such classics as "Hello Dolly," "Mack The Knife" and "Rocking Chair."

Caught

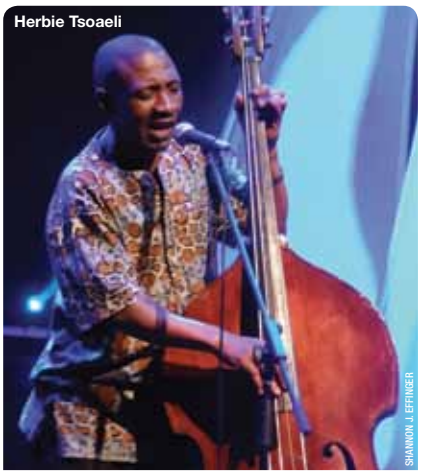
Cosmopolitan Cape Town Hosts Traditional Artists

Cape Town's 13th Annual International Jazz Festival brought in more than 40,000 concertgoers March 30–31, nearly doubling last year's attendance. With its beautiful architecture and lush vineyards, Cape Town is truly a cosmopolitan city. So it is only fitting that a music festival should be representative of its host city.

South African vocalist Zamajobe kicked off "Africa's Grandest Gathering" at the Kippies stage with selections from her debut album *Ndawo Yami (My Place)* (Giant Steps), a hybrid of her African influences with a leaning towards contemporary music in the vein of Sade and Amel Larrieux. But the marriage of sounds was perhaps most seamless during bassist Herbie Tsoaeli's hour-long set at Rosies, filling the room with a tranquil yet optimistic energy.

There wasn't one theme that could really tie most of the festival performances together. Certain artists, like Durban-based performer Zakes Bantwini, looked to the past for inspiration. But celebrity stylist-turned-singer Lindiwe Suttle was clearly looking ahead as she incorporated elements of dance and theater with a fusion of electronica, funk and jazz harmonies.

One noticeable faux pas was overlapping performances, notably of two South African legends, Hugh Masekela and Dorothy Masuka. If ever there were a case to be made to add an extra day to the festival weekend, this would be a perfect one. At Rosies, Masuka showed little sign of injury from her broken hip as she danced with the


Herbie Tsoaeli

SHANNON J. EFFINGER

hypnotic guitar rhythms of "Khawuleza." Much of Masekela's opening set at Kippies was a tribute to the late Miriam Makeba; however, he gave young South African artists like vocalist Zolani Mahola and vocalist/guitarist Vusi Mahlasela ample room to shine. Either Masuka or Masekela would have been a perfect choice to close out the festival, but instead, concertgoers endured the near-45-minute delay of Ms. Lauryn Hill's performance, which due to sound issues and a shaky intro was not worth the wait.

The hiccups were compensated by the overall experience of the festival. Organizers have not only given artists from all over the continent a real platform, but in turn, they've given concertgoers a rare cultural experience.

—Shannon J. Effinger

Sachal Spearheads Singer Showcase

FRAN KAUFMAN

In a rare pairing with legendary vocalist Jon Hendricks (right), Sachal Vasandani (center) fronted a six-day showcase of vocal jazz talent at Dizzy's Club Coca-Cola in New York March 27–April 1. Other featured performers included Jeb Patton, David Wong, Clarence Penn and Dayna Stephens.

Bruce Springsteen

BRIAN BARZER

Distribution, New Technology Among SXSW's Hot Panel Topics

Bruce Springsteen got the 2012 SXSW proceedings off to an excellent start with a highly personalized and often humorous keynote address. Keyboardist Robert Glasper emphasized his jazz underpinnings with a sublime set as Berklee College of Music guitar professor Bruce Saunders augmented his straight-ahead performance. Guitarist Gabriel Santiago led his band through a well-balanced Brazilian take on jazz standards, and trumpeter Jeff Lofton unashamedly and entertainingly reprised the early Miles Davis mode. But for all its entertainment, SXSW is also a funnel of music business ideas. That aspect was examined in great detail on March 6–18 via dozens of daily business panels, from the nuts and bolts of song royalties to the enduring presence of metaphysical magic in musical performances.

Much of the discussion by panelists focused on the ongoing evolution of distributing and disseminating music. The panels were both intriguing and educational, but most of them simply affirmed the belief that it was probably too early to draw conclusions, particularly regarding the ultimate capabilities and challenges of the latest quantum leap in the ever-evolving synthesis of music and technology.

Cloud technology was an especially hot topic. The "Evolution Of Musical Discovery In The Cloud" session, moderated by Andrea Leonelli of MXP4, served as the foreground for four companies to contrast and compare their file-sharing methodology. Others detailed the price structure differences in web and mobile access, the difficulty of identifying and procuring revenue due artists from digital sources and the need for a new approach concerning the legal aspects of the technology.

The related "Run For Cover: The Future Of Cloud Commerce" panel was moderated by attorney Paul Bezilla, who explained the problems associated with cloud technonology today. "While parameters have been defined," Bezilla said, "very few precedents have been established."

With many of its events organized online, the festival itself was a prime example of the goals discussed in the "Promoting Music With Social Media" panel. During the session, panelists swapped stories of successful strategies for adapting to current social media trends. Aron Levitz, content acquisition director for BlackBerry, moderated the "Music In Devices" panel, which previewed the actual trends generated by new techniques for gathering and listening to music. It also encompassed how business entities, whether individual artists or monolithic corporations, might capitalize on them.

Several of the panels stressed a human element over the technological one. During the "Managing Publicity" panel, publicist Heather West explained that "effective publicity is based on building up a relationship, both with the artist and with the media you want to hear the artist." In a similar vein, Lewis Pesacov, White Iris producer and moderator of the "Value Of Vinyl" panel, stressed that the growth of vinyl sales is directly related to the personal bond between the manufacturers of music on vinyl and their customers and the stores those customers patronize.

The most compelling panel experience of the conference was the insider account of the plight of the unsinkable city of New Orleans. Critic John Swenson's evocative book *The New Atlantis* served as the framework for an impassioned discussion of the rebuilding of the Crescent City music scene in the wake of Hurricane Katrina. Swenson served as moderator of the panel, which featured a cross-section on New Orleans music veterans, detailed how the already traditionally close-knit musical community had further tightened and unified its actions while also creating new alliances in order to emerge from the tragedy. —*Michael Point*

Jazz Day in Treme


Herbie Hancock in New Orleans, hours prior to his same-day appearance at the United Nations in New York

MICHAEL WEINTROB

A smoky sunrise shined over the Treme neighborhood next to the French Quarter on April 30. The crowd slowly straggled in to hear the concerts and speeches in honor of International Jazz Day in Congo Square, which was officialized this year by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO). Once a thriving market and social gathering spot, Congo Square is one of the true roots of jazz music and African American culture.

"This is going back to the the home base," said UNESCO Goodwill Ambassador Herbie Hancock. "It's coming back to the source to feel the vibes and the history there. It's a momentous occasion."

It is said that the spirits in Congo Square never sleep, and much of the crowd hadn't either. They had arrived from the late-night concerts that comprise much of the New Orleans Jazz & Heritage Festival, which had been going on simultaneously around the New Orleans Fairgrounds and Race Course. The audience was treated first to the percussion and horn improvisation of the Congo Square Preservation Society led by percussionist Luther Grey. Singer Mama Jamila poured libations on the ground as tribtue to the many musicians—from Buddy Bolden to Baby Dodds to James Black—who had called New Orleans home.

Scholar Freddie Evans, author of the new book *Congo Square: African Roots in New Orleans*, followed with an explanation of the history and significance of Congo Square.

A band consisting of trumpeter Kermit Ruffins, clarinetist Dr. Michael White and Treme Brass Band members baritonist Roger Lewis, drummer Benny Jones and trombonist Eddie King did a version of "Whoopin' Blues" that got the crowd moving before speeches from New Orleans Mayor Mitch Landrieu and UNESCO Director-General Irina Bokova.

The crowd was anxious as Hancock sat at the piano and started the famous riff to "Watermelon Man" with bandmates from the Thelonious Monk Institute of Jazz Performing Arts High School Jazz Program. The students rose to the occasion with trumpeter Glenn Hall Jr. of New Orleans playing a particularly high-spirited solo. Via Internet technology, groups in Paris, Cape Town and Rio de Janeiro played simultaneously, as another video screen displayed a montage of jazz-related images.

As the musicians switched up, Hancock stepped to the microphone, praised the magical sparkle of New Orleans and proclaimed that he was "deeply humbled to be at Congo Square." He then stepped back to the piano to start "A Night In Tunisia" with White, trumpeter Terence Blanchard, bassist Roland Guerin, fellow Headhunter Bill Summers on percussion and drummer Jeff "Tain" Watts. White's solo evoked brief moments of John Coltrane, and Blanchard emphasized a good, round tone. But the tune really took off as Hancock and Watts started working off each other ferociously, and the sun rising through the trees gave Watts' face a mellow, slowly brightening glow. The New Orleans audience, always discerning when it comes to jazz, hooted and applauded by the end of the spectacle.

Stephanie Jordan and Ellis Marsalis delivered a stirring rendition of the jazz standard "On A Clear Day You Can See Forever," which kept the energy going. Finally, Ruffins and the Treme Brass Band returned to the stage to combine the now-ubiquitous-in-New-Orleans "Treme Song" with the Rebirth Brass Band's "Do Watcha Wanna." During the medley, the New Orleans crowd proved that it can get its roll on at 7:45 a.m.

Those spirits of Congo Square seemed to be satiated and satisfied that their legacy was being honored in the creative and artistic way that it had began.

—David Kunian

Hancock, U.N. Enlist Global Musicians to Celebrate International Jazz Day

In November 2011, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization formally recognized jazz as a dynamic force for promoting peace, embracing diversity to foster unity, eliciting cultural dialogue and nurturing enhanced cooperation among people through music when it officially proclaimed April 30 as International Jazz Day. Back then, it seemed like merely a grand gesture—a calendar date without much weight. When the day arrived, however, the vision was manifest in a global event that celebrated jazz in seven continents in disparate communities from South Africa and Brazil to France and the U.S.

The consummate finale—the International Jazz Day Sunset Concert at the 1,800-seat United Nations General Assembly Hall in New York—was spearheaded by UNESCO goodwill ambassador Herbie Hancock, who was clearly the motivating factor behind the star-studded concert's success.

The evening featured noteworthy emcees (including Morgan Freeman, Michael Douglas, Quincy Jones, Thelonious Monk Jr. and Robert De Niro) as well as U.S. Ambassador Susan E. Rice, UNESCO Director-General Irina Bokova and, by video, U.N. Secretary-General Ban Ki-Moon. Freeman promised, "You will never forget this monumental evening commemorating America's greatest musical contribution to the world."

Hancock, who enlisted some 40 top-flight musicians from around the globe, said, "This is the culmination of my career dream, for people all over the world to celebrate on one day the music that has shaped my life."

The nearly three-hour evening show, musically directed by George Duke, embraced all of jazz's stripes. "As the sun sets on the first annual Jazz Day, tonight's concert will go down in history," Hancock told the crowd. "It's a prime example of how embracing the magic in music crosses cultural boundaries."

Earlier in the evening, Jones waxed eloquently, "Celebrate the miracle: *jazz*. It's our classical music, it's the meeting of the left and the right brain, it's a powerful word."

—Dan Ouellette

Caught

NOLA Pairings Span Cultures, Generations

In New Orleans music culture, styles, riffs, repertoire—even the artists themselves—are shared repeatedly and obsessively. A similar aesthetic of inspired collaboration informed this year's Jazz and Heritage Festival, which ran from April 27–May 6.

Regina Carter played a moving set built on material from her 2010 *Reverse Thread* CD, which explored the accordion's roots in the music of Madagascar. Later in the Jazz Tent, her band performed a New Orleans tribute that had Carter wielding her violin like a fiddle as the band kicked into swing overdrive.

Equal parts Cajun, punk rock and jazz, the Lost Bayou Ramblers' co-founders Louis Michot (fiddle, vocals) and Andre Michot (lap steel, accordion) easily rivaled Herbie Hancock and a Warren Haynes–Dr. John collaboration as the most impressive closers on the festival's second Saturday. Bassist Alan Lafleur mixed a straightahead sensibility that would have made Esperanza Spalding jealous (especially since her own acoustic bass proved inoperable earlier that weekend, resulting in a lackluster, truncated show) with visceral attacks that heightened the drama onstage during songs such as a French version of The Who's "My Generation."

Perhaps the festival's most ubiquitous artist, conga player and singer Pedrito Martinez was an apt addition. Despite his band's roots in New York's Latin jazz culture, their flexibility allowed them to easily adapt the rumba rhythms they focused on during their own sets to the pan-Caribbean carnival sounds espoused by acts like Galactic, which featured Martinez, Trombone Shorty and other guests.

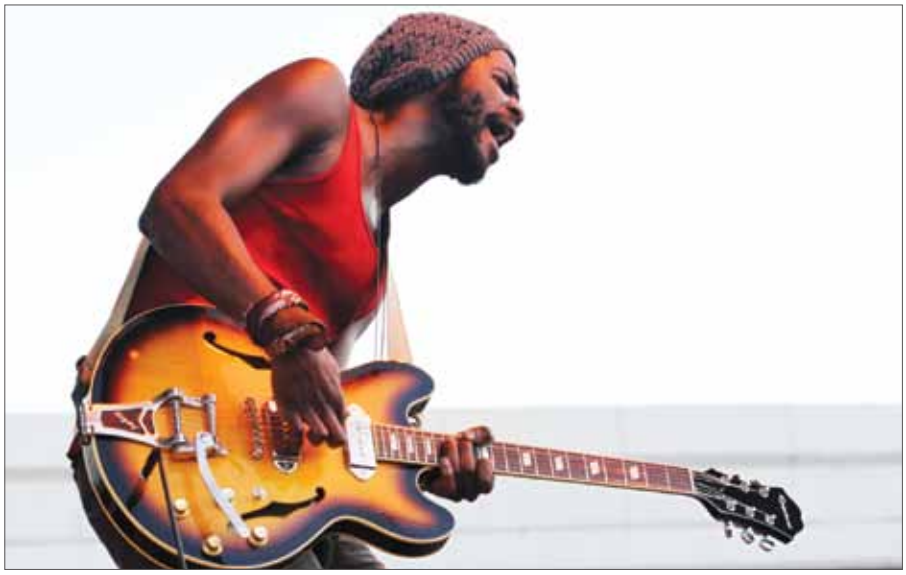
Traditional New Orleans jazz also opened itself up to outside influences at this year's festival. Wycliffe Gordon brought an inspired performance of his *Hello Pops!* Louis Armstrong tribute to the Economy Hall tent, where he


Esperanza Spalding

MICHAEL WEINTROB

growled over classics like "It Don't Mean A Thing." In one of the most memorable closing Jazz Fest sets in recent history, the Preservation Hall Jazz Band shared the bandstand with George Wein, Lionel Ferbos, Allen Toussaint, Bonnie Raitt, Jim James, Steve Earle and Ani DiFranco. *—Jennifer Odell*

Gary Clark Jr.
Festival Guitar-slinger



Blues-and-beyond guitarist Gary Clark Jr.'s career has taken off like a raging wildfire. The 27-year-old Texan's 2011 EP *The Bright Lights* (Warner Bros.) received rave reviews. Earlier this year, Clark performed at the White House on the PBS special "Red, White & Blues" as well as the David Letterman and Jimmy Fallon shows. His capable singing and awesome guitar pyrotechnics have been showcased at festivals from Beale Street to Bonnaroo. Back from performing at the New Orleans Jazz & Heritage Festival, Clark took a break from working on his forthcoming album to chat with DownBeat.

Was Austin a good place to start your musical journey?

I've known no other home than Austin. Growing up, I was immersed in every musical style imaginable, ranging from hip-hop to country to jazz to electronic and everything in between. There are so many venues throughout Austin, which makes it a fertile ground for musical exploration.

How would you describe your music?

It's a combination of rock, psychedelic, blues, r&b, soul. It certainly ebbs and flows with time. I do my best to channel these waves of sound that move out there, and it evolves as a free-flowing organism with amoebic characteristics.

As part of the rich Texas music tradition, do you feel any special responsibility?

I have an enormous amount of respect for the history. It's impossible to fathom inspiration without integrating a deep respect for my predecessors. Certainly because of cats like Jimmie Vaughan, I have a foundational respect and gratitude for those who have looked out for me. Austin is where family is. Home.

Is there a particular musician you admire?

I have to give it up to B.B. King. He has earned the title of hardest-working man in show business time and time again. Playing shows with him gave me the wake-up call that no matter how tired or down-and-out I feel, I can keep pushing along. He has truly led by example.

Eric Clapton picked you, the only newcomer, to play the 2010 Crossroads festival.

Crossroads was a big moment. Playing in front of a stadium [of about 20,000 people] amongst cats like Clapton, Jeff Beck, Buddy and B.B. was special to me. I'm very grateful.

What about all these other festivals?

I love the energy. Everyone just seems to be letting loose out there, so it moves me to do the same, hoping they will express the love back. So far, it's been reciprocal.

What about jazz inspires you?

Bitches Brew does it for me big time. All that chaos and shape-shifting just fuels and motivates me. Total madness that just makes sense somehow. And like Miles, Sun Ra was doing his own thing in his own crazy way. *—Frank John Hadley*

Musicians, Friends Remember Phoebe Jacobs

Longtime jazz advocate Phoebe Jacobs died April 9 in New York. She was 93.

A highly influential behind-the-scenes figure in jazz, Jacobs was best known as a publicist for such prominent musicians as Ella Fitzgerald, Sy Oliver, Peggy Lee, Sarah Vaughan, Duke Ellington and Della Reese. She worked closely for many years with Louis Armstrong and assisted in organizing the Louis Armstrong Educational Foundation, where she served as executive vice president.

After Armstrong's death in 1971, Jacobs continued to promote his legacy, and her efforts and influence helped establish the Louis Armstrong Center for Music and Medicine at Beth Israel Hospital, the Louis "Satchmo" Armstrong Summer Jazz Camp, the Louis Armstrong Archives at Queens College and the Louis Armstrong House Museum.

Jacobs worked tirelessly to provide scholarships to high school and college students through various nonprofit organizations, and she was instrumental in launching the Jazz for Young People Concert Series at Jazz at Lincoln Center. In 1989, she helped establish the Jazz Foundation of America, a nonprofit organization that provides support to musicians in need.

Jacobs discovered her love for jazz as a young woman and began working as a hat-check girl at the Manhattan jazz club Kelly's Stable at age 17. She went on to work as a promoter and contractor, serving as director of public relations and producer of special events at the Rainbow Room at Rockefeller Plaza. Early in her career, Jacobs also worked for Decca Records and the club Basin Street East.

"I always thought of Phoebe as the best friend of jazz," said Michael Bourne of WBGO-FM. "She especially loved Louis and Ella and Peggy. She always nudged me to play more Peggy on my show, *Singers Unlimited*."

Bourne added, "She told me several times my favorite story of her friendship with Ella, the time she and Ella were dressed to kill, complete with fur coats, standing on a New York street eating hot dogs from a vendor. Phoebe always promoted the musicians more than herself, especially Pops with the museum and the foundation. And so often, whenever some promising player appeared, Phoebe was there, smiling, encouraging, always happy hearing the music alive and swinging."

At press time, a star-studded Jazz at Lincoln Center memorial concert was scheduled for May 24. *—Ed Enright*

Tyner, Glover Bring Cultural Continuity to Reopened Howard Theatre

The April 27 pairing of pianist McCoy Tyner's trio with dancer Savion Glover imbued Washington, D.C.'s reopened Howard Theatre with knowing historical reverence and a wise cultural continuation.

Glover and Tyner have been collaborating since 2006. But at the Howard Theatre, their performance gave off a causal grace as if it were just another spirited gig rather than some highfalutin commissioned project. With Gerald Cannon's stout bass and Francisco Mela's symphonic rhythmic bombs, Tyner began with a thundering treatment of his classic "Fly Like The Wind." What Tyner's pianism lacked in sonic clarity, he more than made up for in emotional immediacy and evocative drama.

Tyner eased up on intensity when Glover joined for a delightful exploration of Duke Ellington's "In A Mellow Tone." While Glover certainly added a visual zest, he kept his performance squarely in modern jazz improvisation as if he were an auxiliary percussionist. Some of his intricate rhythms alluded to timbales, congas and djembe drums, especially when the ensemble launched into "African Village" and the hypnotic "Walk Spirit, Talk Spirit." After several jolting performances filled with pentatonic scales and global rhythms, the concert simmered to "Blues On The Corner," a personal tribute to Tyner's childhood friends and a fitting one for the D.C. cultural epicenter. *—John Murph*

From left: Tim Berne, Jim Black and Nels Cline

SCOTT FRIEDLANDER

Checking in with BB&C

The Supergroup Prepares for Rare Tour Dates

Saxophonist Tim Berne, guitarist Nels Cline and drummer Jim Black reunited onstage at New Yorks ShapeShifter Lab on May 7–8 for what has become an ongoing, if somewhat rare, supergroup.

While the two-night run may have had the air of a debut for BB&C, the musicians have actually been playing together in a trio format since 2008. Separately, the artists have been performing in each other's bands for decades, and each of them has his own commitments as a leader.

"We don't do that many gigs. When we do, it's really fun," Berne said of the trio, which only plays improvised music. "The three of us are so busy independently that it's hard to come together and do it. I think we've probably only done about four gigs at this point."

The trio formed during a live session on New York's WFMU at the behest of DJ Bethany Ryker. They emerged as a unified voice after a marathon tune that moved through angular bursts of melody to dense clusters of sound and on to tender phrases.

As Berne told it, the musicians hadn't even talked about what to play before settling in for the journey. BB&C reconvened nearly a year later at The Stone in New York City for a live record, which came out in June 2011. The nine tracks on *The Veil* (Cryptogramophone) are also all improvised—a organizational factor that has become the band's driving force.

Improvisation, at first, came from simple necessity—everyone was too busy to write music. The group plans to maintain the current structure even if and when the band suddenly starts playing more shows. Berne said that changing course from improvised music to composition-driven tunes might be difficult. The group is all improvisation, all the time, and Berne said the trio is committed to that decision.

He does admit, however, that with improvised music, the audience might be a more present factor in a performance. Berne said he feeds off the audience whenever he plays, but a receptive crowd can really make or break an improvised show.

"It sure helps when the audience is listening. You can tell. It definitely helps your confidence," he said. "Conversely, if you get up in front of an audience and you can just tell people aren't into it … it creeps into your consciousness."

Future gigs—when everyone has a break in his hectic schedule—are a rather distinct possibility, and a festival appearance in Europe is on the books for this summer. Everyone wants to do more playing together, and do it more often, Berne said, but the logistics are an issue. The nature of what the band does also doesn't lend itself to studio projects, the saxophonist said. If another record came along, it would certainly be recorded live, but Berne isn't really concerned about releasing any more music.

"I'm more interested in just performing, playing with those guys," Berne said. "Nels, I don't think I've ever played steadily with him. It's always quite interesting, and it's always different." —*Jon Ross*

Luis Perdomo
Taking charge

It wasn't easy for Luis Perdomo, the longtime pianist for Ravi Coltrane and Miguel Zenón, to become a bandleader. He's not the kind of person who enjoys talking to journalists and club owners, promoters and A&R reps. "It's not part of my personality," he admits. "I'm a pretty quiet guy."

But he felt that he had no choice. He had written a lot of music, and he realized he needed his own group as a vehicle for those compositions. He was so energized by his new music that he overcame his introverted tendencies.

"I had to become a bandleader," he adds, "so this music would actually be performed rather than just sit on my piano at home. Having audiences respond to it, having fellow musicians like it, that makes it all worthwhile. "

The first test of his resolve was his ambitious plan to record his new compositions with Jack DeJohnette. Perdomo had been a fan ever since his teenage years in Venezuela, when he had heard the drummer on Keith Jarrett's 1985 release *Standards, Vol. 2* (ECM).

"I had never heard anybody play like that," Perdomo remembers. "It was so musical—highs and lows and surprises at every corner. I started buying everything I could find that had his name on it. Later, when I was playing with Ravi at a festival in upstate New York, I got to meet Jack."

Though Perdomo had left Coltrane's road band in 2007, the pianist still recorded for the saxophonist's label, RKM Music, and Coltrane encouraged him to record with DeJohnette. But Perdomo was hesitant to contact his hero.

"It took me a few months to be brave enough," he recalls, "but I eventually called Jack, and he picked up the phone. I'd been hoping that I could just leave a message; I had written down everything I wanted to tell him, but when he answered, I forgot everything. I calmed down and introduced myself. He remembered me and asked me to send him some music. He called back later and said, 'Yeah, I'd be glad to do it.'

"I was super overwhelmed to be in the studio with Jack. Not only was I playing with Jack, but it was *my* record. I went through this list of pianists who have played with Jack—Keith Jarrett, Herbie Hancock, Bill Evans, McCoy Tyner—and concluded there was no way I was going to play better than these guys, so all I could do was just be myself. As soon as we started playing, there was an instant hook-up. Jack, being such a humble person, made me calm down and be myself. We were doing the hits together at the same time, like we were reading each other's minds."

The result of that session, *Universal Mind* (RKM Music), reveals what DeJohnette heard in Perdomo's music and why the pianist's worries were unnecessary. There's such a tensile strength in the keyboard rhythms that they require no reinforcement, and DeJohnette was freed to play counter rhythms and variations on Perdomo's phrases. At the same time, the composer's melodies are so firmly wedded to the beats that it's hard to imagine one disentangled from the other. So the listener is pulled in by the jaunty tunes and then rewarded by a wealth of rhythmic invention.

"He's got beautiful melodies, great harmonies and nice moods," DeJohnette says. "That Venezuelan background is there, and it definitely helps his concept. He plays rhythmically, like Danilo Pérez and Gonzalo Rubalcaba. Luis understands rhythm, so for me it's really great. It's like playing with another drummer."

"There's quite a bit of the rhythmic daredevil in each of them," adds Drew Gress, the bassist on this trio session. "Both feel time and rhythm as motion and are thoroughly at home manipulating that flow."

The new CD bears the subtle influence of Perdomo's Venezuelan background, but there's nothing overtly Latin about this straightahead project. When the pianist came to the States in 1993 to study at the Manhattan School of Music, it was easiest to find work in Latin-infused bands such as Ralph Irizarry & Timbalaye and the Fort Apache Band. But Perdomo has worked diligently to avoid being pigeonholed.

"I never considered myself a Latin-jazz player," he insists. "I consider myself a jazz player. People see my name and they say, 'Oh, this guy must know Latin music.' Sometimes at a festival, people see my name and they expect Latin music; sometimes they get mad when I play my own music. It's improving now that I'm getting better known, but some people think I'm going to come out in a ruffled shirt shaking maracas.

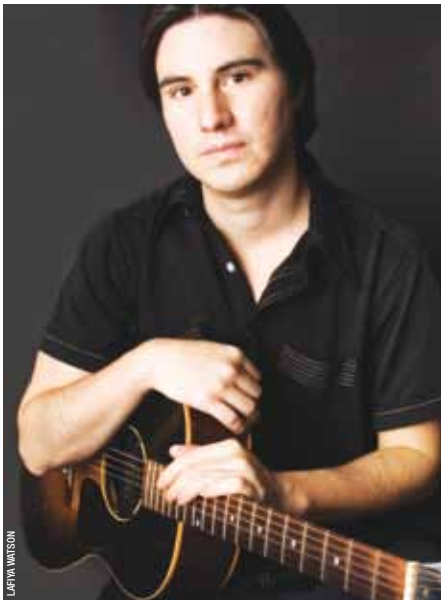
"On the other hand, the rhythmic influence of Latin music is deeply ingrained in my brain. It works very well in the music I'm doing now, because Latin music and jazz have the same roots in African music. It gives me my own sound."

Now that he's hitting the road to promote the new album, Perdomo is learning the plusses and minuses of being a bandleader.

"When you're a sideman," he explains, "and there's no one to pick up the band when you land in Europe, you go to the bar and wait for it to get sorted out. But if you're the leader, you get on the phone and figure out when you'll be picked up or how much a cab will cost. If you're a sideman, you find out when the sound check is and go back to your hotel room till then. But if you're the leader, you have interviews and meetings until the sound check. It's a whole different world."

—Geoffrey Himes

Mike Moreno
Seeking Possibilities


LAFIYA WATSON

On his fourth album as a leader, Mike Moreno solidifies his position as one of the most compelling guitarists in jazz today. Since arriving in New York City in the late '90s, Moreno, 33, has become an in-demand player, working with Joshua Redman, Gretchen Parlato, Kenny Garrett and Ravi Coltrane. Moreno's *Another Way*, featuring a band of modern heavy hitters—pianist Aaron Parks, vibraphonists Warren Wolf and Chris Dingman, bassist Matt Brewer, and drummers Ted Poor and Jochen Rueckert—was recorded mostly in 2009. Moreno has been plenty busy since then, touring with his own band as well as artists like Nicholas Payton, Will Vinson and Francisco Mela. Released on World Culture Music, *Another Way* features Moreno's dynamic ensemble performing a collection of his excellent, original compositions.

The music features whimsical melodies and unexpected harmonies, showcasing an impressive range not only in terms of composition, but also instrumentally, with a chord-driven hookup between Moreno, Parks and Wolf. "I was hearing some of the music with vibraphone when I was writing it," explains Moreno. "There were certain elements that, to me, were calling out for it."

The album's dark, cinematic opener, "The Spinning Wheel," establishes the band's sound. Poor's vigorous drumming propels tunes like the driving "One And A Half" into high gear. Moreno first gravitated to Poor's mid-range sound while touring with Parks' band in 2008.

The musical camaraderie of Moreno and Parks dates back to 2006, when Parks played on the guitarist's stellar debut, *Between The Lines* (World Culture Music). The two flourished, particularly on the gorgeous duo piece "Still Here"; their connection deepened on *Another Way* with a lyricism so natural that it screamed for a project dedicated entirely to their partnership, which is now in the works. "The way I write calls for certain musicians," says Moreno. "Aaron has a way of bringing the music across the way I hear it."

"There's something [special] about the way that those two sounds interweave, and when they connect and double a melody or counter each other," says Parks. "The way that Mike and I find a way to create something together—it has the potential to really do something beautiful and emotional. There's just a good feeling there."

Moreno had long envisioned his new CD—a departure from his two Criss Cross Jazz albums, which brilliantly showcased his affinity for standards—but the challenge of putting out music independently was evidenced by the amount of time it took to get funding. Along with founder and fellow Houstonian Kendrick Scott, Moreno teamed up with a group of like-minded musicians in 2006 to form World Culture Music, where he has released his most personal material.

"With the World Culture Music label, it's still an independent release," he says. "I own 100 percent of my records and get 100 percent of the profits, but there is a brand, artists and a catalog there to stand with. We split publicity costs, and having a catalog, even if it's small, helps to get distribution."

