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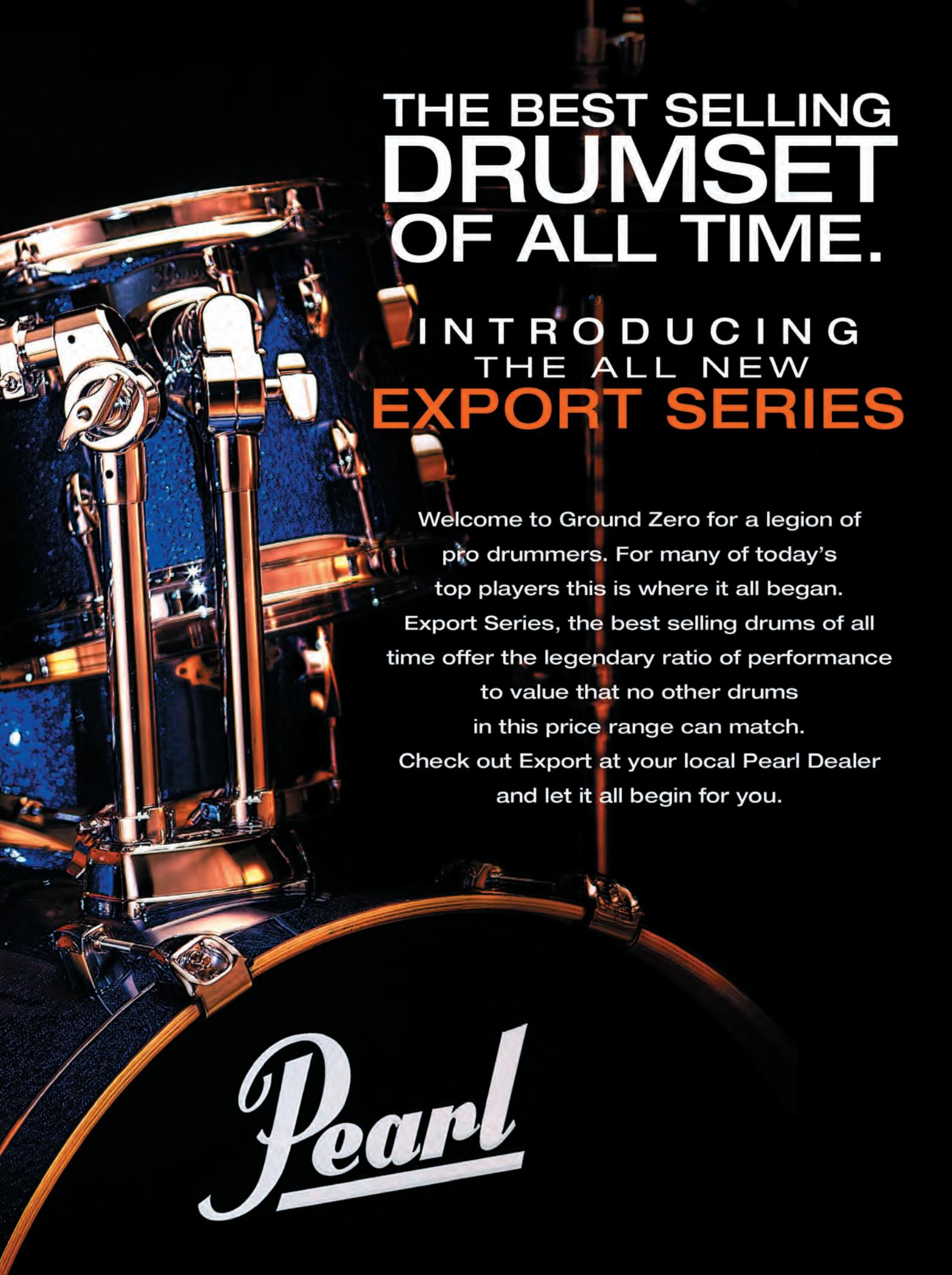
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NOVEMBER 2013

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### Chief Messenger

BY JOSEF WOODARD

Chucho Valdés is one of the greatest jazz pianists in the world, and he shows no signs of slowing down. Apparently, the veteran bandleader didn't get the memo about taking it easy during his "golden years."



Cover photo of Chucho Valdés (and image above) shot by Paul Wellman on Aug. 16 at Rebury Hotel, Los Angeles

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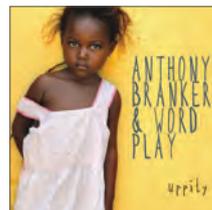
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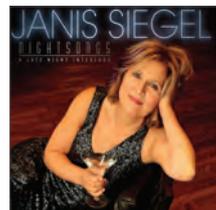
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# CUNEIFORM RECORDS

First Take > BY BOBBY REED

## Let's Get Festive

**SOME OF LIFE'S MOST MEMORABLE EVENTS HAPPEN AT JAZZ FESTS.** Wouldn't you agree?

As the DownBeat staff finished up this issue, there were still some warm days and must-see outdoor festivals left on the 2013 calendar. This summer provided our staff—and a number of DownBeat contributors—with a plethora of terrific jazz fest experiences on multiple continents.

At the Chicago Jazz Festival on Aug. 31, pianist Jason Moran unleashed his "Fats Waller Dance Party" (see review on page 19), which included wildly infectious music as well as some stunning visuals. We won't soon forget the vision of Moran dancing around the stage and playing keyboards, all while wearing a giant Waller mask and the now-classic DownBeat T-shirt replicating our December 2010 cover

photo of Sonny Rollins. We're grateful to photographer Mark Sheldon for providing us with the photo at right. It's not often that you see the magic combination of Waller, Rollins and Moran all depicted in one photographic composition.

And it's not every day that you see a guy wearing a gigantic papier-mâché mask that includes expressive eyebrows and a cigarette dangling from the corner of the mouth.

Outdoor fests are part of what makes the summer season great, but true fans know that the festivals don't stop just because the leaves start falling. On page 91 of this issue, we introduce a new annual feature, the DownBeat Fall/Winter Festival Guide.

Longtime readers know that our International Festival Guide (published in the May issue) showcases numerous fests, many of which occur in the summer. This new November guide complements the May one, offering a detailed resource for planning musical travels from around Oct. 1 through winter of 2014.

To celebrate the launch of our guide, we're holding a "Get Festive Contest." Email us your most memorable jazz fest anecdotes—whether it's about a Wayne Shorter sax solo that blew your mind, or merely a lament about a lout who spilled beer down the back of your shirt. Feel free to hop on a soapbox and complain about concert etiquette, or anything else that stirs your passions. We encourage fans as well as musicians to participate in the contest. Send us an email (up to 250 words) that vividly describes an awesome or dreadful experience you had at a jazz festival. Our staff will pick the top five entries and send the writers a DownBeat T-shirt. A few lucky scribes will have their prose published in the First Take column.

Send your emails to [editor@downbeat.com](mailto:editor@downbeat.com), and be sure to write "Get Festive Contest" in the subject line.

In other DownBeat news, we'd like to introduce you to our new associate editor, Davis Inman (see Riffs on page 16). We're excited about Davis joining our team and helping us devise new, creative ways to share high-quality journalism with readers in print, in our digital and tablet editions, on our website and in our free monthly e-newsletter.

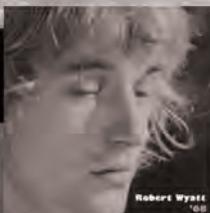
We believe the formula for DownBeat's continuing success involves generating innovations in-house, as well as responding to suggestions and criticism from our readers—many of whom love improvised music just as much as we do. Thanks in advance for sharing your thoughts with us. **DB**

Jason Moran at the Chicago Jazz Festival on Aug. 31



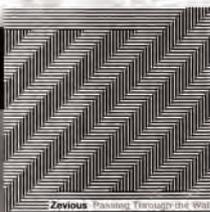
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## Chords & Discords >

### What Sucks?

My favorite section of DownBeat has always been the Blindfold Test. However, I often long for the “good old days” when Leonard Feather seemed to relish springing a free-jazz nugget on a mainstream artist. Phil Woods’ “no stars” critique of Anthony Braxton comes to mind (Oct. 14, 1971). These days, the combination of softball track choices and critical restraint from the Blindfold subject results in predictably bland and redundant responses.

In your September issue, David Sanborn gave 4 or 5 stars to *all* the tunes. That’s why it was so refreshing to read the October Blindfold Test with the always candid, and often critical, Branford Marsalis. What I love about Branford—aside from his wit, wisdom and brutal honesty—is that when he doesn’t like something, he doesn’t merely say, “I don’t like this, and therefore it must suck.” He supports his claims with a compelling amount of evidence and insight. For example, he explains why David “Fathead” Newman, even though he has a fat sound and was great with Ray Charles, is not really a jazz musician. And Branford’s assessment of the avant-garde—“When a guy says the establishment sucks, but he can’t play it anyway, I wonder, does it suck because it actually sucks or does it suck out of necessity?”—speaks volumes.

GORDON WEBB  
SANTA CLARA, CALIF.



Dan Ouellette (left) conducts a Blindfold Test with Branford Marsalis on July 14 at the North Sea Jazz Festival in Rotterdam, the Netherlands

### Chronicling Konitz

It is astonishing that saxophonist Lee Konitz has not been elected to the DownBeat Hall of Fame either by critics or readers. He is someone who has remained consistently creative from approximately 1945 to the present. He is now 85 years old and continues to offer creative music. I know readers may not be so knowledgeable about his music, but the critics certainly should be aware of his six-decade-long record of excellence.

JAMES BURPEE  
MINNEAPOLIS

#### Editor's Note:

Turn to page 55 to see our review of *Costumes Are Mandatory*, an album recorded by Lee Konitz, Ethan Iverson, Larry Grenadier and Jorge Rossy.

### The Unbearable Negativity of Being

Chords & Discords is officially the only depressing page in your great magazine. All I ever seem to read is people threatening to cancel their subscriptions or whining because some musician they don’t like got a good review. In your October issue, the most offensive letters were from Dick Mace, who excommunicated Bill Frisell from jazz, and Dave Dubinsky, who feels he must insult other music in order to praise Wynton Marsalis. It is unfair to mindlessly dismiss Wynton’s entire output, but it is equally unfair to condemn all of free-jazz as “fleeting, unrecognizable nonsense.” The great Czech writer Milan Kundera once said that all over the world now, people would rather judge than understand. When he made that statement, I wonder if he had just read that month’s Chords & Discords.

TONY ALEXANDER  
NORTH MIAMI BEACH, FLA.

### A Love of Trucks

Perhaps David Zivan could explain why he only gave 3 ½ stars to *Made Up Mind* by the Tedeschi Trucks Band (Reviews, October). Zivan didn’t have a single reservation about it. This was another example of an album losing 1 ½ stars simply because it isn’t jazz.

KEITH PENHALLOW  
CANBERRA, AUSTRALIA

### Corrections

- In the October issue, a review of *Out Here* (Mack Avenue) by the Christian McBride Trio misspelled the name McBride and a word in the album title.
- In the Student Music Guide in our October issue, the faculty list for California Institute of the Arts (CalArts) should have included Charlie Haden, who is also the founder of the CalArts Jazz Program.

DOWNBEAT REGRETS THE ERRORS.

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# The

## Inside

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# Beat

## WBGO Listeners Travel Far and Wide

Since 1979, Newark, N.J., public radio station WBGO 88.3 FM has served listeners with quality, award-winning jazz programming. As the station has expanded online via [wbgo.org](http://wbgo.org), its reputation as a leader in jazz broadcasting has grown exponentially—so much so that WBGO has ventured into new vistas by way of a series of travel packages to key jazz festival destinations.

Launched as “A Musical Journey Around the World,” WBGO Travel booked and hosted trips last summer to the Montreal Jazz Festival and Newport Jazz Festival. Future trips include a Dec. 26–Jan. 2 travel package to the Umbria Jazz Winter Festival in Orvieto, Italy, as well as an excursion to Jazz on the Mountain in Mohonk, N.Y. (Jan. 17–20).

Although the station has broadcast from the Montreal Jazz Festival and has sponsored trips to various festival destinations in the past, such innovations were not without their share of growing pains. “We had partnered many years ago with a travel company and did travel,” explained WBGO acting President and CEO Amy Niles. “And I heard excellent things about our travel program. But a little before the recession, it fizzled out. It wasn’t happening as well as it should’ve been and we dropped it as an initiative.”

After some tweaking and retooling, the radio station gave it a revamped approach and took a fresh perspective toward offering travel opportunities to jazz fans and station members. “I’m the kind of traveler who doesn’t like to go on tours or go to touristy places,” Niles continued. “I love going to different countries, different cities and to experience things through the eyes of an insider. So we thought that anyone can go to a jazz festival, but how often do you get to go to a jazz festival and really experience it from the inside?”

WBGO acts as a cultural concierge for attendees, providing them with an all-inclusive experience that includes first-class accommodations, meals, concert tickets and the opportunity to meet jazz musicians and festival producers.



WBGO listeners Shirley Hobson (left) and Janice Foster at the Newport Jazz Festival on Aug. 3 in Newport, R.I.

COURTESY WBGO

“I totally enjoyed myself at WBGO’s Newport, R.I., weekend,” said Janice Foster of Staten Island, N.Y. “The station even found me a suitable roommate and we enjoyed the festival together. I haven’t been to the Newport Jazz Festival since the ‘60s, when there was only one stage. I am so happy that it has continued on and that WBGO is around to keep this music alive.”

Robyn Reid, a retail planner from New Jersey, said, “Some people have sticker shock when they look at the prices. But when you look at all the shows you can attend, three meals a day, having dinner with the artists at your table—when you break it all down, it’s a great value. From soup to nuts, WBGO thinks of everything.”

Looking to the future, special events are planned for WBGO’s 35th anniversary in 2014 and also the Montreal Jazz Festival’s 35th. Festival destinations in South Africa, Brazil, Belgium and Napa Valley are currently being considered as well.

“It’s a very welcoming, family- and user-friendly experience,” said Niles. “We make it easy and comfortable for people. We want them to enjoy what we do as much as we do.”

—Eric Harabadian

## Riffs >



Dick Hyman

**Jazzin' at the Logan:** The University of Chicago Presents is inaugurating the Jazz at the Logan concert series as part of its 2013–14 season. The program includes The Bad Plus (Oct. 25), Anat Cohen (Nov. 24), Rudresh Mahanthappa Quartet (Dec. 6), Ambrose Akinmusire Project (March 7) and a double bill with Dick Hyman and the Bill Charlap Trio (May 30).

**Details:** [chicagopresents.uchicago.edu](http://chicagopresents.uchicago.edu)

**New On the Beat:** Davis Inman has joined the DownBeat staff as associate editor. A 2005 graduate of the Columbia Publishing Course in New York, Inman previously worked as a contributing editor at the Nashville-based music magazine *American Songwriter*.

**RIP Albert Murray:** The acclaimed jazz critic and novelist died in Harlem on Aug. 18 at age 97. Murray co-authored Count Basie's autobiography, *Good Morning Blues*, which was published in 1985, a year after Basie's death. Murray mentored young writers and musicians, including Wynton Marsalis, and he helped launch the jazz program at Lincoln Center in 1987.

**Artist Connections:** As part of the SFJAZZ Center's 2013–14 season, resident artistic director Jason Moran will perform in four different configurations: with the Ralph Alessi Baida Quartet (Nov. 21), with Cassandra Wilson (Nov. 22), with Comedy & Jazz featuring Marina Franklin and Faizon Love (Nov. 23) and with Randy Weston and Billy Harper (Nov. 24). Other highlights of SFJAZZ Center's new season include three performances by Eddie Palmieri—in a septet with Donald Harrison (Nov. 29), Palmieri's Salsa Big Band (Nov. 30) and in a septet with Alfredo De La Fe (Dec. 1)—plus a four-night residency by Chucho Valdés & The Afro-Cuban Messengers (Jan. 30–Feb. 2). **Details:** [sfjazz.org](http://sfjazz.org)

**Live Masters:** The 2013–14 NEA Jazz Masters Live program will provide \$75,000 in grants to six nonprofit organizations to present NEA Jazz Masters at performance and educational activities. Grantees include the Burlington Discover Jazz Festival, the Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts, the Lionel Hampton Jazz Festival at the University of Idaho, the Monterey Jazz Festival, the New Mexico Jazz Festival and SFJAZZ. **Details:** [arts.gov](http://arts.gov)

## Caught >



Adam Makowicz onstage at Caramoor

GABE PALACCO

# Piano Virtuosity Abounds at 20th Annual Caramoor Jazz Festival

**IN ITS TWO DECADES OF OPERATION, NEW** York state's Caramoor Jazz Festival has at times struggled to be heard. But as George Wein's Newport New York and similar events recede in memory, Caramoor's programs of undiluted jazz are gaining wider notice in the city and beyond—owing in no small part to their presentation of pianists.

In recent years, Caramoor's 1,700-seat Venetian Theater and 300-seat Spanish Courtyard have hosted a range of leading keyboard titans. This year, its 20th edition, the jazz festival kept the pianistic faith. From July 26–28, it offered the mix of style, sensibility, tone and temperament that festival-goers have come to rely on. Less expected, perhaps, was the focus it placed on the meaning and value of virtuosity.

Festival organizers dubbed the July 27 program as "The Language of Virtuosity," and that day offered the heaviest concentration of pianists: Adam Makowicz, Vijay Iyer and Benito Gonzalez.

Makowicz, a native of Poland who made a big splash in New York in the late 1970s and '80s but has been heard only rarely in the city more recently, set the benchmark for virtuosic display. On flag-wavers like "Just One Of Those Things," his ability to command the keyboard without resorting to gratuitous gestures was reminiscent of Art Tatum. As the set unfolded, it was clear that an equally apt comparison was to Erroll Garner.

Drawing largely on standards, Makowicz served up the slightly wayward intros, rich tremolos and cascading chords that Garner favored. Makowicz strengthened the identification by offering two Garner tunes: "Misty" and the lesser-known "Dreamy," his encore and the only piece on which he moved out of a trio format and into a solo role.

Despite the vintage Garnerisms, Makowicz's "Dreamy" was not imitative but evocative—no surprise, perhaps, given that his roots are more Chopin than Joplin. But the solo performance also reminded Makowicz-watchers of what had been missing from the set: his Tatumesque stride.

Gonzalez and pianist Luis Perdomo brought to the solo front a touch of Tatumesque sparkle as well, albeit with a regional twist, in remarkably fluid rep-

resentations of the rhythms of their shared homeland, Venezuela. In a short set, Gonzalez briefly placed those rhythms front and center before relegating them to subtext status in a respectable if attenuated survey of modern jazz piano.

Perdomo responded with a wider vocabulary during his festival-opening set on July 26. On Miles Davis' "Solar," he was in an expansive mood, articulating a series of statements in extended unison runs, flashes of Baroque counterpoint and, at one point, a left hand that swung into a freewheeling walk.

Pianist Elio Villafranca's July 28 set featured two percussionists and drummer Lewis Nash, a juggernaut alternately supporting and rising above the remainder of the septet, the Jass Syncopators. Riding the wave, Villafranca grabbed his moments of virtuosity largely outside the solo spotlight, negotiating the intricacies of comping within the limits defined in some measure by Steve Turre's shells.

Performing solo as part of a July 28 presentation with the Mingus Big Band, pianist Helen Sung had to establish her bona fides on an improvised pastiche of tunes that reflected Mingus' famously strong personality, "Old Portrait" and "Roland Kirk's Message." Both pieces had the added weight of provenance, being drawn from his only piano album, *Mingus Plays Piano*. Nonetheless, Sung emerged smartly, with vivid and colorful renderings.

Like Sung, Iyer has something of the painter in him, but his work frequently is oriented toward abstraction. On "Work" and "Golden Sunset"—songs by composers he described as heroes, Monk and Andrew Hill, respectively—he leaned heavily on thickly slathered chords that dwelled deep in the lower register, a dense mix broken only occasionally by wisps of upper-register tone clusters that vanished or transformed themselves into lines that snaked their way back down the keyboard.