Over the past two years, Moreno—who graduated from The New School for Jazz and Contemporary Music in New York—has broken into the network of international clinics, joining the artist-in-residence faculty at the Berklee College of Music affiliates in Quito, Ecuador and São Paulo, Brazil.

Moreno also has been broadening his musical statements, recently working with bassist/singer Meshell Ndegeocello on her Gil Scott-Heron project, and with vocalist Claudia Acuña, with whom Moreno will be touring and whose album Ndegeocello is producing. Moreno met Ndegeocello last year at the "713→212: Houstonians in NYC" concerts, organized by pianist Jason Moran at the 92nd Street Y/Tribeca performance space. "When [Moreno] played, I was floored by what were amazing chops, but that was deceptive, because after he settled in, he morphed into a languid, open sky," recalls Ndegeocello. "He is inspiring to me as a writer and producer because he makes you want to create a space for him to search and explore."

Moreno continues to steadfastly raise his profile. "I want to keep putting records out, and I want to do another one soon," he says. "I feel like I'm only beginning to find my way, and the more records I make, the more possibilities I will find."

—Angelika Beener

Don Braden

Consummate Educator

Saxophonist and educator Don Braden leads by example. He looks at his pedagogy as more than simply a way to prepare the jazz players of the future for the rigors of the music business. Creating well-rounded, strong individuals is even more important.

"I'm thinking a lot about a holistic approach to jazz education, so it's not just chords and scales and rhythm; we focus a lot on those things, but we also look at the larger picture," said Braden, who hopes that his healthy lifestyle and dedicated practice routines set examples for his students. He has held the music director chair at Litchfield Jazz Camp in Connecticut for nearly 15 years. He also runs the New Jersey Performing Arts Center's "Wells Fargo Jazz For Teens" program and recently was named the head of jazz studies at Montclair State University.

"As teachers, our job is to help everybody be citizens of the earth—to help contribute to the planet rather than destroying it," he said.

Braden's energy, even when sitting down over a light breakfast, is infectious. An animated conversationalist who allows a dialogue to flow organically from one topic to the next, he has a casual ease about him. In addition to being an acclaimed educator, the saxophonist has recorded 16 albums since 1991. His discography is mostly straightahead jazz, but the latest release, *Big Funk: Live* (Creative Perspective Music), stands out. Drummer Karl Latham, bassist Gary Foote and keyboard player Nick Rolfe helped Braden embrace a genre he'd been pursuing on the side since childhood.

Latham, who has known Braden since 2005, said the saxophonist's enthusiastic nature transfers to his teaching. Students respond to that passion, but it can also be heard in Braden's improvisations. "Don has an amazing ability to never run out of ideas," Latham said. "You're in the middle of a solo section, and you think, 'OK, he's done now,' and the guy has another 10 motifs that you've never heard before."

Soon after meeting, Latham and Braden realized they had common musical ground. Latham had come up through funk and rock drumming, having first been exposed to jazz through Miles Davis' *Bitches Brew*—and the two frequently found themselves playing together in a variety of contexts. Eventually, Braden and Latham started talking about a funk record.

Mastering funk was no problem for Braden, Latham said. He calls the Harvard-educated Braden—he pursued engineering in school—a brilliant horn player who is incredibly smart, but is also very welcoming and warm.

"What really impressed me when we went out on tour is how adaptable he was," Latham explained. "He's not just a bebop player. He went out and played this very European straight-eighth-note jazz, and man, he sounded as good as any of the guys in the genre."

This creativity and tireless energy has carried Braden into a slew of new projects. In late 2011, he recorded an album with vocalist Vanessa Rubin, and he hopes to release it on his label by year's end. He's also talking about putting out a quartet recording, a ballad album and a disc of contemporary standards, but only the quartet disc will likely be released in 2012.

Braden's focus on education started early. He didn't have any musical family members to mimic or use as a sounding board—music was on in the house, but that was it—so Braden grew up playing songs he heard on the radio and going to jazz camps and private lessons. His high school band director and the educator Jamey Aebersold helped him form jazz chops, but at the same time, he was learning how to effectively teach the music.

His early encounters with teaching convinced Braden to focus on creating a positive experience for students. By being a role model, he knows he can mold the musicians of tomorrow.

"My high school music teacher was great, and Jamey Aebersold was great," Braden recalled. "Those guys really cared. And I wanted to be like that. I want my kids to look back at me and say, 'This guy really cared. He has a lot of energy and puts his heart into it.'"

—Jon Ross

Melissa Stylianou
Sophisticated Storyteller


GRAHAM POWELL

An incident from Melissa Stylianou's adolescence helped point the way to her current career. "I was in my room, singing along with a Harry Connick version of 'But Not For Me,'" she said, reminiscing about the fateful event, which occurred in Toronto when she was 14. "My mother opened the door and I was embarrassed, but she said, 'You sound good—you should keep singing.'" Stylianou has taken that advice to heart and has emerged as a gifted singer with a strong sense of improvisation.

Her new album, *Silent Movie* (Anzic), is her fourth release, following three self-produced projects in Canada. On April 3 at New York's Jazz Standard, Stylianou, her band and guests—reedist Anat Cohen and guitarist Gene Bertoncini—celebrated the CD release with a performance that was all about musical expressiveness and inventive storytelling.

In 2005, Stylianou received a grant from the Canada Council for the Arts that allowed her to come to New York and study with, among others, vocalist Theo Bleckmann and pianist/composer Garry Dial. Coincidentally, her husband, Jamie Reynolds—who plays piano on *Silent Movie*—received the same grant in the same year and came to study with Fred Hersch. Being in New York has given Stylianou the opportunity to meet many musicians, including the players on her new CD—guitarist Pete McCann, bassist Gary Wang, drummer Rodney Green and percussionist James Shipp. "Melissa draws from a wide range of musical styles, and that works well with what I can bring to the band," McCann said. "Whether it's Paul Simon or Patsy Cline, Melissa brings her own sound and concept to the music."

Describing the *Silent Movie* sessions, Stylianou said, "We worked closely on the arrangements so that we could emphasize the word or phrase that represents the true meaning of its story." That sense of the potential of a song to express things that may otherwise be difficult or impossible to communicate is a crucial component of Stylianou's art.

The new disc touches upon many genres—jazz, country, folk and Brazilian rhythms. When making the CD, Stylianou strove for cohesion within variety: "What's important to me is that my performances and my recordings are not just collections of songs thrown together, but they have to feel right for the musicians, and for the audience." —*Donald Elfman*

Spectrum Road, from left: guitarist Vernon Reid, drummer Cindy Blackman Santana, bassist Jack Bruce and keyboardist John Medeski

Dear Tony

Spectrum Road's Jack Bruce, Vernon Reid, Cindy Blackman Santana and John Medeski extend the jazz-rock innovations of the late Tony Williams

By Geoffrey Himes
Photography by Jimmy and Dena Katz

"Like a lot of people," guitarist Vernon Reid admits, "I had the chronology twisted. I thought jazz-rock started with Miles, but Tony was first. *Emergency* came out before *Bitches Brew*."

Tony Williams, who had recently departed the Miles Davis' Quintet, released *Emergency* in the fall of 1969, half a year before Davis' now-iconic *Bitches Brew* emerged in the spring of 1970. Lifetime, Williams' trio with guitarist John McLaughlin and organist Larry Young, demonstrated how the improvisational freedom and harmonic sophistication of jazz could be married to the technology and raw energy of rock. For 71 minutes, across the four sides of two vinyl LPs, the three musicians alternated hammering rhythms, cascading notes and buzzing textures with quieter passages of reflective lyricism. Their example inspired several generations of musicians, including Reid.

Reid was so deeply influenced that in late 2009 the guitarist formed a quartet called Tony Williams Lifetime Tribute with drummer Cindy Blackman Santana, keyboardist John Medeski and bassist Jack Bruce. The group had fun touring Japan that year, but it was only on their second tour, of North America in early 2011, that the chemistry jelled, he says, and they became a real band. It was only then that the four musicians realized that this might be more than the occasional, fun side project, more than just a "tribute band." This was something, they sensed, that deserved to be recorded, toured and nurtured. So they renamed themselves Spectrum Road and in May 2011 went into the studio to cut their debut album, also called *Spectrum Road* (Palmetto). The disc includes the quartet's own, very different versions of "Where" and "Vashkar" from *Emergency*, but not, strangely enough, "Spectrum" or "Via The Spectrum Road," which appeared on the same album.

It's hard to think of any lineup that would be better suited for a renewed exploration of Williams' jazz-rock. Each of these four musicians has one foot in the jazz world and the other in the rock realm. Reid played guitar in the legendary jazz outfit Ronald Shannon Jackson & the Decoding Society before founding the successful rock band Living Colour. Blackman Santana has led several jazz combos (including her own Williams tribute group, Another Lifetime) in addition to playing with such rock acts as Lenny Kravitz and guitarist Carlos Santana (whom she wed in 2010). Medeski is not only co-leader of the trio Medeski Martin & Wood but also a member of The Word with Robert Randolph and the North Mississippi Allstars. Bruce was a singer and songwriter in rock's seminal power trio

Cream (with guitarist Eric Clapton and drummer Ginger Baker) before joining Williams, McLaughlin and Young for the second Lifetime album, 1970's *Turn It Over*.

Bruce's brief membership in Lifetime gives Spectrum Road a direct connection to Williams. That link is reinforced by Blackman Santana, who was 16 when she met Williams at a drum clinic near Hartford, Conn., in 1975. She remained a good friend until her mentor died in 1997. Because half of the lineup knew Williams personally, the musicians never sound like worshippers from afar, but like intimates who are merely continuing a conversation after Williams has left the room.

It's a conversation that *needs* to be continued because the experiments Williams conducted in the first Lifetime band opened so many doors of possibility that the musicians never had the chance to walk through all of them. Bruce and McLaughlin left Lifetime after *Turn It Over*, mostly, Bruce says, because there weren't enough live gigs to keep the band together. Though Williams continued his jazz-rock explorations with players like Ron Carter, Ted Dunbar, Allan Holdsworth and Alan Pasqua, it was never quite the same. As the jazz-rock movement followed a commercial path into fusion, Williams devoted most of his energy to acoustic jazz.

Spectrum Road provides a chance for Bruce and his three younger partners to finally step through the doors opened by Williams' innovations into rooms never fully explored. Though eight of the 10 tunes on the new album were originally recorded by Williams, there is no attempt to replicate the original solos or even the original arrangements. In fact, when the new disc opens with the fast-and-furious "Vuelta Abajo" from *Turn It Over*, the Jack Bruce of Spectrum Road sounds quite different from the Jack Bruce of Lifetime; his phrasing is more supple and his bass now has a warmer tone. Spectrum Road is not interested in revisiting Lifetime's music as much as picking up where it left off.

Before the quartet started two months of touring (June in North America and July in Europe) with a kickoff show at Tennessee's Bonnaroo Festival on June 9, the four musicians talked about their new band, Tony Williams and the unfinished business of jazz-rock.

DownBeat: What happened on the 2011 tour that was different from the 2009 tour? What convinced you that this was more than just a tribute-band side project?

Vernon Reid: When we did the first tour, it was just an idea. On the second tour, the idea turned into something real, and it took all of us a little by surprise. At first I thought it would just be fun to hook up with Cindy, John and Jack, but there was something about the way we melded together that shifted how we thought about it. It's one thing to play with each other; it's another thing to really connect. Maybe it was letting go and letting things happen. It's analogous to the moment when you're learning your instrument that scales become expression, theories become actual music and the notes have an actual feeling—only instead of one person, it's happening to four people at once.

John Medeski: Last year, when we got together again, something happened. We weren't just playing Tony's music—we were becoming a band with that music as a starting point. It felt different. We were all being ourselves, but this music was the seed that allowed us to develop. A tribute band would be playing a lot of the solos note for note. The players in the band would sound like the original players. But in our band, even Jack doesn't play like Jack Bruce; he has a different bass and a different way of playing. We're talking about improvised music, and it's not improvising if you're doing what somebody else did, at least in the solos.

Cindy Blackman Santana: All of a sudden we began to hear a real band sound. We started to hear different resolutions, different colors. We'd be playing an ostinato theme that Tony wrote, but the stuff we were playing on top of that kept changing. Like on that song "Where," there's an incredible part in 6, but suddenly Vernon and I looked up at each other, because we were morphing Tony's original figure into something else. Another line was coming up, and that became a platform for John to solo over. We were building on what we heard.

Jack Bruce: One of the tracks on the album, "Blues For Tillman," is just an improvisation. That's the great thing about Spectrum Road: We can freely improvise and come up with a sophisticated form. It's a revelation that I can go onstage and just play a bass line or melody and everyone will pick up on it and it will become a thing, not just jamming, but some music with an identity. I've never played with people who can do that; we never did much of that in Lifetime.

Why did you change the name from Tony Williams Lifetime Tribute to Spectrum Road?

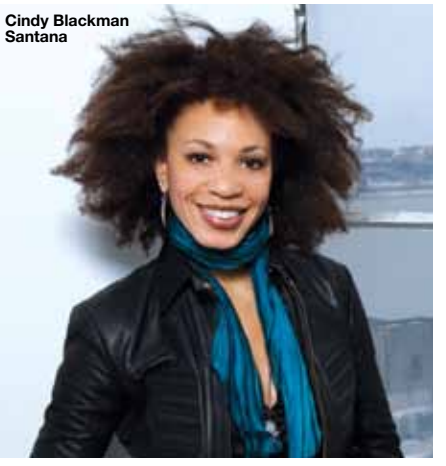
VR: It was no longer a tribute band. I didn't want just our names on the record, because that didn't feel right. The term *Spectrum Road* spoke to the colors and different places we're coming from and the long, twisted road we've traveled.

CBS: The name came from that song, "Via The Spectrum Road." We haven't played the song yet, but hopefully we will. I've played it in my band, but not with this group.

How did this band come together?

VR: I got the ball rolling. When I was in Jack's band in the early 2000s, I kept asking him what it was like to be in Cream and Lifetime. He felt close to Tony and had great affection for him, and the more he talked, the more I understood how jazz-rock really started. It quickened my mind; I started thinking about revisiting those early days. I'd already been playing with Cindy. I thought of John because I'm a big Medeski Martin & Wood fan. I had jammed with them when they toured with DJ Logic.


Jack Bruce


Cindy Blackman Santana


John Medeski


Vernon Reid

JB: I loved Vernon's playing immediately. We just had a bond. His musical approach is very much like mine: He plays his own stuff, but he comes from a jazz background. If, instead of listening to just the Beatles or the Rolling Stones, you've also listened to Ornette Coleman, it gives you a freer approach. A lot of rock players I've played with are very four-square. They may be very good, but they're limited in what they can do.

When you first started playing together, what surprised you about your new bandmates?

JB: John is just amazing. He comes up with these very unexpected things, and he's doing them on these very basic instruments. He's not using programs and synthesizers—not that there's anything wrong with that. Cindy's phenomenal. If I close my eyes, sometimes I think it's Tony on the drums. Then I look around and there's Cindy, who's incredibly beautiful and funky.

JM: Playing with Jack, I realize what Tony loved about him. He's a full-on rock bass player, but his spirit is so free; he's wide open to everything, whatever comes his way. That's why Cream had those 20-minute jams, because Jack wouldn't let you resolve; he comes around to the top again, and it keeps going. Clapton is more blues-rooted, while Vernon's got a whole other world of sounds going with blinding speed—waves of sound. There are a lot of notes, but he's creating these shapes. It's nonstop, like the ocean.

CBS: Jack helped to create that sound. *Turn It Over* has a vibe, and Jack helped to create it. The stories he tells are incredibly helpful, because he puts you right there in the middle of the original Lifetime. We feel as if we're right in the room with them. We're vibrating with that energy. It provides a connection that's not just historical but personal.

How does it help that each of you has considerable experience in both the jazz world and the rock world?

CBS: Because we have a foot in each camp, we can bring all those influences; we're not close-minded. When you have openness, that's when things happen. Some people don't have a willingness to let other influences in. If you completely block them, there's a side of the music that won't be able to grow. It will be [one]-dimensional rather than multi-dimensional.

JB: Cream and Lifetime were really two sides of the same coin, both fairly experimental in some ways. At the beginning of Cream, we had to struggle for acceptance. We had overnight success after years of trying to find it. Today Lifetime is famous, but we had the same struggles. Of course, you respond differently with different material and different players, but I always say, "I don't play jazz; I play Jack." I'm not going to try to be Ron Carter when I play with Tony.

VR: There never would have been a Living Colour without my experience in the Decoding Society. Ronald Shannon Jackson was such an outsider, such a powerhouse player and composer. The first time he took me to Europe, I found myself standing next to Joseph Jarman watching Muddy Waters play with Pinetop Perkins. Experiences like that turned my life around. When I started hearing Ornette, I no longer thought of having a sound within a genre like funk or rock; the lines between genres melted away. The rock thing was no longer in opposition to jazz; they were all part of one thing. It was challenging—part of you wants things to stay in the box they're in. It made me hear Hendrix in a different way, to hear there wasn't a separation between the words, the melody and putting the guitar behind the head: It was all part of one expression.

When jazz and rock were being put together for the first time back then, what were the challenges? What are the challenges now?

JB: In the early days of Lifetime, there were lots of technical problems capturing all

those fast passages played at rock volumes, because no one had done that. The technical side of things hadn't caught up with our brains yet. And all that electricity was crucial to the whole situation. When you push an instrument to its limit, you get a different effect. They couldn't catch the sounds we were making either on stage or in the studio. It was as if bebop had started around the time of the Hot Five recordings. Someone like Charlie Parker wasn't a quiet player. He wasn't just tootling; he was pushing his instrument to its limit.

JM: There was a certain rock rawness with Lifetime; you could tell they felt it and loved it. You could tell they said, "How can we use this and play with it? How far can we stretch it before it breaks?" I think they stretched it pretty far. It all comes down to choices. How complex can the harmony be and still have it groove? Can you have two chord changes in every bar and still groove? How do you groove and improvise at the same time? Groove comes from repetition; if you keep changing everything, where's the groove? If it never changes, where's the improvisation? We're still wrestling with those questions. When you try to get too delicate or too complex, you lose some of that rawness.

How did the great promise of those early jazz-rock bands turn into fusion, which disappointed a lot of people?

JB: It was very exciting to put those two musics together, but something went wrong, and it became very formulaic and bland. It started out as jazz-rock and then it became fusion, which wasn't so good. That's a danger with all movements in music—they start out very exciting and become predictable. There are lots of examples, not just in jazz.

VR: *Emergency* came out at a time when audiences were much more open, when markets hadn't solidified. The money men hadn't figured out how to compartmentalize audiences. Bill Graham was putting Miles Davis on rock bills at the Fillmore. Rock stars like Carlos Santana were consistently championing Trane and Miles. Who took on the mantle of Bill Graham? Of Carlos Santana? Who supported that open approach to the musical experience? I think of jazz-rock and fusion like the difference between the spirit of the law and letter of the law. The original inspiration is a beautiful thing, but then it turns into something else.

CBS: Tony Williams, the person who created that music, called it jazz-rock; he never called it fusion. So when you talk about fusion, you're talking about something he never intended. Tony was a very schooled musician. He had studied harmony and all the great drummers before him. He broke down each part of the drum kit and studied what each one did. The other drummers who came after that didn't do that, and the further it got away from Tony, the more watered-down it got. When I think of fusion, I think of something that had neither the intellect and spontaneity of jazz nor the guttural, raw energy of rock.

"The more Jack talked, the more I understood how jazz-rock really started," says Vernon Reid (second from left).

JM: Why it went bad, I don't know. A lot of things went bad at the end of that decade. Not that there weren't great songs. There were successful versions of it and unsuccessful versions.

If jazz-rock got sidetracked by its turn into fusion, is there still a chance to go down the other road jazz-rock might have followed?

JM: The idea of combining jazz with rock music hasn't been fully explored. If you go back and listen to Tony's music, it doesn't seem we've gone very far forward in 40 years. For myself and the other members of Spectrum Road, jazz, rock and all these other musics are part of our lives, our palette. We grew up listening to it all. How you put it together is the key: You have to do it the way you feel it rather than the way it's already been done.

CBS: I remember hanging out with Tony in New York in the mid-'80s. He said, "Do you know any organists that I could play with?" He was still interested in that. I told him, "That Lifetime stuff was so incredible." And he said, "You mean, when I was doing all that drumming?" "Yeah, when you were doing all that drumming." His genius was ever flowing, and I don't think he ever ran out of ideas. He said to me one time, "I'm doing this band for later; it will be important then."

JM: Combining improvised music with the popular music of now always has potential, because pop music is always changing. I see what Tony and them were doing as not all that different from what Duke Ellington was doing with dance tunes or Charlie Parker was doing with Gershwin songs. You can say those songs had more complexity, but I don't care about all that. You only need one note to move people. To me improvisation is the key—music in the moment, for the moment. You're combining that with whatever is popular at the moment. Hip-hop hadn't happened yet when Lifetime was active, and that provides a whole new thing for us to draw on.

How do you start with Williams' inspiration and then move beyond it?

JM: A lot of people in jazz are regurgitating everything that's already been done. I turn on the radio, and I say, "That sounds like Herbie Hancock," and it's some other guy I never heard of—and, hey, better to sound like Herbie than a lot of other things. But there's something about having your own voice beyond the sum of your influences, where the music has a life of its own. Spectrum Road is an excuse to get together and honor this music that isn't played often enough. They're great tunes, but at the end of the day, what is a tune? It's a vehicle to express something, to share an emotional experience. If you can feel that in this song, you can make it your own. I'm not against tribute bands, cover bands or classical music, but it's not what I want to do.

Everybody talks about what a great innovator Williams was, but what specific innovations did he introduce?

JB: He turned drumming around. He wasn't necessarily using the hi-hat as it had been used before; he might use it in a different place. All jazz drummers before Tony played the hi-hat on the offbeat, but Tony would play the bass drum pattern on the hi-hat; he'd literally reverse the parts of the instrument. If you're a musician, it's exciting to hear someone who turns things around, especially if you want to do that yourself.

CBS: What Tony took from rock changed the sound of jazz. He might play eighth beats on the ride cymbal and a rock beat on the snare or the bass. Then he would play them backwards. Not only did he mix those two, but he innovated on that mix by inverting them. He took an organ trio, which is a very traditional, very set format, and made it a very electric-sounding, futuristic-sounding group that had all the intelligence and complexity and history of jazz with the rawness and electricity of rock.

VR: Tony played to the pulse of the music, in addition to keeping time. He would phrase

counter to what soloists were doing; he would cut across times. He did unprecedented breaks and rolls. He'd moved past the physical mastery of the instrument into a mastery of the drums in an unconventional way.

Williams was one of the few jazz musicians to integrate the vocal as well as the instrumental side of rock. The album *Spectrum Road* features vocals by Jack and Cindy. Why was it important to include singing?

VR: Tony was roundly criticized for singing. I imagine he took that criticism to heart, because he sang on those early Lifetime records but stopped singing by the time he did *Believe It* [in 1975]. He was not a gospel or soul singer; he had a plainspoken voice, but that style of singing was so ahead of the curve. Now you hear that kind of singing all over alternative rock. You hear it in Tricky, in Robyn Hitchcock, in Radiohead. People couldn't hear it at the time, because they expected Otis Redding or Donny Hathaway. Unless you were Bob Dylan or Phil Ochs from a folk tradition, where being a wordsmith took precedence of your vocal ability, no one would accept it.

JM: He was doing a lot of things that people have just caught up with. Back then, I got the obvious rocking, kicking groove, but some of the other stuff, like the singing, I only get now. He wasn't trying to be soulful; he was just himself, like a lot of today's indie-rock singers.

CBS: His vocals were important because they were a way to express something he couldn't express any other way. It was another way to get a message out to the people or the ether. He seemed very much like a Brazilian singer, because they sing a little flat, which creates an incredible mood. Tony did the same thing. I really dug his singing. He opened up the accessibility of the music.

Tell me about the track "An t-Eilan Muileach," a traditional Scottish folk song featuring Jack's vocal.

JB: That's an old Celtic song I remembered from my childhood. It's a homesick lament sung in the old Gaelic language; it's about longing for the Isle of Mull, also known as An t-Eilan Muileach, in the Outer Hebrides. It comes from the time of the Highland Clearances, when a lot of people were forcibly removed from their land. The landowners wanted to bring more sheep in because it produced more money.

CBS: It started out with me playing an instrument, sort of like a marimba, playing that *boom-de-boom-dee*. I had the idea in my head and I just played it. Vernon and I were listening to the phrase, and we both said, "Jack should sing on this." On a live gig in Seattle, Jack sang this Scottish tune as a tribute to his friend Gary Moore, who had just died [on Feb. 6]. When he sang that song over my new line, it just fit.

JB: I grew up in Scotland, in the projects near Glasgow. That song is me—it's what I am. When I started playing with Tony, he was very encouraging that it's good to be what you are. There's no particular way to be a jazz player. It's all right to be a Scot and to bring that kind of music into the jazz fold. He [told] me that what I had to offer was as valid as what anyone else had.

What are your most enduring memories of Tony Williams?

JB: I had my own band with Larry Coryell and Mitch Mitchell at the Fillmore East when John McLaughlin brought Tony down to hear us. After the show, Tony asked me to join his band. Even though it was the start of my own tour, my first tour with my own band, I said yes, because I really wanted to play with that band. And as soon as I wrapped up my tour, I did.

CBS: One time I was at the Vanguard in New York watching Tony, when someone came up from behind me and put his arm around me. It was Art Blakey, who had been like a father to me since I moved to New York. He was patting on my shoulder how he was feeling what Tony was playing. He was behind the beat, and Tony was right in the middle of the beat. It was incredible to hear those two feels at the same time. **DB**

STEVE TURRE'S WORLD OF SOUND

THE MASTER TROMBONIST PAYS TRIBUTE TO WOODY SHAW WITH AN ALBUM OF ORIGINAL COMPOSITIONS

By Ted Panken | Photo by Richard Blinkoff

Over his half-century as a working musician, Steve Turre has often welcomed the challenge, as he puts it, of "jumping in turbulent waters and seeing where it carries me and finding my way." Still, as Turre's old friend Buster Williams recently observed, "Steve functions better when things are organized than when they're not."

Williams' feelings in this regard were reinforced last summer, when he played bass on Turre's new album, *Woody's Delight* (HighNote). The disc is an homage to trumpeter Woody Shaw (1944–'89), who is a member of the DownBeat Hall of Fame. Turre played on 14 of Shaw's albums, working with him between 1974 and 1987—including a four-year run in a force-of-nature, early '80s quintet with pianist Mulgrew Miller, bassist Stafford James and drummer Victor Lewis.

For *Woody's Delight,* the 63-year-old trombonist-shellman drew on hard-won logistical know-how to assemble and coordinate an impressive number of moving parts, including five trumpeters, two pianists, four bassists, two trapsetters and two hand drummers. Trumpeters Jon Faddis, Wallace Roney, Claudio Roditi and Freddie Hendrix blow on two tracks apiece, Chocolate Armenteros on one. Turre meshes all the players with a watchmaker's precision and big-picture perspective, displaying the logic and elegance that inspired trombonist J.J. Johnson to remark in the liner notes for *In The Spur Of The Moment* (Telarc)—a 2000 session for which Turre convened three different quartets, one featuring Ray Charles on piano, another boasting Chucho Valdés—on "the extent to which Steve Turre is in complete command and control of Steve Turre."

"On Steve's dates, you can trust that you'll get the music on time to look it over," said Williams, who performed on six of Turre's 16 previous recordings. "He likes to know what to expect, but at the same time, he doesn't put boxing gloves on you. He's as spontaneous as he is organized."

Turre is respected throughout the music world. He was voted the top trombonist in the 2011 DownBeat Critics Poll—an honor he has received 13 times. On the publishing front, Hal Leonard's new book *The Steve Turre Collection* includes transcriptions of 14 classic solos recorded by Turre over the course of his career.

On *Woody's Delight*, Turre follows a modus operandi not dissimilar to that of its predecessors. Addressing a suite of originals that constitute a multilingual program of Pan-American flavors, he plays without technical limitation, "speaking" each dialect without an accent. He deploys a broad timbral palette that includes mutes and plungers, referencing an encyclopedic inner database of trombone expression and coalescing syntax absorbed from such signposts as Johnson, Lawrence Brown, Al Grey and Curtis Fuller into a unitary voice. As in much of his oeuvre, he integrates melodies created on customized seashells on which he alters the pitch by inserting his hand in the shell, framing his declamations with rhythms drawn from the African diaspora, and executed by world-class hand drummers. Another common thread is Turre's refraction of the harmonic ideas of such one-time employers as Dizzy Gillespie, McCoy Tyner—and, of course, Shaw—into melodies that stick.

"It has a little swing, a little Afro-Cuban, some Brazilian, some modal harmony, some blues harmony—different flavors, different col-

ors, different concepts blended through my lens," Turre summarized. "They're things I like, feel comfortable with and have experience with. It's not that I always have to be comfortable. But when I'm presenting a record, I want to have a direction and make a clear statement. I don't want to be practicing conceptually or make something without much thought just for a few dollars, or to put something out there to get a gig."

Turre has the financial security to back up such words with deeds. He's in his 28th season as a member of the house band for "Saturday Night Live," and in his fourth year teaching trombone at the Juilliard School (after 18 years at Manhattan School of Music). That artistic freedom is one reason why he was able to apply his god-is-in-the-details philosophy to the first recording on which he explores exclusively his interaction with the trumpet.

"I decided to have a collage of different trumpet voices to honor Woody as a main influence in finding my own voice," Turre recently said in a glass-walled Juilliard practice room, where he'd spent the day giving one-on-one trombone lessons. "He gave me freedom to search. He did not handcuff me; he allowed me to make mistakes and find out who I was musically.

"Woody was *intense*. He always put the music first. At the time, fusion was in, and also avant-garde. Even though he had one foot in the avant-garde, he still had to be in the tradition. He didn't want to completely let go and disregard where he came from. I'm with him there."

Turre developed his deep feeling for old-school values early on. Growing up near Oakland, Calif., he entered the fray at 13, when he and his older brother, saxophonist Michael Turre, began to play local Elks Clubs and American Legion halls with a Dixieland jazz band.

"I'd seen Louis Armstrong on TV—he was profound to me even then because he made you feel good and had such a beautiful sound," Turre reminisced. "I liked New Orleans traditional, because it had funk and spirit and rhythmic drive. I respected Tommy Dorsey, but wouldn't try to emulate him—even though the lyric quality was beautiful, it didn't have that rhythmic drive and emotional improvisation." A high school classmate introduced him to J.J. Johnson's music. "It turned my world upside-down," Turre said. "I wore those records out, playing along and trying to match the feeling of the phrase."