If Iyer was the abstract expressionist on those tunes, he was the pointillist on others. Notable among them was John Coltrane's "Giant Steps," which found him spraying melodic bits and harmonic fragments across his keyboard canvas until a complete sonic picture took shape. —Phillip Lutz

## Dresden-Based 'Baby' Sommer Pays Homage to Percussionists

As one of the pillars of European jazz and a key force in the development of the continent's free-jazz aesthetic, it's a little surprising that German drummer Günter "Baby" Sommer uses his recently released fourth solo album *Dedications—Hörmusik IV* (Intakt) to pay homage to eight percussionists he counts as important influences. The Dresden-based drummer is as active as ever, continuing his collaborations with players from around the globe, but he's not above contemplating his long career. "At the age of 70, I am old enough to confess who deeply influenced my way to becoming a musician," he said. "I am at the age to honor all of these old masters and to carry some of these names to my audience around the world."

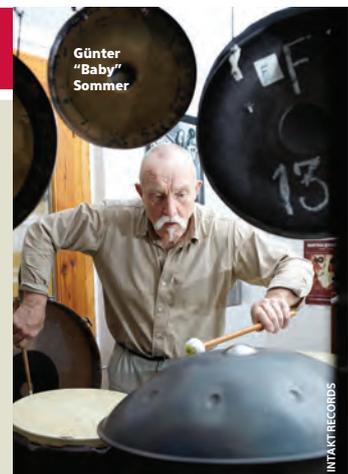
The new recording begins with a dedication to the drummer who provided him with his own nickname, the

pioneering New Orleans percussionist Baby Dodds, moving on through the history of jazz to salute Philly Joe Jones, Pierre Favre, Art Blakey, Paul Lovens, Han Bennink, Ed Blackwell and Max Roach. "In each piece I tried to show something of the sound, rhythm or character of the original," said Sommer. "This does not mean to make a copy, but I tried to transfer their personality into my own language." On most of the pieces, Sommer adds English-language spoken word, sometimes describing how a particular drummer impacted his own conception, sometimes articulating abstract musical sounds to flesh out his portrait.

The album closes with a piece titled "Selfportrait" where the words are spoken in German. "The music from some of these drummers [was] like stories to me, and I myself feel like

a storyteller as well," Sommer said. "In this piece, I am talking about my life as a traveling musician, going around the world and meeting different people. The words were written and spoken in a kind of Dadaism—only German people can understand, and sometimes, not even them!"

The solo recording comes on the heels of one of Sommer's most ambitious, beautiful and meaningful projects of his career, *Songs For Kommemo* (Intakt), a song-based effort meant to memorialize the brutal 1943 massacre of the Greek town's inhabitants by Nazi soldiers. The drummer was invited to perform in Kommemo in summer 2008 for a percussion festival organized by Nikos Toulaitos. Once there, he met the mayor, who asked Sommer if he knew the history of the town. The drummer was so disturbed by what he heard he initially felt that as



a German the only respectable thing to do was depart immediately. Instead he stuck around, met townsfolk and expressed his empathy. The music on *Songs For Kommemo*, recorded with Greek reedist Floros Floridis and singer Savina Yannatou, emerged as his touching response to the massacre. "The tragedy of Kommemo has strongly influenced my actual thinking and feeling," said Sommer. "All my life as a musician, I've tried to carry my political and especially pacifistic attitude into my music."

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# Engineer Jim Anderson Helps Players 'Make a Great Sound'

A curious black-and-white photo of unlabeled tape reels hangs in the office of 10-time Grammy award-winning recording engineer Jim Anderson. A professor at New York University's Clive Davis Institute of Recorded Music, Anderson is also this year's chair of the annual AES (Audio Engineering Society) convention. When Anderson worked with the reel-to-reel tapes for the reissue of Miles Davis' 1971 album *Live-Evil*, he discovered something unusual, memorializing his find in a glossy 4- by 6-inch snapshot.

"The *Live-Evil* reels were originally lost, then found," Anderson said. "Teo Macero had edited out all of Gary Bartz's saxophone solos. The splices were evident. Teo said, 'I am not trying to sell a saxophone player; I am trying to sell a trumpet player.' I put the solos back in. This newer version is the complete takes."

Such discoveries (and saves) are typical for Anderson, whose resume includes Patricia Barber, Terence Blanchard, Joe Henderson, Maria Schneider, McCoy Tyner and the Muppets. As a four-time chair of AES, Anderson understands the value of education and networking.

"At the 1978 AES convention, I met the most amazing people in the industry," he said. "You often get ideas for projects or learn different techniques. After a while you become the one people come to, and the wheels keep turning. AES really fueled my early interest in recording."

**How have engineering students, and what you present to them at NYU, changed over the years?**

Students now come in better prepared and/or with more experience. Whether that experience is a good foundation is another story. You may know how to run Pro Tools, but you may not know why certain choices are made. I am trying to teach them how to listen, and how to be mentally prepared to talk about a recording. We also focus generally on working in the studio, and how to get the best recording out of an artist. Students today come out as more than engineers. It is much more holistic: They study business, history and criticism, and production. Then they can focus their interests.

**As an engineer, is your goal to capture a live performance?**

Very much so. A record isn't going to sell worse if there is a buildup of 250Hz on the piano; it's really about the performance. I use Pro Tools, of course, but if we are doing something that has a repeat, I will push the artist to play it straight through. The brain and the ear can detect that slight variation—that's what music is all about. I'm not here to make music the easiest way possible or cut corners. I am here to help musicians make a great sound.

**What are some basic tips for getting a great sound in a home studio?**

Good recordings can be made with inexpensive gear. My first recordings were made with Electro-Voice 635s, an omni-directional dynamic microphone. One of those recordings got me my job at NPR; it was being able to listen to a big band and knowing where to put the first two mics, then the other four. I tell musicians to look at an EV

RE50/B or EV 635. An RE50 is almost bulletproof and it's well isolated—a \$179 mic. It works well.

**Which do you prefer, minimal or multi/close miking?**

I've done both. I am great fan of lots of mics, but just because you place a lot of mics in a session doesn't mean you have to use them all. They're a resource in your mixing palette. If I am recording a large ensemble and I am only using a pair, I am not doing my job, because I will need to balance the orchestra in the mix. You start with a pair, then add section mics, then see what else you need.

**How would you record a saxophone-led quintet if you only had six microphones?**

First, make sure you can hear the leader clearly. Then I would ask if they perform together regularly. That will be key to getting them to play within a dynamic. If you listen to *Live-Evil*, for instance, Jack [DeJohnette] is playing like crazy, and Keith [Jarrett], but they are all playing as a band, not as individuals. So they have a dynamic. You probably could have put up a pair of mics and gotten a pretty decent band sound. I once recorded the Woody Herman big band at Avery Fisher Hall with [six microphones]. I had a solo mic up front, a mic on the piano, a pair in the audience, and an X/Y pair on the band. Those 15 pieces played like a single unit. If everyone in that sax quintet is playing in a controlled dynamic, you could then put one mic on the piano, one on the bass, one over the drums positioned properly, then on the sax, trumpet and one room mic. I like to work with musicians who have a dynamic and a developed sound. —Ken Micallef

# Chicago Jazz Festival Reveres Tradition, Embraces the New

**AFTER THREE-AND-A-HALF DECADES OF** hosting international stars and hometown heroes, the Chicago Jazz Festival made a crucial upgrade. While the free Labor Day weekend event had previously been held in Grant Park, this year's concerts were mostly staged in the newer Millennium Park a few blocks north.

The festival's basic structure remained the same: headliners on the main stage in the evening, and other acts at side stages during the afternoon. While the sound at Grant Park's Petrillo Music Shell had been substandard, Millennium Park's Jay Pritzker Pavilion is an acoustic marvel. The festival's daytime stages used to be in less-than-comfortable locations; now they're in more commodious tents—one of which has been named in honor of the late Chicago jazz icon Von Freeman. That combination of revering tradition while embracing new ideas emerged as the weekend's primary theme.

On opening night at the Pritzker on Aug. 29, former Chicagoan Jack DeJohnette led a supergroup, and rare local reunion, of AACM veterans Muhal Richard Abrams, Roscoe Mitchell and Henry Threadgill along with bassist Larry Gray. Each contributed a composition, and even though they only had a couple of days to get acquainted, their pieces seemed written to everybody's strengths. DeJohnette's fluid drumming tied together Mitchell's extended flights of circular breathing and Threadgill's ethereal turn on bass flute.

Another early AACM member, trumpeter Wadada Leo Smith, returned to Chicago to perform his civil rights epic, *Ten Freedom Summers* (released last year on CD by Cuneiform) on Aug. 30. The tensions created by the string section and Wadada's Golden Quartet members reflected the complexities inherent in America's civil rights struggle but set a new bar for jazz-and-classical hybrids.

Pianist/conductor Satoko Fujii brought her extended large-band composition *Ichigo-Ichie* to the festival, which she performed at the Freeman

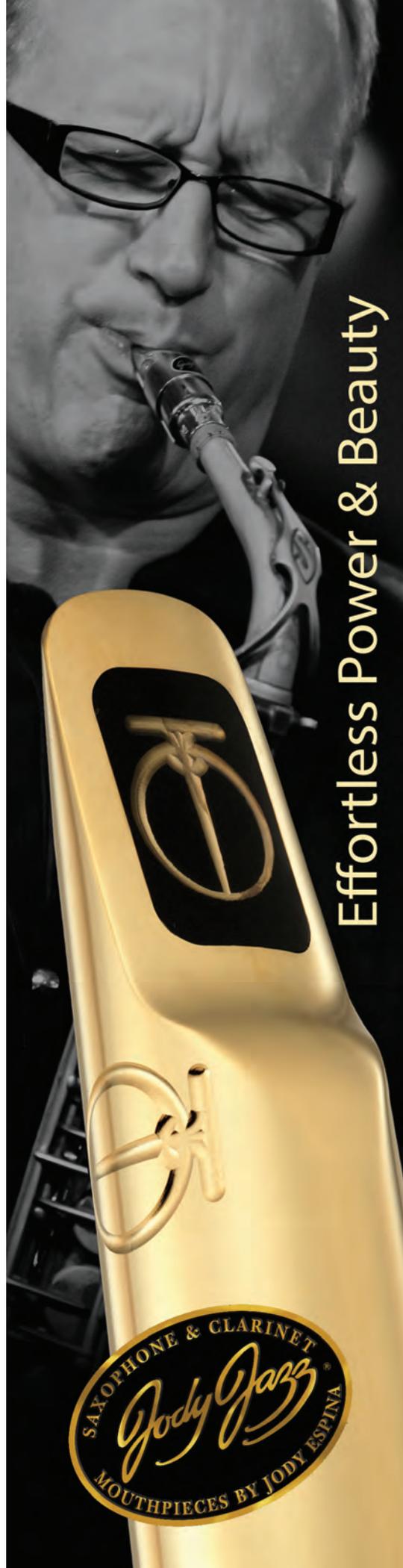
Pavilion. Billed as Satoko Fujii's Orchestra Chicago, the ensemble included her regular working Japanese/French band with a host of locally based players. The piece moved as a series of waves that shifted in tone at surprising moments. She let the gradually changing dynamics of the piece frame extroverted solos from saxophonists Ernest Dawkins and David Rempis.

Young artists' tributes to jazz masters was another recurring theme. Veteran tenor saxophonist Jimmy Heath flowed freely behind drummer Winard Harper's extroverted forays. Chicago-based saxophonist Geof Bradfield's *Melba!* featured his interpretations of the late Melba Liston's arrangements. Her former colleague Randy Weston made a guest appearance, and his dark registers added a new dimension to the tribute. Jason Moran sat in with Charles Lloyd and Friends; the group's loose approach gently prodded the saxophonist's warm and indirect approach to melody. Moran's Fats Waller tribute brought new energy to such classics as "Ain't Misbehavin'," despite the distraction of onstage dance performers.

Chicago drummer Hamid Drake, this year's artist in residence, also paid tribute to his heroes, including Kidd Jordan. While his collaborations with the saxophonist, bassist William Parker and pianist Cooper-Moore go far back, they found new ways to challenge each other at the Freeman Pavilion on Aug. 31. Drake brought his Bindu: Reggaeology project to the Pritzker on Sept. 1. Equally experienced in reggae and jazz, Drake found new and unexpected ways to combine the two genres. Also on Sept. 1, Robert Glasper challenged the audience with his new rap-influenced take on jazz fusion.

Singer Gregory Porter's r&b-inflected baritone won over the audience without resorting to gimmicks. An enthusiastic response to the material from his new album, *Liquid Spirit* (Blue Note), was an important step in the ascending trajectory of his red-hot career.

—Aaron Cohen



Effortless Power & Beauty

Jack DeJohnette at the Jay Pritzker Pavilion on Aug. 29



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## IN MEMORY



Marian McPartland

DOWNBEAT ARCHIVES

# Pianist, Broadcaster Marian McPartland Made Vivid Impressions on Fans

**I**n 1938, when Marian McPartland was studying classical piano at London's Guildhall School of Music and Dance, thinking that jazz might be her real calling, she auditioned at songwriter Billy Mayerl's School of Modern Syncopation. Mayerl was so impressed he invited the 20-year-old musician to go on tour.

This would not be the first time McPartland, who died Aug. 20 at age 95, would make a vivid first impression. Host for 32 years of the longest-running arts program on National Public Radio, *Marian McPartland's Piano Jazz*, McPartland was the recipient of a Grammy Award for Lifetime Achievement and a Peabody Award (the highest honor in radio). In 2010, she was named an Officer of the Most Excellent Order of the British Empire by Queen Elizabeth II. McPartland recorded more than 50 albums.

"For 30 years, she spread the word as well as Willis Conover did," remarked Bill Crow, McPartland's bassist in the 1950s, referring to the Voice of America jazz broadcaster.

Born Margaret Marian Turner on March 20, 1918, in Slough, Berkshire, England, McPartland was raised in the well-to-do suburb of Bromley, Kent, 12 miles southeast of London. Gifted with perfect pitch, from age 3 McPartland began mimicking her mother's piano renditions of Chopin. She studied violin from age 9 but did not receive formal piano instruction until she was 16. From 1935-'38, McPartland studied at the Guildhall and, after touring with Mayerl, worked in English music halls until 1944, when she went to Europe with a USO troupe. In Belgium, she met and married Chicago trad-jazz cornetist Jimmy McPartland and moved to Chicago with him in 1946, where Marian—known then by the stage name Marian Page—played in Jimmy's band. In 1950,

the McPartlands moved to New York and Marian formed a modern trio of her own, attracting the attention of critic Leonard Feather, who wrote in a famous *DownBeat* profile that she had "three strikes against her"—she was white, female and British—which McPartland took as a challenge.

In 1952, she began a long engagement at the Hickory House, the last of the 52nd Street clubs, and over the next decade became an institution there, working in a classic trio with Crow and future Dave Brubeck drummer Joe Morello and recording for Savoy and Capitol. In 1958, she was one of three women pictured in the famous group photograph *A Great Day in Harlem*. In the 1960s and '70s, McPartland wrote articles for *DownBeat* and threw herself into jazz education, headlining the first convention of the National Association of Jazz Educators in 1973. After her 1967 divorce from Jimmy, she started her own label, Halcyon, stunning fans and critics with a freer style that often led to comparisons to Bill Evans. In 1978, on the recommendation of her longtime friend, composer Alec Wilder, she was invited by South Carolina public radio to begin taping *Piano Jazz*.

"Alec Wilder, Whitney Balliett [the late New Yorker jazz critic] and myself were the first artists to highlight the Great American Songbook epitomized by the great Fred Astaire," Tony Bennett wrote in an email. Bennett recorded McPartland's tune "Twilight World" and later recorded with her on his own label, Improv.

From 1978 to 2010, McPartland interviewed and played duets with everyone from Eubie Blake to Cecil Taylor on *Piano Jazz*, which at its peak aired on more than 200 stations (the show is still in reruns). Her genteel accent and theatrically self-deprecating manner were leavened by a cutting wit. Said former NPR entertainment executive Murray Horwitz: "For an hour, she made you feel she and her guest were having the best time of any two people in the world and that they were happy to have you along for the ride."

*Piano Jazz* catapulted McPartland to fame. She began appearing at A-list clubs, recorded for Concord Jazz and appeared at festivals in Europe and Japan. She collected awards on a regular basis, including recognition as a 2000 National Endowment for the Arts Jazz Master. She performed for two presidents at the White House and, in 1997, for the Supreme Court.

Bill Douglass, one of a long list of great McPartland bassists (Eddie Gomez, Steve Swallow and Steve LaSpina were three others), said of McPartland's style: "It was always a dialogue, just sharing music together, no vanity about it, just in the moment and playing."

McPartland was an ardent champion of women, whom she regularly featured on *Piano Jazz*, encouraging everyone from Joanne Brackeen to Diana Krall.

McPartland died in her Port Washington home "surrounded by loved ones," reported Jimmy McPartland's granddaughter Donna Gourdol, who said a public memorial is being planned to take place early next year in New York.

—Paul de Barros



## Pianist Cedar Walton Dies at Age 79

Cedar Walton died Aug. 19 in Brooklyn, N.Y., at age 79. A pianist and composer who was a major contributor to the hard-bop jazz movement that came to prominence in the late 1950s and early '60s, Walton was admired for his keyboard skills, tasteful solo chops, first-rate writing and utter command of harmony. He was named an NEA Jazz Master in 2010.

In addition to his notable work as a leader, Walton played and recorded with Art Farmer and Benny Golson's Jazztet, Art Blakey's Jazz Messengers and such jazz giants as J.J. Johnson, John Coltrane, Sonny Rollins, Kenny Dorham, Lee Morgan, Dexter Gordon, Ornette Coleman, Gene Ammons and Sonny Stitt.

As a composer, Walton wrote the jazz classics "Mosaic," "Ugetsu," "The Maestro," "Iron Clad," "Ojos de Rojas," "Midnight Waltz" and "Hand In Glove," many of which are routinely covered by jazz artists.

Of his years spent under Blakey's leadership, Walton told DownBeat in January 1981: "The pianist, at least when I was with [Blakey], really had to be strong; you had to time your playing to be heard over his powerful style. It was when I joined Blakey that I started gaining power and strength. ... It was really a great time for us [Walton and trumpeter Freddie Hubbard, saxophonist Wayne Shorter and trombonist Curtis Fuller]. We were encouraged to learn how to be leaders, and Art was a good model for us. He was good at programming the pieces we played, and he was good with audiences. And I think we all inherited that."

Walton continued to play and record on the world stage until this year. —Ed Enright

## Sax Icon Bert Wilson (1939–2013) Specialized in Extended Techniques

Bert Wilson, a saxophone guru who taught extended techniques to players such as Lenny Pickett and Jeff Coffin, died of a heart attack June 30 in Olympia, Wash. He was 73. The ebullient reedman had been confined to a wheelchair since he was 4, but the lifelong crippling effects of polio could not stop him from playing with everyone from John Coltrane to Sonny Simmons and Barbara Donald.

Wilson taught himself to play fluently through four-and-a-half octaves on the tenor saxophone and to produce multiphonic chord clusters. "He was an amazing musician," said Pickett, who studied informally with Wilson in the late '60s. "And completely original."

Born in 1939 in Evansville, Ind., into a vaudeville family, Wilson began playing saxophone in 1958 after moving to Los Angeles. Wilson formed his first band in 1961 with bassist George Morrow; the group became the house band at the Gas House in Venice Beach. In 1966, he was spirited away to New York City by drummer James Zitro. In 1968, Wilson returned to California, this time to Berkeley, where he recorded with drummer Smiley Winters. He returned to New York state in 1975 but found it difficult being alone. In 1979, a group of musicians in Olympia, Wash., raised money to bring Wilson to their city, where he spent the remainder of his life teaching, performing and recording with his bands Rebirth and Bebop Revisited and running an impromptu jazz academy on Percival Street.

Saxophonist Jeff Coffin recalled his first exposure to that scene. "As I got closer to the door, I started hearing this incredible music," he said. "There's about eight or nine people playing and just as many hanging out, listening. He would play the upper extensions of the chords and take that to a very high level. I've still never heard anybody like him." —Paul de Barros



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# HARRIS EISENSTADT

## Intellect and Emotion



Any encounter with drummer Harris Eisenstadt—whether in person or through his music—provides evidence that he is a “thinking man,” to borrow a phrase from trumpeter Nate Wooley.

The prolific Eisenstadt leads multiple bands, with Wooley a member of his most longstanding group, the quintet *Canada Day*. Wooley traded horn for pen to write liner notes for the eponymous first album by another of Eisenstadt’s groups, the *September Trio*, which features saxophonist Ellery Eskelin and pianist Angelica Sanchez. Wooley wrote: “He doesn’t produce unneeded complexity in his compositions or his playing to give us mental gymnastics to follow; he instead puts his incredible natural energy and intelligence into creating music that is thoughtful, unique, well-constructed, meaningful and somehow simple sounding.”

There is indeed a balance of thought and feeling in Eisenstadt’s music, particularly with the *September Trio*. That first album features wonderfully atmospheric, poetic ballads. Eskelin’s tenor has a husky lyricism, while Sanchez’s harmonic choices eschew cliché. Eisenstadt’s playing reveals a drummer with a composer’s ear, for whom color is as vital as propulsion. The group’s second release, *The Destructive Element* (Clean Feed), ups the ante; the album is melody-rich and blue-hued but more volatile than its predecessor.

Seated outdoors at a bar in Ditmas Park, the charming Brooklyn neighborhood he calls home with his family, the 38-year-old Eisenstadt talked about his open style of composing for the *September*

*Trio*: “Ellery plays the notes, but his distinctive sound and sense of time shape the music. For the new record, I encouraged Ellery to be as bluesy as he wanted to be and for Angie to be as gospel-y as she wanted. Both of them can deal with lyrical material but naturally subvert it, too, through timbre and by expanding forms. The idea is to meld lyricism with abstraction—it doesn’t have to be either/or.”

Eskelin, a veteran bandleader in his own right, was drawn to the ballad-like aspect of Eisenstadt’s writing for the trio, as well as the sense of space and freedom. “As a saxophonist, that setting is really conducive to going for a fuller tone—there is a lot of air around each instrument, and this becomes part of the fabric of the band’s sound,” Eskelin said. “Harris also plays with close attention to dynamics, which I appreciate greatly in a drummer.”

*Canada Day*—which these days includes Wooley, tenor saxophonist Matt Bauder, vibraphonist Chris Dingman and bassist Garth Stevenson—has released three albums as a quintet, plus one as a textured octet with alto sax, trombone and tuba. *Canada Day Octet* (482 Music) begins with a drum solo, although it’s a characteristically singing, sculptural one. Eisenstadt’s music for *Canada Day* is compositionally oriented, yet has room for personal inflections in the playing.

Regarding *Canada Day*, Wooley said, “What Harris has done brilliantly is to keep the same band together over some years, which isn’t as easy as it seems. And he combines a growing knowledge of each player’s preferences for how they like to improvise with a talent for finding good ways to push us

into new areas, to force us to think in new ways. He knows how to hear someone’s voice in a new context. That has a lot to do with why his music always sounds fresh and vibrant.”

Eisenstadt’s newest band is the chamber-jazz outfit *Golden State*, with bassist Mark Dresser, flutist Nicole Mitchell and bassoonist Sara Schoenbeck. The group’s debut, *Golden State* (Songlines), is Eisenstadt’s 15th album as a leader since 2001. He has various connections with each member, most closely with Schoenbeck, who is his wife. Reflecting on the genesis of the band, Eisenstadt said, “The unusual instrumentation of flute, bassoon, bass and drums was intriguing—like, ‘What’s this going to sound like?’ I wanted to hear it. There is that post-Ellington thing to what I do in that I write for specific players, striving to take advantage of what the musicians can do.”

Continually expanding his palette, Eisenstadt has studied West African drumming, recorded an album with saxophonist Sam Rivers and percussionist Adam Rudolph (as the *Vista* trio) and composed a concerto for multiple drummers that will be performed with the Brooklyn Conservatory Community Orchestra for its premiere in November. As he pondered the challenges of making music as a career, Eisenstadt mentioned composer Arnold Schoenberg, the modernist icon who provided germinal inspiration for a couple of *September Trio* pieces. Schoenberg was a famous intellectual, but Eisenstadt cited another of the composer’s traits—tenacity—which is certainly a necessity for any questing artist.

—Bradley Bamberger

Players >

## MARIUS NESET

### Takes Flight

One of the most exciting moments of this year's Vossa Jazz Festival in Norway came in the city's retrooled movie house, Kino, where 27-year-old tenor saxophonist Marius Neset led the Trondheim Jazz Orchestra. The concert bolted into motion with the 15-minute piece "Birds," the bracing title track of Neset's recent album (on the Edition label). The composition is an intricate, driving work, full of progressive touches, layered rat-a-tat rhythms and a marshalling of ecstatic musical energy. Deep into the score, the tall Neset seized the stage for a solo teeming with the stuff for which he is becoming ever more famous: a blend of taste, virtuosity, ideas and controlled power, all delivered with swaying intensity. He rarely stands still—both metaphorically and literally.

A year earlier in the lovely lakeside town of Voss, Neset lit a different kind of fire when he played with his powerhouse smaller group Golden Xplosion in the festival's edgier venue, the Fraktgodson. In both cases, Neset lived up to his reputation as being one of the most commanding Norwegian musical thinkers to hit the scene in years.

Although Neset grew up in the nearby Norwegian town Bergen, he has been based in Copenhagen for the past decade, and he thinks of himself in culture-spanning terms. "I honestly don't think very much over whether I sound Norwegian, European, American or whatever," Neset asserted in an interview after his Voss show. "To me, it's all about music. I'm just trying to make as good and as personal songs as I can. I'm putting all my energy into that, where I include inspirations from music all over the world that I think sounds good.

"Of course, I grew up with Norwegian folk music, and Norwegian composers like Edvard Grieg. I'm actually becoming more and more inspired by his melodies and harmonies, which sometimes remind me of what modern jazz players today are doing."

Recently, Neset has been enjoying a neat convergence of critical and public acclaim.



"The last couple of years have been fantastic," he said. "It is a very good feeling to get so much recognition for my music, which I have been working on for many years. I always try to push myself harder, and my goal is always to make a better record than the last one, and hopefully this will continue for many years."

Neset's 2011 album *Golden Xplosion* (Edition) is designed with a compositional ear for structures and ideas linked to jazz, contemporary classical and other progressive music. That aesthetic is explored with even greater focus and overall conceptualist brio on his latest album, *Birds* (Edition).

"This is something that I always have been going for: making more complex stories, and integrating solos and improvisation as a part of the composition, instead of just playing over and over on a form. I try to think like a classical composer when I compose, with many details. What's difficult is to integrate freedom and spontaneity in a natural way; but when it works, it gives an incredible energy and freshness to the music."

At this stage of Neset's musical story—one honed over numerous years, but with a sudden buzz factor in the jazz world—he continues working with his band and projects such as the eclectic outfit JazzKamikaze. "I'm already working on a new record, and have plans for the record after that. I don't want to hurry. It takes time to make music and to compose music. To me, it's often a process of one or two years to get songs really finished. I'm probably very slow in that way, but I feel the songs have to develop in a natural way, and that always takes time.

"I don't know where I will be in 10 years, but I'll probably be doing the same thing as now: composing, recording and touring. I feel privileged to live a life like this."

—Josef Woodard



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## Players >



# HUTCHINSON ANDREW TRIO

*Rural Route*

Still enjoying the afterglow of winning the prestigious TD Grand Jazz Award at this year's Festival International de Jazz de Montreal, the members of the Hutchinson Andrew Trio are contemplating their next move. Bassist Kodi Hutchinson and drummer Karl Schwonik are on a Skype connection from Calgary, Alberta, and pianist Chris Andrew is on a dodgy cell phone line from further north, in Edmonton. There are plans for work with a string quartet, and a 2014 European tour is being discussed. All are aware that the award, in place since 1982, has helped propel the careers of musicians like David Virelles and John Stetch.

"New uniforms would be nice," deadpans Schwonik, the joker among them. "I hear lederhosen are very hip right now."

The trio, which also goes by the acronym HAT, is a band that has succeeded so far without being overly concerned with what is hip. Although each member has toured widely, HAT is resolutely centered in Alberta, which—the Banff International Workshop in Jazz and Creative Music aside—is not exactly a hotbed of jazz.

"We play in a lot of places where no jazz group has ever played," says Hutchinson. "We go to a lot of rural gigs, and have performed in more than 200 schools."

Schwonik grew up on a farm near Gwynne. "For me, Calgary is a big city," he says. He's being a bit disingenuous, given that he's studied in New York City, but his point is taken: These guys are quite happy living out of the jazz mainstream.

"Work-life balance is important to all of us," he says. "There's definitely a more relaxed atmosphere here. People are *nice* here." There's a beat and then he continues: "So we try not to be too nice in our music."

While the trio's music is suffused with the kind of pastoral space that reflects the geography of western Canada's prairies and foothills, Schwonik's drumming and the taut lines of Andrew's compositions bristle with energy.

Andrew says that pushing boundaries lies at the root of the band's existence. "When we started as a trio [in 2005, with Schwonik's former teacher, Sandro Dominelli, in the drum chair], it was because I really wanted to push myself creatively and challenge myself to be up front in a piano trio."

The concept clicked immediately for Hutchinson. "I was a big fan of Ray Brown from the Oscar Peterson Trio, and I loved Chris' writing. The music really came together quickly, and I loved the openness of working in this setting."

After collaborating with Dominelli on 2005's *Lost But Not Forgotten* and 2008's *Music Box* (both on Chronograph), the drummer decided to concentrate on his teaching at Edmonton's Grant MacEwan University, and the trio took two years off. During the hiatus, Andrew and Hutchinson found themselves working in Schwonik's band.

"When we thought about reforming HAT, there was no question that Karl was our first choice to replace Sandro," says Hutchinson. "He's a very athletic drummer, and bringing him on board really changed our sound."

When it came time to record HAT's third album, *Prairie Modern* (Chronograph), Schwonik made a recommendation that changed their sound even more.

Hutchinson recalls, "The music Chris had written just really seemed to suggest adding a saxophone as a fourth element, and Karl recommended asking Donny McCaslin, who he'd met while he was in New York."

"Their music and concept was very open," McCaslin wrote in an email. "I was impressed with the level of musicality and expression they all brought to the plate."

On six of the new album's 13 tracks, McCaslin adds his highly expressive voice, soaring above the band like a hawk on the contemplative "Mountain Rose" and driving the trio forward with a forceful, time-stretching solo on "Waltz For Clay."

"We were looking for someone to really push us and provide us with some creative growth," says Andrew.

"It's weird," says Schwonik, "but when I listened back to the album a couple of months after we were in the studio, Donny's playing made the songs sound like they are faster than they actually are, just because of the energy he brought to them."

Now, with *Prairie Modern* attracting positive reviews and the Montreal victory beginning to draw offers of work well beyond rural schools in Alberta, the trio is considering its future.

"We're excited about the possibilities," says Hutchinson. "But, mostly, we're excited our future is in our control."  
—James Hale

Players >

# MANSUR SCOTT

## An Open Door



Mansur Scott may be a senior citizen dealing with a disability—the result of a stroke he suffered more than 10 years ago—but the singer-percussionist is also someone who’s living in a dream. Before his accident, he had always been under the radar and had never really considered recording or touring.

All this changed one fateful night at St. Nick’s Pub on St. Nicholas Avenue at 149th Street in Harlem. At some point in the evening, the musicians on the bandstand asked him to join them. Scott reluctantly did. “He went up on stage and sang ‘In A Sentimental Mood’ and I was so touched because it was so different,” remembers trombonist Paul Zauner, who had come to the club to hear a longtime collaborator, pianist-singer Donald Smith. This happened to be the start of a successful musical relationship that has yet to bear all its fruits. “If it weren’t for Paul, I would have walked away,” says Scott. “He gave me a new lease on life. He opened a door for me and gave me the inspiration to go on.”

Until then, Scott had been an active member of the local jazz community, which earned him the title of “Jazz Mayor of Harlem.” Scott has no idea who came up with this nickname, but he seems to know everyone in the borough. Just drop the name of a musician who has ever lived in Harlem, and Scott will have at least one anecdote to share.

He is also a product of the drug culture that invaded the jazz world in the 1950s. In 1970, he received a 10-year conviction and spent five years in prison. Being scolded by legendary pianist Mary Lou Williams because of his lifestyle did not deter him. Later, he had a series of other legal problems.

Earlier this year saw the North American release of Scott’s debut, *Sometimes Forgotten, Sometimes Remembered* (Blujazz). The album first

came out in Europe on Zauner’s label, PAO. It features his Harlem Quartet playing a program of mostly standards. But the recording did not go as planned because of an unfortunate turn of events. “Some years ago, the mother of my children used to like a lot of these songs, and right when I got ready to do the recording, she got seriously sick, so I pulled them out,” he says. “I had a feeling about how I wanted them to sound, about the rhythmic patterns.” The record showcases Scott’s unique conversational style, ornamented with congas and small percussion instruments that he plays with his right hand—the stroke left him with a “lazy left side,” as he likes to call it. “I am a storyteller who happens to sing, too,” he says. “I try to bring out through the songs my feelings and experiences. I cannot tell a story I know nothing about.”

“Being in control of myself and in the moment” has become his life philosophy, which explains why he’s so averse to rehearsing. During this year’s appearance at the INNtöne Festival in Diersbach, Austria, Scott lamented that his cohorts insist on practicing before the performance. “I have so many stories to tell, I don’t have time to rehearse,” he says.

Now splitting his time between New York and Passau, Germany, Scott is enjoying every moment, taking nothing for granted. And there does not seem to be an end to his recent good fortunes. His next album, *Soulful Journey*, includes contributions from vocalist Gregory Porter, as well as Smith.

At Chicago’s Jazz Showcase in February, Scott performed Abbey Lincoln’s “Throw It Away,” a song that conveys his current state of being. Reflecting on his previous hardships, he seems to have an explanation for his new life direction: “Blessings come when you go through tough experiences. I am thankful for that [stroke] because it made me more aware of time and space.”

—Alain Drouot

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## FOR DECADES, IT HAS BEEN A

commonly held opinion that Chucho Valdés is one of the greatest jazz pianists out of Cuba. In the musical world at large, he's revered as a versatile virtuoso and as a founding conceptualist behind the iconic Cuban band Irakere, launched in the early '70s. Apparently, the veteran band-leader didn't get the memo about slowing down during his "golden years." Valdés, 71, is doing anything but resting on laurels or taking an easy route: His formidable creative imprint on the 2013 jazz scene, one of the more intriguing musical stories of the season, represents yet another new high in a varied and artistic life.

It has, in fact, been a year of highs and lows in Valdés' life, with the release of one of his finest albums yet, the aptly named *Border-Free* (Jazz Village), with a striking version of his band the Afro-Cuban Messengers, but also the passing of his legendary Cuban musician father, Bebo, who died of complications of Alzheimer's disease on March 22 at age 94. *Border-Free* is the latest of Chucho's acclaimed albums since leaving Irakere in 2005, including the duet with his father, *Juntos Para Siempre* (Calle 54) in 2008, and 2010's *Chucho's Steps* (Four Quarters), both of which won Grammy awards. *Border-Free* ups the ante of artistic breadth, featuring songs written in tribute to his father, mother Pilar Valdés and grandmother, while also exploring multiple global byways.

A summer tour, leaving a wake of critical acclaim and happy audiences, took Valdés and his percussion-enriched Afro-Cuban Messengers through the Canadian and European jazz festivals, and select stops in the United States, culminating in a show at the Hollywood Bowl on Aug. 14. Before 12,500 listeners on a balmy night, Valdés' mighty band delivered the unique, idiom-stitching message put forth on *Border-Free*, which blends strong Afro-Cuban traditions with jazz, flamenco, Gnawa music, Yoruban rituals and swatches of the classical music that Valdés studied as a child prodigy in pre-Castro Cuba.

Converging forces of family, cultural history and his own new momentum in his musical life coalesced during his 45-minute Bowl set, opening for Natalie Cole, who was promoting her new Spanish-language disc, *En Español* (Verve). There was a strong personal link to the booking: When she invited the pianist to sit in with her massive ensemble on the tune "Quizás, Quizás, Quizás," Cole mentioned to the audience that her father, Nat King Cole, and Valdés' father had worked together in Cuba in the late '50s, and

**DownBeat:** That was a powerful show at the Hollywood Bowl, and there was an intriguing moment when you sat in with Natalie Cole. What was the connection your fathers had in Cuba?

**Chucho Valdés:** It was beautiful. Nat King Cole recorded in Cuba in 1958, but he had come a previous time [in 1956]. When he first came, my father was the pianist at the Tropicana and they made a very strong connection. My father was also a big jazz artist. [Cole] had a big influence on him, and so did Art Tatum and Bud Powell, and he would accompany Nat King Cole on his shows.

When he came in '58, my father had left the Tropicana [where Bebo was long the musical director]. One of the requirements Nat King Cole had was that Bebo would be his pianist. And then my father wrote four arrangements for him. I was in the recording sessions, at 16 years old. I was already playing piano and had been for a long time. For me, it was unforgettable.

After more than 50 years, this situation came that his daughter was going to sing and that I could accompany her on one of the songs—this was unbelievable. I was in heaven.

**DB:** Was Nat King Cole's piano playing influential for you?

**CV:** I think it was to everybody. For me, for Bill Evans, Oscar Peterson and to my father, he was huge. He was a fantastic pianist.

**DB:** Do you appreciate a situation like the one at the Hollywood Bowl, where you are bringing sophisticated jazz to a large audience, which might not be familiar with jazz, per se, or Afro-Cuban music?

**CV:** I think, for us, it was a challenge, because it wasn't a specific jazz festival, for an audience accustomed to hearing that type of music. But we viewed it as our job and I think that they liked it a lot. We were lucky.

**DB:** Your new album, *Border-Free*, is very ambitious in that it is personal and family-related, but it also reaches out into the world. Did you start this project with such an ambitious concept, or did it expand as you got more involved in making the album?

**CV:** This concept really started with Irakere. With Irakere, I was working with a lot of elements and I fused them. This is a second phase, and it is in a deeper and different sense, maybe more mature because of my age and my experiences. There is a mix of emotions.