To avoid marching band ("I didn't like military music; I like music that heals people"), Turre—by now working regularly on the Bay Area's thriving Summer Of Love scene—opted for football (wide receiver) during his two years as a music major at Sacramento State. On earnings from a summer 1968 gig with a circus band, he bought a Volkswagen Bug and drove to Denton, Texas, to attend North Texas State. The street-trained musician didn't care for the pedagogical orientation ("it was like a training ground for the L.A. studios then"), but he soaked up the opportunity to sight-read ("two or three charts you'd never seen that they put before you every day—you'd look them over for a minute, then it was sink or swim").

He dropped out after a year, but remained in Texas until the end of 1969, aligning himself with such fellow students as trumpeters Tex Allen and "Hannibal" Marvin Peterson, who hired him for his funk band. Turre also worked in Dallas with world-class veterans like saxophonist James Clay and pianist Red Garland. Back in the Bay Area, Turre became a journeyman for the next two years, applying Texas training in horn sections with Van Morrison's band, Herbert Mimms' East Bay Band and Marvin Holmes & The Uptights (which included trumpeter Tom Harrell). Turre also played salsa with the Escovedo Brothers, played on Santana's *Caravanserai* recording and refined his bebop skills in Kansas City altoist Bishop Norman Williams' house band at the Both/And, a Haight-Ashbury club, thus qualifying for gratis door entree to hear the traveling artists who played the venue.

One was Rahsaan Roland Kirk, with whom Turre launched an enduring relationship—documented on the 2004 CD *The Spirits Up Above* (HighNote)—during his freshman year at Sacramento State. Already a fan, Turre attended two Saturday night sets by Kirk at San Francisco's Jazz Workshop, approached the master to express his appreciation and was invited to bring his horn to the Sunday matinee. "It was like we'd been playing together all our lives," Turre said. "We'd breathe together, phrase together without noticing it. He said, 'Why don't you stay, and play tonight,' which I did. We exchanged numbers. Later, when he came to the Bay Area, he'd call me. I'd make 50 bucks for the week. I was like a kid going to school and getting paid for it. After I moved to New York, I joined his band for the last few years of his life."

By Turre's account, he and Shaw—who relocated to the Bay Area in 1972, while Turre was on a long-haul sojourn with Ray Charles—experienced a similarly instant simpatico on their first meeting toward the end of that year. In the spring of 1973, Shaw informed Turre that he'd be playing with Art Blakey at an upcoming Keystone Korner engagement, and urged him to sit in. Afterward, Turre related, "Art said, 'You want to join the Jazz Messengers and go to New York?' I said, 'Yeah. When?' 'Now. Pack your bags.' I worked my way east with Art—La Casa in St. Louis, the Jazz Showcase in Chicago and then the Village Gate. I've been here ever since."

About six months later, Faddis brought Turre into the Thad Jones-Mel Lewis Orchestra, which—along with the cachet of Blakey's imprimatur—launched him into the ranks of the New York City's first-callers.

"TO MATCH WOODY'S ARTICULATION AND IMPECCABLE INTONATION, I HAD TO PRACTICE ON ANOTHER LEVEL."

Over the next 15 years, Turre played different styles in multiple groups—postbop with Shaw's sextet and concert ensemble, Slide Hampton's World of Trombones and Cedar Walton; open-ended music with Pharaoh Sanders and Archie Shepp's Attica Blues Big Band. By 1980, when Shaw established the trumpet-trombone quintet, Turre was also a fixture on New York's thriving Latin scene, including a steady gig with Libre, the cutting-edge salsa band led by Manny Oquendo ("the Art Blakey of the timbales") and Andy Gonzalez, which he used as a platform to internalize the structures of clave on a post-graduate level and to develop his shell voice. These explorations continued through the '80s in the Fort Apache Band, in Lester Bowie's Brass Fantasy ("it opened me to ways to create real music in the realms of color and sound"), in Tyner's Big Band and in Gillespie's United Nations Orchestra—he was a founding member of each unit.

"I heard the sound of the shell through Rahsaan, who would play one note," Turre said. "It was so beautiful, I wanted to try it, and in 1970 I got my first shell. One thing led to another into the shell choir that I do now. The shell with the hand drum is a real marriage of sound and spirit. The shell was alive once, and the hand drum was made from wood and skin, so it was alive once, too."

Lessons with Guinean master djembe player Ladji Camara, a Blakey associate, helped prepare Turre for this conceptual leap. "I realized that the blues, the reggae, the samba, the plena, the rock 'n' roll and the jazz all comes from that African root," he said. "All the different branch-

es of that tree are family, and the stronger the root, the stronger the tree grows. I made it my business to learn as much as I could about that root. I still study rhythm incessantly. That level of rhythmic acuity attracts me like a magnet."

Faddis—who played on Turre's 1987 debut, *Viewpoints And Vibrations* (Stash), and on his polymath Verve epics *Rhythm Within* and *Steve Turre* from the mid-'90s—described Turre's tunes as "rhythmically tricky, shifting in and out of different grooves." He added, "Steve writes long pieces that go in and out of different moods, very logical and well-arranged. He's meticulous about what he wants, especially for phrasing, and he likes to rehearse, sometimes to the point of micromanaging, to get it."

Both Faddis and Williams opined that standing next to Shaw in the trumpeter's quintet spurred Turre to find his voice. "Woody was so unique that he made you look into yourself," Williams stated. "He always did something above what you expected. That made Steve progress, both in his playing—he plays bell tones, never cracks a note, no matter how long the phrase—and composition and arranging talents."

Turre agrees with their assessment. "I did not want to lose that gig, and to match Woody's articulation and impeccable intonation, I had to practice on another level," he explained. "I was playing tenor sax parts on trombone, and Woody said he'd give me a month to get it together. It was crunch time. I asked Curtis Fuller how he evolved into flowing while playing so fast, and he told me, 'Practice slow.' It worked."

Spending quality time with Shaw burnished Turre's compositional skills. "Woody didn't see, so he'd either sing the part, plunk it out on the piano, or play it on the trumpet, and then I'd write it out," Turre recalled. (Like Turre's mentors Kirk and Charles, Shaw—who had contracted *retinitis pigmentosa*—was legally blind.) "I notated most of *Woody III* and several other records I did with him, which gave me an insight into modal harmony. I did the same with Rahsaan, so he could give the cats in the band a part. Rahsaan carried a suitcase of LPs, and we'd listen to them in his hotel room in the dark—he didn't need light—until the sun came up. He'd point out the details and nuances. He taught me how to listen, how to be part of his world of sound. Sometimes, when I'd talk to Ray, I'd close my eyes to put myself in that world of sound, and respond to that."

That background impels Turre to preach "sound is first" to his trombone students. "Whatever style you're playing, the basics are the basics," he said. "I try to get the students to hear what a centered sound is—using the air and the tongue properly to make your horn resonate, so that even if you're playing soft, you can project without a microphone, and when you articulate, it's clean. The sound comes from your body's energy, not the energy of electricity. In an acoustic jazz setting, if you're eating the mic, then something isn't right. These kids at Juilliard are talented, they can play some stuff and run all the chords. I say, 'Now, how come when you play fast, the tone quality isn't the same as when you play a long tone?' 'I dunno.' We go back to square one and we build their sound."

Having assimilated the notion of projecting an ancient-to-future sonic identity early on, Turre continues to regard it as an animating principle. "When I heard Curtis Fuller and J.J. and Frank Rosolino, I wanted to be able to play the trombone with that kind of velocity and spontaneity," he recalled. "At the same time, I recognized the power of the language and in being accurate with your rhythm. When I'd play at jam sessions with older cats, I'd play a whole lot of notes; then they'd play something simple and wipe me out. That opened my eyes. So I consciously tried to develop two ways at the same time—to work for more complexity, and also more simplicity.

"Rahsaan made me aware that how far *back* you can go will directly influence how far *forward* you can go. We played all the different styles on the bandstand, and he showed me how to perform in those styles and still be yourself. If it feels good, there's nothing wrong with it. I like music that was conceived as an expression of culture, rather than for the purpose of selling a product and making money. It has a different spirit. It has a different healing property. The vibrations are different. You can feel it." **DB**

Ben Jaffe

Charlie Gabriel (left) and Clint Maedgen

Preservation Hall (exterior)

Preservation Hall (interior)

Outside Preservation Hall, circa 1963, from left: Alcide "Slow Drag" Pavageau, Jim Robinson, Emanuel Sayles, Willie Humphrey, Josiah "Cie" Frazier, Percy Humphrey and "Sweet Emma" Barrett (Photo: Dan Leyrer)

PRESERVATION HALL JAZZ BAND

50 Years of New Orleans Artistry

By Jennifer Odell | Photography by Erika Goldring

The Preservation Hall Jazz Band has kept the flame of traditional jazz burning for more than five decades, and now the historic group is exploring some surprising artistic avenues

On a Monday in March after a pummeling New Orleans rain, silence cradled the courtyard behind the carriageway at Preservation Hall. Dusk was coming. With it, a warm, pink-hued light was falling on the bricks and banana palms that shelter four nearly life-size, wooden portrait carvings of Alcide "Slow Drag" Pavageau, Josiah "Cie" Frazier, John Brunious and Allan Jaffe.

Through a window at the back of the hall, the sphere of Ben Jaffe's brown curls popped into view. Bent over a telephone, he was making plans for a new musical theater piece, or the hall's eponymous stage at the Voodoo Music Experience fest, or another Mos Def video—or, more likely, something completely new.

Suddenly, Jaffe looked up, pointed his signature coif toward the window, and craned his neck to see out. Darting outside of his workspace—the studio apartment where his parents lived after taking over the hall in 1961—he focused his wide blue eyes on the high walls of the courtyard.

"What … look at that! Do you see that? That's so beautiful," he implored of anyone within earshot. He ran inside, then returned, holding a Polaroid camera as a few employees poked their heads out to check on the seeming emergency. Now he was under the pink- and green-brushed wall of the carriage house, turning around, looking ever further up.

Click. "Wow," he said, shaking his head, fanning his snapshot of beauty in the settling lavender evening air.

You might think a 41-year-old man who grew up watching day to turn to night and musicians come and go from this carriageway would find something like a change in Mother Nature's light to be mundane. You might also think that introducing rock stars, a bluegrass band, a modern dance company and a vaudeville show into a living sanctuary of traditional New Orleans jazz—as Jaffe has done over the past few years—would pollute the fabric of the music that Preservation Hall has worked diligently to sustain. But Jaffe, a visionary thinker who follows his heart as much as he follows his family's legacy, is known to surprise folks.

As the creative director of Preservation Hall and the tuba player in the venue's touring band, he has managed not only to preserve the tradition of the music, but to reinvigorate it, broaden its audience and illustrate some of the connections between the legacy of great artists like George Lewis and the future of American roots music.

His approach has been successful. The last 365 days of the Preservation Hall Jazz Band's life have been marked by golden anniversary celebrations, including a historic concert at

Carnegie Hall, as well as glowing critical reviews. The group's jazz-meets-bluegrass collaboration with the Del McCoury Band, *American Legacies*, received a 5-star review in the June 2011 issue of DownBeat. PHJB also has an exciting, ongoing collaboration with award-winning dance company the Trey McIntyre Project.

As Preservation Hall and its band embark on their 51st year, their horizon shines with more projects that speak to Jaffe's ability to balance forward-thinking ambitions with a sincere reverence for tradition. Among them are a forthcoming CD of the Carnegie Hall show (plus a special, limited-edition LP) and what Jaffe has called "the ultimate" box set collection of PHJB recordings. The new venue Preservation Hall West—which Jaffe describes as a "celebration of New Orleans" that also "reflects the creative community"—will open in San Francisco. Photographer Danny Clinch's film *Live At Preservation Hall: Louisiana Fairytale*, which documents PHJB's work with rock band My Morning Jacket, will, hopefully, be distributed to a wider audience (following limited screenings in 2011). And the band will continue playing gigs at home in the small, bar-less room on St. Peter Street where all of this began as an effort to give underemployed masters of traditional New Orleans jazz a regular place to perform. (The venue, one of the most famous structures in the French Quarter, was originally built as a residence in 1750, and it served as a tavern during the War of 1812.)

Somehow, the Preservation Hall Jazz Band—which includes Jaffe, Mark Braud (trumpet), Charlie Gabriel (clarinet), Freddie Lonzo (trombone), Rickie Monie (piano), Clint Maedgen (vocals/reeds) and Joseph Lastie Jr. (drums)—has made one of the most traditional institutions in America progressive. Its success begs the question: What's the magic trick?

Actually, there is no trickery, just a lot of hard work—but the magic of moments like the falling light in that historic courtyard should not be too quickly dismissed.

Take clarinetist Charlie Gabriel. At 80, he's arguably the heart of the touring group, which maintains a steady roster (a mix of talented players perform at the hall other nights of the week). Gabriel began playing this music on the streets of New Orleans at age 11, during the era when World War II had claimed so many musicians that he landed gigs with the likes of the legendary Eureka Brass Band by default. He graduated to tours with numerous marquee acts, including vibraphonist Lionel Hampton and singers Nancy Wilson and Aretha Franklin. Gabriel describes the music in a way that's reminiscent of how a preacher might discuss spirituality: "Those who can play this music [can] change people's lives and touch emotions, touch feeling. All of this comes from what you have to offer to them. This is the chains of love."

Saxophonist Clint Maedgen, 42, credits Gabriel and his playing with changing his life—he's similarly reverent about the hall itself: "Things happen in that room that don't happen anywhere else in the world. There's so much history in there. The greatest players of this style of music that ever lived played here 500 [or] 1,000 times. That room's porous, and it stores all of that energy. It absorbs all of that sound … there's something in the walls."

"A lot of people can mimic other people, but that doesn't keep the music alive," says clarinetist Charlie Gabriel. ERIKA GOLDRING

Collaborating artists such as Tom Waits and Jim James have been known to wax equally poetic about the creative inspiration that comes from playing with these men, in this place.

Jaffe, meanwhile, says he's "like a little kid when the curtain goes up at the movies." He values those goose-bump moments in what he does, and he wants to share them. He's also a son who lost his father too soon to cancer. "The weight of the success and the future of the hall is ever-present," he says, acknowledging that he remains driven by the memory of his dad. As a student of the music and an ambassador of his city, he has a culture to protect—as well as a business to run.

Seated back inside the hall apartment an hour before showtime, Jaffe says that his first priorities are feeling passionate about new projects and ensuring they're in line with the band's artistic vision, but he also admits, "Survival is a goal, too."

"We've been very fortunate because we've been able to survive, doing what we do, without ever having to compromise our integrity—and that's rare," he says over the boisterous whoops emanating from Pat O'Brien's piano bar next door.

"My parents came here and their [thinking] was, 'When this generation of musicians that we first knew when we got to New Orleans—George Lewis and Sweet Emma [Barrett] and Harold Dejean and Narvin Kimball and Willie and Percy Humphrey and Punch Miller, Jim Robinson, Louis Nelson—when that first generation passes away, then that will be the end of the Preservation Hall Band, and that'll [also] be the end of Preservation Hall," he says.

Jaffe's parents, Pennsylvania natives Allan and Sandra Jaffe, had come to New Orleans on their way home from a honeymoon in Mexico. A graduate of the University of Pennsylvania's Wharton School of Business, Allan had worked in market research for a Philadelphia department store prior to his wedding. One day during their visit to New Orleans, they followed a street parade through the French Quarter and ended up at Larry Borenstein's art gallery, where they met a group of jazz fans who made up the audience when Lewis and others would get together there and to play. The jam sessions soon outgrew Borenstein's expectations, and he asked the Jaffes if they wanted to try running the place for profit. They did—and as the band grew in popularity with global audiences and promoters like George Wein, the Preservation Hall Jazz Band graduated from kitty-paid wages to salaries.

When Allan's son, Ben, took the reins after his father's death in 1987, he brought his own perspective to the job. A New Orleans native whose godfather was Olympia Brass Band legend Harold Dejean, the younger Jaffe was a strong musician and full-time member of the band, unlike his father had been. As such, he cultivated his own artistic terms for presenting music over the years. He also recognized when PHJB fell into a rut, playing the same songs in the same order for a static audience.

"I was looking around and seeing other people doing amazing, creative things that I wanted to be a part of," he explains. "I wanted to incorporate the things I really am passionate about into Preservation Hall. What it should be is a reflection of this generation of people who grow up with it. I mean, it was, for the first 30 years, a reflection of my father's tastes."

Ben started small, first changing the order of the set list, and worked his way up to eyebrow-raising choices like incorporating into PHJB sets the New Orleans Bingo! Show, a vaudeville-

inspired variety act featuring live music and freaky theatrics. These ideas were not always popular with everyone.

But as Jaffe progressed further in his risk-taking ventures, he focused on what worked organically. While recording the 2010 CD *Preservation: An Album To Benefit Preservation Hall*, he learned that Del McCoury had been born near Allan Jaffe's hometown. Ben met McCoury's bandmate sons, and they discovered repertoire overlaps between bluegrass and New Orleans jazz. They noticed similar lyrics and chord progressions. It even turned out that McCoury's mentor, bluegrass pioneer Bill Monroe, had studied with a banjo player from New Orleans for years, frequently visiting the city.

"You're just talking about people who are playing blues and telling their story through music," Jaffe says. "When you get to make music with someone like Del or Charlie Gabriel, someone who's been doing it their whole life, the only reason this works is because they're into it. If they weren't into it, no amount of money would make this happen, and nothing would translate to an audience. You can't fake that."

A few days later, the Hall is maxed out with visitors. The musicians launch into "Bourbon Street Parade," which opens every PHJB show. Seated center stage in a wooden chair is Charlie Gabriel, who tips his head back with a dreamy smile. He calls out the names of each soloist from the back of his throat. His clarinet sails through its first solo, and cheers answer its graceful call, resonating through the room, which has no microphones. Joe Lastie jumps in with a thunderous drum solo, the horns come alive, and 200 hands begin clapping as the music builds to a climax and then erupts into ecstatic release.

"If you have any appropriate musical request, just write it down on a $20 bill and we'll be glad to consider it," Jaffe quips.

Later in the set, trumpeter Mark Braud trades barbs with Gabriel throughout a guffaw-inducing rendition of "I'll Be Glad When You're Dead, You Rascal, You."

Many of these songs are theatrical in nature, whether poking fun at or dramatizing the solemnity of loss. And though there's not much room for crowd movement in the hall, the entire PHJB repertoire is designed for dancing. The band's two collaborations with choreographer Trey McIntyre's modern dance troupe, *Ma Maison* and *The Sweeter End*, represent the latest chapters in the music's historic connection to dance and theater (see sidebar on page 38).

"Those guys, they've been around," Maedgen says of his bandmates, noting that some of them performed in *One Mo' Time* (a local musical theater show that became an Off Broadway hit in 1979 and spawned numerous touring companies). "They're hip beyond my understanding. We're not throwin' anything new in their direction."

The McIntyre collaborations resulted from a 2008 New Orleans Ballet Association invitation to set modern dance to New Orleans jazz. The spookily beautiful *Ma Maison* uses visual cues to elaborate on musical themes like mortality and celebration. It was received so well that a second piece was commissioned and premiered in New Orleans in February 2011. Each piece has been heralded as a groundbreaking juncture of music and dance traditions, and both productions are now a permanent part of the band's repertoire. Jaffe and McIntyre are currently working on a new piece, which will be presented as part of the Minneapolis Orchestra's 2013 jazz program.

While Gabriel admits that not every PHJB collaboration has meshed fully with his personal aesthetic, he is a big fan of the McIntyre projects. Still, he keeps a close eye on new ventures.

"Benji's main focus must be to preserve what this music stands for, what it is," says Gabriel. "It's a lifestyle of the individuals who have played this music before." Placing his hands over his heart, he adds, "Music is in here. But he has to preserve and respect this, what's inside of here. And that is fine. Long as he keeps his eyes on the prize, he can roll with it."

PHJB musicians aren't the only ones who are

Trey McIntyre Project dancers wearing *Ma Maison* costumes inside Preservation Hall

Big Choices

Choreographer Trey McIntyre considers himself an anthropologist of sorts, mining cultural themes and presenting what inspires him through the prism of dance. "The most poignant research is always experiential, not clinical," said the director of the Boise, Idaho-based Trey McIntyre Project in a recent phone conversation. "You have to immerse yourself as much as possible and let all that stuff seep into your pores."

When it came time to plunge himself into New Orleans culture following the commission of *Ma Maison*—his troupe's first collaboration with the Preservation Hall Jazz Band—the Mardi Gras Day's St. Ann parade served as McIntyre's holy water.

After saturating himself in carnival madness, McIntyre got to work. "Once I'm in the studio, I let those associations just come," he said, explaining the first phase in translating his New Orleans experience to the stage.

Balancing modernity and history is something McIntyre has done successfully in other collaborative projects. A key challenge in choreographing work to be presented alongside live jazz, however, had to do with the very structure of the music.

"In my performance, I had to paint in broader strokes and work with the dancers to understand the big choices within music. I'd like to find a way to work more in the way the musicians do," said McIntyre, who studied classical piano for many years before he began dancing professionally.

According to Ben Jaffe of the Preservation Hall Jazz Band, the musicians had to learn the different ways that various interpretations of music would affect movement. "[McIntyre] had to teach me what the dancers are responding to and the kind of consistent things that they need in their routines," Jaffe recalled. "I find it to be a lot like what we do, though. Inside of this musical form, there are these rules that you're following, but they're open to a certain amount of interpretation."

Clad in ghoulish skull masks and bone-adorned unitards, the dancers in *Ma Maison* exude a rag-doll aesthetic in the way they hold their bodies, no matter how complex their gestures. Performed against a black stage with PHJB's ageless accompaniment, the visuals are arresting and dark: A tuxedoed skeleton rises and falls, performs hunched loops and ground-centric turns while a macabre army pumps its knees in unison behind him, swirling out of the formation one at a time to bow and wriggle, implying a connection to the ground. As alive as the music and movements are, the performance's intrinsic ties to death are as in-your-face as a brass band at a jazz funeral.

In the subsequent piece, *The Sweeter End*, dancers wear spray-painted "X" signs on denim, a sartorial reference to the post-Katrina signs that rescue workers placed on New Orleans buildings—an indication that the structure had been searched for bodies.

As McIntyre and Jaffe begin to brainstorm about a new collaboration, the choreographer is keeping all possibilities open.

"Ben is so experimental in his thinking," McIntyre said. "And the music is amazing—it's its own spiritual experience. And they do a great job of finding a modern context for a historic activity, without changing the essence of what it is. The music is still powerful and they're still contemporary ideas."

—Jennifer Odell

monitoring Jaffe's alignment with the original mission of the hall. George Wein's relationship with Allan and Sandra Jaffe dates back to the early '60s, and Jaffe says Wein was initially skeptical of the collaborative projects he was pursuing. That changed after the release of the *Preservation* album.

"At Newport, when we actually had all of our guests show up on set—Andrew Bird, Jim James and Tao [Seeger]—and we closed with 'We Shall Overcome,' George grabbed me after the show, hugged me, congratulated me and said I was really onto something," Jaffe recalls with pride, referring to a heartwarming moment at the 2010 Newport Folk Festival.

Wein reiterated that sentiment on Jan. 7, when Carnegie Hall welcomed PHJB and a slew of guests to perform in a 50th anniversary celebration. When the lights came up to open the show, Wein, seated alone at the piano, introduced the proceedings by explaining that Ben Jaffe's parents had been his first guides in the city where he eventually created the New Orleans Jazz and Heritage Festival. He went on to perform "Basin Street Blues," before Jaffe walked onstage.

"We've been able to survive, doing what we do, without ever having to compromise our integrity—and that's rare."

"It was magic," recalls Jaffe. "It felt like we were taking over the world that night—like a movement. I could easily see people looking back at that concert as a major moment in music. I mean, there was an incredibly diverse group of musicians on the stage that evening and then to cap it with Tao Seeger singing to his grandfather [Pete Seeger], sitting in the audience, and for George Wein to be there and symbolically acknowledge that this was the next thing, this is where we are today."

Not everything is totally new when it comes to PHJB. The repertoire has grown, but its roots have stayed the same. Elder statesmen like Gabriel understand that this music continues to flourish as it did in the '40s in part because it's constantly being updated by its performers.

"When they improvise and they solo, they only can play their own experience. They can't play what Papa Celestin played," says Gabriel. "A lot of people can mimic other people, but that doesn't keep the music alive. Music, when it touches you, it does something to you. And you do something to the music. It's not in a box."

Maedgen points out that Allan Jaffe was "radical" in his hiring of players who would never have worked together otherwise. "I get the feeling that Ben is, in more ways than one, following in his dad's footsteps," Maedgen says. "His dad was a risk-taker. But at the same time, he had so much respect for the tradition here. The balance of those two things is really miraculous and, ultimately, is the thing that allows this music to continue on the level that it has."

It's almost showtime now, and the din from inside the hall grows as Jaffe packs up his computer and switches roles, from interview-giving administrator to gigging musician.

"[The collaborations] push you to really think about what it is—and how precious it is—what you do," he says, standing up and hoisting a sousaphone over his shoulder. Reflecting on Hurricane Katrina's aftermath, he adds, "I had a whole different sense of preciousness after the hurricane, when we didn't *have* music. You get older, too, and things aren't forever."

Jaffe walks out into the carriageway, joining his bandmates. As they step through the gate to where a new audience awaits, their silhouettes begin to sway in the light. **DB**

MARY HALVORSON
Perfect Balance

By Michael Gallant | Photo by Nick Lloyd

"I love distortion," says guitarist Mary Halvorson, laughing over her bowl of Vietnamese noodle soup on New York's Lower East Side. "I use it when I can, but I relate it to the song and the song structure. In this case, the piece is centered around a big build, with my distorted guitar line coming in as it gets crazier—and then everything implodes."

The song Halvorson refers to is "Sinks When She Rounds The Bend (No. 22)," the ominously titled opening track from her new quintet recording *Bending Bridges* (Firehouse 12). The composition begins quietly, with wisps of baroque melodies played by Jonathan Finlayson on trumpet and Jon Irabagon on alto saxophone, while her longtime rhythm section of bassist John Hébert and drummer Ches Smith lays down a groove of storm-cloud atmospherics. Motifs fold back on themselves as the track swells and releases with slow-growing intensity—and Halvorson's simmering distortion kicks in. "Everything crescendos towards that final moment," she says, describing the piece's grandly chaotic peak and subsequent dénouement, replete with foghorn squeals, crashing cymbals and grungy, machine-gun stabs of overdrive. "The build was the backbone of the song, and the guitar grit helped me create the kind of energy I was looking for."

As both a guitarist and a composer, Halvorson is accustomed to defying convention, and not only when it comes to the surgical application of rock-flavored distortion. To illustrate her sonic landscapes, both intimate and brash, she skillfully draws upon a wide swath of effects often banished from the vocabulary of the archetypal jazz guitarist. "One of the beautiful things about guitar is that you have a wide range of sounds you can produce," she says. "I love both playing acoustically and using effects. I tend to use effects more as accents rather than the main thing, but I like having them enhance certain moments or add embellishments. The raw, acoustic sound of the guitar is equally important to me, though."

Halvorson's angular phrasing, inspired interplay between bandmates, and storm-and-calm approach to composition can't help but invite comparisons to John Zorn and Masada—a parallel that Halvorson welcomes. "I discovered Masada in college and became a huge fan," she says. While a student at Wesleyan University in Connecticut, Halvorson regularly made the two-hour drive to New York to hear Zorn and other musicians perform live, often returning the same night after the last notes faded.

Three albums deep into her career as a bandleader, Halvorson has earned significant critical acclaim for her sonic and harmonic explorations. Lars Gotrich of NPR described her as "the most future-seeking guitarist working right now, thinking out the instrument on a level most couldn't comprehend"; the New York Times referred to "a glowing critical consensus" about her oeuvre; and The Village Voice declared her "New York's Best Guitarist" in 2011, an honor that left the modest musician grateful, but nonplussed. "That was an interesting one," she says with a smile. "It was both weird and surprising. I was excited for sure, but I definitely wasn't expecting it."

Halvorson's new CD showcases the same quintet that she directed so effectively on her 2010 sophomore album, *Saturn Sings* (Firehouse 12), though four of the songs on the disc are recorded in trio format with Hébert and Smith. "The basic ideas behind the trio and quintet is continuity," she notes. "I already had an album with the quintet, and I wanted to keep developing our sound as a follow-up to the last album." Before taking the band into the studio, Halvorson enjoyed seeing the music and the group develop. "We've been gigging quite a bit, so it was nice to go into the studio already having worked out a lot of the music in a performance situation," she says.

In the studio, Halvorson—who co-produced all three of her albums with Taylor Ho Bynum and Nick Lloyd of Firehouse 12—tried to record as few takes as possible, favoring the energy and live feel of first and second play-throughs. *Bending Bridges* was created in a busy two days. First, the band recorded the album's four trio tracks; the next day, Halvorson and company welcomed horns into the studio, which was a new experience for her. "I've been having so much fun writing for horns," she says. "This is my first attempt at it. I had just gotten Finale notation software when I started writing this material and it opened things up, being able to experiment and hear instantly what any given part would sound like an octave higher or lower. Even though I was only able to listen to playback in a rigid MIDI-sounding voice, it was really helpful. So I just started experimenting."

Halvorson chose to spice *Bending Bridges* with intertwined trumpet and alto sax in order to make her close-knit voicings come to life. "Because those instruments are similar in register, I thought the combination might create an interesting blend and give me more possibilities. I wanted to combine more traditional harmonies with weird cluster harmonies. It really was just trial and error, figuring out what worked and what didn't on those instruments. To me, it's all about a balance between beautiful, traditional harmonies and weird left turns."

The theme of balance resonates not just from lick to lick and chord to chord, but from track to track within the album. "If I'm writing a lot of pieces with structures that take irregular forms, then maybe I'll write something in a regular form. I always think about balance as it relates to the band and all of the pieces."

A familiar joke begins, "How many guitars does a guitarist need?" The punch line is "One more!" Halvorson laughs when I share this with her, but assures me that she bucks the trend. "It's my personality in general to find one thing that I like and stick with it," she says. "That applies to guitars as much as anything."

Audiences who catch Halvorson performing in New York will see her riff on a Guild Artist Award hollow-body from 1970. "I've had it since 2000, and I love it because it's an enormous guitar with a huge acoustic tone," she says. "It almost reminds me of an acoustic bass with all of its resonance, and it has really warm pickups as well. It sounds good through most amps, which lets me be flexible on gigs. The acoustic sound comes through so much that I feel like I can play out of just about anything and be OK with it." While the Guild is her axe of choice, the instrument is too big to travel with safely. A guitar collector friend helped her purchase a smaller, similar-sounding instrument off of eBay for $500, and that's the one she takes on the road.