I have been very sensitive, because a year before my father died, my

# CHUCHO

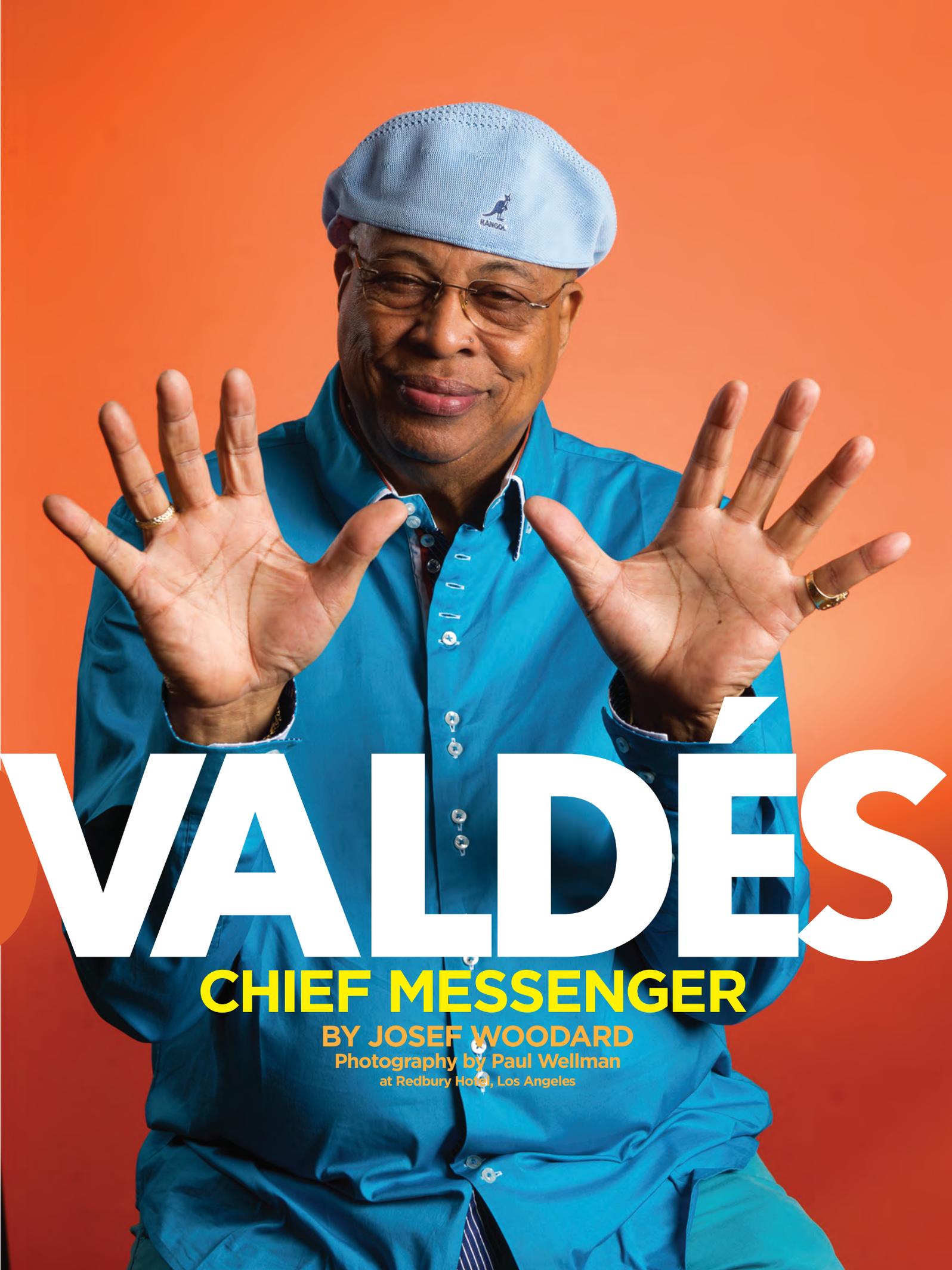
were mutual fans.

Two days after his Hollywood Bowl triumph, an affable and open Valdés—a tall, commanding yet friendly presence—sat down for an expansive interview in the comfy, pool table-equipped "Library" bar in Hollywood's Redbury Hotel. He spoke through a translator, Humberto Capiro, but managed to convey much non-verbally, as well. Extra-linguistic communication is a specialty of his, needless to say.

Coincidentally, the iconic Capitol Records building was just across the street, with Nat King Cole's face beaming down from the vast mural on an outer wall, and Cuban music royalty Celia Cruz's star on Hollywood Boulevard just a block away. Fateful connections and converging lines are part of Valdés' story, a continuing saga moving healthily into its eighth decade.

mother passed away. This created a very sensitive state. When my father started becoming ill, it became even more sensitive. When I wrote that song for my father, "Bebo," he was still alive and I had no idea he was going to pass away. But I wanted to honor him and my mother, because they were the ones who formed me, musically, and also my character and my person. And there was my grandmother, who was a queen, who formed my father.

I started to develop my ideas and went beyond what I had done before. There is a very strong Cuban rhythm called the conga. But a previous rhythm was called the contradanza. So I took elements of the contradanza and elements of the conga, and I united them. It was a very symbiotic link, which became the "congadanza." It's incredible how well they work together, and rhythmically, how they fuse together.



# WALDÉS

**CHIEF MESSENGER**

BY JOSEF WOODARD

Photography by Paul Wellman  
at Redbury Hotel, Los Angeles

## CHUCHO VALDÉS CHIEF MESSENGER

Also, I took elements of the North Africans, of the Moroccans, the Gnawa, and Spanish flamenco, which has the origins of those rhythms. I made a tribute to a certain percussionist from Morocco, Abdel. That's why there's a song called "Abdel." I called on Branford Marsalis to help me with the Arabic scales on the soprano [saxophone]. Then I did a flamenco theme, called "Santa Cruz," to say that this was born from Arabic influence. There is a relationship there.

For the "Afro-Comanche" piece, we were going to use two Comanches, who played flute and a percussion instrument. Because of the problems of time and distance, it couldn't happen. So I took the elements and indigenous melodies. The story is that toward the end of the 19th century, they sent about 700 Comanches to Cuba. They lived in the eastern part of Cuba. They knew the Africans and the Afro-Cubans, and in time, they had children together. Some of the Carnival parties were the same as what happened in New Orleans, with the American Indians. The Africans would dress like the Indians in the Carnivals, and they would dance together.

I took a mix of the roots of Afro-Cubans. I haven't, musically, found proof of that, so I created a piece called "Afro-Comanche." It's one of the songs that they liked the most in the concert.



**DB:** You tell a lot of stories on this album. There is a narrative layer to the project, weaving through the music. Was that something that you consciously wanted to pursue?

**CV:** At the end of one part of my life, this album is a case where I am doing something to start a new one. It's like a frontier, to go into another one.

There are also classical elements in it. For example, "Caridad Amaro" is for my grandmother. When I studied piano, my grandmother would always ask me to play the second movement of Rachmaninov's concerto. As a tribute to her, at the end of the song, I play a little bit of the second movement.

As for my mom, when I would study Bach, she would ask me to play the prelude, many times. She said, "Chucho, give me the prelude." She also loved

Miles Davis and her favorite was "Blue In Green." Mom was also a singer and she would accompany herself on piano. She understood jazz very well. She loved Miles. She said he was a poet. So I included the prelude and a piece of the Miles tune on the song "Pilar." It's a very personal thing.

To my father, I dedicated the song "Bebo," which I wrote in his style. My father heard that piece, in December 2012. He died in March of 2013. He heard it many times; he loved the song.

**DB:** Can you describe how your father influenced you and helped you form your musical voice?

**CV:** I was a very privileged child—privileged in the sense that my father was a great musician. I started to play the piano at 3 years old, according to my father. When I was 7, we would hear Art Tatum. He would bring me to the Tropicana, where he worked, and there, I saw many people, including American big bands. I saw Woody Herman, Glenn Miller, Ray Brown, Buddy Rich, Nat King Cole, Roy Haynes . . .

I loved jazz as a kid. This was a big impression on me. My dad would say, "Now we're going to hear Nat King Cole, now we're going to hear Sarah Vaughan . . . Learn how to play the blues, learn how to play some of their rhythms." I had that kind of school at home. I couldn't have had it any closer. And then he sent me to play classical music, so I had classical music training, and, of course, the Afro-Cuban music. That's why, when I write, all these things come out.

**DB:** With Irakere, which you started in the early '70s, you were talking about how you would bring together many musical pieces in that group. This was a trailblazing Cuban band at the time. Were you trying to fill a void with that group, in a way?

**CV:** We weren't trying to fill anything. We were trying to build something we felt. I didn't have a lot of support, because people didn't understand what I was trying to create. They would say, "How can you have jazz with batá drums? Why are you saying Yoruba chants? This is not jazz." This is Afro-Cuban jazz. I didn't have much support at that time.

There was a man who helped me a lot. I composed something called "Black Mass," before Irakere. It had similar elements, with a quartet. In 1970, I had the opportunity to play at the Jazz Jamboree in Poland. They would tell me, "Don't play that music in Poland. This is craziness." But I wanted to stick with the idea.

I presented that piece in the Jazz Jamboree and I was given the chance before Dave Brubeck. When I finished my piece and it was his turn, I stayed behind so I could hear him play. He's one of the pianists I admire the most, because of the influence of the French Impressionists. When he finished, they came to my dressing room and asked for me. He wanted to talk to me, and also with the musicians. He said, "This was very good. You were doing something very different. This is the new road within the Latin jazz world."

I cried with a lot of emotion because he told me, "Don't ever stop." And I'm never going to stop. I give thanks to him, because I knew who he was and what musical power he had. After he gave me

that opinion, I didn't care what anybody else said.

**DB:** Now that you have been out of Irakere for eight years, how do you look back on it? Do you feel that you are in a new, post-Irakere chapter in your musical journey now?

**CV:** I felt the necessity to play the piano. With Irakere, which was a band that I loved, you lost the piano. The work was spread out between all the instruments, and the piano was at a disadvantage. In Irakere, I worked a lot with composing and directing and I forgot a little bit about the piano. I talked to a friend in 1979, Joe Zawinul, and he said, "The orchestra is great, but you also should have a trio or a quartet so you can play more of the piano."

**DB:** Zawinul was another musician, like yourself, with wide open ears and who pulled ideas from around the world, and so naturally.

**CV:** For me, he was a genius.

**DB:** On your album *Chucho's Steps*, you pay a nod of respect to the Marsalis clan, with "New Orleans (A Tribute To The Marsalis Family)."

**CV:** They are also important to me. I met the father [Ellis] first. I love the way he plays piano. Then I was introduced to his sons, who are wonderful.

**DB:** Obviously, there is a connection with the idea of musical family, extending into next generations. Your son, Chuchito, is a pianist, for instance.

**CV:** Yes, and there is another one on the way. He is 6 years old. His name is Julian. He has already started to play a little bit.

**DB:** How much did the Cuban music scene change in the early '60s, when the political barrier took effect in society? Was there a dramatic shift at that point, for musicians and fans?

**CV:** It was very difficult to connect with jazz, until we discovered something—the "Voice of America Jazz Hour" show. The DJ was Willis Conover. The program was heard at 3:15 in the afternoon and it would repeat at 8:15 in the evening. It was through that program, in 1963, that I first heard the John Coltrane Quartet. After a gap of three years, I thought it was musical science fiction. When I heard McCoy Tyner for the first time, my hair stood up.

I had a little tape recorder and I would record all the programs. [The recorder] had some static, and it was sometimes a disaster. But we started to hear things. We heard Coltrane, Miles Davis with Herbie Hancock . . . Wow.

In Cuba, a Canadian attaché brought a collection of everything that was happening in jazz. We met. On Sundays, we would go to his house to listen. When he finished his diplomatic work in Cuba, he gave us his whole collection. That was it [claps his hands]. Through that, we had more contact with what was happening in the U.S.

**DB:** Was that the way you learned jazz, through "Voice of America" and from records?

**CV:** Yes. It is because of "Voice of America" and his records, and also, the sailors would bring in things they had bought abroad. But it was very difficult.

**DB** At that time, was there any jazz education in Cuba?

**CV** No, no.

**DB** You mentioned John Coltrane's game-changing quartet in the '60s. Back then, were you open to avant-garde sounds?

**CV** In the beginning, I didn't understand it. It was a very strong shift, but as we got to hear it more, we started acclimating to it. I wanted to play like McCoy, but at first I didn't understand it. But it fascinated us. And there was Bill Evans. His *Live At The Village Vanguard* is my favorite album. It's the first one I heard. It left me with my hands up.

**DB** At that time, were you focused primarily on jazz, putting other styles of music to the side?

**CV** No, I was doing two things. Cuban music was our music. I just didn't have jazz, and we would be interested in things that we didn't have.

**DB** There has always been such a natural connection between Afro-Cuban music and jazz. They belong together, wouldn't you say?

**CV** Yes. They are like family.

**DB** And your father helped to make that connection stronger.

**CV** Yes. I will tell you who my father's idols were: Art Tatum, Monk, Bud Powell, Hank Jones—who was very special to my dad—Billy Taylor, and Ellington. For me, I liked other pianists who a lot of people didn't listen to. I liked Lennie Tristano, who hasn't been given his due. He was on a road that was very unique. In 1946, I heard Brubeck. Oh, my God. And I also liked George Shearing. He played more Latin stuff. And Cal Tjader.

**DB** What about Keith Jarrett? Are you a fan?

**CV** Yes. From the time I heard McCoy, in that moment, my main idols were McCoy and Bill Evans, two different roads. For me, they were the ones who changed the concept. I heard Herbie Hancock, who's fantastic, and Chick Corea, and Keith Jarrett. I first heard him with Charles Lloyd, on the album *Forest Flower*. At that time, he was more avant-garde. I liked that.

There is another pianist who is a phenomenon: Cecil Taylor. He's a real monster.

**DB** And he is from the abstract perspective.

**CV** Totally abstract. It's like he is up in space.

**DB** But you like him?

**CV** Yes, just as I liked Lennie Tristano, because he is also more abstract.

**DB** Tell me about your band, the Afro-Cuban Messengers, and how you view it.

**CV** It's a formation which is atypical. I have several percussion instruments—drums [Rodney Yllarza Barreto], congas [Yaroldy Abreu Robles], and a guy who plays three batá drums [Dreiser Durruthy Bombalé] who can also sing in the African language. There is the bass and the piano, the only polyphonic instrument. It's interesting to me to mix polyrhythms, like with the drums, with the jazz drums mixed with the

# COMBINED AFRO-CUBAN ENERGIES

As much as Chucho Valdés is certainly the central, conceptual and otherwise driving creative force in his current band, the flexible dynamic in the Afro-Cuban Messengers plays a vital role in the overall success of this complex musical venture.

"Chucho is the figurehead of the group," drummer Rodney Yllarza Barreto said. "And he always will be, but he gives us a lot of liberty to show him what we have inside. At the same time, he shares what he has in his head. It's a series of combined energies. It's all very positive."

While in Hollywood recently, the afternoon after playing the Hollywood Bowl, the four band members making up the present incarnation of the Messengers spoke in roundtable fashion (in Spanish, alongside translator Humberto Capiro). In this group, the musicians recognize that there is something unique afoot in the project, beyond purely musical objectives.

"Our name is Afro-Cuban Messengers," commented batá player and vocalist Dreiser Durruthy Bombalé, "and we always bring two messages—musically and spiritually. We always try to make sure the public is satisfied with what they hear and what they feel."

Bassist Ángel Gastón Joya Perellada added, "This is the type of world we believe there should be: one without borders. We don't think about starting a project or just writing a song. We're trying to integrate ourselves with the world, with the music."

"Our music has evolved," says Barreto. "It's not just the influences of Cuban music and it's not just the traditional Afro-Cuban roots. It's also the influence of American music—jazz, funk and other genres—so when you mix all of those things, it's a lot of information. If you don't know how to organize it, it's too much for the public to understand. So it is a challenge. At the same time, how do you use all of those elements without bothering the music? This is our challenge. We've been able to do that."

The players hail from various places and musical backgrounds: Bombalé, from Guantánamo, started in classical dance before settling on music, playing the batá drums and singing; Perellada and Barreto are from the Guanabacoa township in Havana, known for its Santería spiritual practices; and percussionist Yaroldy Abreu Robles is from a small town in the east, Sagua de Tánamo. Together, they create a collective voice. As Barreto explains, "I have played with Yaroldy in other projects for almost 10 years. With Dreiser, we have just played a couple of times. Gaston and I studied together. We played together since we were little. In the end, it's just the good energy we all have together. It makes a big difference."

And, of course, the commanding epicenter is the iconic bandleader, whose eminence is not lost on the musicians. Robles comments, "In what we know as Cuban music, Chucho has been an influence not just for us, but for the world. It's not just him, but through his father, as a pianist, composer and arranger. From the beginning, the work that got the world's attention was Irakere. And it is not only in jazz. With Irakere, he was the creator of current popular music, which is timba. You hear Irakere in the '70s and you realize that, in actuality, it is the essence of what became timba. With Chucho, everybody focuses on such a huge talent."

"Chucho is the heart of Cuban music," says Barreto. Reflecting on the band's tradition-meets-progressivism approach, he adds, "We're moving forward, but respecting everything that is behind us."

—Josef Woodard



Backstage at the Hollywood Bowl, Aug. 14. From left: Rodney Yllarza Barreto, Ángel Gastón Joya Perellada, Chucho Valdés, Dreiser Durruthy Bombalé and Yaroldy Abreu Robles



Chucho Valdés and the Afro-Cuban Messengers

## CHUCHO VALDÉS CHIEF MESSENGER

Afro-Cuban drums, and the polyrhythms of the batá. I also use the piano as a percussion instrument. It is a melodic and percussion instrument. There is a whole world of really interesting things going on there.

The bass player [Ángel Gastón Joya Perellada] is 26 years old and he's one of the best Cuban bassists around. This kid is going to play double bass in the symphony, but he can play whatever style is needed, from ragtime to free-jazz. He knows all these phases and rhythms. He's very creative and is a composer and arranger, as well.

[Dreiser Durruthy Bombalé] is a classical ballet dancer, and he can dance the Afro-Cuban

dances, and can also write music. The conga player can also write music, and the drummer is another composer. There is a lot of creativity in this group. Even if we play the same songs every day, every day, it's different. They inspire me a lot.

**DB** Regarding the band name, the Messengers, I assume there is a connection to Art Blakey and the Jazz Messengers, correct?

**CV** Yes, 100 percent. When I was very young, I had a passion for the Jazz Messengers and Art Blakey. That was very important to me. The young talents all passed through Art Blakey's group. It was like a school. I am not trying to imitate that,

but after Irakere, I realized all the generations that ... have passed through my hands. Now, these are the most talented musicians in Cuba and they want to work with me again [laughs]. And I want to work with them. That helps me a lot. That's why I wanted to call this group the Afro-Cuban Messengers.

**DB** Do you have a message that you're trying to convey with this group? You titled the album *Border-Free*. Are you thinking about the grand idea of music as universal language?

**CV** I had a professor who would say, "Music is a language. It's the language of sound. But there is also spoken language. But the music has its own rules." She would tell me, "If music is the language of sound, the most important part is the sound. If music has the same rules as spoken language, then the most important part is the diction." How do you say it? You can say it right or wrong. If it is sound, you should say it right, because it still goes through the ears.

There is the speed and the technical part, but it has to be spoken well and have a beautiful sound.

**DB** Cuba is one of those hot spots in the world where cultures come together, like New Orleans and Brazil. Do you feel that Cuba has a special quality for bringing together cultures?

**CV** Before Afro-Cuban jazz, before Chano Pozo and Mario Bauzá, there was another phase between Cuban music and American music. Jelly Roll Morton felt like there was a "Latin tinge." There was a French community in New Orleans, but in Cuba, there were a lot of Haitians who came with their French roots, because Haiti was a French colony. In 1804, a lot of Haitians came to Cuba, and came with the *cinquillo* and the French *contradanza*. *Cinquillo*, they left in Cuba, and the *contradanza* led to the *son*.

There is a big French influence in Cuba, and African influence. In New Orleans, there is also a French community that had the same roots of the *contradanza*, mixing with the slaves from the same tribe as in Haiti. We have this thing in Cuba called the *habanera*. It is in the *contradanza*. In New Orleans, there was another thing called *ragtime*. When you hear *habanera* and *ragtime*, you feel there is something that is very similar. The *ragtime* and *habanera* are family.

There is a Cuban trumpeter named Manuel Perez, who went to live in New Orleans, and he worked with all of them. He returned to Cuba with musicians from New Orleans, to Santiago, and mixed with Cuban musicians. They formed the first *ragtime* orchestra. So you can see the relationship goes way back. Then in the '40s, Dizzy and Mario Bauzá connected. The story between the two is very beautiful.

**DB** Buena Vista Social Club had such a huge, global impact. Did the sensation actually help Cuban jazz get out into the world? Did its success open the door for greater appreciation for what you do, for instance?

**CV** The Buena Vista phenomenon was a big help for us. It helped people to focus, both inside and outside of Cuba. It was a boom of Cuban music. It wasn't the current music of Cuba, but it was the

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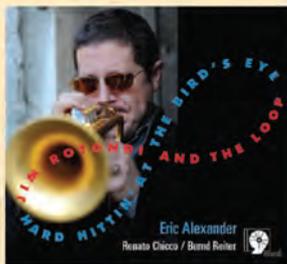
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most important interpreters of their time, and they maintained a high quality. That type of Cuban music has always been popular. It is dance music, but it is more difficult to comprehend, because it's more complex to dance to. Also, rhythmically, it's more complex.

That type of Cuban music, the *son*, came back to take its place. I always felt a big admiration for that. I was very lucky that I knew most of them when I was a child. [Pianist] Rubén González would also come to my house and talk to my dad. I have to give thanks to Buena Vista.