At gigs, Halvorson uses an array of pedals to expand her sonic palate: "I've used the same effects pedals for years. I have a Line 6 delay pedal that I use for a pitch-bend sound. I have an expression pedal for the Line 6 and I can create that sound by using the pedal to switch from no delay to lots of delay." Other mainstays of her rig include a volume pedal and her Rat distortion pedal. A newer addition to her arsenal is a ring modulation pedal, custom built by Critter and Guitarri; on *Bending Bridges*, Halvorson used a similar spacey effect sourced from a Moog Music Moogerfooger ring modulator.

"I try to use pedals sparingly," she reaffirms. "But I do like them as accents to create certain kinds of sounds I couldn't get acoustically."

Halvorson grew up in the Boston area and began studying violin in second grade, though the instrument never quite clicked for her. "I didn't like it and I wasn't very good at it," she recalls, smiling. "And I wasn't interested in playing classical music. I liked Jimi Hendrix and wanted to play guitar, so I started teaching myself out of tablature books." A local teacher, Issi Rozen, turned her on to straightahead jazz not long after. Fueled by her father's extensive collection of jazz recordings, Halvorson discovered a defining musical direction.

Halvorson recalls struggling to be taken seriously as a female, teenage, jazz guitarist, and was often mistaken for the archetypal girl-with-guitar singer-songwriter—a misconception that continues to dog her from time to time on the streets of New York City. "People sometimes stop me and say things like, 'Hey, sing me a song, sweetie!'" she says, laughing. "Walking around the city with a guitar seems to be an open invitation for anybody to talk to you. It's funny. I also hear, 'Do you sing?' 'Do you play lead or rhythm?' 'Are you any good?' When I get that last one, I usually just say, 'No' and walk away, but I haven't come up with anything clever yet for the 'lead or rhythm' question." When I suggest that an accurate response would be "both at the same time," she agrees, though such a simple answer doesn't come close to encompassing the complexity and idiosyncrasies that make Halvorson's music shine.

Bold, Direct Leadership

Michael Gallant talked to two of Mary Halvorson's collaborators about working with her.

Drummer Ches Smith: I met Mary in 2003, playing with her and Trevor Dunn. There was a certain vibe going on back then that Trevor thought we both had, where we weren't afraid of letting things drop and having some awkward phrasing together.


Clockwise, from bottom: Mary Halvorson, John Hébert, Ches Smith, Jon Irabagon and Jonathan Finlayson

Mary has always balanced her love for melodies with more abstraction. What she comes up with [as a composer] is a combination of her personality and all the stuff that's influenced her. She's very clear as a bandleader. Up front, she tells you if she wants something specific on a piece or if she wants you to do your own thing.

Bassist John Hébert: Whether she's writing for bass, drums or sax, she's thinking about the person she's writing for. That's a special thing. I'm grateful she considered me for this chair and [composes] with me in mind. The fact that she has such clarity and direction before she even starts writing makes playing with her a really unique experience for me.

The way she writes includes sections that are open for development and improvisation, which is really cool. Once you get into those open sections, there's been enough material that's preceded and enough material after that, so that you can draw from all of that material. It blurs the line between composition and improv and makes the listener ask, "Are they improvising? Is this totally free, or written out?" In some of the newer music she's doing, though, a lot of the improvisational sections are based on changes and forms. There's written material that we loop and develop as it goes along.

Those idiosyncrasies have coalesced to make Halvorson's voice a fresh and powerful one, yet such a voice did not evolve overnight. "When I started, I was playing straightahead jazz," she says. "I was lucky to have teachers who nailed in the point that I had to find my own thing and sound like me, so from an early age, that's what I was searching for. I've spent a lot of time exploring gradually over the years, and feel like I'm still searching for it."

Halvorson, 31, is happy to see an increasing number of women joining her in the ranks of professional jazz musicians. "When I was a teenager, it was a little tough, with so few women doing what I was trying to do," she says. "These days, it doesn't feel like an issue at all. In my own bands, I work with women and men not because they're women or men, but because they're great musicians who I want to play with."

Whether building a trio, quintet, septet, or other configuration, Halvorson seeks out musicians who can gracefully hang. "I'm looking for people whose playing I really love, and whose energy I gravitate towards," she describes. "I'm looking for players who are open-minded, have strong musical foundations, can play different styles of music and are good readers, and understand harmony—but are also open to whatever direction the music takes."

Beyond chops, Halvorson seeks out musicians with the right personalities. "If I don't like the players I'm working with, it's just not worth it," she says. "Being reliable, showing up on time, being trustworthy and fun to hang out with—those things are important. I love the people in my band, and they're all amazing musicians."

Like any number of successful composers before her, Halvorson writes with her bandmates in mind. "It helps when I'm writing for bass to think about John and picture his sound on the part," she says. "I do like playing to people's strengths, but I also like taking people out of their comfort zones. The problem with that is that these guys have so many comfort zones because they're all such versatile musicians. They have a million things they could do."

One of Halvorson's most compelling collaborative projects isn't one that bears her name in its title. Thumbscrew features Michael Formanek on bass and Tomas Fujiwara on drums. "It's a brand new project that I'm excited about," she says. "Tomas and I have been working together on a lot of different projects since 2004, and he's the perfect musician who fits all of the descriptions I was talking about: He's an interesting, open-minded, versatile drummer who's very easy to work with. Michael is one of my all-time favorite bass players. I've been looking for some opportunity to collaborate with both of them."

The three first met while playing together as the rhythm section for Taylor Ho Bynum, and Halvorson immediately recognized the musical chemistry at work. "We talked about collaborating and then hooked up to play a couple gigs," she recalls. "It's nice to have a band that's a collaborative effort, where everyone is writing music. The pieces very much sound like different compositions from different people, but hopefully, it'll still have a cohesive sound overall."

In tandem with her growth as a bandleader, Halvorson seeks to maintain a balance within her career of side-person work as well; collaborators thus far have included guitarist Marc Ribot, reedist Anthony Braxton, pianist Myra Melford and drummer Tom Rainey, among others. "I love playing other people's music," she says. "I enjoy the process of figuring out what the identity of the music is, what the bandleader is looking for, and how to fit my playing into those ideas while still maintaining my identity as a musician. Anthony Braxton's bands have been a huge influence on me and a huge challenge, and touring in Trevor Dunn's trio with Ches on drums and Trevor on bass was a pretty influential thing as well—just seeing how Trevor combined elements of rock and metal with jazz in such a seamless way.

"It's important for me to keep challenging myself and keep growing on guitar," Halvorson says, setting her chopsticks down on the table. "Each band presents a different challenge. With every band I play in, I learn new things." **DB**

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Reviews

Brad Mehldau Trio
Ode

NONESUCH 529689
★★★★½

No Soundgarden, no Oasis, no Radiohead, no Beatles or Paul Simon, no Nick Drake and no "No Moon At All" or any other standards. Shepherding his trio into the studio for the first time in several years, Brad Mehldau relies on the power of his own pen (substantial) and his team's collective articulation (godhead) for this new outing—a move that breaks an existing formula while generating the band's most expressive record yet.

The ensemble's interplay is one of modern jazz's most magical. In the last few years, drummer Jeff Ballard has brought a more provocative attack to the music than his predecessor, Jorge Rossy, and without sacrificing any of the lyricism that Mehldau holds dear, the threesome peppers each other with counterpoint maneuvers that amplify tension while sustaining eloquence.

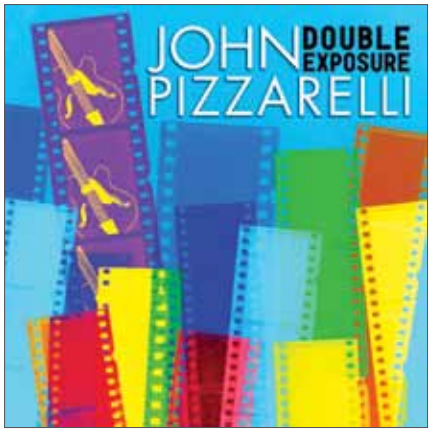
Ode is built on this dynamic. Momentary storms bubble up in most of the pieces, and guessing which way the weather patterns might shift is one of the record's joys. A steady groove suddenly makes room for agitation. A tad of tumult realigns an otherwise calm terrain. Sometimes it's Larry Grenadier's nimble bass lines pushing the buttons, sometimes it's Ballard's agitation making a land grab. More than ever, Mehldau uses his instrument as a drum, popping staccato notes into the maw of the rhythm section's formidable bustle. From "Aquaman" to "26," there are some truly explosive moments.

Mehldau wrote these tunes as homages. Guitarist Kurt Rosenwinkel gets a clever nod, the late Michael Brecker is smooched by one of the most kaleidoscopic turns, and even Jack Nicholson's stoner redneck character in *Easy Rider* is acknowledged with a eulogy.

Indeed, "Stan The Man" could have been called "Bouncing Without Bud." Mehldau earned an early rep as a harmony fiend who loved to milk a mood, and he probably still is. But this wildly declarative piece finds him smoking through a modern bop head with enough chops to make jaws drop. Its deep swing is the essence of this remarkable outfit.

—*Jim Macnie*

Ode: M.B.; Ode; 26; Dream Sketch; Bee Blues; Twiggy; Kurt Vibe; Stan The Man; Eulogy For George Hanson; Aquaman; Days Of Dilbert Delaney. (75:27)
Personnel: Brad Mehldau, piano; Larry Grenadier, bass; Jeff Ballard, drums.
Ordering info: nonesuch.com



John Pizzarelli
Double Exposure
TELARC 33221
★★★½

A couple of decades back, guitarist-singer John Pizzarelli entered a rarified and ritzy musical fief some referred to as grown-up music, meaning that vast bequest of pre-'60s songs that it was assumed younger audiences would find once they grew wise enough to appreciate them. But Baby Boomers had no wish to outgrow the hymns of their adolescence. So Pizzarelli's realm never received that invasion of newly minted adults eager for Cole Porteresque sophistication.

His latest, *Double Exposure*, does have a more contemporary texture. But it's still intended for those who prefer to take their music at, say, New York's Carlyle rather than the Village Vanguard. Part of the program, in fact, comes from the Carlyle bandstand where last fall Pizzarelli and his wife, Jessica Molaskey, presented a multi-generational aggregation of songs intercut in pairs. Some of the hybrids heard here are fairly simple instrumental convergences of riffs and harmonies. Part of Seals and Croft's "Diamond Girl" parallels "So What." The two fit hand in glove. More oblique to my ear is the link between "Walk Between The Raindrops" and Thad Jones' "Tip Toe," which inhabit a more brittle coexistence. Pizzarelli might have done better with "Opus # 1," which he quotes in his solo. The CD's one instrumental is a delightful synthesis of the bass line from Wes Montgomery's "Four On Six" and the Allman Brothers' "In Memory Of Elizabeth Reed." Other couplings are more thematic, though without Molaskey they don't duplicate the sense of theater created in the Carlyle. —*John McDonough*

Double Exposure: I Feel Fine/Sidewinder; Harvest Moon; Traffic Jam/The Kicker; Ruby Baby; Allison; Rosalinda's Eyes; In Memory Of Elizabeth Reed; Drunk On The Moon/Lush Life; Walk Between The Raindrops; Free Man In Paris; Take A Lot Of Pictures; I Can't Let Go Now; Diamond Girl. (76:02)
Personnel: John Pizzarelli, guitar, vocals; Tony Kadleck, trumpet; John Mosca, trombone; Andy Fusco, Kenny Berger, saxophones; Aaron Weinstein, violin; Larry Goldings, organ; Larry Fuller, piano; Martin Pizzarelli, bass; Tony Tedesco, drums; Jessica Molaskey, vocal (3).
Ordering info: telarc.com

Billy Hart
All Our Reasons
ECM 2248
★★★★

A largely collective ensemble, nominally led by drummer Billy Hart but featuring material evenly distributed between Hart, pianist Ethan Iverson and saxophonist Mark Turner, this foursome seems a perfect fit for a contemporary ECM outing.

Expansive in scope, but with resonance and focus, *All Our Reasons* has the spirit of great early albums by Jan Garbarek and Keith Jarrett. But this band, with Hart mooring everything with a sense of grace, wisdom and adventure, brings today's New York scene to bear on that 40-year-old label sound.

You can hear Hart's sensitivity at midpoint of Iverson's "Ohnedaruth," a tune founded on John Coltrane's "Giant Steps," without any of the heavy-handedness such an adaptation might take on; after the pianist's beautiful intro, the drummer kicks in with light-as-air brushes, pushing along, coloring and creating space all at the same time. A few minutes later, he's anchoring his own lovely "Tolli's Dance," a tune that could be an ECM classic with its folksy theme and ample room sound. Bassist Ben Street works perfectly with Hart, helping articulate the passageways and tunnels

through the music. Turner is great here, his unstrained, sometimes restrained approach perfect for building momentum. The saxophonist's strutting "Nigeria" is another beauty, featuring a sweet solo by Iverson, whose playing is uniformly wonderful, including on the unaccompanied "Old Wood." Turner's spacious "Wasteland" presents him sans others for the first two minutes, a strategy that allows us to hear how he parses a harmony, the classic, big ECM sound not drowning him but buoying him instead. —*John Corbett*

All Our Reasons: Song For Balkis; Ohnedaruth; Tolli's Dance; Nostalgia For The Impossible; Duchess; Nigeria; Wasteland; Old Wood; Imke's March. (58:30)
Personnel: Billy Hart, drums; Mark Turner, tenor saxophone; Ethan Iverson, piano; Ben Street, bass.
Ordering info: ecmrecords.com

Alfredo Rodriguez
Sounds Of Space
MACK AVENUE 1064
★★★

Alfredo Rodriguez is a 26-year-old Cuban pianist who has been championed by Quincy Jones since he heard him play in Montreux in 2006. Three years later, the conservatory-trained Rodriguez defected to the United States. *Sounds Of Space*, recorded in formats ranging from solo to chamber ensemble, dramatizes Rodriguez's momentous life change.

A prodigious player with fast fingers and an alternately percussive and tender touch, Rodriguez comes from a long line of sparkling Cuban pianists who play classical, pop and jazz and would be as comfortable in a parlor as on the concert stage or in a dance club. Keith Jarrett's pure improvisation inspired him to play jazz. The Cuban's debut leaves open the question as to whether he is a substantive new voice in *that* tradition or merely a purveyor of atmospheric, well-made program music.

A few tracks suggest Rodriguez has the right stuff, particularly the organic development and interplay of his trio with bassist Peter Slavov and drummer Francisco Mela on the nervous 7/4 "Oxygen." "Crossing The Border," also agitated, showcases big, two-handed octaves, a dissonant dance figure and a sneaky interlude, evocative and atmospheric. The title track has heft, too, with its insistent left-hand riff and haunting clarinet counterline. Rodriguez is a good mimic, conjuring the swelling joy of Bud Powell's lines on "Cu-Bop" with a lovely spirit, but there is something square about his time as an improviser. He is not a swinger. One of the best tracks is the simply stated bolero "Sueño De Paseo," which conjures a promenade in the Havana evening, though wind player Ernesto Vega's out-of-tune soprano saxophone almost ruins the mood.

—*Paul de Barros*

Sounds Of Space: Qbafrica; Sueño de Paseo; Silence; Cu-bop; April; Oxygen; Sounds Of Space; Crossing The Border; "…Y Bailaría La Negra?"; Transculturation; Fog. (58:18)
Personnel: Alfredo Rodriguez, piano, melodica (1); Gaston Joya (2–4, 7, 9–11), Peter Slavov (1, 6), bass; Francisco Mela, drums (1, 6); Michael Olivera, drums, percussion (2–4, 7, 9–11); Ernesto Vega, clarinet (7), bass clarinet (7), soprano saxophone (2, 3, 9, 10); Santa Cecilia Quartet (11).
Ordering info: mackavenue.com

The Hot Box

CD / Critics	John McDonough	John Corbett	Jim Macnie	Paul de Barros
Brad Mehldau Trio *Ode*	★★★★	★★★★½	★★★★½	★★★★
John Pizzarelli *Double Exposure*	★★★½	★½	★★★	★★½
Billy Hart *All Our Reasons*	★★½	★★★★	★★★★	★★
Alfredo Rodriguez *Sounds Of Space*	★★★	★★★★½	★★★½	★★★

Critics' Comments

Brad Mehldau Trio, *Ode*

Enthralling, thrilling, mercurial music. Mehldau's wonderful harmonic imagination and expansive ability to extrapolate are evident, but he's also down to earth, dedicatedly un-pompous, and the way he interacts with the rhythm section—pull together, alter dynamic, break apart—is at times miraculous. —*John Corbett*

A superior suite of discernable, often lovely homages to random recipients. A fragment of melody may flicker like a familiar mirage only to melt away before you can pin it down. Range covers solidly anchored bop ("Stan") to more free-form digressions into the subjective ("Eulogy"). Excellent notes offer insight into the trio's processes. —*John McDonough*

The outward-looking nods to other people here don't actually make this album any less interior, dark and brooding than other Mehldau efforts, but the quirky "Bee Blues," speedy "Stan The Man" and tumbling "Aquaman" do somewhat offset the churning obsession that has become his signature. But following Mehldau's brilliant trio down whatever path it chooses is its own reward. —*Paul de Barros*

John Pizzarelli, *Double Exposure*

Disagreeable moves from Pizzarelli, perhaps trying to play to the audience by making mash-ups of '70s pop and jazz, in the process watering down the music he's trying to spotlight. The guitarist's voice is not his strong suit, as he makes plain on his mauling of Elvis Costello's "Alison." —*John Corbett*

Pizzarelli has always brought a lighthearted approach to his chosen material, and because I enjoy him as much as I enjoy a bit of silliness, this mash-up program is basically jake by me. But it's too cute by about half. —*Jim Macnie*

Pizzarelli's wit is one of his undeniable charms, but this album is too clever. Crossing the Beatles' "She Said" with "The Sidewinder," Tom Waits' "Drunk On The Moon" with "Lush Life" and Seals and Crofts' "Diamond Girl" with "So What" probably felt like fun in the living room, but that's where it should have stayed. The big band arrangements sound canned, and the rock hits in swing time feel awkward. That said, Pizzarelli's taste in '60s and '70s songs is impeccable. Wish he'd just sung 'em straight. —*Paul de Barros*

Billy Hart, *All Our Reasons*

Turner's gentle, pensive tenor fixes much of this music in a passive ambience of pastels and fluttering scales in search of an idea. But its art, like much ECM music, is more in its search than its outcome. Hart takes leisurely, thoughtful solos that are curiously inert. "Duchess" is the only piece with a pulse of locomotion. —*John McDonough*

The band's version of rumination leaves lots of room for little storms; I file that under believable drama. Their version of bop leaves room for plenty of élan; I file that under maturity. —*Jim Macnie*

This is a dull record—well-crafted, certainly, but so subdued, restrained and cloistered as to be a parody of ECM cloud chamber preciousness. Apart from Hart's lively "Tolli's Dance" and Mark Turner's speedy "Nigeria," the music doesn't give Hart much chance to shine and affords far too much space to Turner's saxophone etudes. —*Paul de Barros*

Alfredo Rodriguez, *Sounds Of Space*

Another self-contained piano debut sealed in the seclusion of its own writing. At first glance, Rodriguez has much going for him starting with a grandiose keyboard command and a beguiling knack for the quirky phrase and spicy chord. As composer, he seems more directed at leveraging his abundant skills than conjuring memorable music. —*John McDonough*

Real, compelling Cubano-jazz, with edges and funk as well as slickness and suave. Rodriguez is impressive himself, likes tasty little dissonances, but here it's the whole package—tunes, band and insightful production—that make it work. —*John Corbett*

Hats off to the newcomer with the chops. The pieces on *Sounds Of Space* are a tad too chipper at times, but zest can occasionally carry the day, and the spirit on this outing (not to mention the unity) speaks for itself. —*Jim Macnie*

Heinrich Von Kalnein & Kahiba
Orbital Spaces
NATANGO 47611
★★★

In the world according to music with an intentionally open and atmospheric agenda, there can be a fine, yet discernible, line between achieving an integrity-blessed ambient state of being and that which drifts off into a shallower, more vaporous and forgettable zone. Count *Orbital Spaces* as part of the former camp, a space where jazz sensibilities meet intelligent and tasteful soundscaping, understated, soothing grooves that remind us more of Miles Davis' *In A Silent Way* than anything akin to new age notions.

Austrian reed player Heinrich von Kalnein, switching between tenor sax and alto flute for this date—along with an "iPhone 3G" on his instrument list, using software co-designed by Brian Eno and Peter Chilvers—establishes an impressive and empathetic artistic synergy, not to mention seamless electro-acoustic blend, with keyboardist Christian Bakanic (accordion and electric piano) and notably subtle ambi-percussionist Gregor Hilbe. Together, they collectively explore textural areas, rough up the harmonic structures with just enough tonal sinew to keep tension in the mix and generally keep the music spatial but energized.

Cosmic inklings are clearly indicated by the album title and songs nodding to astrological signs ("Gemini," "Aquarius" and "Taurus," the latter being the one most fortified with jazz heat, building into a swinging exchange of drums, accordion and tenor sax chops). "LOA–a.ka. Dancing Muezzin" moves into an impressionistic world-folk-fusion terrain redolent of Oregon and early Weather Report, keeping an ensemble spirit intact, never succumbing to the standard jazz scheme of protagonist soloist over rhythm section.

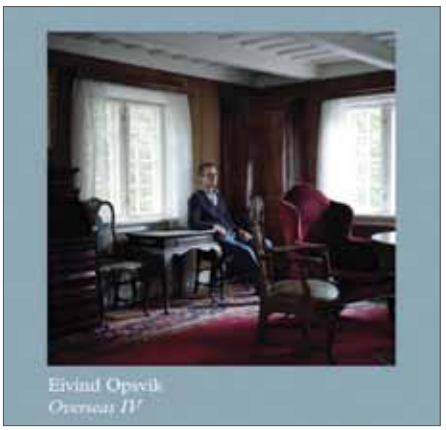
As the players drift off into the mesmeric, spacey album-closer "Pan," with Kalnein on alto flute and Bakanic triggering fleeting memories of Miles' early electric piano adventures, we get the sense of having ventured on a journey to whereabouts and genres unknown, but with the effect of an emotional cooling agent. This is meditative music with the right amount of muscle involved. —*Josef Woodard*

Orbital Spaces: Gemini; LOA–a.k.a. Dancing Muezzin; Sphinx; Aquarius; Amber; Shiva; Taurus; Pan. (50:49)
Personnel: Heinrich Von Kalnein, tenor saxophone, alto flute, iPhone 3G; Christian Bakanic, accordion, electric piano; Gregor Hilbe, drums, percussion, electronics.
Ordering info: natangomusic.com

Eivind Opsvik
Overseas IV
LOYAL LABEL 011
★★★★

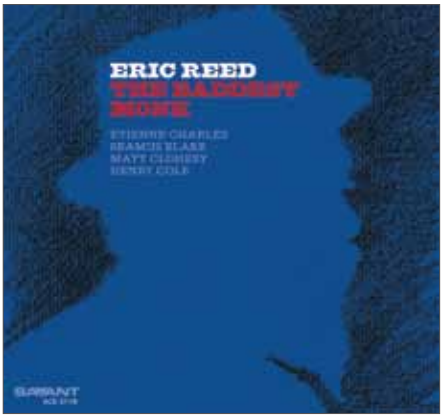
From the initial notes uttered by Jacob Sacks' harpsichord and Kenny Wollesen's timpani, one is transported a few centuries ago and cognizant that bass player Eivind Opsvik's new opus belongs to a unique musical universe. But Opsvik's project is no novelty act.

Indeed, the stately pomp of the introductory piece quickly gives way to a lovely rock-tinged ballad ("White Armour") driven by Wollesen's expansive drumming and punchy accents. On "1786," the most convincing piece, the band slowly turns the intensity up several notches until saxophonist Tony Malaby lashes out a terrifically rugged and biting solo in competition with—rather than over—a backdrop dominated by Brandon Seabrook's aggressive guitar, which adds some more uncompromising grit. *Overseas IV* also relies on contrasts and sometimes offers sharp detours. Opsvik alternates the thoughtful and forlorn with the frantic. At the same time, the focus shifts back and forth from melodies to textures, although these two elements are sometimes allowed to coexist.



The second half of the program is more linear and includes repetitive riffs while providing some room for occasional ecstatic and majestic passages. Malaby is confined to a rather supportive role but subtly blends with the collective. —*Alain Drouot*

Overseas IV: They Will Hear The Drums—And They Will Answer; White Armour; 1786; Silkweavers' Song; Men On Horses; Robbers And Fairground Folk; Michelle Marie; Nineteen To The Dozen; Det Kalde Havet; Youth Hopeth All Things, Believeth All Things. (50:34)
Personnel: Eivind Opsvik, bass, Kenny Wollesen, drums, cymbals, timpani, vibraphone, marching machine; Jacob Sacks, harpsichord, Farfisa organ, piano; Tony Malaby, saxophone; Brandon Seabrook, electric guitar, mandolin.
Ordering info: loyallabel.com



Eric Reed
The Baddest Monk
SAVANT 2118
★★★★

Thirty years after the passing of Thelonious Monk, the iconic pianist and composer continues to inspire jazz artists of varying stylistic ilk and many generations to dedicate full-length albums to him. One of the increasing problems, though, is coming up with dates that stand out from the bulk. Eric Reed's latest entry attempts to do such a thing and mostly succeeds.

A major reason why this date works so well is that Reed has already developed a voice that's uniquely his own. While that style is steeped in bebop, gospel and soul-jazz, it's definitely modern. He's absorbed his influences so sublimely that it's difficult to pinpoint his lodestars.

Given that, he's skillful and smart enough to not mimic Monk's signature style. Reed illustrates this acumen from the start with the opening "Rhythm-A-Ning," on which he creates a slightly funky feel thanks to drummer Henry Cole and bassist Matt Clohesy's hammering rhythm. Tenor saxophonist Seamus Blake and trumpeter Etienne Charles bring the implied Caribbean exuberance out of the melody of that song, accentuating that aesthetic to the point where it almost sounds like a calypso. Still, the version doesn't out-clever itself to the point of absurdity.

Reed also gives "Green Chimneys" a splendid makeover, playing wonderfully with sonic dynamics atop Cole's sparse drumming and Clohesy's shadowy bass as he opts for a fleet-figured orchestral take on the song. With the help of vocalist José James, Reed imbues "'Round Midnight" with a hazy 21st century soul vibe that stays true to Monk's theme of romantic longing. The pianist also offers two solid originals—"Monk Beurre Rouge" and "The Baddest Monk"—that can become standards unto themselves. —*John Murph*

The Baddest Monk: Rhythm-A-Ning; Epistrophy; Green Chimneys; Monk's Mood; 'Round Midnight; Evidence; Monk Beurre Rouge; Bright Mississippi; The Baddest Monk. (53:32)
Personnel: Eric Reed, piano; Henry Cole, drums; Matt Clohesy, bass; Seamus Blake, tenor saxophone; Etienne Charles, trumpet; José James, vocals (5).
Ordering info: jazzdepot.com

Sculpted Strings

The artist Claude Monet—and the entire Impressionist art movement—is the driving force behind Scott Dubois' ***Landscape Scripture*** **(Sunnyside 1309; 61:19 ★★★½)**. Spaced throughout the disc are four ruminations on Monet's haystack paintings, and while each of the pieces is centered around Dubois' atmospheric, chordal guitar work, the four compositions all present different ideas. "Spring Haystacks" bubbles violently with idiomatic reed squawks from Gebhard Ullmann, while "Summer Haystacks" is more even-keeled, with a stirring melody. "Autumn Haystacks" is a desolate-sounding, cold piece of music, while "Winter Haystacks" is sparse and angular, but warm. While DuBois' series of haystack compositions forms the backbone of *Landscape Scripture*, every one of these original tunes stands on its own as tiny bits of art.

Ordering info: scottdubois.com

Two beautiful, emotional works form Matt Ulery's ***By A Little Light*** **(Greenleaf 1026; 38:12/43:02 ★★★★½)**. These multi-movement compositions could stand on their own in both the classical and jazz worlds. There are no cheap musical tricks or shortcuts here; "By A Little Light" and "To The Brim," which comprise each disc, are fully formed pieces that embrace a range of musical styles. The ensemble-driven music moves through a range of genres—a rock back-beat from the drums here, a bit of string quartet writing there—but never feels forced.

Ordering info: mattulery.com

Georg Breinschmid's compositions on ***Fire*** **(Preiser 91203; 78:46 ★★★★)** shine with a manic, fun brilliance. The disc contains material from two ensembles: a live café recording with violinist Roman Janoska and pianist Frantisek Janoska, and a studio duo with trumpeter Thomas Gansch. All of Breinschmid's originals on the album have a free, zany spirit, but the tunes performed with the trio—like the opening track, "Schnortzenbrekker," which packs a big punch—may be the most fun, or the most alarming. This is an incredibly entertaining, high-energy album by a bassist who knows that being tongue-in-cheek doesn't mean compromising a superb level of musicianship.

Ordering info: georgbreinschmid.com

Three "Free Episode" compositions, short improvisatory numbers sprinkled throughout the Andrea Veneziani Trio's ***Oltreoceano*** **(Self Release; 52:20 ★★★)**, create a bit of anarchy in an otherwise clean and structured debut. Veneziani wrote four standards for the date, and, along with drummer Ross Pederson and pianist Kenny Werner, he navigates tunes by Thelonious Monk, Bill Evans and Charlie Parker. Of the standards, Monk's "Pannonica" and Parker's "Segment" stand out. One of Veneziani's best pieces is the shimmering, mid-tempo "Mark Rothko," which features a solo introduction by the bassist.


Matt Ulery

JIM NEWBERRY

Ordering info: andreavenziani.com

A travel theme runs through the tunes on ***The Road Home*** **(Origin 82605; 57:46 ★★★★)**, most of which progress at a fast pace, anchored by Clipper Anderson's light, bouncy improvisations. This Northwest-based bassist's stellar debut as a solo artist covers a lot of ground, from Bill Evans' heady, complex "Twelve Tone Tune Two" to the Portuguese original "Esperancoso Destino" and soaring ballads like the title track, which was inspired by a stretch of I-90 that runs through eastern Washington. Anderson's light, full bass tone sings the melody on Rodgers and Hart's "Over And Over Again," included on the disc as Anderson's tribute to Paul Desmond. Anderson's equally full arco tone takes over on "Jimnopodie" by pianist Jack Brownlow. It was in Brownlow's band that Anderson started singing with his own voice, and "Only Child" serves as his official vocal introduction to the world.

Ordering info: clipperanderson.com

Lorenzo Feliciati imbues ***Frequent Flyer*** **(RareNoise 014; 49:32 ★★½)** with a contemporary industrial sound. The electric bassist and keyboard player has help from DJ Skizo on three of the 11 tracks—including "Never Forget" with trumpeter Cuong Vu—but an early electronica feeling, or at least a heavy fusion predilection, pervades nearly every track. One of the exceptions is "Groove First," Felicati's chance to stretch out and highlight his impressive chops to a Latin accompaniment. To help create this sonic landscape, Felicati has enlisted a revolving cast of players, including saxophonist Bob Mintzer, who plays soprano and tenor on the opening track, "The Fastswing Park Rules." **DB**

Ordering info: lorenzofeliciati.com

New Standard Quintet
The Many Faces

NEW STANDARD MUSIC

★★★½

The "faces" cited in the title of this debut from Chicago-based New Standard Quintet refer to the multitude of sounds the group explores on a program of original music by saxophonist/leader Ken Partyka and guitarist Pat Fleming.

This band has a way of sounding right at home on a wide range of material, whether it's a slow, lazy swinger ("Mirror, Mirror"), bossa nova ("A Voz Doce"), grooving hard-bopper ("In The Kitchen"), or harmonically challenging modern-leaning adventure ("Uncertainty Principle"). It stands as a testament to the restrained maturity of each of these fine instrumentalists, their cohesiveness as a group and the rich compositions they embrace. These guys aren't out to impress listeners with extreme statements; rather, they strive for artistic excellence and meaningful interplay.

The quintet integrates traditional and contemporary elements to create a group sound that is defined by both acoustic and electric instruments in the keyboard, guitar and bass roles. It all depends on what's appropriate given the compositional context of each tune.

The Many Faces has an undertone of quiet confidence that guides the listener through the unexpected melodic turns and subtly shifting syncopation of its deceptively advanced compositions. —*Ed Enright*

The Many Faces: The Melbourne Method; Mirror, Mirror; A Voz Doce; Uncertainty Principle; The Many Faces; Only More So…; One Eyed Jacks; In The Kitchen; No More Words (Goodnight). (51:50)
Personnel: Ken Partyka, tenor, soprano, alto saxophones; Pat Fleming, guitars; Tom Vaitsas, keyboards, piano; Curt Bley, basses; Rick Vitek, drums.
Ordering info: newstandardlive.com

George Colligan
Living For The City

STEEPLECHASE 31727

★★★★

Nowadays, one of the best strategies for recording jazz is to simply play superbly and forego overarching themes or the temptation to feature guest artists. Pianist George Colligan does just that on this winning date. He showcases his longtime trio—drummer E.J. Strickland and bassist Josh Ginsburg—and digs into a somewhat peculiar batch of jazz standards, a bossa nova classic, pop hits and Motown gems.

The disc, however, shouldn't be cast off as a run-of-the-mill blowing session. The trio brings plenty of subtle inventiveness and, more important, crisp euphoria to the fore. Colligan's rendition of "Living For The City" is by far one of the best makeovers of a Stevie Wonder classic in recent times. He begins with halting, forlorn chords that play into the song's narrative before breaking away into snappy swing that builds increasingly intense by way of Strickland's splintered cross rhythms and Ginsburg's bass counterpoint.

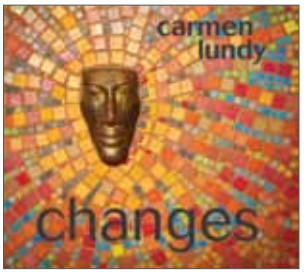
Colligan invigorates "It Don't Mean A Thing If It Ain't Got That Swing" and "The Girl From Ipanema"—two songs that have been covered to death—with heightened musicality. In the case of the disc's jazz standards, though, it's his makeover of Wayne Shorter's "Water Babies" that proves most mesmerizing. —*John Murph*

Living For The City: It Don't Mean A Thing If It Ain't Got That Swing; Water Babies; Living For The City; Close To You; I Can't Make You Love Me; Keep Me Hanging On; Along Came Betty; Cold Duck Time; The Girl From Ipanema. (66:44)
Personnel: George Colligan, piano; Josh Ginsburg, bass; E.J. Strickland, drums.
Ordering info: steeplechase.dk

Carmen Lundy
Changes

AFP 13712

★★★★



There's a spot at the end of "Dance The Dance" where Carmen Lundy and her band just can't seem to let go. It's the best part of that song, and the best example of what is offered when everything comes together on *Changes*.

With music (including string and horn arrangements) and lyrics by Lundy across eight originals with a novel cover of "A Nightingale Sang In Berkeley Square," the tunes reflect a mix of hope, longing and regret. Still, there's an upbeat quality to it all.

Indeed, even a song like "Sleeping Alone" is performed with a kick, a bounce that might make you wonder what she means when she sings, "There's no love in my life, and I can't, I can't get used to sleeping alone." Repeating the simple phrase "I can't," Lundy emphasizes the words "sleeping alone" to point to her being alone, lonely, getting to the real heart of the matter of that familiar, threadbare existence. Elsewhere, the love songs are more clearly about the sunshine and not the clouds, more fully integrated. But with music like this, it's the sound of Lundy's hearty, full-bodied voice that carries the day.

There's also some material here that's more about life itself, apart from relationships, with her "Love Thy Neighbor." But the confounding world of love returns with "Too Late For Love." The album ends on a more hopeful note with "Where Love Surrounds Us," which features her in duet with guest guitarist Oscar Castro-Neves. —*John Ephland*

Changes: The Night Is Young; So Beautiful; Love Thy Neighbor; A Nightingale Sang In Berkeley Square; Sleeping Alone; Too Late For Love; Dance The Dance; To Be Loved By You; Where Love Surrounds Us. (47:50)
Personnel: Carmen Lundy, vocals, harp; Anthony Wonsey, piano, Fender Rhodes; Kenny Davis, bass, electric bass; Jamison Ross, drums, percussion; Oscar Castro-Neves, guitar; Nolan Shaheed, trumpet, flugelhorn; George Bohanon, trombone.
Ordering info: carmenlundy.com

Mark Sherman
The L.A. Sessions

MILES HIGH 8617

★★★★

East meets West as New York vibraphonist Mark Sherman finds fellowship with a couple of Los Angeles aces—Bill Cunliffe and John Chiodini—and Big Apple drummer Charles Ruggiero. The surprise is Cunliffe, one of Southern California's great jazz pianists, playing the Hammond B3 throughout. Those who only know Ruggiero as a rock drummer should hear his melodic breaks on "Woody N' You," his whispering brushes on "Quasimodo" and his nimble hi-hat work on "Serpent's Tooth."

Sherman is a melodist with a rich harmonic palette. Whether he's cruising through "Serpent's Tooth" or running the "Moment's Notice" steeplechase, he makes the most of the linear themes. In the absence of a bass, Chiodini's guitar strums chords that are tangy yet never overly obvious in their placement. Cunliffe lets loose his formidable bop chops on "Notice," yet emerges as an heir to the Blue Note organists of yore on blues tunes like "Bag's Groove."

Throughout there's seldom the hint of any more preparation than simple head arrangements. The playing, the head-shaking grooves and the musical camaraderie require nothing more. —*Kirk Silsbee*

The L.A. Sessions: Woody N' You; Quasimodo; It Could Happen to You; Celia; Far Away; Whisper Not; Moment's Notice; Bag's Groove; Serpent's Tooth; Quasimodo; Woody N' You; Celia. (76:29)
Personnel: Mark Sherman, vibraphone; Bill Cunliffe, organ; John Chiodini, guitar; Charles Ruggiero, drums.
Ordering info: mileshighrecords.com

Aaron Novik
Secrets Of Secrets
TZADIK 8168
★★★½

The cover of clarinetist Aaron Novik's intense homage to 12th century German rabbi Eleazar Rokeach shows an image of the rabbi brandishing a briss knife atop a cloud, handpainted by Novik.

Rokeach wrote *Secrets Of Secrets*, a five-book inquiry into the mysteries of the spiritual realm that is the fodder here. British occultist Aleister Crowley is also name-checked in Novik's thanks list. The music is dark, powerful and unprecedented, the only players familiar to this writer being guitar guru Fred Frith and clarinetist Ben Goldberg. The latter solos on "Secrets Of The Divine Chariot," the former's textures and plosions permeating more comprehensively.

The music begins benignly with circling strings before a violent tolling of tubular bells, rumbling timpani and maelstrom of insistent, sequenced horns and strings, before a distorted solo from Carla Kihlstedt's electric violin. Like Mastodon—the band and the beast—a low, loud thump stomps through a mesh of strings and horns before loop slips herald an even more murderous skronk. It's *Sergeant Pepper's* on stronger acid, and the trip isn't going well. The creation alchemy is occurring at a Norse blacksmith's. "The Secrets Of The Divine World" are not placid, either, until a dumbek-led Mideastern interlude cools out the black Sabbath. A rave-worthy throbbing bass note is joined by Matthias Bossi's thumping tubs. Novik's vision of the spiritual is smelted in the fire and brimstone of Rokeach's brutal experiences on terra firma: the clouds ain't candyfloss. Frith soundscapes "Secrets Of The Holy Name," adjusting the throttle, while Morton's tuba tolls and intergalactic communications are de-coded through coils of lassoing electrocharge. "Secrets Of Formation" brooks no lallygaggers; it's a brisk jog with plucky strings around the crater of a bubbling volcano.

—Michael Jackson

Secrets Of Secrets: Secrets of Creation (Khoisdl); Secrets Of The Divine World (Terkish); Secrets Of The Divine Chariot (Hora); Secrets Of The Holy Name (Doina); Secrets Of Formation (Bulgar). (67:76)
Personnel: Aaron Novik, electric clarinet, percussion, programming; Matthias Bossi, drums; Cornelius Boots, robot bass clarinet; Carla Kihlstedt, electric violin; Willie Winant, tympani, vibraphone, glockenspiel, gong, tubular bells; Fred Frith, guitar; Ben Goldberg, contra-alto clarinet; Lisa Mezzacappa, bass; Aaron Kierbel, dumbek; The Real Vocal String Quartet: Irene Fraser, Alisa Rose, violins; Dina Mccabee, viola; Jessica Ivry, cello; Jazz Mafia Horns: Henry Hung, flugelhorn, trumpet, marching French horn; Adam Theis, trombone; Jamie Dubberly, bass trombone; Doug Morton, tuba.
Ordering info: tzadik.com

Joe Locke/ Geoffrey Keezer Group
Signing
MOTÉMA 85
★★★

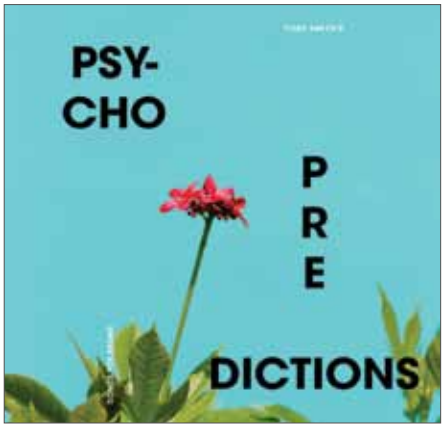
In a band featuring both vibes and piano, the hardest thing can be staying out of each other's way. Joe Locke and Geoffrey Keezer have worked together for over 10 years, so they've long since developed the conversational skill not to step all over each other, and spirit of give and take is one of *Signing*'s biggest assets.

The most exquisite display of this well-developed interplay on *Signing* can be heard on the group's inspired cover of Imogen Heap's "Hide And Seek," a song originally performed in layered a capella with Vocoder processing. Locke and Keezer have transcribed and arranged it for their quartet, but the real wrinkle emerges as the song proceeds and Keezer adds more lines and texture from the Omnisphere, a virtual synthesizer that allows players to design their own timbres. The weird wash he conjures up here bestrides the gap between New Age and modern electric jazz.

The new toy doesn't always add so much, though, and the original compositions that surround "Hide And Seek" and a version of John Coltrane's "Naima" sometimes strain for an off-kilter energy they can't quite attain. "Darth Alexis" is one of these—drummer Terreon Gully does his best with the awkward beat he's given, but it never really flows. Gully isn't aided by Locke and Keezer's own production, which shortchanges the low-end and generally sounds a bit thin.

—Joe Tangari

Signing: Signing; The Lost Lenore; Darth Alexis; Naima; Hide And Seek; Her Sanctuary; Terraces; This Is Just To Say. (55:22)
Personnel: Joe Locke, vibes; Geoffrey Keezer, piano, Rhodes, Omnisphere; Terreon Gully, drums; Mike Pope, electric and acoustic bass.
Ordering info: motema.com



Ches Smith's Congs For Brums
Psycho Predictions
88 RECORDS 001
★★★½

A solo album from a drummer risks being a nebulous proposition, but with two albums already under his belt as Congs For Brums, Ches Smith clearly has a handle on the form. It helps that he doesn't limit himself to just trap kit; his arsenal also includes electronics and vibraphone. Armed with those tools, his third solo outing, *Psycho Predictions*, unfolds like a compositional game. Smith presents a trio of "etudes," as he considers them, in sequence without overdubs, with the added—though no less crucial—element of curiosity helping to keep this from being merely a technical exercise.

Prodded by Shahzad Ismaily—his collaborator in unorthodox endeavors such as Marc Ribot's Ceramic Dog and Secret Chiefs 3, and the engineer/producer/label behind this album—Smith took 13 passes at the triptych suite before settling on the version heard here. That in itself is a testament to the disc's compositional heft, not to mention Smith's commitment to linear narrative.

Spare motifs, rhythmic and melodic (and undoubtedly informed by recent work with minimalist master Terry Riley), flow one into the next as Smith jumps between instruments, punctuating his narrative with glitchy exclamations.

The centerpiece of *Psycho Predictions*, "Birth Chart," opens with a revolving vibes pattern that shifts to drums, which continue the theme, sliding up and down a rudimentary scale. "Death Chart" and "Conclusion: That's Life," the album's bookends, offer the opposite, splattering this polyrhythmic obstacle course with synthetic textures. Warm and cold tones collide before settling into an often rigorous structure, yet somehow the results never sound anything less than spontaneous.

—Areif Sless-Kitain

Psycho Predictions: Death Chart; Birth Chat; Conclusion: That's Life. (36:19)
Personnel: Ches Smith, drums, percussion, vibraphone, electronics.
Ordering info: chessmith.com

Talk Ain't Cheap


Paul Rishell

Paul Rishell: *Talking Guitar* (Mojo Rodeo 1952; 39:54 ★★★★) On the first all-acoustic album in his long career, storyteller Paul Rishell uses his carefully controlled singing and expert guitar playing in several styles to bring out the beauty of a dozen Depression-era songs. The Cantabrigian has a natural, uncommon fluency for the idiomatic expression of emotion. The anguished heart of St. Louis street corner guitarist Clifford Gibson's "Tired Of Being Mistreated" is revealed. Blind Blake's caution over the criminal justice system in "Police Dog Blues" assumes a newly poignant authenticity. Rishell's own "Louise" and "I'm Gonna Jump And Shout" fit in perfectly. Annie Raines contributes harmonica to three tracks. In sum, the album's both a lively introduction to unplugged blues for novitiates and the place for seasoned listeners to reconnect with the music's mystery and romance.

Ordering info: paulandannie.com

Amy Hart: *Congratulations* (Painted Rock 2011; 35:05 ★★★½) Amy Hart can really sing. A native Chicagoan based in Nashville, she wends her way through melodic blues-rock originals that are sunnier than one might expect from someone whose life was upended by the Gulf Coast oil rig calamity. This trouper picks herself up, dusts off and keeps moving on "Put Me Back" and "Be That Way." Kittenish and ironic, Hart has her entertainment needle at full throttle on the title track. This album would've been even better if she had ditched all the Music City studio pros and recorded with just Bob Britt on acoustic guitar.

Ordering info: amyhart.com

Alek Razdan & The A-Train Orchestra: *Two-Timin'* (ASR 003; 41:15 ★★★) 17-year-old saxophone whiz Alek Razdan and his quintet have an easy time extracting fun from old r&b (Red Prysock's "Jumbo") and blues (Albert Collins' "Backstroke"). It's no gimmick when this Tufts University student blows tenor and soprano simultaneously. Add a real singer and some brass, and they would give Roomful of Blues a run for their money.

Ordering info: myspace.com/alekrazdan

Lurrie Bell: *The Devil Ain't Got No Music* (Aria B. G. Records 2; 47:36 ★★★½) Grandson of an Alabaman minister and son of a blues harp master, Lurrie Bell—a fine Chicago bluesman in his own right—sings through layers of blessed dirt in his larynx and realizes the potential of text belonging to gospel songs older than Methuselah and to spiritual offerings by Joe Louis Walker, Tom Waits, Muddy Waters and ringer James Taylor. Bell's acoustic guitar asserts blues drama with complete naturalness. His ecclesial community in the studio includes backup singers Mike Avery and James Teague, drummer Kenny Smith and guitarist Joe Louis Walker.

Ordering info: lurrie.com

Bo Diddley: *The Black Gladiator* (Future Days Recordings 600; 33:33 ★★) After the Chess hits stopped in the early 1960s, Bo Diddley tried futilely to get in the good graces of the listening public again. This oddball funk and electric blues affair, released on a Chess subsidiary label in 1970, clears the ears the way horseradish clears the palate. When not fixating on Muddy Waters or Sly Stone, the man primps in the mirror, yodels, cracks jokes and has a great time telling women to shut up. Dated junk only worth a listen for Bobby Alexis' copious flows of organ sound.

Ordering info: lightintheattic.net

Big Brother and the Holding Company: *Live At The Carousal Ballroom 1968* (Columbia/Legacy 8869; 70:59 ★★★½) This concert "sonic journal" from the vault of soundman Owsley "Bear" Stanley features Janis Joplin's supersonic jet of a voice on staples like "Piece Of My Heart" and "Ball And Chain." However, the counterculture hero gets nowhere with wretched, far-out songs furnished by her noisy, amateurish and therefore admirable acid-rock band. **DB**

Ordering info: legacyrecordings.com

Hendrik Meurkens/ Gabriel Espinosa
Celebrando
ZOHO 201204
★★★

A confluence of South American-based musical traditions, *Celebrando* is the brainchild of German-born harmonica master Hendrik Meurkens and Mexican bassist Gabriel Espinosa. It's when things go slightly off-course, however, that the album shines. "La Esperanza," an Espinosa original, and "Slow Breeze," penned by Meurkens, mesh blissfully, each using Alison Wedding's summery scatting as a platform off of which Meurkens launches high and winding phrases. The vibe switches to a more syncopated style for Meurkens' "Frenzelosa," which takes advantage of Anat Cohen's background playing choro rhythms. Meurkens and Cohen flit over and under their lines with a nonchalant joy. Playfulness takes over in the last few bars, as Misha Tsiganov's piano ushers the two main voices to an up-tempo close. While diverging harmonica/vocal improvisations on the melody seem to bind the material here, the harmonies on tracks like "Maya Roots," as well as piano-forward numbers like "Pa Rio," cast the ensemble in a different and welcome light. Though creatively composed, Meurkens' tendency to repeat similar frameworks does less for the album as a whole than when new ideas are set forth. *—Jennifer Odell*

Celebrando: La Esperanza; Slow Breeze; Frenzelosa; Odessa In April; Pa Rio; Out Of Reach; La Puerta; She Lives In Brazil; Maya Roots; Mountain Drive; Celebrando. (54:17)
Personnel: Hendrik Meurkens, harmonica; Gabriel Espinosa, bass, vocals; Anat Cohen, clarinet, tenor saxophone; Jim Seeley, trumpet, flugelhorn; Alison Wedding, Molly Blythe, vocals; Misha Tsiganov, piano, Fender Rhodes; Antonio Sanchez, drums; Mauricio Zottarelli, drums, percussion.
Ordering info: zohomusic.com

Mud Morganfield
Son Of The Seventh Son
SEVERN 0055
★★

Larry "Mud Morganfield" Williams belongs to the blues subgroup of sons and daughters of notable musicians carrying the proverbial torch. The oldest son of Muddy Waters has bided his time, only recently recording an album. Present in the studio are two more blue bloods: drummer Kenny Smith (son of Willie Smith, the Muddy Waters Band drummer) and bassist E. G. McDaniel (son of guitarist Floyd McDaniel).

Morganfield has his dad's full, rich voice down pat, spookily so. Phrases and inflections might be mistaken for Waters when heard casually, but close listening reveals his singing as worshipful mimicry. At a slow tempo on the title track or "Health," Morganfield's facsimiles are just plain labored, showing nary a hint of his father's sublime presence. Producer Bob Corritore joins Morganfield in rounding up songs they've written or got on loan from album guitarist Billy Flynn, Studebaker John and from the Waters strongbox of Chess singles: "Short Dress Woman" and "You Can't Lose What You Ain't Never Had." The band does well supplying the required locutions, with drummer Smith lagging behind the beat as his father once had. *—Frank-John Hadley*

Son Of The Seventh Son: Short Dress Woman; Son Of The Seventh Son; Love To Flirt; Catfishing; Health; Loco Motor; Money (Can't Buy Everything); Midnight Lover; Go Ahead And Blame Me; Leave Me Alone; You Can't Lose What You Ain't Never Had; Blues In My Shoes. (54:29)
Personnel: Mud Morganfield, vocals; Rick Kreher, guitar; Billy Flynn, guitar; Barrelhouse Chuck, piano, organ; E. G. McDaniel, bass; Kenny Smith, drums; Harmonica Hinds (3, 4, 6, 11, 12), Bob Corritore (1, 2, 5, 7, 8–10), harmonica.
Ordering info: severnrecords.com

Giovanna Pessi/ Susanna Wallumrød
If Grief Could Wait
ECM 2226
★★★★

Some critics have framed this stunning collaboration between Swiss harpist Giovanna Pessi and Norwegian vocalist Susanna Wallumrød as a boundary-destroying effort, but any such erosion was happenstance. Instead, two striking artists simply hit it off. The singer asked Pessi to appear on one of her folk-pop records, and *If Grief Could Wait* was the next step. Most of the songs are by the 17th century English baroque composer Henry Purcell, but there's nothing gimmicky about the inclusion of songs by Leonard Cohen, Nick Drake and Wallumrød. Wallumrød is not an opera singer, so she brings a largely austere, restrained beauty to the Purcell songs that beautifully recall the sound of traditional British folk singing. Wallumrød's voice is supported by a gorgeous mix of early music instruments, with Jane Achtman's mournful viola de gamba and Marco Ambrosini's pointillistic nyckelharpa (a Swedish keyed fiddle) joining Pessi's calm, resonant cascades of bittersweet arpeggios, but the melodies level the playing field. Wallumrød's magical delivery lacks any era-specific fingerprint, and instead, she hews only to the melodic shapes, using only the slightest vibrato and embellishment. *—Peter Margasak*

If Grief Could Wait: The Plaint; Who By Fire; If Grief Has Nay Power To Kill; The Forester; A New Ground; You Know Who I Am; Hangout; O Solitude; Which Will; A New Scotch Tune; Music For A While; A New Scotch Tune, Var.; A Evening Hymn. (57:39)
Personnel: Giovanna Pessi, baroque harp; Susanna Wallumrød, voice; Jane Ashman, viola ad gamba; Marco Amboina, nyckelharpa.
Ordering info: ecmrecords.com

Jerome Sabbagh
Plugged In
BEE JAZZ 49
★★★★

Tenor saxophonist Jerome Sabbagh can generate a lot of dense, extremely intricate sound with very little effort. On 2010's trio date *I Will Follow You*, he created tunes that started as introspections, but quickly became walls of beautiful noise. On *Plugged In*, he's expanded his range to a quartet driven by Jozef Dumoulin's keyboards and anchored by Patrice Blanchard's electric bass, but the modus operandi is much the same.

Once Sabbagh uncorks himself in a long side-winding string of notes following the opening melody of the first tune, it's hard for him to slow down. Sure, there are a few ballad-type tracks, like the tender "Special K" and the subdued "City Dawn," but Sabbagh and his colleagues prefer to let loose and blow. Such high-energy playing gives the ballads even more gravity, and all the players maintain their high level of musicianship through both uptempo and downtempo numbers. Tied to a leash of supposed instrumental rock, the band wanders far away from their initial inspiration. Tunes begin with slow, hummable melodies only to evolve into a dense fog of sound. Only "Slow Rock Ballad" is overt about its inspiration, but an undercurrent of overdrive-driven progressive rock runs through the entire album. *—Jon Ross*

Plugged In: Drive; Special K; Aisha; Jeli; Ronny; Walk 6; UR; Minor; Rider; Boulevard Carnot; City Dawn; Walk 3 Bis; Kasbah; Slow Rock Ballad. (65:14)
Personnel: Jerome Sabbagh, tenor saxophone; Jozef Dumoulin, keyboards; Patrice Blanchard, bass; Rudy Royston, drums.
Ordering info: jeromesabbagh.com


Carolina Chocolate Drops: Dom Flemons (left), Rhiannon Giddens, Leyla McCalla and Hubby Jenkins

Romantic Acoustic Traditionalists

String music spun from the rich loam of the past, but laden with fresh nutrients, illuminates the dignity of ordinary rural folks of years long gone. Six new albums featuring acoustic string instruments uphold a romantic ideal without sounding anachronistic.

Carolina Chocolate Drops' ***Leaving Eden*** **(Nonesuch 29809; 45:09 ★★★½)** is the worthy followup to their Grammy-winning debut album, *Genuine Negro Jig*. With the addition of Hubby Jenkins in the band, Dom Flemons and Rhiannon Giddens continue to update the pre-World War II black string band music style of the southern Piedmont region through a synthesis of charisma and resolve. But even more enthralling than the skilled playing of guitars, fiddle and such is Giddens' sweetly expressive singing, pure as a mountain stream. Treasure her a cappella rendering of the lovelorn Hazel Dickens bluegrass tune "Pretty Bird." Cellist Leyla McCalla, who tours with the trio, is a welcome presence on a few tunes. Unfortunately, part-timer Adam Matta's beatboxing sounds like a narcotized wild boar rooting for water.

Ordering info: nonesuch.com

On ***La Belle Blondine*** **(Swallow 6223; 46:34 ★★★½)**, Dennis Stroughmatt's vocals and fiddle work exemplify the élan of Creole and Cajun folk music in Illinois and Missouri. He may not be of French-American descent, but he's totally comfortable with both dance tunes and ballads (the deceptively soothing title track concerns patricide). A supporting guitarist and two mandolin players are functional, not distinctive.

Ordering info: swallowrecords.com

Based in California, the Matt Flinner Trio shows technical knowledge of bluegrass and jazz as they streamline mandolin, acoustic guitar and string bass into the appealing, organized hybrid sound of the 15 instrumental tracks on their second album, ***Winter Harvest*** **(Compass 4569; 62:54 ★★★½)**. The three musicians write fresh, attractive melodies, but keep sweetness in check; they usually pack tension and surprise into harmonies and rhythms.

Ordering info: compassrecords.com

As he'd done for the 2010 film *Baghdad, Texas*, veteran roots-music maven Booka Michel asked the mostly Austin-based musicians of his unconventional Flaming Geckos studio band to lend their skills and personalities to his *Jeremy Fink & The Meaning Of Life* soundtrack called—take a deep breath—***The Not So Meaningful Songs In The Life Of Jeremy Fink*** **(Loudhouse 2011; 31:00 ★★★½)**. Guitarists Cindy Cashdollar and Kenny Franklin and fiddler Dennis Ludiker have a grand old time delving into Piedmont blues, country, folk, world music, acoustic trance and Middle Eastern music. No familiarity with the film necessary to enjoy fully formed songs and brief atmospheric passages.

Ordering info: loudhousemusic.com

All hail the return of Michael Chapman's obscure 1969 debut record, ***Rainmaker*** **(Light In The Attic 079; 69:26 ★★★★)**. This English folk-eclectic spins spontaneous ideas on acoustic guitar that point to his amazing assortment of influences. Chapman balances his maverick streak with his responsibility to bygone English and American music.

Ordering info: lightintheattic.net

On ***Romantech*** **(Traditional Crossroads 6011; 54:58 ★★★½)**, the New York Gypsy All-Stars bring funk and jazz to their cross-cultural mix of traditional Balkan Romany, Greek, Indian, Latin and Turkish music with a technically precise attack. The front line has Macedonian clarinetist Ismail Lumanovski and Turkey-born microtonal kanun master Tamer Pinarbasi. Just "Outcry" dithers in the misterioso, and only "EZ-Pass" short-circuits with over-calculated bass and electronic keyboard funk. **DB**

Ordering info: traditionalcrossroads.com

Floratone
Floratone II

SAVOY JAZZ 17855

★★★★½

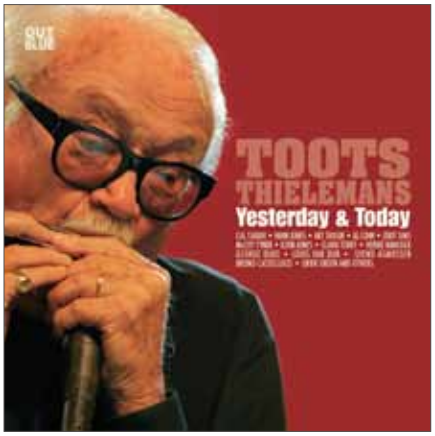
Everything Bill Frisell plays has become like one continual song. You could make that case as well for all the work he's done on the side. *Floratone II* (like 2007's *Floratone*, not under the Frisell moniker) plays like a sideman/frontman kind of gig. The ever self-effacing guitarist is all over this new one.

Essentially a quartet date, it's Frisell once again joined by Matt Chamberlain on drums and percussion, "production" roles once again being turned in by Lee Townsend and Tucker Martine. (The gist: On the heels of recorded improvisation between Frisell and Chamberlain, tapes were subtly "manipulated" to create something different—loops, dubs and all, including more instruments.) Joining the quartet are bassist Mike Elizondo, violist Eyvind Kang, keyboardist Jon Brion and another major voice on trumpet, Ron Miles.

There are 13 selections (all credited to the quartet, with horn/string arrangements by Frisell), all of them pastiche-like in their respective ways, like unfinished dreams that still carry a resonance, each unique in mood, color and mindset. In this swirl, Frisell's unmistakable sound permeates amid tasteful, seamless electronics. Add Miles' horn lines and Chamberlain's insistent, floating and/or punctuating beats, and you've got another kind of pastiche: one where old style meets the new in novel ways.