**DB** Do you find that the music you're making is being accepted more around the world in the last few years?

**CV** I think so. I notice this in the concerts, and in the public's reaction. The public is more understanding of what we're doing, and this is a good thing.

**DB** Has it been more than 50 years now that you have been professionally involved in music?

**CV** Yes, it's amazing. The first time I played piano in public was at 9 years old. I played Mozart and Beethoven, and [the] music of my teacher. I had my first contract to play at the Tropicana at 10 years old, where my father used to work. They contracted me to work with a child prodigy from the U.S., from Chicago, with the last name Robinson.

He was a child playing boogie-woogie. This is about 1951. He was really good at playing boogie, and he was a showman. He had everybody excited about him in Havana and was playing the Tropicana. Everybody was praising him. My father said, "Put your suit on so we can go to the Tropicana, and you can meet someone who is playing there." So he took me to the dressing room. They call this kid Robinson and they introduced us. We talked. We never really understood each other, because I didn't speak English.

Then Robinson played, very well. The orchestra was all there. Dad said, "OK, Chuchó, why don't you play us the second sonata of Mozart?" I didn't understand what he wanted. I just played it. I wanted to play what Robinson was playing. Then he asked me to play a Cuban *danzón*, and I didn't understand why. Then he said, "Play a boogie-woogie." This fat man came out and said, "That's what I want. The next week, it's going to be the two kids."

That night, I came home at 4 in the morning. When I came in, my mom was sitting with her arms crossed, pointing at her watch. My father said, "He's contracted at the Tropicana, in a duo." And then Mom said, "At 7 o'clock, he has school. He's going to sleep now. And there is no show at the Tropicana because when kids start playing places like that, they never learn. They start paying them, and they don't want to go to school, so it's not going to happen."

**DB** Did your dad win out?

**CV** No, my mom won. Dad was just happy. He just wanted to show me off.

**DB** After these 60 years in music, do you still feel that burning passion, a sense of energy and curiosity about music and where you can take it? It seems that way, that you keep moving forward.

**CV** It's because there is always something to do. When I was 17 years old, I was a pianist for the theater. I had to learn how to play as a real pianist, reading sheet music. There were two theater shows on Sunday. One stopped at 6 and the other one started at 9. But on Sundays, they had jazz sessions, and me and the drummer from the orchestra would run over to the jam sessions. We would return, without eating, at 9 o'clock.

The old guys in the orchestra said, "You can do that because you're young. But when you are our age, you won't be able to do that." That scared me, because could you lose the love for music, lose the desire just because you're old? But now I'm lucky. I'm going to be 72 years old and I have more passion to play than when I was 19, and more passion to learn, to see and to feel more. So I lost that fear.

For the real artist, age doesn't have anything to do with it. You never reach an end to learning.

**DB** Especially in jazz.

**CV** Especially in jazz, since it's always evolving. After *Border-Free*, I realize that I'm becoming an adolescent again [laughs].

**DB** You're forever young?

**CV** Yes. Because of the music.

DB

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The musicians who play on the album *Red Hot* by Mostly Other People Do The Killing gather for a portrait.  
Top row, from left: Peter Evans, Moppa Elliott, Brandon Seabrook.  
Bottom row, from left: Kevin Shea, Ron Stabinsky, Jon Irabagon, David Taylor.



MOSTLY OTHER PEOPLE DO THE KILLING

# GOOD TIMES

THESE MERRY PRANKSTERS ARE  
SERIOUS MUSICIANS WHO ARE  
FREQUENTLY MISUNDERSTOOD

By Phillip Lutz | Photo by Alexander Richter

**HAD BASSIST AND COMPOSER MOPPA ELLIOTT** been working in the hard-bop heyday, his debut recording might have been a vinyl LP festooned with hot type and hyperventilating headlines like *Introducing Moppa Elliott!* or *Meet Moppa!* or *The Astounding Mr. Elliott!* Instead, the album, released in 2004, was a CD dubbed *Moppa Elliott's Mostly Other People Do the Killing*—a singular title, to be sure, but not one that reflected the period send-ups that would become an Elliott hallmark. For that, his fans would have to wait until his second album, *Shamokin!!!*

But fans who read the debut album's liner notes would surely have been clued in to the anarchic sensibility taking shape behind the album's cover. Written by Elliott under his own name—a practice he would later abandon for a nom de plume that has raised a few eyebrows—the notes were no sales pitch. Rather, they were a strongly worded argument against the selective canonization of jazz repertoire and the sterilizing effect it could have on the music.

"Jazz," Elliott wrote, "has started to take itself too seriously." Jazzmen should "bring out the mud."

That he has decidedly done. Over the course of six studio albums on his Hot Cup label—his latest, *Red Hot*, was released on Sept. 24—Elliott has promulgated an exuberantly chaotic but strangely coherent brand of self-referential, serious fun. In the process, he has rejected anything that might remotely be described as an authentic rendering of mainstream jazz, even as he roundly exploits its mannerisms. It is an ambitious undertaking, and one that has marked him as a provocative presence.

Surrounded by his bandmates on a mid-August day in the Brooklyn apartment of drummer Kevin Shea, Elliott hardly seemed the provocateur, dressed as he was in unassuming garb and speaking in the modest cadences of his native northeast Pennsylvania—a state from which he draws both inspiration and the names of tunes. Yet he dominated the conversation, a loquacious sort willing to tackle the knottiest of subjects. Save, that is, for the first order of business—the band's name.

Plucked in 2001 from a Leon Theremin apologia for Russian strongman Joseph Stalin, the words—"mostly other people do the killing"—bore no direct relationship to his music, he insisted. What, then, was their relevance?

Perhaps the words reflected a predilection for non-sequiturs; early on, he said, he rejected a disparate collection of monikers that included Indigo Boys, Glam Chowder and Dude Descending a Staircase. Or maybe they simply mirrored his skepticism about the trappings of jazz conservatism.

"I just wasn't ever interested in having a band called the Moppa Elliot Quartet," he said.

What he was interested in was having a band whose members shared his vision, and the chops to make it real. He didn't have to look far. Trumpeter Peter Evans was already on hand, having been his roommate and musical co-conspirator at the Oberlin Conservatory of Music. Shea and saxophonist Jon Irabagon came to Elliott's attention through contacts with guitarists Mary Halvorson and Jon Lundbom, respectively. Shea, in particular, made an impression with an on-the-job demonstration (he was subbing for the band's original drummer, Vinnie Sperrazza) in which he spontaneously removed his shirt and began thrashing his drum set with it.

That thrashing came to mind during the August gathering at Shea's apartment, where at one point the drummer interrupted the proceedings for a necktie whipping of Evans. Such outbursts, it appears, are the domain of Shea, who recalls Dutch drummer Han Bennink in his more animated moments. They are of a piece with his percussion work, a sometimes volatile affair in which the beat can seem driven by impulse and the performance can verge on ritualized slapstick—though that, Shea said, is not the aim.

"It's like a weird desire you have," he said. "You're not defining it as funny."

However he defines them, Shea's antics amuse and inform the other band members—they bring "an extra level of performance art" to the program, Irabagon said—and while those members are not likely to transform their clothing into weapons any time soon, they are given to the episodic onstage eruption. The eruptions can take any number of forms, from pitched battles for supremacy on an arcane point of musical order—"subverting each other" is the tactic of choice, Evans said—to dazzling displays of collective technical wizardry. All of which as often as not finds some humorous allusion—much like good ensemble comedy on TV, Elliott explained.

"Certain elements of tension and virtuosity and conflict and everything else create funny situations in the same way Monty Python skits, 'The Office,' 'Family Guy' or The Three Stooges are all very, very different ways of generating humor," he said.

For all the humor on offer, neither its meaning nor its motivation is always clear. "Everybody participates in the humor," said pianist Ron Stabinsky. As a sometime sideman with the group (he has occasionally shared the stage with them since 2011 and appeared on all nine tracks on the new album) Stabinsky can claim the perspective of both insider and outsider. "But I don't think everybody agrees on what the intention is."

The band members do agree, however, that despite all the sound and fury, they are *not* a comedy group. That point, Elliott said, is often misconstrued by critics who praise the ensemble's musicianship without trying to parse its goals—or, worse, simply dismiss the work as an intricately conceived, brilliantly executed joke.

"If you're looking for substantive problems to discuss, that's the one," he said. "People think, 'Oh, those guys are just trying to clown around,' which is fundamentally not true. We allow certain things to be awkward and funny in the context of this large thing,

which is often not funny at all. We don't have some satirical agenda."

Critics might not get a pass, but casual listeners could be forgiven for perceiving—or, as Elliott might have it, misperceiving—satirical intent. Case in point: the new album. Like all satire, it traffics in exaggerated convention, from the cover art (featuring the band's members improbably bedecked in tuxedos and 1920s finery) to the 12-page insert (a floridly designed glossy flush with authentic photos found at a Pennsylvania estate auction). It is the Jazz Age confection seemingly too good to be true.

And it is. The CD's liner notes were written by one Leonardo Featherweight, who is actually Elliott posing as a modern-day version of a jazz critic remarkably



like Leonard Feather (1914–'94). Devotees of the band will be familiar with Featherweight; after Elliott's impassioned essay on the debut album, he switched gears and adopted the pen name on *Shamokin!!!* In doing so, he conferred on himself license to assume in part the persona and borrow in whole the phraseology of Feather.

While the language in the liner notes to *Red Hot* may more closely resemble breathless newspaper copy of the 1920s than Feather's hipper musings, the parody was more direct on *Shamokin!!!*, whose reference point was Art Blakey & The Jazz Messengers' 1960 LP *A Night In Tunisia*. The point of the notes, coupled with the imagery and iconography elsewhere in the package, has been consistent across albums.

"It's visual commentary in the same way that the music is commentary on that time period," Elliott said.

As if the packaging weren't commentary enough, Elliott insists on naming his works after towns in Pennsylvania. He doesn't claim that deep thinking is involved in choosing the names, some of which have worked their way into album titles. The names draw on towns like Shamokin, Slippery Rock and Moosic, which pops up in the title *This Is Our Moosic*, a play on Ornette Coleman's *This Is Our Music*. Evans sees something akin to free association at work, while Elliott suggests a process subject to whimsy and a disdain for pretentiousness that lacks self-awareness.

"When people were titling their modern jazz compositions, they rarely provided an insight into what the songs actually sounded like," he said. "A lot of them were unnecessarily attempting to be profound or introspective. There are lots and lots of entertaining, complicated, funny, bizarre, interesting town names in Pennsylvania. So I won't run out of material."

In pursuing an idiosyncratic project with such single-mindedness, Elliott and his merry pranksters are aware that they are walking a fine line between

ridicule and respect. During our conversation, Evans twice floated a comparison between the band and the acrobatic troupe Cirque du Soleil—an apt comparison, given that troupe's reputation as the thinking man's circus and its renown for high-wire derring-do.

The band's wire has had its moments of shakiness. The appropriation of Feather's literary tics, for instance, has not sat well with some of Feather's one-time readers, who remember him as an important link to British jazz at a time when labor issues were challenging those connections—and as a writer who, as Feather/Featherweight might say, had acquitted himself admirably in print.

Elliott has mixed feelings about Feather's criticism: "Sometimes he's right on and sometimes he's talking about something that's completely irrelevant."

For *Shamokin!!!* alone Elliott read the liner notes to more than 30 Blue Note albums. He is similarly thorough in his handling of the music, his treatments reflecting a grasp of the history so complete that few would argue he lacks the authority to subject almost any style or system to his approach. Not that his treatments are the only potential point of contention his critics focus on.

With the band's 2012 album, *Slippery Rock*—an exploration of 1980s smooth jazz—he found that negative attitudes toward the original material had an impact on how the project fared overall. Some listeners questioned the choice of material. But to Elliott's way of thinking, all is fair game. "I don't want to pretend I didn't grow up listening to terrible hip-hop and indie rock," he said. And smooth jazz was part of that mix.

But Elliott was determined to learn from the experience—after some reflection, he said that he had come to find it enlightening—and, on *Red Hot*, he has tinkered with his approach. For starters, he reached back to source material with a venerated tradition and a clear constituency in the wider jazz community. "I don't suppose people have these knee-jerk reactions, hating Jelly Roll Morton and Louis Armstrong," he said. "I feel like people are much more eager to engage that because it's canonized and lionized."

Elliott has also adjusted his approach to the treatment of the material. With three additional musicians on hand—David Taylor on bass trombone and Brandon Seabrook on banjo and electronics, as well as Stabinsky—the arrangements are more structured than his quartet charts, and the unaccompanied soloists are given a wider berth. Elliott said he is looking forward to the reactions of the public. He expects a few raised eyebrows as Seabrook's synthesizer runs up against Morton's sonic world on the album's title tune.

On the analog side, meanwhile, Elliott praised the shape-shifting cadenza with which Stabinsky opened "King Of Prussia." Operating in something of a vacuum—Stabinsky said he was given no instructions about how the solo should proceed—the pianist laid down what may be the only track this year that quotes both Billy Joel (the signature "Piano Man" riff) and Beethoven (the opening arpeggios of the "Moonlight" sonata's third movement).

The solo was so absurdly conceived and elegantly delivered, Irabagon said, that laughs had to be stifled in the studio—a sure sign that, for all the limitations the addition of a chordal instrument might have imposed on the band, the possibilities opened up were vast.

Whether critics get the point is beside the point, Evans said. The project speaks, at length, for itself.

"If they don't get it, if they hate it," he said, "that's fine with me."

DB



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# Bella Musica

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For 40 years, the Umbria Jazz Festival has fostered the growth of Italy's vibrant jazz scene

By Ted Panken

Photos courtesy of Umbria Jazz

## AT NOON ON JUNE 7,

Carlo Pagnotta, the artistic director of the Umbria Jazz Festival, sipped tea in the restaurant of Manhattan's InterContinental Hotel, where Umbria Jazz and Italy's Ministry of Foreign Affairs were co-sponsoring a week of two-nighters by three of Italy's most visible jazz musicians. On the previous evening, pianist Stefano Bollani's Danish trio—bassist Jesper Bodilsen and drummer Morten Lund, who play on his recent ECM recording *Stone In The Water*—played both their sets before a packed house, following two days of extemporaneous duos by Sardinian trumpeter Paolo Fresu and American pianist Uri Caine, and setting up a Saturday-Sunday appearance by Enrico Rava's quintet, which includes Italian musicians young enough to be the 73-year-old trumpeter's grandchildren.

"I couldn't find a table, so I had my food at the bar," Pagnotta said, shaking his head with an incredulous expression. "Twenty or thirty years ago, you could speak about just a few Italian artists. Now we have [dozens of] artists at the international level."

It wasn't apparent from Pagnotta's demeanor, but a crisis was afoot. Sonny Rollins—booked for a special concert with Fresu and Rava in Perugia's 5,000-seat Santa Giuliana Arena in honor of the festival's 40th anniversary—had just announced the cancellation of his entire summer schedule. It was imperative to find, quickly, a suitable replacement. Pagnotta was confident that he and longtime *aide de camp* Annika Larsson, working the phones in the Perugia office, could resolve the problem. (They eventually did by moving saxophonist Jan Garbarek's show from a smaller stage to the arena.)

During his 40-year reign, Pagnotta had dealt with worse. "We stopped the festival in 1977," he remembered. "We had too many problems. We tried again in 1978, but the political situation was too difficult." Umbrian politics were then dominated by the Italian Communist Party, which Pagnotta recalls, received 70 percent of the popular vote in contemporaneous regional and municipal elections. Furthermore, as bassist Giovanni Tommaso noted the following month in Perugia, "Italy had a strong delayed reaction" to the late-'60s student rebellions in the United States and France. In jazz circles, Red Records founder Sergio Veschi writes in his online biography, these developments correlated to "the promotion and diffusion of music mainly addressed to young people and workers," specifically by such radical African-American avatars as Max Roach, Archie Shepp, Cecil Taylor, Sun Ra and Sam Rivers. They were part of a mid-'70s roster that also embraced Keith Jarrett (whose first Umbria Jazz appearance was a pre-Köln *Concert* solo per-

formance in 1974), Horace Silver, Charles Mingus, Elvin Jones, Art Blakey, Stan Getz, the Count Basie Orchestra and Sarah Vaughan, all emblematic of a lineage more closely connected to Pagnotta's taste.

"During those days, the Left said, 'This is old jazz; you have to play different,'" recalled pianist Danilo Rea, 55, whose career began in the mid-'70s in a trio with bassist Enzo Pietropaoli and drummer Roberto Gatto, both fellow Romans. "Italy was completely divided in two. They didn't care about the way you played. You had to have a project."

On the one hand, the cultural milieu that produced the Red Brigades facilitated some of the most interesting music of the decade on Italian labels like Black Saint/Soul Note, Horo and Red, and allowed world-class improvisers like Gianluigi Trovesi and Antonello Salis to find space in which to gestate their singular musical worlds. On the other, as 54-year-old Gatto said in a separate conversation, "Many concerts at Umbria were interrupted by people going to the stage, and making a disaster." Genoese pianist Dado Moroni, now 51, spoke of a cohort stoning the Count Basie band bus after a 1975 performance for "representing America's Republican Party."

"A little paper wrote that Basie was a 'fascist,'" Pagnotta contextualized. "In those days we spread the festival into different towns in Umbria, and one night in Gubbio in 1976, we had to stop Sarah Vaughan's concert because a guy pulled down his trousers in front of her. She didn't want to come back to Perugia. They booed Chet Baker and called him 'a slave of the system,' and they booed Stan Getz."

Still, Pagnotta said, although "there were critics

in the Communist Party who were against the festival because it was too much classic, not enough avant-garde, they realized that it was popular, bringing in people, and good for Umbria." Tommaso attributed the sizable turnout for the one-day 1973 debut to the cancellation of a "huge festival in the north of Italy that had lots of 'progressive' bands, as they called folk singers and rock bands then," whose audience "all came south to Perugia." Contemporaneous photos show prone figures surreally blanketing the old city's Piazza IV Novembre and Corso Vannucci. "These kids had never been exposed to a real jazz festival," Tommaso added. "They loved it, and came back every year, for years, with their sleeping bags."

In 1982, when Umbria Jazz resumed operations from the back office of Pagnotta's Sir Charles men's clothing store, the audience had matured and Italy's politics were trending centrist, mirroring the evolving aesthetics of many Italian jazz musicians. "At a certain point, the so-called 'free music' in Italy began to feel routine, less interesting than the bebop cliché," Rava explained in 2011. "It started to get ridiculous, like Dada 40 years too late. I felt that you should also be free to play melodies, harmonies and rhythms."

For the remainder of the decade, Pagnotta booked "mainstream artists": Art Blakey, Miles Davis, Dizzy Gillespie and several generations of their prominent alumni and contemporaries. He augmented the festival's soundtrack with gospel bands and rootsy New Orleans-flavored units,

# warren wolf wolfgang

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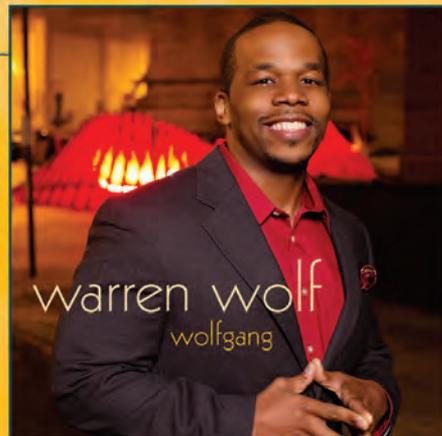
## people said this about Warren's eponymous debut:

"To say that Warren Wolf's Mack Avenue debut is auspicious would be an understatement. No doubt, this is one of the best of the year in jazz."

— Greg Thomas, *NY Daily News*

"... Warren Wolf... plays music that doesn't argue with the most popular and usable parts of jazz's past. It uses swing, blues, virtuosity, cuteness, directness and seldom wanders from a sense of tune."