Examples abound. "Parade's" soft shoe is as innocent a ditty as you'll find anywhere, Frisell's guitar sounding more like a ukelele, aligning with horn in this marching meander of a tune that also carries a hint of trouble or turbulence, Chamberlain's shuffle carrying the day, Elizondo's walking bass the perfect cadence for this parade. *—John Ephland*

Floratone II: The Bloom Is On; More Pluck; Snake, Rattle; Parade; Not Over Ever; Move; Do You Have It?; The Time, The Place; No Turn Back; The Time, The Place (Part 2); Gimme Some; Grin And Bite; Stand By This. (38:13)
Personnel: Bill Frisell, guitars; Matt Chamberlain, drums, percussion; Lee Townsend, Tucker Martine, production; Mike Elizondo, bass; Jon Brion, keyboards; Ron Miles, trumpet; Eyvind Kang, viola.
Ordering info: savoyjazz.com



Toots Thielemans
Yesterday & Today
T2 2011052
★★★★

Yesterday & Today: Disc One: Jazz Band Ball; Crazy Bop; It Had To Be "Bird"; Nalen Boogie; Red Devils Boogie; Dynamite; Love Is Just Around The Corner; Caravan; Cool And Easy; The Cuckoo In The Clock; Early Autumn; Hot Toddy; Lullaby Of Jazzland; Melancholic Harmonica; Soul Bird; Yesterday And Today; Cherokee; O Susannah; Please Send Me Someone To Love; Barquinho; Mr. Nashville (66:33). Disc Two: Chump Change; Love Theme From "The Getaway"; No Greater Love; That Misty Red Animal; Black Beauty; Big Bossa; The Slickest Man In Town; The Late Night Wizard; Fritiof Anderssons Paradmarsch; Bye Bye Blackbird; Midnight Sun; Out Of Nowhere; "Spartacus" Love Theme; What Kind Of Fool Am I; Someone To Watch Over Me; Circle Of Smiles; What A Wonderful World (69:25).
Personnel: Toots Thielemans, harmonica, guitar, vocals; Sven Asmussen, violin; Clark Terry, Joe Newman, trumpet; J.J. Johnson, Bob Brookmeyer, trombone; Phil Bodner, flute; André Gijssens, Phil Woods, alto saxophone; Al Cohn, Al Epstein, Lou Marini tenor saxophone; Danny Bank, baritone saxophone; Francis Coppieters, George Shearing, Hank Jones, McCoy Tyner, Herbie Hancock, Antonio Adolfo Saboia, piano; Dick Hyman, organ; Elis Regina, Shirley Horn, vocals; various others.
Ordering info: universalmusic.com

Grégoire Maret
Grégoire Maret
EONE 2413
★★★½

Grégoire Maret: Lucilla's Dream; The Secret Life of Plants; The Man I Love; Travels; 5:37 PM (Intro); Crepuscule; 4:28 AM; Manhá Du Sol; Prayer; Lembra De Mim; The Womb; Children's Song; Outro; O Amor E O Meu Pais; Ponta De Areia. (62:10)
Personnel: Grégoire Maret, harmonica, vocals (1); Toots Thielemans, harmonica (14); Stephanie Decailet, violin (3, 11, 12, 13); Eleonore Giroud, violin (11, 12, 13); Johannes Rose, viola (3, 11, 12, 13); Fabrice Loyal, cello (3, 11, 12, 13); Soumas Heritage School of Music Ensemble (11, 12, 13), Federico G. Peña, piano, keyboards (4, 7, 9, 10), programming (7, 11, 12, 13), Rhodes (8), vocal (1), percussion (9), taicho harp (14); Brandon Ross, 6- and 12-string acoustic guitars (2, 4, 10); Jean-Christophe Maillard, acoustic guitar (2), taicho harp (4); James Genus, contrabass (2, 3, 4, 11, 12, 13), electric bass (1, 5, 6, 7, 8, 10), vocals (8); Marcus Miller, electric bass (7); David Brito, contrabass (11, 12, 13); Robert Kubiszyn, acoustic bass, (14); Clarence Penn, drums (1, 3, 10); Jeff Watts, drums (3, 7, 8, 11, 12, 13, 15); Bashiri Johnson, percussion (1, 2, 4, 10); Mino Cinelu, percussion (1, 2, 8); Alfredo Mojica, percussion (3, 7, 13), Cassandra Wilson, vocal (3), Nicki Gonzalez, vocals (8); Gretchen Parlato, vocal (11, 12, 13); Janelle Gill, Adia Gill, Micai Gill, vocals (7, 11, 12, 13), Mark Kibble, Alvin Chea, vocals (9).
Ordering info: eonemusic.com

Belgian guitarist-turned-chromatic harmonica virtuoso Jean "Toots" Thielemans is the standard by which all other jazz hamonicists are measured. His long career has taken him from earnest European jazz acolyte to George Shearing sideman to valued studio ace. This two-CD retrospective is an impressive overview of often- rare material.

The early cuts feature various Continental groups, with Thielemans playing mostly boppish guitar. His harmonica appears on a couple of boogie tunes—novelties until he navigates the involved bridges. When Shearing gave him a feature on "Caravan," Toots played it like a pocket saxophone. He subsequently displayed serious blues chops, introspection, swing, country grit, Brazilian cool, funk and many flavors of soulfulness. His work as guitarist, whistler and singer are sprinkled throughout.

Young Swiss harmonicist Grégoire Maret has an ambitious production here with no less than two suites. His outlook is more contemporary than Thielemans': mercurial tempos, smooth-jazz textures, atmospheric vocals and seesaw chord changes abound.

Maret is a soulful and moody player, with an affinity for Brazilian insouciance. As finely wrought as his solos are—even to the point of heartbreaking, as on "Secret Life Of Plants"—there's a standardized feel to the totality. Solos tend to meander as the pieces float about. These pieces are so precious in their harmonic prettiness and rarefied tone that a little goes a long way. The vocal turns are seldom satisfying. Cassandra Wilson turns in a weak "Man I Love," while Gretchen Parlato is barely discernible elsewhere. Thielemans guests on "O Amore" and though it's a ballad, his focus is relatively bracing. —*Kirk Silsbee*

Historical

BY JOHN MCDONOUGH

Europe's Rich Radio Days

It may be that the world's largest library of the '50s, '60s and '70s jazz scene resides today in the collective radio and television archives of Europe's various public radio systems, which served the continent long before National Public Radio in the United States. There was hardly a jazz concert of any consequence that was not taped and archived in this vast network, which operated outside any market considerations of box office and treated a subsidized AACM performance with the same importance as a Benny Goodman sell-out.

Jazzhaus has reached into the vaults of Germany's regional SWR net, whose history goes back to the pre-Marshall Plan days of the country's Allied occupation and claims more than 3,000 hours of concert tapes. The first results include several performances documenting major American tours. You get some sense of how thorough the European taping net was by examining Cannonball Adderley's swing through Europe in the spring of 1969. ***Legends Live: Cannonball Adderley Quartet*** **(Jazzhaus 101702; 60:15 ★★★)** was recorded in Stuttgart on March 20, 1969. But the same group was also taped in similar programs in Bordeaux, Hamburg, Rome and Paris. All have been released on CD. So it's not as if this throws new light into long silent corners. But if you don't have any of those, this will offer a measure of freshness.

The set list favored his Capitol LP *In Person*, but none of the tunes have been overdone, except for the obligatory "Work Song." Adderley comes bounding out on "Rumplestiltskin" in an uncharacteristically free manner before settling into a more accessible bump-and-grind soul-jazz persona. Brother Nat's "Sweet Emma" is full of sweet gospel changes that practically play themselves. "Somewhere" and "Oh Babe" (a straight blues) find Adderley reaching out to Johnny Hodges, while "Blue 'N' Boogie" is too fast for anything but a long drum solo. Also of interest is young player and composer Joe Zawinul, who has a brief out-of-body experience on "Rumplestiltskin," probably in the body of Cecil Taylor.

Gerry Mulligan is an attractive player for many reasons. One of the more apparent is that in spite of his historic reputation for cooling down the jazz world as a young bebop sprite in the early '50s, the older he grew, the warmer his performance temperature became. There's a version of "Idol Gossip" on ***Legends Live: Gerry Mulligan Sextet*** **(Jazzhaus 101700; 68:32 ★★★★)** that comes close to smoldering in places and swings with a ferocity rare in Mulligan's earlier, more languid bandstand manner. By the time of this 1977 concert, he had largely blown the modern-cool trap and was as eager to explore any aspect of music. I once saw him jam with members of the Preservation Hall band. Unlike Adderley, who liked to rouse a crowd, Mulligan was all music and intellect. This concert is pure, fat-free muscle, whether it's the swagger of "K-4 Pacific," the layered lyricism of "Song For An Unfinished Woman" or the melancholy of "Night Lights."

In the fall of 1959, Benny Goodman took an all-star mini-band to Europe for 21 concerts. At least six were recorded for broadcast, and three have been issued over the years. This is the fourth to come out, but chronologically the first of the tour dates actually to be recorded (Oct. 15). With seasoned veterans like Red Norvo, Flip Phillips and Bill Harris on hand, ***Big Bands Live: Benny Goodman Orchestra Feat. Anita O'Day*** **(Jazzhaus 101704; 76:07 ★★★)** is consistently good. Some regard it as one of Goodman's best post-war periods. But as the tour went on one tune, things loosened up. "Breakfast Feud," a blues from the early Goodman Sextet book with Charlie Christian, became a more open-ended jam in which anything could happen. This version is compact, elegant of line and to the point, but it lacks the sense of impulsive playfulness that would invigorate later performances. Also, Goodman sits out close to half the playing time here as others get their feature moments. Not even a husky "Honeysuckle Rose" or "Four Brothers" from Anita O'Day can lure Goodman to combat. He prefers to stand by his standbys, familiar to us all, except maybe the producer. The disc ends with a brisk but perfunctory "Sing Sing Sing," mysteriously mislabeled and misspelled on the cover as "Bei Mir Bist Du Scheen." **DB**

Ordering iofnfo: jazzhaus-label.com

Joe Chambers
Moving Pictures Orchestra: Live At Dizzy's Club Coca-Cola
SAVANT 2120
★★★

Pietro Tonolo/Arnie Somogyi/ Jorge Rossy/Joe Chambers
Passport
PARCO DELLA MUSICA RECORDS 036
★★★½

Veteran drummer and vibraphonist Joe Chambers shows his versatility, breadth and depth on two new releases.

Chambers arranged all but one of the tracks on *Moving Pictures Orchestra*, which is his first recording date with a big band. The disc has its origins in the "Moving Picture Suite," which Jazz At Lincoln Center commissioned in 2003. Here the suite is split, with the first three movements opening the album. "Prelude" is a brief ballad feature for trumpeter Josh Evans, and it's here that much of Chambers' approach to orchestration becomes apparent, as Evans is backed by large, lush chords. The second movement, "Irina," shows Chambers' knack for writing strong and powerful horn parts that at times pit sections against each other or have sections supporting and augmenting each other. Chambers' unhurried vibes solo on the third movement, "Ruth," a ballad waltz, is one of the album's high points. The album and suite concludes with "Clave De Bembe." The movement's first part fades in, with trumpeter David Weiss blowing over an Afro-Cuban feel. Percussionist Steve Berrios takes a lengthy and grooving solo over Dwayne Burno's bass ostinato. The feel changes to a rumba as the piece segues to the second part, which is dominated by a spirited Xavier Davis piano solo wrapped in flute and brass backgrounds.

Those familiar with Chambers' playing on albums from the 1960s by Bobby Hutcherson will find Chambers in a similar vibe on *Passport*. The album's most distinctive characteristics (and the source of one of its greatest strengths) is the various instrumentation configurations, made possible by drummer Jorge Rossy and Chambers' doubling abilities. As a result, the album is loaded with timbral and textural variation.

Accompanied by Rossy and Chambers on drums, Italian saxophonist Pietro Tonolo plays tenor on his playful "Desalabro." The two drummers work well together, with Rossy primarily staying with toms while Chambers works the snare and cymbals. Rossy takes over the drum chair when Chambers mans the vibes, his gorgeous playing marked by lots of pedal and vibrato, especially on his "Ruth."

—Chris Robinson

Moving Pictures Orchestra: Prelude: 1st Movment; Irina: 2nd Movement; Ruth: 3rd Movement; Lonesome Lover; Power to the People; Tu-Way-Pock-E-Way; Theme from "M Squad"; Mendacity; Clave de Bembe Part I: 4th Movement; Clave de Bembe Part II: 4th Movement. (69:40)
Personnel: Joe Chambers, drums, vibraphone; Tim Green, Sharel Cassity, soprano saxophone, alto saxophone, flute, clarinet; Craig Handy, tenor saxophone, soprano saxophone, flute; Sam Dillon, tenor saxophone, soprano saxophone; Frank Basile, baritone saxophone; Frank Greene, David Weiss, Greg Gisbert, Josh Evans, trumpet; Conrad Herwig, Steve Davis, James Burton, Max Siegel, trombone; Xavier Davis, piano; Dwayne Burno, bass; Steve Berrios, percussion, Nicole Guiland, vocals (4, 8).
Ordering info: jazzdepot.com

Passport: Esteem; Puerta; Descalabro; Ruth; Phantom of the City; Not So Easy; Mimi; JJ; This is New; Rio (56:40).
Personnel: Pietro Tonolo, tenor saxophone (1, 2, 3, 5, 6, 8, 9), soprano saxophone (4, 6, 7, 10); Arnie Somogyi, bass; Jorge Rossy, piano (1, 2, 5, 6, 8, 9), drums (3, 4, 7, 8, 10); Joe Chambers, vibraphone (1, 4, 7, 10), drums (1, 2, 3, 5, 6, 8, 9).
Ordering info: egeamusic.com

Paolo Fresu/Omar Sosa
Alma
OTÁ 1023
★★★★

Alma would be mood music if it weren't also so playful. The combination of Italian trumpeter/flugelhornist Paolo Fresu and Cuban keyboardist Omar Sosa has resulted in a number of live shows as well as a previous CD, the live *Promise* in 2007. Their collegial chemistry is obvious here.

Part of what keeps the music slightly offkilter and interesting is their use of effects, selective vocal insertions and the presence (on four cuts) of cellist Jaques Morelenbaum. On the opener, Fresu's medium-tempo, spritely "S'Inguldu," Morelenbaum follows the song's playful melody lines along with his cohorts but then inserts his own sonic contrasts, especially in the midst of what feels like a group improv. The best music here, however, comes with the more open-sky, mysterious material, where the reverb works to further the mood and feel of a song both tuneful but also atmospheric, Sosa's bluesy "Inverno Grigio." The ache is so subtle, Fresu's open horn mournful without being sentimental, Sosa's piano chords haunting, his slight use of effects and a punctuated single bass line just the right touches. And Sosa's slow, two-chord "Old D Blues," with Fresu's best, most Miles Davis-like mute playing, is a haunter that may linger after all the other music's gone.

The duo's versatility gets the better of them on (relatively) zippier tunes. While it's a marvel of technique, Sosa's fervent "Angustia" distracts with its recurring patterns, a boxed-in feeling predominant. The groove and the extra touches are slinky and alluring on the duo's "No Trance," the medium-tempo pulse, percussive effects and keyboard spices contrasting with Fresu's alternately open and muted horns, which float serenely over the coursing tempo.

That melancholy, that yearning comes to the fore with all three players on "Crepuscolo," the song's form almost a cry for a center as it seems to wander, Morelenbaum's cello aching for a sense of communion in the middle of Fresu's searching open horn and Sosa's gently voiced piano musings. —*John Ephland*

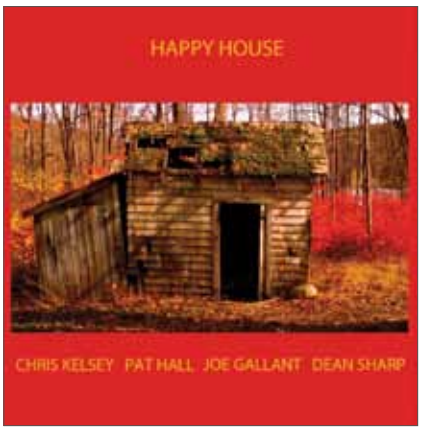
Alma: S'Ingulda; Inverno Grigio; No Trance; Angustia; Crepuscolo; Moon On The Sky; Old D Blues; Medley Part I: Ninos; Medley Part II: Nenia; Under African Skies; Rimanere Grande! (60:31)
Personnel: Paolo Fresu, trumpet, flugelhorn, percussion, multi-effects, whistle; Omar Sosa, acoustic piano, Fender Rhodes, microKorg, samplers, multi-effects, percussion, vocals; Jaques Morelenbaum, cello (1, 4, 6, 11).
Ordering info: harmoniamundi.com

Happy House
Plays Ornette
UNSEEN RAIN
★★★½

Ornette Coleman's influence over jazz is so powerful and omnipresent, it can seem atmospheric at times, detectable in trace elements or in whole cloth. The latter angle is at work on this lively tribute to Coleman's early music, by a band of bold players named after a famous Coleman tune.

Taking the early Coleman chordless quartet in a semi-fresh direction, the limber alto (and soprano) turns of Chris Kelsey and the rumbling, rambling pulse of Dean Sharp's drumming accesses memories of Coleman and original drummer Billy Higgins. But Don Cherry's trumpet voice has been replaced by Pat Hall's impressive trombone playing, and even more divergent from the historical source is Joe Gallant's lanky and sometimes chord-snatching electric bass role.

From the cheerful title track and then the popular "Ramblin'," it is evident that this foursome is channeling a Coleman-centric spirit, at once free and vibrant. A slinky, slow "Legend Of Bebop" is in sharp contrast with the brisk



topsy-turvy energy of "Fifth Of Beethoven." Throughout, the foursome lays sympathetically into the shape and emotional vibe of the repertoire. The obliquely mournful balladry of "Lorraine" gets its ruminative due, just as the charging "Broadway Blues," "Dee Dee" and the liberating finale, "Enfant," spin out an aptly dizzy path, sounding like a rebel kin to bebop. —*Josef Woodard*

Plays Ornette: Happy House; Ramblin'; Legend Of Bebop; Fifth Of Beethoven; Congeniality; Lorraine; Broadway Blues; Improv; Dee Dee; Enfant. (67:00)
Personnel: Chris Kelsey, alto and soprano saxophones; Pat Hall, trombone; Joe Gallant, bass guitar; Dean Sharp, drums.
Ordering info: meyefi.com

Clare Fischer Orchestra
Extension
INTERNATIONAL PHONOGRAPH 77
★★★½

Keyboardist Clare Fischer and reed player Jerry Coker were each born and raised in the Midwest, and both men enjoyed diverse careers in and out of jazz education.

Fischer fashioned this record in 1962, but you won't hear any of the seismic revolutions that would transform jazz during that decade on it any more than you can hear the dominance of either the cool West Coast or hot East Coast schools. This music may be generously stocked with unusual ideas, but it is all about balance.

Extension is a reserved big band set intended to showcase Fischer's subtly variegated arrangements and Coker's exquisitely controlled tenor sax, and it does both jobs quite well. You can detect Fischer's diverse influences—Duke Ellington, Igor Stravinsky, Latin American and African folkloric drumming—in the plush charts and swinging grooves, but his adventurous harmonies and rhythms are as discrete as cufflinks peaking out from the sleeve of a well-cut blazer.

Likewise, his use of organ on a big-band session never draws attention to its novelty, even though he is the only soloist besides Coker. Despite being the featured soloist, Coker is also discrete; his solos seem to materialize out of the horn textures and recede back into them like an evening mist that just appears in a low clearing, then disappears as the night grows chill.

This music is too restrained to evoke raving superlatives, but there's plenty to savor here despite its brief running time. —*Bill Meyer*

Extension: Ornithardy; Quiet Dawn; Bittersweet; Igor; Extension (Coker's Blues & Running Mate); Soloette; Passacaglia; Canto Africano. (30:44)
Personnel: Clare Fischer, piano, organ, alto saxophone, lujohn; Jerry Coker, tenor sax, bass clarinet; John Lowe, flute, alto flute, piccolo, contrabass clarinet, baritone sax, clarinet; Sam Most, flute, alto flute, piccolo; Don Shelton, alto clarinet, clarinet, alto saxophone; Bud Shank, flute, alto saxophone; Ben Kantnor, clarinet; Louis Ciotti, clarinet; Gary Foster, alto clarinet, tenor saxophone; Jack Nimitz, contrabass clarinet, baritone saxophone; Vince De Rosa, 1st horn; Richard Perissi, 2nd horn; Fred Teuber, 3rd horn; Gil Falco, tenor trombone; Bobby Knight, bass trombone; Tommy Johnson, tuba; Larry Bunker, vibes, drums; Bob West, bass; Colin Bailey, drums.
Ordering info: internationalphonographinc.com

Metta Quintet
Big Drum/Small World
JAZZREACH/THE ORCHARD
★★★½

There's a big backstory to this release. It's about audiences and education and outreach. The 17-year-old nonprofit JazzReach is like the friendly ghost in the machine of this project by Metta Quintet. Needless to say, the news story is a separate story. The real story here, of course, is the music.

Driven by JazzReach founder/drummer Hans Schuman, Metta Quintet's *Big Drum/Small World* is its third release, following *Subway Songs* and *Going To Meet The Man*. Both of those projects feature newly commissioned, or inspired, music. The same is true with *Big Drum/Small World*, with five originals designed to reflect the globalization of jazz. Beginning with reed player Marcus Strickland's "From Here Onwards," this commissioned journey continues with Miguel Zenón's "Sica" (Puerto Rico), Omer Avital's "BaKarem" (Israel), "Crabcakes" by Rudresh Mahanthappa, finishing with "Summer Relief" by Cuba's Yosanny Terry.

If one were not given the backstory to *Big Drum/Small World*, one might come away with the impression that this is a conventional jazz release. Each of these five cuts—which also feature great work turned in by alto saxophonist Greg Ward, pianist David Bryant and bassist Joshua Ginsburg—stem from the spirit of straightahead acoustic jazz, the group's playing intelligent, vibrant, ongoingly contemporary. The international touches, when they are there, are just that, touches.

Avital's "BaKarem" instills a Middle Eastern vibe in its cadences; the open, modal form of Mahanthappa's "Crabcakes" might suggest a Mediterranean dance, featuring some of the disc's best extended soloing, courtesy of Ward and Strickland's pressing, almost dueling and dervish-like horn playing. Terry and Zenón's Latin flavorings imbue with their respective zesty rhythms on their respective works. And Strickland's "From Here Onwards" is the straightahead tune here, perhaps reflecting the pulse and pace of New York City.

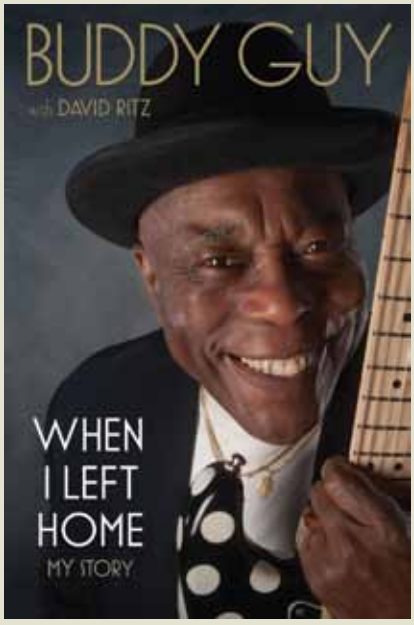
Because these pieces come from five different people, the overall tenor of the program lacks a flow, a feeling of coming and going and coming back again. The songs all suggest a sense of urgency, mirroring one another, the contrasts born out more by the players than the music and composers. Small world, indeed. In this sense, *Big Drum/Small World* is as much a Metta Quintet project as it is the music of four (not counting Strickland) other people. It may be that these "works," performed in a fairly straightforward manner, have served as much as great blowing platforms for what appears to have already been a busy touring schedule.

And so, Metta Quintet's esthetic imprint seems to be one of meeting in the middle, sharing a common language of primarily straightahead jazz and then hitting it as if on a bandstand. One might think that this is the spirit of jazz, internationally speaking. It is, in this particular denomination, from these particular players.

—John Ephland

Big Drum/Small World: From Here Onwards; Sica; BaKarem; Crabcakes; Summer Relief. (39:56)
Personnel: Marcus Strickland, tenor, soprano saxophones; Greg Ward, alto saxophone; David Bryant, piano; Joshua Ginsburg, bass; Hans Schuman, drums.
Ordering info: jazzreach.org

Damn Right, He's Still Got the Blues



Buddy Guy is a stellar storyteller. Aided by top music biographer David Ritz, the guitarist relates the fascinating story of his life in the well-organized, speedily read ***When I Left Home* (Da Capo)**. Now a youthful 75, Guy weighs in intimately on the blues experience, good and bad, maintaining a warmth of spirit that culminates in the memoir's last paragraph: "I'm believing that the blues makes life better wherever it goes—and I'll tell you why: even when the blues is sad, it turns your sadness to joy. And ain't that a beautiful thing?"

Raised up by loving parents in a remote farmland section of Louisiana, young George "Buddy" Guy picked 70 pounds of cotton a day. He made secure connections with country life's cycle of seasons, joyous Baptist church service and music—first bird songs then family friend Coots' two-string guitar playing. He made his first guitar out of window screens. At age 12, the family shack was wired for electricity and he spun 78s by John Lee Hooker and Lightnin' Hopkins on an old phonograph machine. About his father buying him a proper guitar, he writes, "My life ain't never been the same since."

A move to Baton Rouge had 20-ish Guy pumping gas and juggling other jobs unrelated to music. In awe, he listened to Muddy Waters and other Chicago blues heroes on jukeboxes. His first stab at performing in a club was a disaster as he shyly kept his back to the crowd, which incurred the anger of the bandleader. But guzzling a bottle of Dr. Tichenor's Antiseptic medicine soon fortified him for a second try. He won over barroom patrons, just off work, by emulating the extreme showmanship of guitarist Guitar Slim, using a long cord that allowed him to play outside in an alley before working his way to the club's performance area. The day he caught the train north to pursue his dream of being a Windy City bluesman was Sept. 25, 1957. He recalls of his arrival, "It's when I was born again."

Guy is candid about the difficulty he had getting noticed in the big city. One night, flat broke, frustrated, ready to go back home, he and his guitar case got noticed by a kindly passerby on the street, who took him to the 708 club on the South Side. He plugged in. "Some magic happened," writes Guy. "See, the spirit of Guitar Slim entered my soul…If I couldn't play better than the guitarists around me, at least I could play louder." Soon after, his "new father," Muddy Waters, welcomed him to the scene.

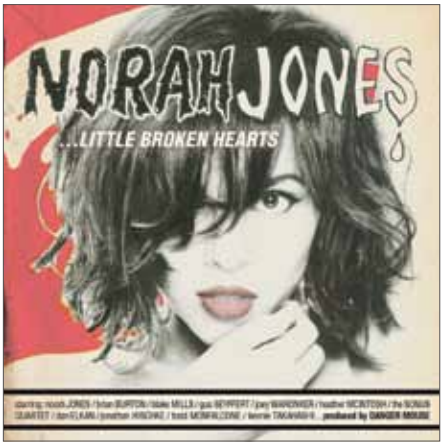
Stunningly wild when performing, but otherwise a reserved and thoughtful man of good character, Guy gives his two cents on blues Chicago without lapsing into romanticizing. He offers readers spicy anecdotes about revered figures like Waters, Howlin' Wolf and Jimmy Reed. He also acknowledges the violence around him. Guy tells about his frustration with Leonard Chess, who rejected his fuzz tone-drenched "live style" in the studio, and he's appreciative of the Rolling Stones boosting his career with European tours after black Americans largely abandoned the blues in the 1960s. Guy's manager Dick Waterman and friends Eric Clapton and Stevie Ray Vaughan are all here. So is elderly guitarist Lonnie Johnson. When Guy encouters him—at a college concert in Toronto—he remembers, "Listening to the sweetness of his sound and the gentleness of his soul, I had tears running down my face."

Guy discusses operating his own Chicago blues clubs, most recently Legends. His musical partner of two decades, Junior Wells, gets a bunch of pages; Guy believes his beloved harp-playing "brother," so talented but troubled, was bitter about not being as popular as James Brown. The second-hand account of Waters playing a wicked lewd prank on Wells will cause readers to pause.

Throughout the memoir, Guy remains humble, even when taking stock of the global acclaim he worked hard to earn. He writes, "But when these prizes came in, I felt like they really belonged to Guitar Slim or Lightnin' Slim or Lightnin' Hopkins—the cats who came before me and never got the right fame or the right money."

Buddy Guy's smile on the cover of *When I Left Home* is every bit a lasting image for modern blues. **DB**

Ordering info: perseusbooksgroup.com



Norah Jones
Little Broken Hearts

BLUE NOTE 31548

★★★★

Informed listeners often prepare for a new album by revisiting an artist or group's prior releases. While this linear approach works for Norah Jones' fifth album, it's particularly instructive to hear a pair of parallel side offerings—*Rome*, by producer/multi-instrumentalist Brian "Danger Mouse" Burton from last year and film scorer/arranger Daniel Luppi, and the *Chasing Pirates Remixes* EP from 2010. The former features Jones' vocals on three tracks and first paired her with Burton, who co-wrote and produced all of *Little Broken Hearts*. The latter has remixes of two of her songs by the likes of Santigold and Beastie Boys' Ad-rock and Mike D and marks her willingness to allow her music to be transformed.

If Jones' initial sound was a pleasing blend of jazz, country and adult pop, she's fully embraced a new aesthetic. Look no further than her drummers: Dan Reiser, Brian Blade and Kenny Wollesen on her 2002 debut, *Come Away With Me*, versus Burton and Beck compatriot Joey Waronker on *Little Broken Hearts*.

Her voice's trademark tone, calming and warm, is frequently different. It takes on a floating characteristic when set to the garage funk of "Say Goodbye" and is more declarative and less committal on the nervously energetic "Happy Pills." The title track is spooky yet stunning, while the revenge ballad "Miriam" is beautiful musically and lyrically chilling. Like Björk, Jones continues to explore different stylistic possibilities by partnering with diverse and empathetic collaborators and musicians.

—*Yoshi Kato*

Little Broken Hearts: Good Morning; Say Goodbye; Little Broken Hearts; She's 22; Take It Back; After The Fall; 4 Broken Hearts; Travelin' On; Out On The Road; Happy Pills; Miriam; All A Dream. (44:55)

Personnel: Norah Jones, vocals, Rhodes, piano, Wurlitzer, acoustic and electric guitar, bass, organ; Brian Burton, organ, synthesizer, acoustic and electric guitar, drums, percussion, piano, bass, programming; Heather McIntosh, cello (1, 8), bass (8); Blake Mills, electric guitar (1, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 9, 10, 11, 12), acoustic guitar (7, 9, 12); Gus Seyffert, bass (3, 5, 6, 7, 9, 11, 12), electric guitar (5, 7), background vocals (5); The Sonus Quartet, strings (5, 6, 11, 12); Joey Waronker, drums (6, 7, 9, 11, 12), percussion (7, 11, 12); Dan Elkan, electric guitar (10); Todd Monfalcone, electric guitar (10); Jonathan Hischke, bass (10).

Ordering info: bluenote.com

Mary Halvorson Quintet
Bending Bridges
FIREHOUSE 12 120401016
★★★★½

Over the last few years, guitarist Mary Halvorson has established herself as one of the most original practitioners of her instrument, and with *Bending Bridges*, she's following suit as a composer and bandleader.

The nine thorny, multilayered and tightly woven tunes here are packed with detail and discursive thrills. A piece like the hooky, melody-rich "Hemorrhaging Smiles" reflects her interest in contemporary art-rock, particularly the splintery joys of Deerhoof, as sophisticated pop melodies collide with shape-shifting rhythmic schemes and multilinear improvisation fractures meticulously arranged writing. Halvorson's tunes make tough demands on her musicians, and it's little wonder that the performances here are much more naturalistic and confident than those captured on the band's debut album, *Saturn Sings*. Four of the pieces feature only the trio of Halvorson, drummer Ches Smith and bassist John Hébert, and it's on these compositions that the guitarist really shines. Both composed and improvised sections are filled with jagged tangles of sound propelled by an inexorable logic.

—Peter Margasak

Bending Bridges: Sinks When She Rounds the Bend; Hemorrhaging Smiles; Forgotten Men in Silver; Love in Eight Colors; The Periphery of Scandal; That Old Sound; Sea Cut Like Snow; Deformed Weight Of Hands; All The Clocks. (68:33)
Personnel: Jonathan Finlayson, trumpet; Jon Irabagon, alto saxophone; Mary Halvorson, guitar; John Hébert, bass; Ches Smith, drums.
Ordering info: firehouse12.com

John Benitez
Purpose
SEED 001
★★★½

John Benitez continues his rise as one of today's top-ranking bassists, specializing in Latin music with his enthralling sophomore disc, *Purpose*.

With a program of all originals, mostly composed by the leader, *Purpose* harkens back to the jazz-fusion of the late '70s and early '80s with a Nuyorican twist. That sonic quality comes strong by way of Benitez's electric bass tumbao figures, Tom Guarna's razor-sharp guitar lines and Francis Benitez Martinez's crisp drumming. And with the emphasis on tricky melodies and rhythms (songs like the title track, "Seed" and "Bomba Lirica"), the musicians recall the best of Steps Ahead and The Yellowjackets.

Some of the best moments occur on the enchanting "Puerza," a song marked by languid passages from Guarna and alto saxophonist Will Vinson and topped off with a stunning a cappella acoustic bass solo from Benitez. The suspenseful "Inspiracion" begins with Benitez singing a haunting, wordless melody atop of Manuel Valera's rippling piano accompaniment and Guarna's evocative guitar chords before the song launches into cumbia groove, driven by Benitez's forceful bass lines.

—John Murph

Purpose: Purpose; The Return; Puerza; YL; Rumba; Seed; Yagrumo; Inspiracion; Bomba Lirica. (62:04)
Personnel: John Benitez, bass, voice (8); Manuel Valera, piano; Tom Guarna, guitar; Will Vinson, alto saxophone; Francis Benitez Martinez, drums; Pedrito Martinez, conga (1, 2, 3, 5), guiro, cajón, cowbell (5); Mike Rodriguez, trumpet (2, 4, 8); Victor Cruz, Colombian percussion (4, 8), gaitas (8).
Ordering info: seedmusic.net

Lynne Arriale
Solo

MOTÉMA 83

★★★½

Lauded for more than a decade's worth of acclaimed quartet and trio recordings, Lynne Arriale's solo project introduces a new batch of evidence suggesting she's one of the top working pianists in her field. An expressive composer and an intuitive arranger, Arriale executes her ideas with a range of sound, from clipped and cerebral to multifaceted and emotive. That diverse acumen allows her to succeed at the goal of "thinking orchestrally," which she says in the liner notes was key to her approach here.

The original "La Noche" embraces that kind of big-picture aesthetic, as a sweeping darkness teases its way through every few bars, counteracting the decisive and strong touch that connotes a different aspect of one's experience of the night. Arriale's arrangement of Thelonious Monk's "Bye-Ya" offers a more introspective and less rhythmic riff on what Monk and John Coltrane did with the tune. The spacing allows breathing room for one hand to approximate what would have been the saxophone's melodic theme, while the other tackles Monk's dexterous part. The disc closes with a nod to Arriale's penchant for setting lyrical pop tunes to instrumental music, although her choice of Billy Joel's lamentation "And So It Goes" provides the ideal baseline for Arriale's fearless delves into the beauty of melancholia. *—Jennifer Odell*

Solo: La Noche; The Dove; Evidence; Wouldn't It Be Loverly; Will O' The Wisp; Yada, Yada, Yada; Arise; Dance; What Is This Thing Called Love; Sea And Sand; Bye-Ya; And So It Goes. (52:24)
Personnel: Lynne Arriale, piano.
Ordering info: motema.com

Ivo Perelman/ Joe Morris/ Gerald Cleaver
Family Ties

LEO RECORDS 630

★★★★½

Brazilian tenor saxophonist Ivo Perelman, who formatively played classical guitar and cello among other instruments, is a name we don't hear enough. Originally from São Paulo, he flipped around from Berklee, Boston, in the early '80s, to Los Angeles, Rome and then New York.

The half dozen improvisations here pay respects to Brazilian novelist Clarice Lispector and begin with Perelman on kazoo, or is it Kermit The Frog singing in the shower? The needling curiosity in Perelman's tenor playing is palpable, propelled by a hoarse, bucket-of-muck tone. He is always going somewhere new, which is not always the case in freeplay, where familiar tropes frequently default.

"Love" is a marathon, nearly half an hour long. Bassist Joe Morris and drummer Gerald Cleaver stir the bucket without spectacle, but backing Perelman must be like riding a bucking bull. Morris' arco begins "Preciousness," the title suggested by the tentative start. Perelman mimics the micro stammers of Morris' bow, dipping into low-volume circular breathing extracts in compliance with Morris' moves this time. On "The Buffalo," you can hear through subtone swagger and rubbery embellishments that Perelman knows his Ben Webster. Morris and Cleaver don't know where he is wandering, but the buffalo-cum-mongoose-cum-honey badger continues to roam. *—Michael Jackson*

Family Ties: Family Ties; The Imitation Of The Rose; Love; Preciousness; Mystery In Sao Christovao; The Buffalo. (75:27).
Personnel: Ivo Perelman, tenor sax, kazoo, mouthpiece; Joe Morris, bass; Gerald Cleaver, drums.
Ordering info: leorecords.com

October Trio
New Dream
SONGLINES 1593
★★★

Given that reedman Evan Arntzen, drummer Dan Gaucher and bassist Josh Cole have played together since they were undergraduates in Vancouver, and after seven years of gigging together, including an apprenticeship with Brad Turner, it's no surprise that the October Trio plays with near-telepathic togetherness. It's a genuine pleasure to hear the three of them navigate the various mood, tempo and meter changes in "Wide," a pop-savvy, picaresque ramble that neatly defines the trio's strengths.

It also illustrates their weaknesses, and that's the frustrating thing about *New Dream*. Sure, the trio members play off one another with ease and élan, and their deep sense of pocket reinforces song structure while providing room for improvisation. But they may be a little too comfortable in that pocket when they could be stretching both the material and themselves.

For much of the album, Cole plays repeated figures that function both as hook and riff, while Gaucher's quietly flashy playing stresses time-keeping over rhythmic commentary. Arntzen holds forth on tenor and soprano in a style that, at its best, evokes the free-floating melodicism of early Ornette Coleman, but without the brilliant left turns. It's a song-oriented approach, so much so that it hardly seems surprising that they break into (embarrassingly reedy) vocal harmony for the out-chorus to "Imagine It."

If that were as far as it went, it would be tempting to write the October Trio off as a solid-if-lightweight pop jazz act. But "1983," the album's opening track, goes well beyond that formula, pushing both the piece and the players right to the edge. Not only is the improvisation more fully collective, but the music moves beyond predictable modality to some truly free and inventive playing. —*J.D. Considine*

New Dream: 1983; Wide; Do Your Thing; New Dream; The Park; Imagine It; Potential Bog; You've Been Flirting Again. (41:32)
Personnel: Evan Arntzen, tenor and soprano saxophone, clarinet; Dan Gaucher, drums; Josh Cole, bass.
Ordering info: songlines.com

Jazz Soul Seven
Impressions Of Curtis Mayfield
BFM JAZZ 302 062 413
★★★★

Curtis Mayfield has long been a neglected figure when it comes to composers whose works are worthy of modern jazz interpretations. His oeuvre is as multifaceted and as expansive as those belonging to Stevie Wonder, Joni Mitchell and James Taylor, whom jazz artists now routinely honor through homages. Oftentimes Mayfield's legacy is relegated to '70s Blaxploitation soundtracks, even though his repertoire dates back to the late '50s with the Impressions and goes all the way up to the mid-'90s with bittersweet collaborations with the likes of Organized Noize and Sandra St. Victor. Perhaps the oversight is because Mayfield was such a strong song stylist, whose compositions were so intrinsic to his own musical imprint, that approaching his material was all the more daunting. Whatever the case may be, Jazz Soul Seven's *Impressions of Curtis Mayfield* is a long-overdue welcome.

As the title may suggest, this septet takes a light, deliberately modern approach to a handful of Mayfield's tunes. Ace drummer Terri Lyne Carrington and bassist Bob Hurt afford the proceedings with a graceful, pneumatic momentum that's often propelled with the help of veteran percussionist Master Henry Gibson, who actually recorded with Mayfield. Wallace Roney's feline trumpet lines and Ernie Watts' flinty saxophone passages share the front line while Russ Ferrante's crystalline piano accompaniments often goad the material forward as well as provide some intriguing reharmonizations. As with the wise choice of bringing Gibson into the fold, unsung guitar hero Phil Upchurch rounds out the ensemble and raises the bar significantly because he, too, played on some of Mayfield's classic '70s LPs.

The ensemble does a sublime job at illustrating just how malleable Mayfield's melodies are. Also, the ensemble brings a discreet level of its own ingenuity in terms of re-arrangements and interpretations. Such is the case with the shuffling makeover of "It's All Right," the percolating "Move On Up" and the skulking "Beautiful Brother Of Mine." Roney and Watts build wondrous improvisations out of Mayfield's melodies, deconstructing memorable hooks sometimes beyond recognition.

Indeed, by loosening up the feel and opting for more intriguing improvisational interplay, Jazz Soul Seven succeeds at avoiding tribute treacle. But there's a downside to that as well. Some of the material desperately needs a strong vocalist. Why? Because Mayfield was also an exquisite lyricist—someone who could pen poetic ballads that found something humane and beautiful in the bleakest themes; he could also address the horrors of urban decay and social injustice with unflinching emotion. As urgent as "Check Out Your Mind" is on the disc, it loses some of its menace because the forceful lyrics are absent. The same can be said about the quicksilver take on "Superfly."

—John Murph

Impressions Of Curtis Mayfield: Freddie's Dead, It's All Right, Move On Up, We're A Winner, Superfly, Beautiful Brother of Mine, Check Out Your Mind, I'm So Proud, Keep On Pushing, People Get Ready, Gypsy Woman, Amen. (73:58)
Personnel: Terri Lyne Carrington, drums; Bob Hurst, bass; Wallace Roney, trumpet; Phil Upchurch, guitar; Russel Ferrante, piano; Master Henry Gibson, percussion, Ernie Watts, saxophone.
Ordering info: bfmjazz.com

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DOWNBEAT
Jazz, Blues & Beyond
SINCE 1934

Kenny Werner
Me, Myself & I
JUSTIN TIME 248
★★★★

Kenny Werner
Institute Of Higher Learning
HALF NOTE 4548
★★★½

Distant voices run throughout the oftentimes lush, sometimes bombastic, most often thoroughly musical set of seven compositions from Kenny Werner's *Institute Of Higher Learning*. The opening to the three-movement "Cantabile" features his swinging, lyrical and reflective, aided with an equally lyrical turn from trumpeter Pierre Drevet. Then there's the surprise insertion of Peter Hertmans' caustic yet also melodic electric guitar. Werner's piano returns for another uptempo swinger with trumpeter Nico Schepers close behind. It is here that Werner's pen begins to create some memorable musical moments, the third movement tying "Cantabile" together with a strong melody, beautiful harmonic contrasts and robust arrangement.

Here and there Werner's arrangements evoke influences, especially trombonist Bob Brookmeyer and Gil Evans. Another name who might have been in the back of Werner's mind is trumpeter Kenny Wheeler and his large-ensemble work from the early 1980s. This is true particularly when the mood is more subdued, as with the second movement of the "Cantabile" and "Second Love Song." Except for the novel addition of the traditional "The House Of The Rising Sun," everything here is by Werner. "Compensation" was a kind of commission, an early song whose existence is owed to the urging of then-boss Mel Lewis. Here, the counterpoint that Werner speaks of in the liners with Maria Schneider manifests as the development of that initial chaos into order, the woodwind and brass passages precise and freewheeling.

Me, Myself & I, on the other hand, offers a window into the more reflective sides of the artist. He is right at home playing all covers along with his solemn "Balloons," a simple tune built around two chords that evokes a sentimentality and a transparency both telling and convincing. Unpretentious, the playing tends to veer toward melody and arrangement, softspoken as opposed to virtuosic. Perhaps a spot where the volume might be adjusted comes with Werner's thinking-out-loud maneuverings through the changes on "All The Things You Are" and, especially, "Giant Steps." While the closer, "A Child Is Born," wears out its welcome at almost 12 minutes, it does hearken back to other chestnuts that are given similarly in-depth treatments that pleasantly obscure the fundamentals of each song. —*John Ephland*

Me, Myself & I: Round Midnight; Balloons; All The Things; Blue In Green; I Had A King; Giant Steps; A Child Is Born. (66:15)
Personnel: Kenny Werner, piano.
Ordering info: justin-time.com

Institute Of Higher Learning: Cantabile (three movements); Second Love Song; The House Of The Rising Sun; Compensation; Institute Of Higher Learning. (69:31)
Personnel: Frank Vaganee, lead alto and soprano saxophones, flute; Dieter Limbourg, alto and soprano saxophones, clarinet, flute; Kurt Van Herck, tenor saxophone, flute; Bart Defoort, tenor saxophone, clarinet; Bo Van der Werf, baritone saxophone, bass clarinet; Serge Plume, lead trumpet, flugelhorn; Nico Schepers, Pierre Drevet, Jeroen Van Malderen, trumpet, flugelhorn; Marc Godfroid, lead trombone; Lode Mertens, Ben Fleerakkers, Laurent Hendrick, trombone; Peter Hertmans, guitar; Jos Machtel, bass; Martijn Vink, drums.
Ordering info: cduniverse.net

Making Microtonal Music Using the 19-tone Equal Tempered System

When I got a 19-tone electric guitar in 1989, courtesy of luthier John Starrett, it opened a door to a world that I had no idea existed. As I began studying the field of tunings in more depth, I was astonished at how little most musicians know about tuning—including our own 12-tone equal tempered system, which is how Western instruments are tuned today. When we learn to play, we aren't taught why these 12 equally spaced notes make up our standard system, and very few of us ever seem to inquire about it.

Now, after more than two decades of studying 19-, 31-, 34- and 36-tone equal tempered scales, I've found that I am able to go to many new places as an artist and create unique concepts that have never been heard before. If you're looking for fresh ideas as a guitarist, you might want to think about moving beyond the usual 12-tone system—it isn't hard to do.

For guitarists, re-fretting to a 19-tone octave is a fairly simple operation that any competent luthier can do. Many familiar scalar/chordal shapes move from 12 to 19 very easily, which also helps one to make the switch. What I really like about 19-tone music is how you can take familiar Western popular forms, such as blues, jazz, country and rock, and stretch them into something familiar-sounding but definitely different. My 19-tone electric guitar concerto *Spider*, based off a 19-tone serial row, also shows that you can get way, way out there as well in 19. I'd like to share with you a few of my 19-tone compositional ideas. Starting with something familiar, we'll compare the 12-tone chromatic scale with the 19-tone chromatic to see how they differ.

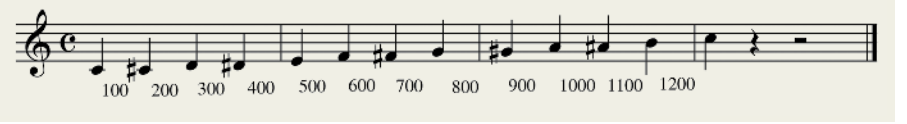
To do this, we need to use the term "cents" to describe the distances between notes. In Example 1, we see that the notes of the 12-tone chromatic scale are 100 cents apart; thus, an octave has 1,200 cents.

Example 2 shows the 19-tone chromatic, and we see there are 63 cents between notes. So, in 19, each note is about two-thirds of a 12-tone interval. We now have seven extra notes to work with. And, we can build all of our usual Western scales in 19 (including major, harmonic/melodic minor, diminished, etc.), but now we can change them a bit by adding some of the extra notes available to us. This opens many new doors.

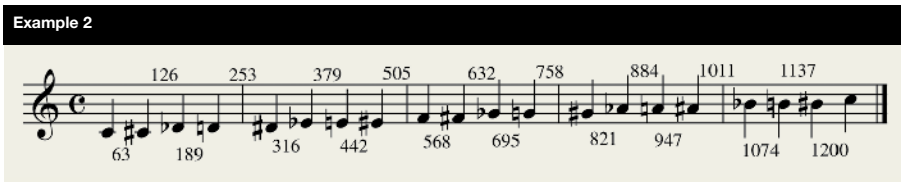
Of special interest is the lack of enharmonic spelling for pairs of notes. In the 12-tone system, G# and A♭ are the same notes; in 19, they are separate pitches (that distinction was well known to early European musicians and is a basic feature of Indian/Arabic/Turkish music). So, we now have a true G#/A♭, A#/B♭, C#/D♭, D#/E♭ and F#/G♭. The only enharmonic tones are E#/F♭ and B#/C♭.

Example 3 is the bass line to "Birdwalk," a blues in E, and the first tune I wrote in 19. Notice how the bass walkups in measures 4, 8 and 11 now have six beats instead of the usual four, because of the extra notes. Same thing in the descending line in measure 10. And measure 12 now has five beats, making this one tough pup to solo over because blues is almost always in a 4/4 meter. It takes some getting used to, but the unequal measures evolve very naturally from the tuning itself. The bass lines show very clearly how the chromatic pairs work in a musical way; measure 4 is E–F#–G♭–G–G#–A♭, resolving to the A chord in measure 5. This

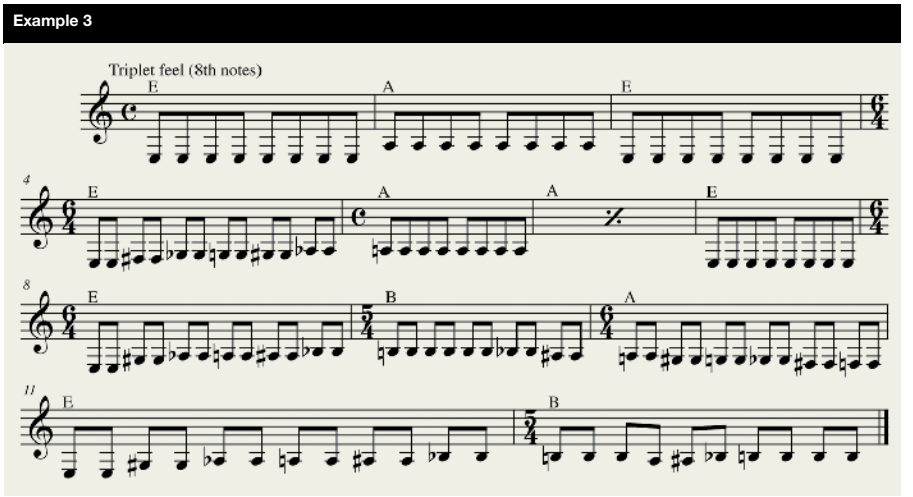
Example 1



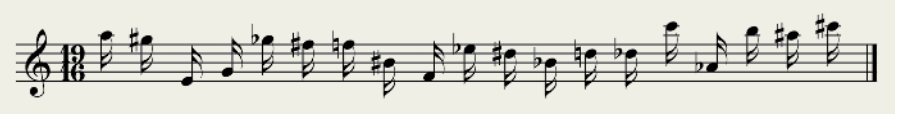
Example 2



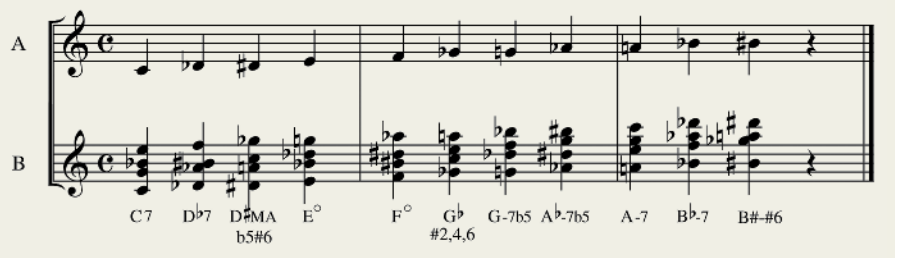
Example 3



Example 4



Example 5




NEELA HAVERSTICK

principle also works great in 19-tone country, jazz and reggae. By the way, you can get a great 19-tone blues scale, too: E–G♭-G–A–A#–B♭-B–D♭-D.

Getting way out there, Example 4 is the 19-tone serial row I used for my *Spider* concerto. I used various alterations of the row for different movements of the piece, and for soloing as well. I was accompanied by the 10 strings of the Colorado Chamber Orchestra, which shows that other instruments can also play in 19 successfully.

Example 5 shows an 11-note major scale, courtesy of Dr. Richard Krantz, and the harmonized chords derived from it. Some of these chords are familiar, but some are totally unique to 19. I used this scale and some of the chordal ideas in "6 Pieces For Pavel" from my *Spider* CD.

Besides 19, other popular equal temperaments are 17, 22, 24, 31, 34 and 53 notes to the octave. The late Joe Maneri, composer of jazz and experimental music, invented a 72-tone equal tempered system. And there are many other ways to re-tune besides equal temperaments. Guitarist John Schneider uses interchangeable fretboards with different tunings using Just Intonation (whose notes align with the harmonic series); he can change a board in a few seconds to go from system to system. Jon Catler uses a 64-tone JI axe, and there is a Vogt guitar with adjustable sliders that allows the player to tune any way he wants. Of course, all equal temperaments are somewhat "out of tune" with the harmonic series intervals that occur in nature. Some have better thirds/fifths than others, making them more useful than others for chordal music. Indeed, the idea of having more than 12 notes per octave is certainly not new, just sort of forgotten. **DB**

GUITARIST/COMPOSER NEIL HAVERSTICK (A.K.A. "STICKMAN") PLAYS MANY STYLES OF MUSIC AND FREELANCES IN THE DENVER AREA. HE HAS 10 CDS THAT FEATURE HIS MICROTONAL/FRETLESS GUITAR COMPOSITIONS, AND HIS LATEST DISC, *HIDE & SEEK*, WAS FEATURED IN DOWNBEAT AS ONE OF THE BEST CDS OF 2011. HAVERSTICK'S THEORY BOOK *FORM OF NO FORMS* RECEIVED GLOWING ENDORSEMENTS FROM GUITAR GREATS TOMMY TEDESCO AND JOE PASS, AND HIS *ACOUSTIC STICK* CD WON A COMPOSITION FELLOWSHIP IN 1999 FROM THE COLORADO COUNCIL ON THE ARTS. VISIT HAVERSTICK ONLINE AT MICROSTICK.NET FOR MUSIC SAMPLES, PHOTOS OF HIS MANY UNUSUAL GUITARS AND ARTICLES ON MICROTONES BY INTERNATIONAL AUTHORS.

John McLaughlin's Time-Shifting Guitar Solo on 'New Blues, Old Bruise'


John McLaughlin

In a career spanning more than 40 years, one aspect associated with guitarist John McLaughlin's playing and compositions has been a rhythmic sophistication that often incorporates less-common time signatures and rhythmic patterns. "New Blues, Old Bruise," from 2009's *Five Peace Band* (Concord) CD with Chick Corea, not only incorporates odd time signatures but literally changes time signatures every single measure. For the most part, there is a pattern: four-measure phrases where an eighth note is added each measure from 7/8 to 4/4 (or 8/8) to 9/8, and then down to 6/8 to start over. This does change once—where the 7/8 and 4/4 bars get repeated (measures 13–16 and 39–42)—which gives the musicians just one more thing to watch out for.

McLaughlin shows his mastery by making it clear he is always aware of where he is and where the downbeats are. Quite a number of his phrases end on downbeats, starting with measure 5 and including measure 27, which is especially poignant since it is the beginning of his second chorus. There's also measure 40, which is important as the entire band accents that particular downbeat. Note the long string of 32nd notes beginning in measure 44 that culminates four measures later on the downbeat of bar 48. To drive the point home, McLaughlin ends his entire solo squarely on the downbeat in measure 53.

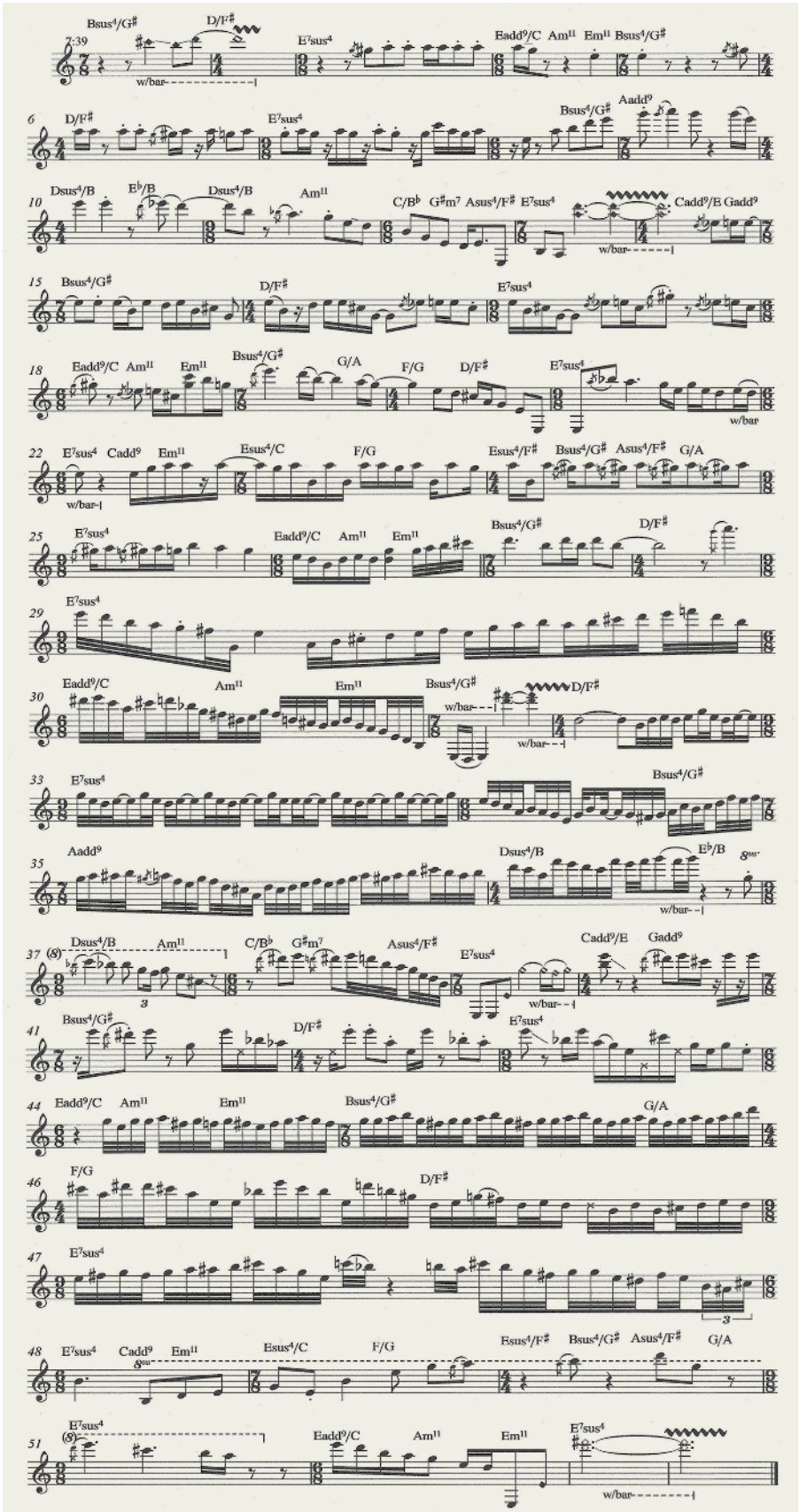
There are also a number of instances where McLaughlin ends phrases by anticipating the downbeat. In measure 27, he ends his phrase on beat seven (the final beat of the measure) and holds it into the next measure. In measure 43, we hear almost the same thing: McLaughlin ends his phrase on the final beat of the measure (in this case, beat nine), but he cuts it off before the downbeat of the next measure. These anticipations are a superb way to stay within the changing time signatures while producing some hip-sounding syncopation.

For more variety, McLaughlin also chooses to start some phrases on the downbeat. In measure 32, he starts with a long note on the "one" as a launching pad for almost five measure of dense rhythmic activity consisting mainly of 32nd notes. His final phrase, the one that ended on the downbeat of bar 53, also started on a strong beat, the downbeat of measure 52.

More commonly, McLaughlin's phrases begin on an anticipation of the downbeat, such as the final eighth note of bar 5, and bar 9, where he plays two 16ths in the last beat to lead into the next measure. There's also the end of bar 14, and the dotted quarter note at the end of measure 28, as well as the last eighth note in measure 36. It's magnificent how this idea—starting a phrase at the end of a measure—is treated in such a variety of ways.