— Ben Ratliff, *The New York Times*



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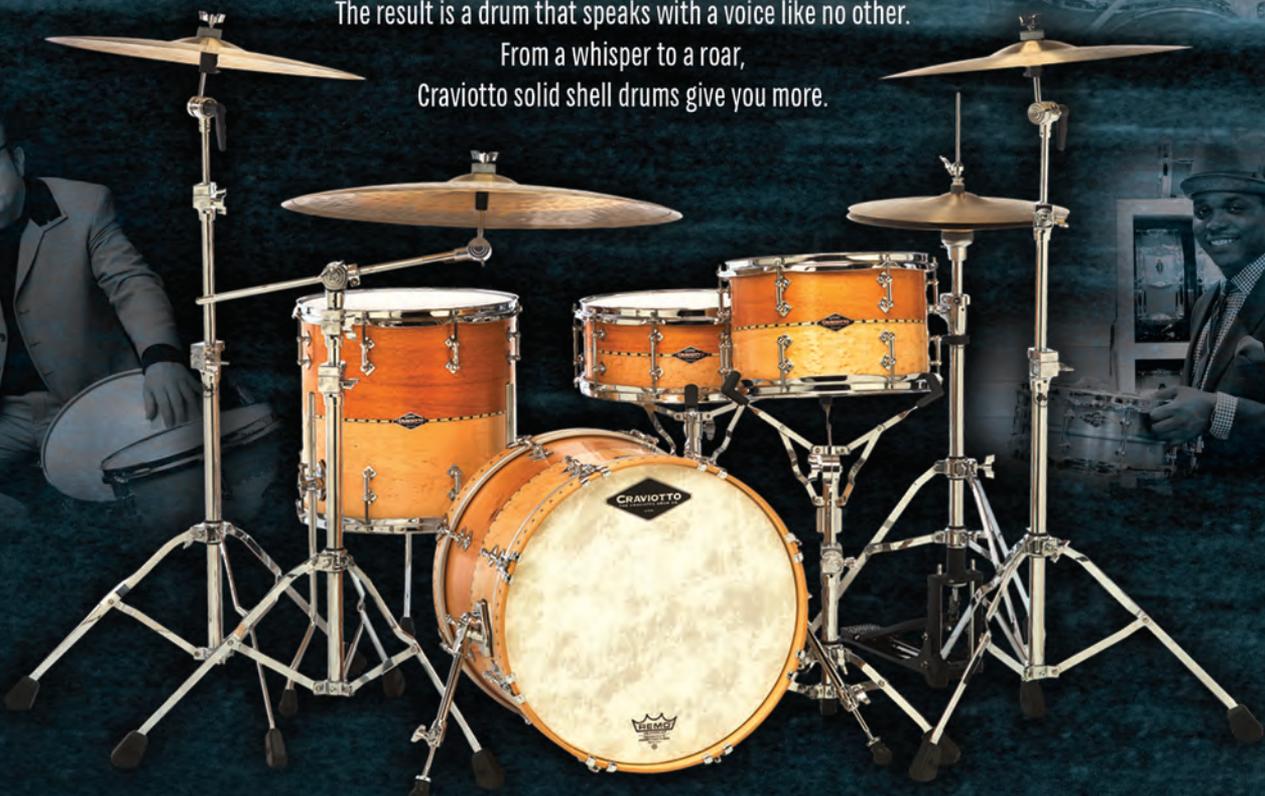
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and, in 1985, launched an ongoing relationship with Berklee School of Music. In 1992, he launched the more intimate Umbria Jazz Winter in Orvieto, 80 kilometers southwest of Perugia. Music from Brazil and Cuba gradually became part of the mix, as did jazz-pop meetings, such as a Sting-Gil Evans Orchestra-Branford Marsalis collaboration in 1987 and a Carlos Santana-Wayne Shorter project in 1988.

For 2013, Pagnotta mixed veteran international stars like Jarrett, Chick Corea and Herbie Hancock in a duo, Diana Krall, Branford and Wynton Marsalis and Terence Blanchard with up-and-comers like Robert Glasper and Hiromi, pop stars John Legend and Italian singer Pino Daniele, and a healthy proportion of Italian jazzfolk, including Bollani, who filled the arena for a classical-to-jazz Gershwin-Leonard Bernstein program with Rome's Santa Cecilia Orchestra.

Fresu packed the 750-seat Morlacchi Theater, a five-tiered gem from 1780, for a ritualistic, programmatic duo with pianist Omar Sosa. Also at the Morlacchi, a sizable crowd heard Rea's scratch-improvised encounter with octogenarian pianist Renato Sellani on songs by film composer Armando Trovajoli—a Teddy Wilson-influenced pianist who played with Charlie Parker in Paris in 1949. Rea abundantly displayed his skills with Tommaso's quartet in which 24-year-old alto saxophonist Mattia Cigalini and drummer Francesco Sotgiu deftly followed Tommaso's predisposition to contrast "inside" and "outside" approaches in his compositions. Playing a drum kit augmented with multiple percussion instruments and electronics, Gatto cued his "Perfect Trio," with pianist Alfonso Santimone and bassist Pierpaolo Ranieri, through a 90-minute triologue on an orchestral array of timbres and rhythms drawn from Africa, India, Brazil, and American swing and funk.

Representing the younger generation, pianist Enrico Zanisi, 24, offered a set of originals with his trio that showcased his finely calibrated touch, right-left interdependence and sense of melodic development, alternating between notey, odd-meter pieces influenced by Brad Mehldau's example and legato ballads with classical connotations. And, although he did not perform at this year's festival, 27-year-old Giovanni Guidi—who recently signed to ECM (*City Of Broken Dreams*) and is Rava's pianist of choice—curated a "Young Jazz" sub-festival in the courtyard of the Palazzo della Penna, a 16th century villa currently utilized as a "contemporary cultural center." Shows there included a duo by drummer Jeff Ballard and guitarist Lionel Loueke, but also projects by saxophonist Dan Kinzelman, drummer João Lobo and percussionist Michele Rabbia—all Guidi collaborators in other groups.

Asked whether the pan-generational cast of characters at Umbria 2013, who hail from Italy's various regions, projected a collective aesthetic that could be construed in any way as "Italian," Guidi emailed that, although "probably some of us pay stronger attention to the melodic side of things," he did not think so. "Today's young musicians are highly trained in all areas, and play with countless different approaches but often lack spontaneity," he added. "Perhaps things that are more interesting are still overwhelmed. The purpose of 'Young Jazz' is to discover the underground rivers that deviate from the main stream."

"There's a difference between an Italian jazz player and a player of Italian jazz," clarinetist

Gabriele Mirabassi, 47, elaborated. "Italian jazz is not a community. We don't debate what we are, where we're going to bring this music. When I was younger, I was one among a group of people who was ideologically into trying to do something of our own. I did things with accordions, arrangements of Italian traditional folk songs and so on. But I failed."

A native Perugian, Mirabassi observed that Italy became a nation only 150 years ago. "There are hills everywhere, and on top of each hill is an ancient town completely surrounded by walls, from which they will throw boiling oil on the heads of visitors," he said. "From Perugia, you can see Assisi. We had maybe 50 years of blood wars with Assisi. We speak different accents. We have different gastronomic customs. We have a phrase, *campanilismo*. *Campanile* is the bell tower. Each bell tower symbolizes a town which protects itself from the next bell tower."

In Fresu's view, this trope of independence and individuality—the notion that "in Italian jazz, everyone is an island unto himself," as Bollani once remarked—"is fantastic, because you can try to mix all these experiences: People who play the new bebop music, or play jazz with the music of Naples, or with opera, or with the *chanson*, or with Mediterranean music."

Both the aforementioned represent that sensibility, as does Rea, who has refracted his own influence tree—Neapolitan melodies, Puccini, other classical music, '70s prog rock and hardcore jazz learned on trial-by-fire gigs with American masters like Lee Konitz and Chet Baker—into a distinctive, pan-Mediterranean style. "I want to improvise on the repertoire I grew up with," Rea stated matter-of-factly, explaining his inclusive stance. "There is nothing ideological. It's playing my emotions. At the beginning, we were imitating the Americans, obvi-

ously, and then we tried to mix. Sometimes we made big mistakes, but from these big mistakes sometimes something happened. It's a kind of Italian approach."

After World War II, European aspirants could experience master-apprentice relationships with American virtuosos in different countries—Kenny Clarke, Johnny Griffin and Arthur Taylor in France; Don Byas in France and the Netherlands; Ben Webster in the Netherlands and Denmark; Dexter Gordon and Kenny Drew in Denmark; Art Farmer in Austria. In Italy, Baker served that function.

"Chet was the James Dean of jazz," says Tommaso, a native of Lucca, who spent 1959-'60 in New York, where, on down time from a cruise ship gig, he heard and personally approached Charlie Haden with Ornette Coleman, Scott LaFaro with Bill Evans, and Paul Chambers with Miles Davis, among others. Soon after Tommaso returned, Baker—just leaving a Lucca prison after serving 16 months for heroin possession—took him on the road for six months. "Chet was good-looking, a singer and trumpet player, and a junkie—a perfect combination of elements to be popular with the Italian audience."

"People of my generation met him personally," Mirabassi added. "He was the giant, the real American, the real jazz player we had at our disposal. It was very difficult not to cry when he was singing the ballads, so delicate and profound. For us, this was jazz as an alternative to classical or pop. It was the place where you really express the drama of living, which we Italians are sensitive to."

Tommaso cited the 1999 CD *La Dolce Vita* (CamJazz), on which his quartet with Rava, Bollani and Gatto interpreted a suite of Italian soundtrack music, as the progenitor of a series of similarly sourced "Italian identity" projects. "If you put into

jazz some of your background, your roots, your deep and sincere approach—those elements that are authentic may give your music a specific flavor,” he said. “But it isn’t like, ‘Take a little popular Italian folk from the south, and place a groove underneath, a little of this and a bit of that, like a gravy for pasta. This is not art.

“Jazz fought a battle all these years to become a universal music. Some people are trying to kick back this goal that we achieved. Italian jazz, Norwegian jazz, Swiss jazz, French jazz—this is bullshit. We grew up with a passion. When you’re young, one day you’re exposed to jazz music and you say, ‘This is what I love.’ I call it *folgorazione*—an explosion, like lightning. That moment led me all my life.”

Carlo Pagnotta’s bebop conversion experience occurred in 1949, when he heard Charlie Parker over the radio from the Salle Pleyel theater in Paris. The son of a hotelier who also operated the first restaurant in Perugia to earn a Michelin star, he was then an engineering student in Bologna. He would enter jazz production in 1956 with Louis Armstrong and Chet Baker concerts under the auspices of Perugia’s Hot Club. He lived in London for nine months in 1957, and another 10 months in 1959, when he worked as a waiter in the high-end Café Royal. He returned to Perugia, reentered the game, and, as the ’60s progressed, traveled to jazz events in Europe, made pilgrimages to Newport and developed a close working relationship with George Wein’s Italian representative, Alberto Alberti, who began a small-scale festival in Bologna in 1969.

“I presented the idea of the festival to the *regione* in 1972, as the President of Jazz Club Perugia,” Pagnotta said. “I was lucky to find the right people—political people, because without public money it is impossible, and big sponsors, like Heineken, which worked with us for many years. This is one of the few big events in Italy where you can say one-third of the budget comes from private money, one-third from public money and one-third from ticket sales. The cultural ministry in Rome gives peanuts to jazz, spends a fortune for opera or classical music. Nothing against opera, but they still don’t realize that jazz is the classical music of the 20th century.”

Although Pagnotta didn’t say so, the Umbria Festival itself functioned as, in Fresu’s words, “the bridge between Italian jazz and American jazz.” “From 1982 until 1990, it was my jazz school,” Mirabassi added. “The major masters of the music were here, very accessible. When I was 11, my parents took me to the center of town, and the Buddy Rich Big Band was playing in the main square. It was a shocking experience.”

Gatto recalled his Umbria Jazz debut, in 1978 with Gianni Basso, a big-toned veteran tenor saxophonist with an affinity for Zoot Sims and Richie Kamuca. “Carlo is more into the tradition, and as artistic director he brought the festival in that direction for years,” he said. “But you could listen to great musicians who came from another thing, too. I was once with him in the lobby of the New York Hilton hotel during an IAJE convention. After a while, Joe Zawinul came by our table. ‘So Carlo, what do you want to do this summer?’ Carlo said, ‘I give you this *carte blanche*, but you have to get the trio with Trilok Gurtu.’ ‘But I never played with Trilok Gurtu.’ ‘OK, you have to do it this year.’ That’s it—they sign a contract. After Zawinul, John Scofield came and sat at

the table. Carlo put together the festival like this.”

Enzo Capua, Pagnotta’s New York representative since 2003, cautions that these freewheeling trappings are deceptive. “Carlo takes care of every detail,” he says. “He can explode if something is wrong. His policy is that everyone who works here must speak English; second, they can’t have the lousy Italian attitude. Annika Larsson is Swedish, and a former Miss Sweden named Erica used to work for him as well. One night George Wein saw these two tall blondes with Carlo and called him ‘the Hugh Hefner of jazz.’”

Perhaps a more apt analogy is to compare Pagnotta’s *modus operandi* to an aristocratic con-

noisseur in a pre-unification city-state putting together a pageant, matching sounds and personalities to spaces. There is an element of *noblesse oblige* and also civic pride: Like his Board of Directors, Pagnotta receives no salary, remunerated only for transportation, accommodations and meals when traveling on festival business.

“Because of my age, I’ve seen Perugia change a lot,” the octogenarian impresario said. “My first year in college, the professor asked, ‘Where are you from?’ ‘Perugia.’ ‘Ah, Perugia. Near Assisi.’ I’m sorry—it’s Assisi that’s near Perugia. Before 1973, Umbria was known only for Saint Francis of Assisi. Now we can also say Umbria Jazz.”

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Warren Wolf at the 2011 Detroit Jazz Festival



# WARREN WOLF A COMPLETE MUSICIAN

By Geoffrey Himes | Photo by Andrea Canter

**ON THE WALL OF WARREN WOLF'S WOLFPAC STUDIO IN** Baltimore, there's a painting of the musician as a chubby 3-year-old boy, wearing a green dashiki and standing on a chair above a vibraphone. "Look at those eyes," says his father, Warren Wolf Sr., nodding at the painting. "Totally focused. He was already playing Charlie Parker tunes." The proud papa, sporting a bushy salt-and-pepper goatee and Afro, glances fondly over his oval glasses at his son. There's no baby fat on Junior these days. Wolf's muscular physique is the result of a regimen that takes him to the gym six days a week.

As a child, he pursued a different regimen. By the time he was able to go to school, the young boy had a daily schedule of 90 minutes of practice after dinner: 30 minutes on vibes, 30 minutes on piano and 30 minutes on drums. During summer vacation there would be two 90-minute sessions a day. Though he sometimes resented the workload, it paid off: Today, he's terrific on all three instruments. Though audiences outside Baltimore know him only as a vibraphonist, his hometown audiences know him as a drummer and pianist as well. You can often see him in those roles at the city's top jazz clubs, such as An die Musik where he recently laid down a Dennis Chambers-like groove behind Chick Corea's former bassist Mike Pope.

Wolf became such a powerhouse percussionist, in fact, that his friends still refer to him as "Chano," after Dizzy Gillespie's conga player Chano Pozo. On the same wall as the painting, there's a gig poster for "Wolfpack and Chano" at the Sportsman's Lounge, from when the grade-school boy played with his father's band at the Baltimore club. And Junior has played piano on occasional projects, such as Bobby Watson's 2007 album *From The Heart* (Palmetto).

On his two major projects this year, however, Wolf sticks to the mallets. He plays the vibes on all eight tracks of Christian McBride & Inside Straight's *People Music* (Mack Avenue) and on eight of the nine tracks of Wolf's own album *Wolfgang* (Mack Avenue). On the ninth track he plays marimba. It makes sense for him to focus—no one ever became a huge jazz star by being a utility player. And if he had to select just one path, mallets were the obvious choice, for it allows him to use everything he learned as a pianist and drummer; it allows him to play both tunes and beats.

"Honestly," he confesses, "I think of myself as a vibraphonist-slash-drummer. But I'm trying to make my presence known, and the vibes have given me the most recognition, so I lean in that direction. When people hire me, they tend to put me on vibes. It's an instrument you don't see every time. At almost every show I play, at least one person comes up and says, 'Wow, I've never seen a xylophone out front before.' I say, 'Thanks, but it's not a xylophone.'"

"It's pretty funny," claims bassist Kris Funn, who plays on *Wolfgang* and has known Wolf since middle school. "On the vibes, he plays by the book, but on piano or the drums, he has a more unorthodox style. His fingerings are weird, and he plays drums left-handed even though he's right-handed. He plays them so wrong but so right. I've

called him for gigs on all three instruments.”

“It’s harder for a drummer to become a bandleader,” adds Wolf. “There are hundreds of drummers out here but only about a dozen serious vibes players. I hear people say, ‘You’re so good on vibes you couldn’t possibly be good enough on drums because you couldn’t have practiced enough.’ If they only knew. But I also love vibes because it gives me a chance to play melody.”

Melody is an element that distinguishes *Wolfgang* from dozens of other records released every year by straight-ahead jazz virtuosos educated at Berklee College of Music (as Wolf was) or similar conservatories. The disc’s strong themes may come from the blues (there’s an arrangement of the traditional tune “Frankie And Johnny”), from classical music (the Mozart Requiem is incorporated into the title track) or from Wolf’s own head, but the tunes always have two qualities: They’re easy to grab and hold onto and they make the listener feel something.

“A lot of jazz nowadays is too thought-out,” Wolf laments. “A lot of musicians—and I’m guilty of this myself sometimes—are playing for ourselves and not the audience. To get away from that, I want to choose tunes that will connect with people. Take any popular song—‘It Don’t Mean A Thing,’ ‘Take Five,’ ‘Mercy, Mercy, Mercy,’ ‘My Girl’ or ‘Billie Jean’—and you’ll find a strong melody. You can solo all day and run all these changes over all kinds of meters and the average listener can’t follow it. I think of all the hours of training that guys like me have had at Berklee, Juilliard or elsewhere. We’re the best trained musicians around, and often we can’t come up with a simple melody that some uneducated guy might come up with at home.”

This is not to imply that Wolf is playing pop or r&b instrumentals where the tune is everything. This is theme-and-variation improvisation that works because the themes are especially strong and the variations are just as compelling—and the one is clearly tied to the other. You can hear this on the new album’s opener, “Sunrise,” recorded with Wolf’s working band of Funn, pianist Aaron Goldberg and drummer Billy Williams Jr.

It begins with a ballad melody that evokes the romance of a new relationship. When the track shifts to a medium-tempo, mid-morning pulse, Funn’s jagged, descending line on upright bass and Goldberg’s push-and-pull phrasing prompt Wolf to reconstruct the theme into forms that echo but never duplicate the opening statement. It’s an illustration of how a theme can be reshaped repeatedly yet still sound melodic.

Something similar occurs in the second track, “Frankie And Johnny,” recorded with the rhythm section of McBride, pianist Benny Green and drummer Lewis Nash. Green bangs out a funky blues riff; McBride introduces the familiar folk melody as a pizzicato stroll and then shouts “Hah!” with pleasure. Wolf picks up the tune, plays it once and then starts messing with it. But he doesn’t just run the scales; instead, he invents new blues melodies in the same neighborhood. Green does something similar on his solo, and Nash gives everything a finger-snapping strut.

The same approach can be heard on the title track, “Wolfgang.” (That title nods to the similarity of the names Warren Wolf, his band Wolfpac and Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart.) Recorded as a duet with pianist Aaron Diehl, it begins with quotes from the Mozart Requiem that are reworked into a jazz ballad and then into a New Orleans blues. It’s an astonishing transformation, because Wolf can play the classical snippets with a lilting precision and can play the blues

with sassy feeling. It’s as if he were channeling both John Lewis and Milt Jackson from the Modern Jazz Quartet.

“Yeah,” Wolf agrees. “that was influenced by the MJQ. I had that line from the Mozart Requiem that I liked, and I developed it by repeating it in different keys with counterpoint. It’s like the way Chick Corea took that line from the *Concierto de Aranjuez* and turned it into ‘Spain.’ I needed a pianist who was good at classical and jazz, and Aaron was an obvious choice.”