Although starting and ending on downbeats (or close to them) makes the shifting time signatures clear, sticking to this phrasing could become somewhat predictable. So McLaughlin makes a point of occasionally deviating from this. For instance, in measures 22 and 44, he begins his phrases in the middle of the measure. In measures 9, 13 and 39, he lets his phrases spill over the downbeat and a few beats into the next bar. In the second-to-last phrase, he both begins in the middle of a measure (bar 48) as well as ends in the middle of one (bar 51). Having this phrase not emphasize the strong beats and following it up with one that leans on the strong beats makes for quite a powerful ending. **DB**

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


7:39
Bsus4/G♯ D/F♯ E7sus4 Eadd9/C Am11 Em11 Bsus4/G♯
w/bar
6 D/F♯ E7sus4 Bsus4/G♯ Aadd9
10 Dsus4/B E♭/B Dsus4/B Am11 C/B♭ G♯m7 Asus4/F♯ E7sus4 Cadd9/E Gadd9
w/bar
15 Bsus4/G♯ D/F♯ E7sus4
18 Eadd9/C Am11 Em11 Bsus4/G♯ G/A F/G D/F♯ E7sus4
w/bar
22 E7sus4 Cadd9 Em11 Esus4/C F/G Esus4/F♯ Bsus4/G♯ Asus4/F♯ G/A
w/bar
25 E7sus4 Eadd9/C Am11 Em11 Bsus4/G♯ D/F♯
29 E7sus4
30 Eadd9/C Am11 Em11 Bsus4/G♯ D/F♯
w/bar
w/bar
33 E7sus4 Bsus4/G♯
35 Aadd9 Dsus4/B E♭/B
w/bar
37 (8) Dsus4/B Am11 C/B♭ G♯m7 Asus4/F♯ E7sus4 Cadd9/E Gadd9
3
w/bar
41 Bsus4/G♯ D/F♯ E7sus4
44 Eadd9/C Am11 Em11 Bsus4/G♯ G/A
46 F/G D/F♯
47 E7sus4
3
48 E7sus4 Cadd9 Em11 Esus4/C F/G Esus4/F♯ Bsus4/G♯ Asus4/F♯ G/A
8va
51 E7sus4 (8) Eadd9/C Am11 Em11 E7sus4
w/bar

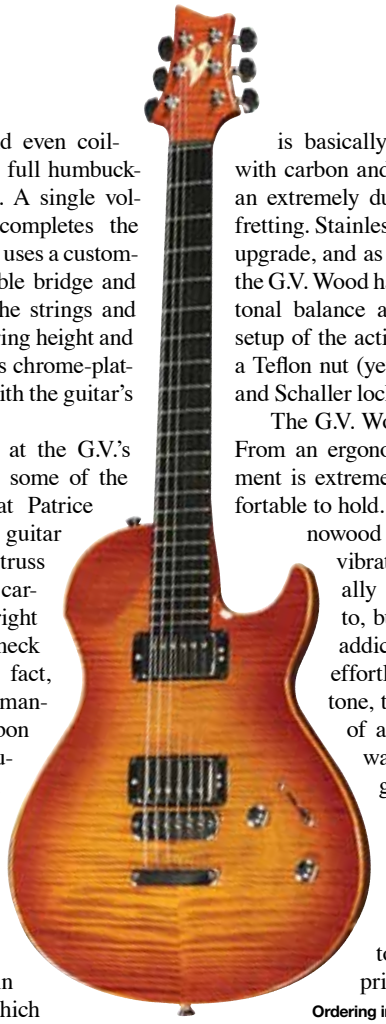
Vigier G.V. Wood Guitar

Axe de Triomphe

French Luthier Patrice Vigier built his first guitar in 1980 and has established himself as a true innovator with a line of high-quality guitars and basses that feature numerous technological firsts. The G.V. Wood is the company's first single-cutaway model, and this impressive axe excels in every detail, from its flawless craftsmanship and silky-smooth action to its versatile array of superb tones.

The G.V. Wood model is built using woods harvested from French forests, as Vigier firmly believes in using local sources for his materials wherever possible. The guitar is manufactured using a combination of modern CNC machining techniques and old-school hand carving for final shaping. From the first glance, it is apparent that this is a top-shelf guitar built with great care and absolutely no compromises in quality. The G.V.'s contoured body is made from naturally aged alder wood, which is capped in book-matched flame maple. The G.V. is stunning to look at, with a tastefully applied stain carefully finished in a high-gloss, slow-drying varnish. Even the case, a sturdy Hiscox Liteflite that comes standard with the G.V., is impressive.

The G.V. Wood is equipped with two hand-wound humbucker pickups (custom-manufactured by Amber Pickups of Germany) mounted in the bridge and neck positions. A five-way switch allows for a variety of configurations, including selection of an individual pickup, running both pickups and even coil-splitting for switching the full humbuckers into single-coil mode. A single volume and tone control completes the guitar's electronics. Vigier uses a custom-designed, six-way adjustable bridge and stop tailpiece to anchor the strings and to allow for fine-tuning string height and intonation. All hardware is chrome-plated, which contrasts well with the guitar's highly figured wood.



Taking a closer look at the G.V.'s neck, we begin to notice some of the design enhancements that Patrice Vigier is known for. The guitar does not use a traditional truss rod; instead, it has a fixed carbon-fiber strip embedded right into the bolt-on maple neck to keep it rock-solid. In fact, Vigier was one of the first manufacturers to utilize carbon fiber technology in instrument-building, a design called "the 10/90 system" because it uses 10 percent carbon fiber and 90 percent wood. Examining the fingerboard, we find yet another surprising innovation in the use of phenowood, which is basically birch that's been injected with carbon and phenolic resins to produce an extremely durable and slick surface for fretting. Stainless steel frets are another nice upgrade, and as with all Vigier instruments, the G.V. Wood has a zero fret to help improve tonal balance and allow for more precise setup of the action. The guitar also features a Teflon nut (yet another Vigier innovation) and Schaller locking tuners.

The G.V. Wood is a great guitar to play. From an ergonomic standpoint, the instrument is extremely well balanced and comfortable to hold. The stainless frets and phenowood board make noting and vibrato so effortless that it actually takes a little getting used to, but you will quickly become addicted to its light touch and effortless action. When it comes to tone, the G.V. delivers a spectrum of amazing colors via the five-way selector switch, and this guitar has sustain for days. At $3,999.99, it may not be cheap, but the G.V. Wood is a truly worthy instrument whose impeccable quality, versatility and attention to detail more than justify its price. —*Keith Baumann*

Ordering info: vigierguitars.com

Cooperstand Pro Instrument Stands

Small & Sturdy

Lugging gear has always been one of the more tedious tasks in a performing musician's life. Players are constantly on the lookout for new products that can lighten the load and ease the burden of getting to the gig. Nashville singer/songwriter Daniel Cooper, frustrated by the lack of a truly compact instrument stand that could fit into a guitar case, decided to design and build his own. He introduced the Cooperstand Pro-G guitar stand in 2009, and his company now produces several models that are impressively small yet surprisingly sturdy.

Along with his musical career, Cooper has been a sculptural artist and is also from a family of tool and die makers, so designing the Pro-G was not that far of a stretch for him. The key to the stand's strength and portability is its innovative four-footed folding design, which

allows it to collapse into a very small package. According to Cooper, "Everything we are doing is totally dictated by necessity."

Cooperstand now offers three basic models, all featuring the same overall design but varying in size and materials. The Pro-G is for acoustic and electric guitar or banjo and is constructed from African Sapele wood. The Pro-Mini, also made of Sapele, is designed to hold a ukulele, mandolin, violin or even an iPad. The Eco-G model is identical to the Pro-G, except it's constructed from 100-percent recycled first-run ABS composite material, which makes it more affordable and virtually indestructible. All models utilize special neoprene padding that will not harm your instrument's finish.

Cooperstands are extremely practical and highly attractive, so it's no surprise that they're getting a lot of attention in the industry.

—*Keith Baumann*

Ordering info: cooperstand.com

Realist Docking Station
Bass Volume Control for All

Clever, clean and compact: These are the first thoughts that came to mind when checking out the new Realist Docking Station from Ned Steinberger and David Gage.

"Volume control for all" is their mantra. The Docking Station is a solidly constructed dock and volume knob, with a ¼-inch input and ¼-inch output that works with any acoustic string bass pickup. I found it to be a quick and easy installation: You simply loosen the E and A strings, then slide the unit between the ball-end of the strings and the back of the tailpiece. The tension of the strings holds it in place. Another benefit to the Docking Station is how nicely it cleans up jack mounting issues. No awkward twist-ties, Velcro or tape required.

I took the Realist Docking Station for a spin at a small club date. The anodized volume knob was easy to spot, and within reach. My sound was the same, but now I was in control of my level on the fly (no more turning around to adjust the amp volume). Who needs a volume pedal? Also, if you want the resistance bypassed entirely, there is the JackPot, a potentiometer that allows you to go beyond the loudest setting with one click.

From a purely practical standpoint, I ask this question: What bassist hasn't found himself forgetting to mute his amp, setting his string bass down on the stage and encountering the thundering feedback of doom? The Docking Station eliminates that issue with ease. Bassists and soundmen rejoice!

If you use a pickup, the Realist Docking Station would be a nice addition to any string bassist's arsenal. *—Jon Paul*

Ordering info: davidgage.com

ToneRite 3G
Guitar-aging Vibrations

It is a well-known fact that acoustic instruments need to be warmed up to reach their full potential. Experts agree that the vibration of a wooden top as a result of playing is the essential ingredient in breaking in an instrument; it's also why many vintage guitars have such amazing tone and volume. There have been many attempts to artificially age an instrument with techniques such as placing it in front of a speaker blasting loud music or sealing it into a sound chamber while pumping in low-frequency tones. ToneRite has come up with its own method of loosening up your instrument: the ToneRite 3G, an electronic vibrator that can improve tone and volume on both new and vintage guitars.

The 3G guitar model sells for $149 and boasts significant improvements over the first version of ToneRite. The unit is a small box that sits over your strings (right at the bridge) and is held in place by "Elastone" rubber feet that slide in between each string to keep the ToneRite suspended over the top. The most significant enhancement on the 3G is the ability to control the vibration's intensity via a rotary control knob. ToneRite currently offers models for guitar, mandolin, bass, violin, viola, ukulele and cello.

Using the unit is simple: Mount it, plug it in, adjust the intensity and let it go. ToneRite recommends an initial treatment of at least 72 hours in order to produce noticeable results. I used the 3G on a new acoustic, a vintage guitar and a mandolin, running it for a full week on each. Although the difference was subtle, I felt in all cases that the instruments sounded better after using the ToneRite.

Although it will never turn a cheap instrument into a killer box or produce the same results as actual playing time, the ToneRite 3G seems to help open up new axes and can be a great way to warm up your instrument before a gig or session. *—Keith Baumann*

Ordering info: tonerite.com

Zoom G5
Guitar Pedalboard Solution

Zoom has introduced the G5, an all-in-one guitar pedalboard solution that combines the ease of stompbox use with multi-effects processing, amp simulation modeling and USB audio interfacing.

The G5 offers more than 120 diverse types of effects at a high-quality sample frequency of 44.1kHz. The unit's tone universe is made up of four large LCD screens with corresponding metal foot switches to allow up to nine simultaneous effects and amp models. Three control knobs for each of the four footswitches make adjusting effect and sound parameters easy.

I found the emulation of popular and vintage pedal effects very convincing, from classic overdrive, distortion and fuzz to chorus, flange and delay. Compressors, noise gates, boosts and limiters add to the effects arsenal—all the effects you could ever need for gigging or recording are here.

You can also store your favorite blends of effects in any of the 297 available effect combination patches. In addition to the classic stomp effects, Zoom includes 22 amp simulation models ranging from vintage to the latest amp trends.

What else besides effects can the G5 do? How about a tube booster to punch your tone up to 16dB, a three-dimensional expression "Z-Pedal" for controlling and shaping effects sounds, a versatile tuner, a built-in drum machine with 40 different rhythm patterns and looper function, and a USB audio interface for studio sessions.

Two other features for pro-audio applications impressed me: the built-in XLR output (for direct connect to any mix console without a DI box) and a convenient pre/post switch (to send a processed sound to the mains while directing the original analog signal to the recording source). *—John LaMantia*

Ordering info: samsontech.com

GUITAR CONTROL

Fishman's TriplePlay is a wireless controller that lets users integrate their guitars with any virtual instrument or hardware synthesizer for onstage access during live performances. Guitarists can also use TriplePlay to integrate their instruments with a DAW running on a PC, Mac or iPad as a music recording, production and composition tool. **More info:** fishman.com

CONTOURED BASS

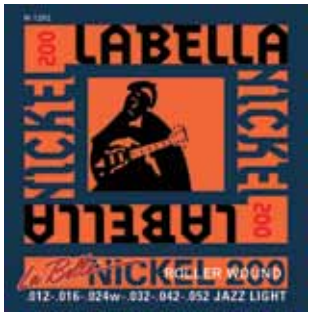
Genz Benz has designed its Contour500 bass combos for players who seek a powerful but lightweight amplifier system. Available in 1- by 15-inch and 2- by 10-inch versions, the Contour500 offers players everything from tight, articulate, full-bodied tone to dialed-up overdrive. Features include input gain and volume controls, tuner out, contour circuitry, active EQ with midrange parametric network, auxiliary input, headphone out and direct output. **More info:** kmcmusic.com

FULL-RANGE PICKUP

LR Baggs taps into the soul of the guitar with its M80 pickup, which senses the entire frequency range of the top, back, side and neck resonances in all three dimensions. Tap on the body, and the M80 makes it sound as if there's a full-range mic inside the guitar. **More info:** lrbaggs.com

SUPPLE STRUMMING

La Bella Strings has rolled out the Nickel 200 Roller Wound series strings for jazz guitar. Wound with compressed pure nickel wire, the strings produce a softer, more mellow tone than typical nickel-plated sets. The extra smooth surface lets your fingers glide effortlessly. The set is available in four different style gauges. A 12–52 is available with a wound G-string. **More info:** labella.com



TRANSPARENT SIGNALS

Planet Waves has introduced custom-designed American Stage cables, which feature the brand's exclusive In-Out technology for optimum signal transparency, in-line solder joints for conductivity and strength, and Geo-Tip design for improved fit in all jacks. The cables are available in 10- to 30-foot lengths. **More info:** planetwaves.com

APP INTEGRATION

iRig Stomp gives guitar players the ability to integrate iOS signal processing apps into an existing pedalboard setup. Based on IK's AmpliTube iRig interface, the unit is compatible with any iOS guitar, amp or instrument app and comes with the AmpliTube Free app. iRig Stomp can be used with other effects pedals or directly connected to amplifiers and P.A. systems via a standard quarter-inch cable. **More info:** ikmultimedia.com

Craig Olson (left) directs vocalists at UNC Jazz Festival

Clinics Strike a Chord at UNC Jazz Fest

More than 7,500 people attended this year's University of Northern Colorado Jazz Festival from April 19–21 in Greeley, Colo. During the three-day festival, more than 275 student groups from 13 states delivered adjudicated performances and took part in a variety of educational clinics from top jazz musicians.

Student vocal ensembles and big bands ranging in grade from junior high through college filled up six venues during the adjudicated shows. During each 20-minute performance, adjudicators, who were primarily professional musicians and educators, recorded their feedback for the band's director. The Cheyenne Mountain Junior High School band (directed by Dan Bell) from Colorado Springs, Colo., blended impressively, even with nine saxophonists and 12 brass players. The Air Academy High School's Advanced Jazz Ensemble (directed by Stoney Black), from Colorado Springs, Colo., received a standing ovation. The Colorado State University's Jazz Ensemble 1 (directed by Peter Sommer) performed two excellent contemporary charts from Will Swindler, while the UNC Lab Band 3 (directed by Erik Applegate) swung extremely hard during its more traditional set.

Many high school and college combos also played in club-like settings. These groups, which varied in style from Dixieland to hard-bop, delivered short sets of three to four tunes. Following their performance, each group worked briefly with their adjudicator. In his comments to the members of University of Kansas Jazz Combo 1, alto saxophonist Dave Pietro offered advice that was relevant to every jazz musician, regardless of level: Don't play what you feel like playing, play what the music asks of you, and let go of your ego.

Students had the opportunity to participate in clinics by professional musicians and educators, who covered wide-ranging topics such as beginning improvisation, practice strategies and instrument-specific methodology. Jamey Aebersold's "Everyone Can Improvise" clinic was very popular, with 150–200 students filling St. Patrick's Church to capacity. Throughout his engaging presentation, Aebersold gave the group of predominantly middle- and high-school students basic instruction on scales, chords and improvising. Trumpeter Clay Jenkins' clinic, which was far more advanced, focused on the importance of a player's sound and depth of groove. Jenkins urged his audience to make everything they practice into a sound and groove exercise. Attendees were also able to interact with the clinicians, especially during a question-and-answer session with bassist Ron Carter and saxophonist Donald Harrison.

Evening concerts closed each day of clinics and student performances. Festivalgoers gave the vocal jazz ensemble The Real Group rave reviews for its Thursday night show. The 1,680-seat Monfort Hall was sold out for a Friday night concert headlined by the Ron Carter Quartet. The crowd spontaneously erupted in applause, laughed in disbelief and didn't hesitate to give a standing ovation midway through the set after Carter's epic performance of "My Funny Valentine." Pianist Geoffrey Keezer opened the festival's Saturday night finale showcase with a lovely solo piano set before giving way to UNC Lab Band I's Art Blakey tribute, which featured Jazz Messenger alums Keezer, tenor saxophonist Billy Pierce, trombonist Robin Eubanks and trumpeter Brian Lynch.

Large jazz festivals with an educational focus, like the UNC festival, are significant institutions that help educate and expose thousands of students to jazz each year. It's clear that the 42nd edition of the UNC festival provided students with great performing, learning and listening experiences. *—Chris Robinson*

School Notes

Coleman Hughes

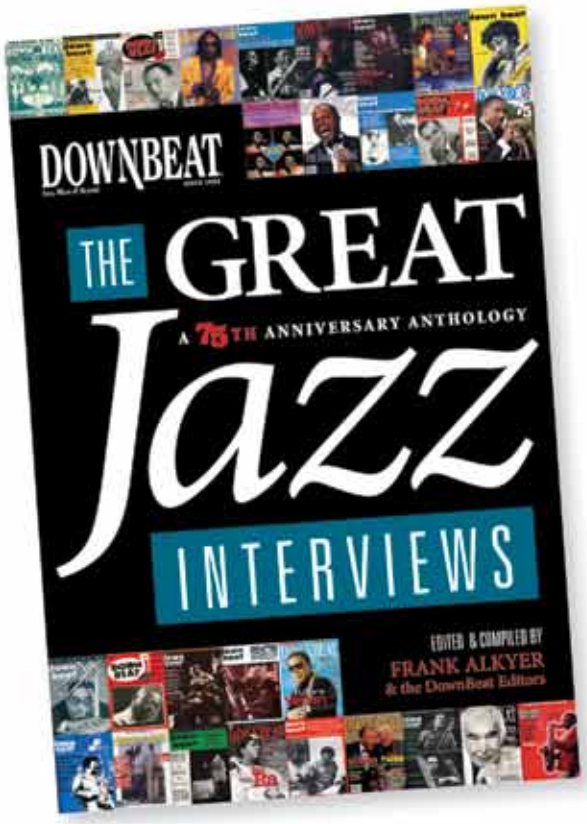
Solo Effort: Trombonist Coleman Hughes won an outstanding soloist award as a member of the Newark Academy High School Big Band at this year's Essentially Ellington competition. Hughes, who received a 2012 DownBeat Student Music Award for best instrumental soloist, was also an outstanding soloist as part of the Newark Academy and Jazz House Kids big bands at this year's Charles Mingus High School Competition. He played in the GRAMMY Camp Jazz Session Big Band (2012) and this year's Next Generation Jazz Orchestra. **Details:** newarka.edu; jazzhousekids.org

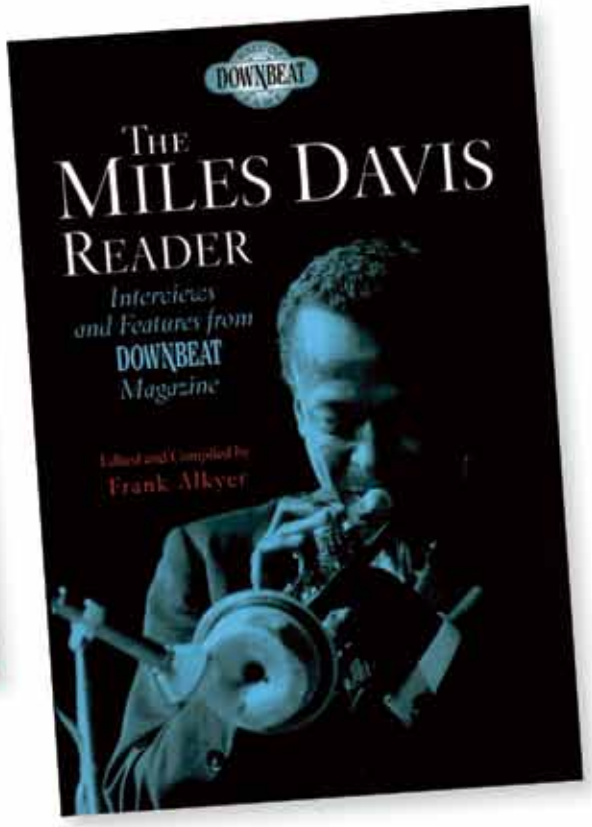
Text Appeal: The Blue Valley Northwest Big Dog Band placed first in the Kansas City Heritage "Basically Basie" competition at the Second Annual Kansas City Jazz Summit April 23–27. The 31 middle school, high school and college groups were voted on via text messaging by audience members, who contributed 25 percent of the total score. **Details:** kansascityjazz.org

Italian Jobs: Columbia College Chicago has partnered with the Pescara Jazz Festival and the Pescara Conservatory of Music in Pescara, Italy, and will premiere a series of collaborative workshops and concerts. The first performances included the Pescara Jazz Ensemble, the Columbia College Jazz faculty and guest guitarist Mike Stern, as well as a show featuring the Pescara Jazz Ensemble, on April 24 and 25. **Details:** colum.edu

Band Aid: The Kenmore High School band of Tonawanda, N.Y, is the grand prize winner of the "Win Gordon Goodwin For Your School Band" contest. The group received a custom arrangement of a song by Goodwin and a visit from the multi-instrumentalist to work on the piece. The contest was launched in collaboration with print music company Alfred Publishing. **Details:** telarc.com

Name Changer: The ASCAP Foundation Young Jazz Composers Awards, which received a major, multi-year financial commitment from the Herb Alpert Foundation, has been renamed the Herb Alpert Young Jazz Composer Awards. **Details:** ascapfoundation.org





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Blindfold Test | BY TED PANKEN

Eric Revis

Equally authoritative with artists and bands as diverse as Branford Marsalis, Kurt Rosenwinkel, Peter Brötzmann and Tarbaby, Eric Revis is one of the most dynamic and versatile bass players on the scene. This was his first Blindfold Test.

Ron Carter

"Gone" (*Dear Miles*, Blue Note, 2006) Carter, bass; Stephen Scott, piano; Peyton Crossley, drums; Roger Squitero, percussion.

[*immediately*] Ron Carter. This is the tune from *Porgy And Bess*—"Gone." Ron has gotten to the place where you expect Ronisms, and only he can do them. It's fresh because you're hearing him do things that he developed. Not my favorite representation of "Gone," but because it's Ron, 5 stars. I think there's a certain point where his obligation to be somewhat of a historian has interrupted an artistic trajectory.

Mostly Other People Do The Killing

"Rough And Ready" (*Forty-Fort*, Hot Cup, 2009) Moppa Elliott, bass; Peter Evans, trumpet; Jon Irabagon, alto saxophone; Kevin Shea, drums, electronics.

[*after coda*] What the hell did they do that for? Compositionally, it was an excuse just to get to that vibe. If the horn player isn't Dave Douglas, he's definitely influenced by Dave. It's not funky, it's not really rocking—it gets to that straight-eighth thing. The bass player is real direct, and his action is real low so you hear a lot of slap-back from the fingerboard, which, for my taste, takes away from the hump that should be there in any kind of groove thing. I thought he went for it on his solo. I appreciate that. At the end, the interaction by the horn players was really happening, getting into almost that molecular space. The trumpet player's got power chops. The saxophone player was cool. 2 stars.

Joëlle Léandre/George Lewis

"Transatlantic Vision IV" (*Transatlantic Visions*, RogueArt, 2008) Léandre, bass; Lewis, trombone.

This is killing. The double-flutter stuff the bass player was doing is incredible. That's [Peter] Kowaldesque—the ability to do simultaneous things, pluck and bow at the same time, and make it a conversation. I don't know many cats who can do that on trombone. George Lewis? [And] I'll guess Mark Dresser. No? Not Mark Helias. 5 stars. [*after*] Joëlle approaches improvised music with unparalleled authority and honesty.

Christian McBride

"Used 'Ta Could" (*Inside Straight*, Mack Avenue, 2009) McBride, bass; Warren Wolf, vibraphone; Steve Wilson, alto saxophone; Eric Reed, piano; Carl Allen, drums.

Christian McBride, his band—Inside Straight. Christian can do things on the bass that nobody has ever been able to do before. The facility with the bow and the fingers—he's a truly front-line bass player, one of the best soloists of the young cats, period, in that thing. [*arco solo*] Yeah! Compositionally, it's not breaking any new ground, but I don't think that was the intent. Christian has extended the Ray Brown school. 4 stars.

Drew Gress

"Chevelle" (*Irrational Numbers*, Premonition, 2008) Gress, bass; Tim Berne, alto saxophone; Ralph Alessi, trumpet; Craig Taborn, piano; Tom Rainey, drums.

It sounds like three or four or five tunes, or pieces of tunes he has sitting around, all made one. There's a real interesting bass line at the beginning, which I thought they'd develop, and then the solo went off into something seemingly unrelated, and then they went back to it. For me, it was so counter-flowing. It's a problem with the editing. I liked the vamp at the end; it could have been a tune in itself. I have no idea who it is. The piece was rather schizophrenic, but that may have been their intent.


JACK VARTOOGIAN/FRONTROWPHOTOS

I didn't follow the logic—but that doesn't mean that there was no logic. All the solos were good. 3 stars.

Dave Liebman

"Gallop's Gallop" (*Monk's Mood*, DoubleTime, 1999) Eddie Gomez, bass; Liebman, soprano saxophone; Adam Nussbaum, drums.

Somebody out of the Mark schools—Dresser and Helias. I think Helias. Is this the Open Loose band? No? I don't know the tune. True interaction. Everybody is so musically adept. It sounds like Tom Rainey on drums. [*bass solo*] That's a phenomenal solo. Compositionally, it sounds like Helias, but sonically like Dresser. There was a story being told, and some of the techniques are amazing. 5 stars.

Agustí Fernández/Barry Guy

"Some Other Place" (*Some Other Place*, Maya, 2009) Guy, bass; Fernández, piano.

The bass player has total command of extended bow technique. The juxtaposition of the pastoral thing, and then the frenetic breaks in the solo, is hip. The minimalism is dynamite. The bassist's command of the textures is superb. To play expressively in that fashion is impressive. 4½ stars. André Breton, the Surrealist, was a medic and saw guys coming in delusional and speaking in non sequiturs. He contended these were actually a glimpse into somebody's being. Playing in a very open, expressive way is very much like that. It opens up a part of you, and you forget all the rules you've taken so long to learn, and approach the instrument as honestly as possible, like a child would. You can express a certain vulnerability that maybe a C7 won't get to. There's a time and a place for everything. I respect the tradition; there's a certain amount of freedom in walking something down the middle, too.

Hans Glawischnig

"Barretto's Way" (*Panorama*, Sunnyside, 2008) Glawischnig, bass; David Binney, alto saxophone; Luis Perdomo, piano; Antonio Sanchez, drums.

This fusing of these kinds of melodies came in about 10–15 years ago—these cats are really good at doing it. The intro and the outro on the bow were beautiful, and the groove was nice. So were the solos. Two players come to mind, Hans Glawischnig or Omer Avital. Ah, it's Hans. Hans is very thorough, top to bottom. And it felt good. 4 stars. **DB**

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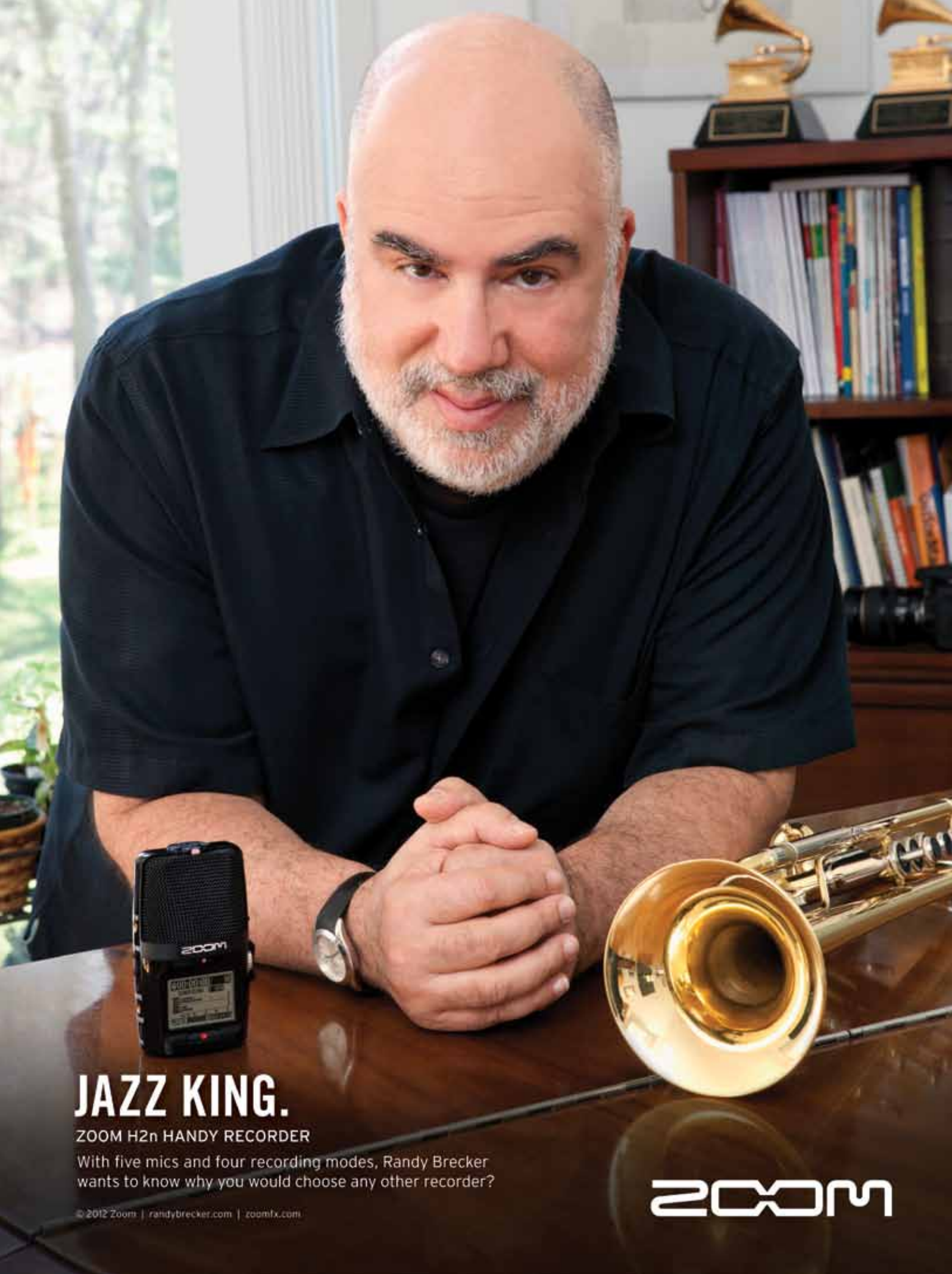

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