“I heard Warren when he played with Christian at the Vanguard,” Diehl recalls. “I had just been studying the archives of John Lewis because I wanted to record some of the Modern Jazz Quartet material, and when I heard Warren, I said, ‘This guy is a virtuoso like Milt.’ That’s what made the Modern Jazz Quartet: the contrast between Milt’s soulful, bluesy quality and John’s more genteel, more baroque sensibility. Warren has both—a real soulfulness but also a thorough knowledge of classical music.”

The first time Wolf encountered Green and

**“[WOLF] PLAYS DRUMS LEFT-HANDED EVEN THOUGH HE’S RIGHT-HANDED. HE PLAYS THEM SO WRONG BUT SO RIGHT.” —KRIS FUNN**

McBride was on Milt Jackson’s 1997 album, *Burnin’ In The Woodhouse*. “I liked the way Benny comped behind the vibes,” Wolf says. “A lot of piano players don’t know their job. They’re supposed to support you, but they play over you; they’re supposed to follow you, but they want to lead you. It’s the same with drummers. I want a drummer who knows when to be busy and when not to be busy.”

*Wolfgang* is Wolf’s second CD for Mack Avenue Records (following 2011’s *Warren Wolf*) but his sixth overall. He did two earlier discs—2008’s *RAW* and 2011’s *Warren “Chano Pozo” Wolf*—on his own label and two more—2009’s *Incredible Jazz Vibes* and 2010’s *Black Wolf*—for Japan’s M&I Records. The latter two albums, which are very hard to find now, feature pianist Mulgrew Miller, who passed away on May 29.

“Mulgrew helped me out a lot in the beginning,” Wolf says. “Not only was he the second person to take me out on the road—right after Tim Warfield in 2003—but he also introduced me to a Japanese producer. Mulgrew was a nice guy who played a hell of a lot of piano. He brought a whole history of the piano to jazz, but he never got the recognition he deserved. Those older guys pass on the experience of the still older guys they played with when they were in their 20s. When you’re playing with Mulgrew or Bobby Watson, you’re getting that experience of playing with Art Blakey, that attitude of ‘Yes, it’s my band, but you have to give other people a chance to shine.’”

Wolf first met McBride in 1997 when the former was attending Berklee and the latter was performing at Boston’s Regatta Bar. The young student asked the bassist to sign some CDs and declared, “Hey, Mr. McBride, someday we’re going to play together.” Wolf soon realized that jazz stars hear that a lot, but three

years later he was invited to Jazz Aspen Snowmass Academy, where McBride was the artistic director. McBride wasn’t aware that a vibes player would be attending, so he didn’t have a score for a vibes part in the big-band arrangement of “Shade Of The Cedar Tree,” McBride’s composition for Cedar Walton (who died on Aug. 19).

“I said I didn’t need it because I knew his music,” Wolf remembers. “And I played it through without the score. After that we exchanged numbers and he said, ‘Someday I’m going to call you for a gig.’ That call finally came seven years later. A woman said, ‘Hello, Mr. Wolf, Mr. McBride wants to know if you can play with him at the Village Vanguard.’ I did six nights there and figured it was over. I said, ‘I got to play with Christian McBride. Good.’ But his manager kept calling for the next six years.”

Unlike many vibraphonists, Wolf prefers two sticks rather than four. When he’s tried four-mallet playing, he’s often developed a sore on the inside of his index finger. Plus, the two-stick approach allows him to strike the keys as if with drum sticks, and it’s that athletic approach that makes his sound so distinctive.

“I’m different from most vibraphonists,” he says, “because I work out a lot, and that allows me to play as hard as possible. When I was at Berklee in 1997, [the Baltimore drummer] John Lamkin invited me down to Wally’s Café. At that point I was still using a classical approach, but I found that no one past the first few rows could hear me. When I complained about it, my roommate at the time said, ‘Let’s go to the gym.’ I started going all the time—which I still do—and before long I was playing the vibes so hard that I was knocking the tubes out of tune. And that’s hard to do.”

The other quality that distinguishes Wolf is his connection to Baltimore. There’s something about musicians from that city that combines the funkiness of the South and the thoughtfulness of the North. Maybe that’s because the town sits south of the Mason-Dixon Line and north of the Union/Confederate border along the Potomac River.

“The musicians from Baltimore who’ve made it—Gary Bartz, Gary Thomas, Dennis Chambers, George Colligan—all bring a real fire to the stage,” Wolf says. “It’s a blues thing. A lot of them come from the black church where you’re playing hard all day.”

The Copy Cat Building in Baltimore is an old industrial warehouse that has been converted into studio spaces for painters, sculptors, reggae bands and indie-rock bands. On the wall of the Wolfpac Studio is a display with a hand-written sign that says, “100 Years of Baltimore Jazz.” Below the sign are photos of Junior’s great-grandfather pianist James Nelson Wolfe sitting at a piano; his grandfather the pianist James Nelson Wolfe Jr., also sitting at a piano; his father and himself standing by their vibes; and Junior’s two sons, 6-year-old Kaden and 9-year-old Devaughn sitting behind drum sets. On the ledge of the catercorner wall sit nine carved drums from Africa. Warren Wolf Sr. explains the provenance of each, one of them dating back 150 years.

“They say you need to play an instrument for 10,000 hours to master it—by the time he went to Berklee, he’d had 15,000 hours of practice,” says the father, a former history teacher, about his son. “I wanted to prepare a jazz musician who would be ready for the first Intergalactic Jazz Festival to calm the aliens. I wanted him to be a superstar, because I couldn’t do it myself. When I saw him go past me musically at age 6 or 7, I knew what the deal was.”

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Carl Allen, *Artistic Director*

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# REVIEWS >



Willie Jones III

**The Willie Jones III Sextet**  
*Plays The Max Roach Songbook*  
*Live At Dizzy's Club Coca-Cola*

WJ3 1012

★★★★★



In order to do right by an icon of attack like Max Roach, authority needs to top your agenda. There are numerous repertory outfits that line their endeavors with precision and grace while leaving the ardor at home. That's not the case here. Jones is one of the most animated drummers on the New York scene, and the vehemence his band brings to hopped-up classics such as "Libra" and "Freedom Day" is front and center. Long story short, when they set up shop at Columbus Circle last January, they owned this stuff.

Roach's work with mid-sized groups often felt explosive. A simple press roll or cymbal crash could jump-start a series of actions that raised the roof. Jones strives to reignite that dynamic. George Russell's "Ezz-Thetic" kicks off the action with a fierce tempo that sets the pace for the entire program. From saxophonist Stacy Dillard's hard-bop squall to the boss' splashy rampage, it's all about verve. The theme of "Libra" has a permanent case of the jitters. When trumpeter Jeremy Pelt smears some long notes over the track's stormy rhythmic exchange, it underscores just how hard the band is hitting.

Things calm down on "Equipoise," but even the ballads sizzle on this date. Dillard's known for his lyricism as well as his bluster, and the track's soprano solo has almost as much romance and edge as the original (from Roach's underappreciated *Members Don't Git Weary*).

Perhaps the zenith of creative agitation comes from Eric Reed, who uses his solo on "Freedom Day" to stack line upon line like he's speed-shuffling a deck of cards. With bassist Dezron Douglas sprinting along, the pianist starts his romp by granting his phrases plenty of room, only to careen towards a spot that gives the term "jumble" a good name—a whirlwind of counterpoint that must have had the audience on the edge of their seats. It's an apt exemplar of this band's essence: They pounce on every idea that the music presents, and bring these vibrant pieces to life again.

—Jim Macnie

**Plays The Max Roach Songbook:** Ezz-Thetic; Libra; Equipoise; Freedom Day; Mr. X; To Lady; I Get A Kick Out Of You/Shirley.

**Personnel:** Willie Jones III, drums; Stacy Dillard, tenor, soprano (3) saxophones; Eric Reed, piano; Jeremy Pelt, trumpet; Steve Davis, trombone; Dezron Douglas, bass.

Ordering info: [cduniverse.com](http://cduniverse.com)



## Earl Klugh *HandPicked*

HEADS UP 33201

★★★★½

Say what you will about the passive, somewhat snubbed netherworld of smooth-jazz, that gateway substance into hardcore daydreams and romantic moods. But on the basis of craft alone, it is entitled to our respect. This is surely the conclusion one comes away with after time spent with Earl Klugh's *HandPicked*, his cleverly titled and perfectly lovely new acoustic collection of standards, plus four originals that seem to masquerade as standards.

## Dave Holland & Prism *Prism*

DAREZ 007

★★★★★

Superficially, Dave Holland's new project, Prism, reads like a conventional supergroup. It's not. It's far better. A democratic, hornless quartet made up of very different sensibilities who join forces to make music that none of them would make on their own—perhaps in this, Prism is genuinely prismatic.

Each Prism member contributes at least two compositions to the album, and the nine tracks are varied, but engaging, and most of them are full of adrenaline. Kevin Eubanks, who had a high-profile gig as the leader of "The Tonight Show" band for more than a decade, has not always been my cup of tea, but here he shows that in the right context, he's a powerful and insightful guitarist.

Off the top, his "The Watcher" sets a heavy agenda, his distorted tone and mercurial zooms bringing a metallic tinge to the angular riff. The big surprise here is Eric Harland. His massive thwack is unexpected; who knew he had these post-fusion tools in his belt? They're tasty enough to attest to his flexibility and mastery, as if such confirmation were needed.

The most structurally complex compositions are Craig Taborn's, and the group is much enhanced by his presence. On his "Spirals," which includes an ultra-rare section complete-

Solo acoustic guitar is a mellow pleasure, sometimes bordering on classical austerity. It never gives into what is beyond its reach, which is excess. Klugh came along in the '70s when the guitar and its assorted mutations were becoming the principal voice of excess and rebellion in music. Klugh was not the only one to take a more traditional path, but he was one of the few—George Benson was another—to take it into contemporary pop on his terms and grab a Grammy for his efforts.

The jazz world pretty much washed its hands of him, yet his present CD is not that far from what Joe Pass was doing on his *Virtuoso* albums—graceful flights of self-accompaniment in which single notes and chords play off contrapuntal bass lines, each offering ballast to the other. If Charlie Christian (or Eddie Lang before him) founded the trumpet approach to the guitar, Klugh presents a piano-based approach in which the left and right hand form an intimate and softly appealing chamber group.

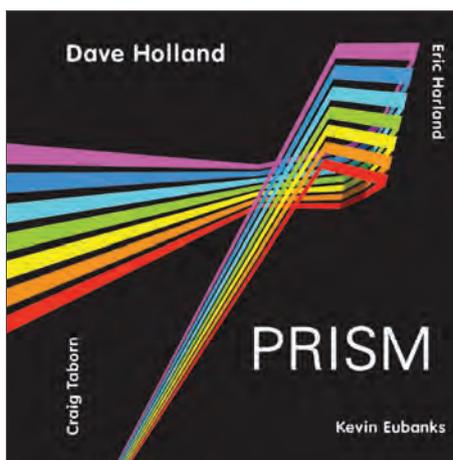
Pass would often fire off whirling arpeggios that came out of his melodic outlines like skyrocket, but Klugh seems more attentive to the strolling atmospheric than active adventurism.

—John McDonough

**HandPicked:** Alfie; Lullaby Of Birdland; Blue Moon; In Six; Cast Your Fate To The Wind; Hotel California; More And More Amor; 'Round Midnight; But Beautiful; All I Have To Do Is Dream; Going Out Of My Head; If I Fell; Where The Wind Takes Me; Morning Rain; Love Is A Many Splendored Thing; This Time. (55:45)

**Personnel:** Earl Klugh, Bill Frisell (3), guitar; Jake Shimabukuro, ukulele (6); Vince Gill (10), guitar, vocal.

**Ordering info:** [headsup.com](http://headsup.com)



ly out of pulsed time, Harland and Holland snap together like rubber parts, revelling in the weird rhythm games; the rhythms on Taborn's "The True Meaning Of Determination" might require even higher math to parse.

Holland's simmering blues on "The Empty Chair" recalls early Funkadelic with its slow, mounting grind, every bit different from Harland's "Choir," a propulsive smile of a tune.

—John Corbett

**Prism:** The Watcher; The Empty Chair; Spirals; Choir; The Color Of Iris; A New Day; The True Meaning Of Determination; Evolution; Breathe. (70:05)

**Personnel:** Dave Holland, bass; Kevin Eubanks, guitar; Craig Taborn, piano; Fender Rhodes; Eric Harland, drums.

**Ordering info:** [daveholland.com](http://daveholland.com)



## Kenny Garrett *Pushing The World Away*

MACK AVENUE 1078

★★★★★

Alto saxophonist Kenny Garrett, whose brawny tone is one of the most immediately identifiable and pleasurable sounds in jazz, continues to explore the vast territory opened by John Coltrane and Sonny Rollins, while at the same time forging a personal middle ground between their knotty variations and his own singable tunes. Balancing the spiritual and party impulses of jazz, Garrett presents appealing new melodies inspired by Spanish, Caribbean and Asian themes, with an inspired cadre of young musicians.

The title track, moving with a Coltrane-styled pulse, showcases Garrett's clarion soprano saxophone, on which he warbles, whinnies and brays multiphonics. Pianist Vernell Brown takes a smashing solo and then the two chant rhythmically in different languages. At nine minutes, it's the longest track, suggesting the chaotic world Garrett left in order to create the more peacefully centered music on the album.

Garrett does not dive directly into turmoil, but works up to it, offering the fetching pentatonic melody of "A Side Order Of Hijiki" first, then a lovely, flamenco-drenched homage to Chick Corea, "Hey, Chick."

As harmonically rich as Garrett's language is, he has a songwriter's knack for melody, such as the rolling, lyrical "That's It." Another original, "Homma San," glides over pedal-sustained, Chinese-like piano, and Jean Baylor adds a wordless vocal, evoking a Pharoah Sanders-like shimmer.

All in all, this is a powerful batch of new material by a consummate jazzman who, like his mentor and former employer Miles Davis, loves a great song as much as a smart variation on it.

—Paul de Barros

**Pushing The World Away:** A Side Order Of Hijiki; Hey, Chick; Chucho's Mambo; Lincoln Center; J'ouvert (Homage To Sonny Rollins); That's It; I Say A Little Prayer; Pushing The World Away; Homma San; Brother Brown; Alpha Man; Rotation. (72:15)

**Personnel:** Kenny Garrett, alto saxophone (1–7, 9, 11–12), soprano saxophone (8), piano (10), vocals (8); Ravi Best, trumpet (3); Benito Gonzalez, piano (1–3, 5–7, 9, 12); Vernell Brown, piano (4, 8, 11–12), vocals (8); Corcoran Holt, bass; Marcus Baylor (1–3, 5–6, 9, 12), Mark Whitfield Jr. (8, 11–12), drums; McCleenty Hunter, drums (4, 7, 10, 12), vocals (6); Rudy Bird, percussion (3, 5–9); Jean Baylor, vocals (9); Carolin Pook, violin (10); Brian Sanders, cello (10); Jen Herman, viola (10).

**Ordering info:** [mackavenue.com](http://mackavenue.com)

# The Hot Box

Critics >	John McDonough	John Corbett	Jim Macnie	Paul de Barros
<b>The Willie Jones III Sextet</b> <i>Plays The Max Roach Songbook</i>	★★★★	★★★★½	★★★★	★★★★½
<b>Earl Klugh</b> <i>HandPicked</i>	★★★★½	★★½	★★★	★★
<b>Kenny Garrett</b> <i>Pushing The World Away</i>	★★★	★★★★½	★★★	★★★★
<b>Dave Holland &amp; Prism</b> <i>Prism</i>	★★★	★★★★	★★½	★★½

## Critics' Comments

### The Willie Jones III Sextet, *Plays The Max Roach Songbook Live At Dizzy's Club Coca-Cola*

Befitting a CD by and devoted to a drummer, this is a fiery, in-the-pocket bebop set that mostly moves at a swift gallop from the first rim shot, touching on the less familiar titles recorded by Roach from 1951-'68. Strong ensembles and solos fly with fierce, ripping precision, pushed from beneath by Douglas' relentless support. Superior stuff.  
—John McDonough

Nice choice, tribute to someone maybe not thought of as having a book per se, looking to associations and a couple of key compositions by Roach himself. Jones' nimble sextet is compact, focused, the tunes given breadth, opportune for Dillard, Pelt and especially Reed to stretch effectively. Adore "To Lady"'s silken vibe. Honey of a rhythm team.  
—John Corbett

Great idea for an album, from the zigzagging "Ezz-Thetic" and joyous "Freedom Day" to the shimmering "Equipoise" and warm romance of "To Lady." Jones is not a great storyteller as a soloist, but he always offered full-throttle swing with Roy Hargrove, and he does that with his own band, too, as well as bringing out the best in pianist Eric Reed, who shines with unselfconscious élan.  
—Paul de Barros

### Earl Klugh, *Handpicked*

Decidedly un inventive programming with some heavy non-ironic MOR choices, despite some accomplished, if not very exciting, playing. Does the Frisell inclusion on the CD's best track lend cred to Klugh or drain it from Frisell? Either way, once they check into "Hotel California" ... gotta go!  
—John Corbett

Nice changeup, and surely he has the chops for a mostly solo session. In fact, this recital elicits a bit more tenderness than we're used to from the guitarist. The high-vis duets work, though the Eagles nod is a tad hokey.  
—Jim Macnie

Kudos for the cleanliness, clarity and care Klugh takes with a melody on acoustic guitar, but the material and the meager variations, though pleasant enough as background music for a summer afternoon, are lightweight, despite marquee contributions from Bill Frisell, Jake Shimabukuro and Vince Gill.  
—Paul de Barros

### Kenny Garrett, *Pushing The World Away*

There are times when sweat passes for heat. Or worse, inspiration. In the fog of fervor, it's easy to see the mirage of a muse. Consider Garrett's strained spirals on "Lincoln Center" or the sour soprano sax wrestling a gurgling vocal mantra on the title track. Still, his homage to Sonny could turn a crowd into a conga line. "Rotation" has a tart jump. Mixed.  
—John McDonough

Some of the zigzags on this variety show don't work as well as others. The gear-shift to "Chucho's Mambo" seems arbitrary. Same with "I Say A Little Prayer," and the leader's stint on piano, lovely as it is. The upper-level post-Coltrane main stem of the music would work better without such detours.  
—John Corbett

He shoots the moon, as is his wont, and along the way makes sure that frenzy gets a good strong pat on the back. The material is not the strongest around, but the saxophonist is a soloist first, and composer second. Stand back and enjoy the storm-force winds.  
—Jim Macnie

### Dave Holland & Prism, *Prism*

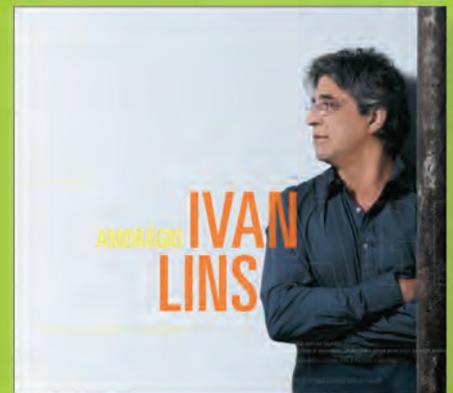
It's Holland's CD, but the lead voice is Eubanks, who, despite moments of restraint and rectitude, prefers the heavier jazz-rock squall lines of thunder and lightning, always on the horizon. Taborn's occasional, semi-tonal probes are the music's wake-up calls. And Holland renders juicy acoustic bass lines on "A New Day" and "Determination."  
—John McDonough

Methinks the influx of mathiness is reaching its limits. The angles and counterpoint make this music too algebraic. Call it "The Inner Mounting Wake Of Poseidon," beg Holland to make the next one a bit more fluid.  
—Jim Macnie

Love the tender "The Empty Chair," the churchy "Choir," the mysterious crawl of "The Color Of Iris" and Eric Harland's lovely ballad, "Breathe," but Kevin Eubanks' admittedly amazing virtuoso guitar heroism ultimately feels like overload.  
—Paul de Barros

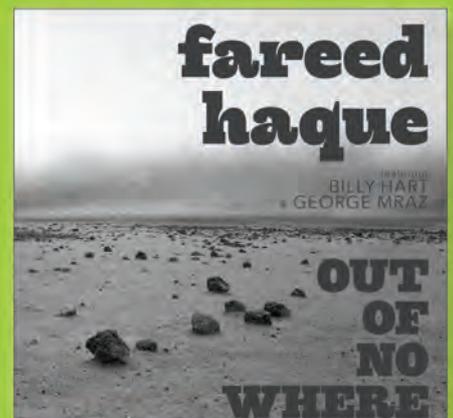
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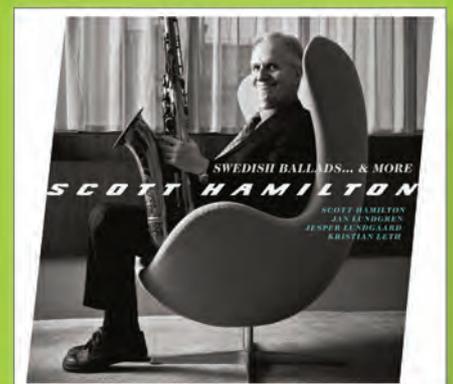
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## São Paulo Underground *Beija Flors Velho E Sujo*

CUNEIFORM 359

★★★★

After steadily expanding from its original duo lineup, the Chicago to Brazil Tropicalia fusion project São Paulo Underground contracts into a trio for its fourth release. Co-founders Rob Mazurek and Mauricio Takara are joined here by keyboardist Guilherme Granado for a raucous affair, Frankensteining Brazilian sounds with elements of post-rock, *Bitches Brew*, Sun Ra and electronica. The result is both sunny and abrasive, like a tropical paradise invaded by Terminators.

## Mary Halvorson Septet *Illusionary Sea*

FIREHOUSE RECORDS 120401017

★★★★½

As a leader, Mary Halvorson started out small, recruiting John Hébert and Ches Smith for her trio. Since then, she's slowly added to the band, expanding it first to a quintet and now to a septet. Her compositional prowess has grown along with her band, and *Illusionary Sea* displays a voice as a writer that is becoming nearly as unique as her voice on the guitar.

The oddball melodies and unexpected shifts of these songs, such as the unusual rhythmic twist "Smiles Of Great Men" takes as Halvorson dives into one of her most impressive solos, all bear her increasingly recognizable signature. As much as Halvorson has developed her writing, though, *Illusionary Sea* frequently loses its way when the songs move past the composition into long, improvised middles. For whatever reason, in these passages the momentum seems to die, all too often.

Both "Butterfly Orbit" and "Red Sky Still Sea" give the listener a spot of whiplash when they return to the head in their final seconds, after minutes of wandering. The contrast between the well-rendered arrangements and the tendency of the band to stall when the script is taken away is sharp.

Halvorson's playing is mostly a marvel. Her mechanistic tone at the end of "Four Pages Of

The group lurches into action with "Ol' Dirty Hummingbird," a loose translation of the album's title, an homage to the late court jester of hip-hop's Wu-Tang Clan, suggesting the trio's puckish sense of humor.

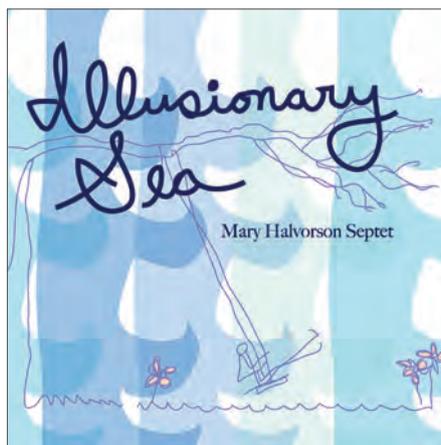
The band weaves a web of sound into huge, powerful monoliths, most of which segue or simply collide into one another. "Into The Rising Sun" gives way to the Sun Ra homage "Arnus Nusar," where Granado approximates the Saturnian bandleader's Farfisa sound amidst a glitchy cosmic swirl, which then explodes into an echo-chamber "Over The Rainbow," as if *The Wizard of Oz* were beamed across the universe, accumulating errors and artifacts en route.

For every ocean air melody—the Carnival bravado of "Evetch" or the exuberant "The Love I Feel For You Is More Real Than Ever"—there's an equally dark, end-of-the-world explosion of sound. "Six-Handed Casio" is a computer melt-down set to music, while "A Árvore De Cereja É Ausente" places Takara's resonant cavaquinho into a field recording haze. It's the work of an ensemble that knows how to create music of real, clarion beauty but also knows how, and perhaps prefers, to sabotage it. —Shaun Brady

**Beija Flors Velho E Sujo:** Ol' Dirty Hummingbird; Into The Rising Sun; Arnus Nusar; Over The Rainbow; Evetch; Six-Handed Casio; The Love I Feel For You Is More Real Than Ever; Basilio's Crazy Wedding Song; A Árvore De Cereja É Ausente; Taking Back The Sea Is No Easy Task. (38:23)

**Personnel:** Mauricio Takara, percussion, cavaquinho, electronics; Guilherme Granado, keyboards, synths, sampler, vocals; Rob Mazurek, cornet, Evolver, ring modulator, analog delay, harmonium.

**Ordering info:** [cuneiformrecords.com](http://cuneiformrecords.com)

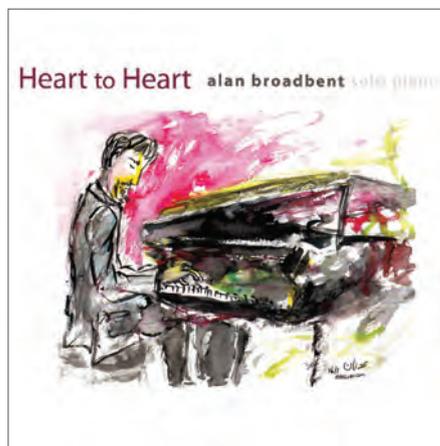


Robots" is startling, and she shows her full range over the course of her solo on "Smiles," from fluid melody to vigorous scraping. She has her voice instrumentally and compositionally. As she continues her work with bigger ensembles, Halvorson's next challenge is to carry the fire in her playing and songs over to the conversation among her band members. —Joe Tangari

**Illusionary Sea:** Illusionary Sea (No. 33); Smiles Of Great Men (No. 34); Red Sky Still Sea (No. 31); Four Pages Of Robots (No. 30); Fourth Dimensional Confession (No. 41); Butterfly Orbit (No. 32); Nairam. (49:51)

**Personnel:** Mary Halvorson, guitar; Jonathan Finlayson, trumpet; Jon Irabagon, alto saxophone; Ingrid Laubrock, tenor saxophone; Jacob Garchik, trombone; John Hébert, bass; Ches Smith, drums.

**Ordering info:** [firehouse12.com](http://firehouse12.com)



## Alan Broadbent *Heart To Heart: Solo Piano*

CHILLY BIN 0004

★★★★★

To a journeyman pianist, an entire album of solo playing is a challenge to fill with worthy music. To a master like Alan Broadbent, the format is a devotional, an exhibition and a playground. Like few other practicing keyboardists, Broadbent's playing on this tour de force truly fulfills the potential of the instrument as an orchestra in a box.

Lennie Tristano's eponymous solo album for Atlantic is an obvious reference for *Heart To Heart*. Broadbent's spidery left hand keeps metronomic time as the foundation for Charlie Haden's "Hello My Lovely" and the title track, a clever, rubato variation of "Body And Soul." But Broadbent has a lyrical flow that is seldom heard in Tristano, whose dark left-hand forests weren't sprinkled with right-hand sunshine like Broadbent's.

Bill Evans is another touchstone. Broadbent's rhapsodic flourishes on the bridge to "Love Is The Thing" (based on "What Is This Thing") are breathtaking. The "Blue In Green" essayed here is far dreamier—in a Bernard Herrmann way—than Evans ever played.

Broadbent's two-hand dynamics are fascinating: An out-of-tempo right hand, contrary motion, spontaneous counterpoint and parallel lines can be heard throughout this Portland recital from 2012. The left-handed pulse may deal out straight-time or play hide-and-seek with the beat. And the bass chords take over the melody for a time while the treble chords accompany, as on "Alone Together."

Emotion is always at the surface of a Broadbent performance, but Ornette Coleman's "Lonely Woman" positively drips with it. The tune operates in a minor chord fog and goes through several permutations to create a small masterpiece for form.

The album caps off with a dazzling, high-velocity romp through "Cherokee." Broadbent tips his hat to Bud Powell and then waves goodbye, as all artists should do to their heroes. —Kirk Silsbee

**Heart To Heart: Solo Piano:** Hello My Lovely; Heart To Heart; Alone Together; Now And Then; Journey Home; Blue In Green; Love Is The Thing; Lonely Woman; Cherokee. (58:44)

**Personnel:** Alan Broadbent, piano.

**Ordering info:** [alanbroadbent.com](http://alanbroadbent.com)



## Drummers Lead With Power

**Steve Gadd Band: *Gadditude* (BFM Jazz; 56:21 ★★★★★)** Is there any doubt that Steve Gadd is one of the most mysterious drummers in the world? The veteran jazz drummer-turned-tubthumper-to-the-stars retains his good groove on *Gadditude*. But while the album is divided between atmospheric, Miles Davis-inspired experiments and funkier fare, Gadd remains an enigma throughout, serving the music with as little embellishment as possible beyond his superbly plush groove. Surrounded by a slick Los Angeles crew (guitarist Michael Landau, keyboardist Larry Goldings and bassist Jimmy Johnson), Gadd lays way back, pulsing the 16th-note beat on Landau's "Africa" and the equally spectral "Ask Me." The band turns Keith Jarrett's "The Windup" into a funky good time, then dissects Radiohead's "Scatterbrained" with as much gloom as the original. The drummer's loose snare-drags and punchy ride cymbal accents are like a race-horse galloping slowly to the finish.

Ordering info: [bfmjazz.com](http://bfmjazz.com)

**Scott Neumann Neu3 Trio: *Blessed* (Origin Records; 59:22 ★★★★★)** Scott Neumann's sophomore solo release is not a blowing but a simmering session. His exceptional trio, with saxophonist Michael Blake and bassist Mark Helias, creates a furnace of ideas where creativity is inspired, swing incessant, and the performances exhilarating. The trio revels in a simpatico exchange. Precise movements and improvisations erupt from a collective identity where listening may be the greatest skill of all. Neumann, who has recorded more than 50 CDs as a sideman and has extensive Broadway and academic credits, performs with detailed abandon on *Blessed*, his transparent, explosive drumming and rich tone inspiring a true group effort.

Ordering info: [origin-records.com](http://origin-records.com)

**Alex Snyderman: *Fortunate Action* (Alex Snyderman Music; 57:14 ★★★★★)** Newcomer Snyderman is pursuing his master's degree in jazz performance at the California Institute of the Arts. His debut recalls the heartland approach of Brian Blade's Fellowship band—whirling melodies, cascading piano lines and exuberant rhythms. Though Snyderman's drums are oddly under-miked, he executes fluid rim and hi-hat combinations. His meticulous

cymbal work recalls his instructor Eric Harland, as well as Peter Erskine's touch.

Ordering info: [alexsnymusic.com](http://alexsnymusic.com)

**Joe Locke: *Lay Down My Heart: Blues & Ballads Vol 1* (Motema; 55:25 ★★★★★)** Joe Locke's rich vibraphone work, characterized by flawless solos of emotional clarity, has graced 30 solo albums and even more sideman recordings. Locke's latest is an album of jazz and r&b covers, cabaret ditties and thoughtful original material. Locke's "Broken Toy" creates an ethereal mood, Sam Jones' "Bittersweet" swings and "Makin' Whoopee" lulls gently. Ultimately, the songs are less the focus than Locke's consistently engrossing solos.

Ordering info: [motema.com](http://motema.com)

**Albert "Tootie" Heath/Ethan Iverson/Ben Street: *Tootie's Tempo* (Sunnyside; 47:00 ★★★★★½)** Where Locke's approach to standards is dutiful, Albert "Tootie" Heath plays "The Charleston," "Charade," "How Insensitive" and "Cute" like he's just discovered gold and wants to share it with the world. A wonderful live recording with pianist Ethan Iverson and bassist Ben Street, *Tootie's Tempo* is both history lesson and joyous event. Like many an old master, the 78-year-old Heath lives by his ride cymbal, imbuing it with a stately grace that drives as hard as a '60s Cadillac. Iverson and Street are equally inspired, their accompaniment exploratory but mostly fun. In that spirit, Iverson's "Danube Incident" recalls Roy Budd's "Get Carter," the Street/Heath duet "Cute" rollicks joyously and "The Charleston" is just as riotous as the original '30s craze.

Ordering info: [sunnysiderecords.com](http://sunnysiderecords.com)

**Ray Mantilla: *The Connection* (Savant; 54:11 ★★★★★)** How better to end a drum fest than with a Latin block party? Percussionist Ray Mantilla leads his sextet through standard Latin fare, but with bright ideas. The sonorous opening of "Les Apolypticanos" bales like warning sirens. "Pieces" brings on a rambunctious New Orleans street parade segueing into a straight-ahead percussion romp. "Blues For Ray" closes the party with one of those infectious grooves that can be heard blocks away, and deep into the night. **DB**

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## OWL Trio OWL Trio

LOSEN RECORDS 123

★★★★

Guitarist Lage Lund, saxophonist Will Vinson and bassist Orlando le Fleming stepped into the abandoned, unheated Brooklyn church where they were to record, having never rehearsed and barely even played together as a trio. But the results of their debut album are impressive, regardless of the circumstances surrounding its production. Everything about this album, which should contend for debut of the year honors, is a resounding success. The music swings effortlessly,

every utterance is gorgeous and the recording is intimate and beautiful.

The program contains a varied mix of standards, among which the trio interspersed three freely improvised tracks. John Coltrane's "Dear Lord," which features Vinson's singing alto, is a standout track, as is "From This Moment On," where Lund's nimble double-time solo work shines. Vinson turns in another fine performance on "I Should Care"; he glides over Lund and le Fleming, turning out lengthy phrase after lengthy phrase in a manner similar to Lee Konitz. The trio shows off its collective chops on Jerome Kern's "Yesterdays"; they mask the meter, rarely give a downbeat and occasionally hint that the tune might be in five. The solos segue seamlessly, and the accompaniment patterns and textures change, keeping things fresh and dynamic.

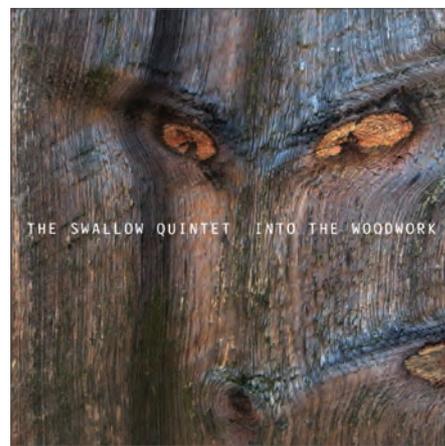
Free improvisations demonstrate the trio's ability to create compelling narrative arcs from scratch. Lund begins "Churchgoing" with a repeated pedal tone, with le Fleming and Vinson filling in the gaps, creating a weaving effect. After a quiet and sparse section, Vinson reintroduces an earlier motive, and the trio concludes the tune with a modified recapitulation of the opening material.

—Chris Robinson

**OWL Trio:** Morning Glory; All Across The City; I Should Care; Hallow; Dear Lord; Yesterdays; Churchgoing; Sweet And Lovely; From This Moment On; Blues For Jimmy; Moonstone. (61:52)

**Personnel:** Lage Lund, guitar; Will Vinson, saxophone; Orlando le Fleming, bass.

**Ordering info:** [distribution13.com](http://distribution13.com)



## The Swallow Quintet Into The Woodwork

ECM 279 8380

★★★★

Steve Swallow distinguished himself as an in-demand upright bassist during the '60s through his work with George Russell, Art Farmer, Stan Getz, Paul Bley and Gary Burton. In 1970, when he began playing electric bass with a pick, he ushered in a new era. While Monk Montgomery had already been playing the Fender Jazz bass with a pick, Swallow carved out his own niche with his lyrical pick-bass technique: a very different avenue than the bass-as-saxophone approach of Jaco Pastorius or the slap-bass approach passed down from Larry Graham and Bootsy Collins to Stanley Clarke, Marcus Miller, Victor Wooten and others.

For this new quintet, featuring his longtime collaborator and life partner Carla Bley on organ, Swallow has concocted a new book of tunes written with the players in mind. The opener, "Sad Old Candle," sets a melancholy tone that recalls Nino Rota's evocative writing for the many Fellini movies he scored. Shifting gears, the title track is a lively jazz waltz that prominently features Chris Cheek's tenor and Steve Cardenas' flowing, warm-toned guitar work. "From Whom It May Concern," dedicated to poet Paul Haines, is a gentle ballad underscored by Bley's funereal organ.

"Grisly Business" is a self-deprecating title for a tune that showcases Swallow's lyrical soloing over a slow-grooving, quirky blues. The underrated Cardenas is paired with Cheek in some distortion-laced harmony lines on "Unnatural Causes," then engages in playful exchanges with the potent tenor player on "The Butler Did It."

"Suitable For Framing" opens with a delicate duet between Cardenas' guitar and Swallow's bass that has the crystalline quality of John Lewis' "Django." The two kindred spirits carry on before the full band finally enters. On "Small Comfort," an intimate waltz-time duet with Bley's organ, Swallow's lyrical, picked bass lines are prominent and instantly identifiable.

—Bill Milkowski

**From the Hip:** Sad Old Candle; Into The Woodwork; From Whom It May Concern; Back In Action; Grisly Business; Unnatural Causes; The Butler Did It; Suitable For Framing; Small Comfort; Still There; Never Know; Exit Stage Left. (56:21)

**Personnel:** Steve Swallow, bass; Chris Cheek, tenor saxophone; Steve Cardenas, guitar; Carla Bley, organ; Jorge Rossy, drums.

**Ordering info:** [ecmrecords.com](http://ecmrecords.com)

## Steve Turre The Bones Of Art

HIGHNOTE 7251

★★★★½

There's a double meaning in the title of Steve Turre's latest album. *The Bones Of Art* refers, of course, to Turre's impeccable trombone artistry, as well as that of his partners in the session's three-bone frontline: Frank Lacy, Steve Davis and, on two tracks, Robin Eubanks. But all four of these men share something in common beside their instrument of choice; they can also claim membership in Art Blakey's prestigious bandstand finishing school, the Jazz Messengers.

Perhaps that explains the ease with which this group coheres into such a lively and buoyantly swinging unit. The 10-song program of originals by Turre and his bandmates manages to stay engaging despite the lack of variety in the horn section. By swapping in a grab bag of plungers and mutes and continually switching gears from one tune to the next, the sound never becomes tiresome.

The leader's homage to Slide Hampton, "Slide's Ride," opens the disc with a boisterous embrace, before shifting into the silky ballad "Blue & Brown." Lacy contributes the forceful "Settegast Strut," inspired by his native Houston, while Eubanks provides "Shorter Bu." Davis offers the bop throwback "Bird Bones" and the balmy Latin rhythms of closing track "Daylight," on which Turre's conch shells make their inevitable



appearance. Eubanks is the honoree of Turre's funky, tricky "4 & 9," which features Kenny Davis on electric bass and Xavier Jones switching to Rhodes. Even if Turre never quite succeeds at making the listener forget that the ensemble has forsaken all other horns, it's a fun and winning attempt.

—Shaun Brady

**The Bones Of Art:** Slide's Ride; Blue & Brown; Settegast Strut; Bird Bones; Sunset; 4 & 9; Fuller Beauty; Shorter Bu; Julian's Blues; Daylight. (68:12)

**Personnel:** Steve Turre, trombone, shells (10); Frank Lacy, trombone (1-5, 7-10); Willie Jones III, drums; Xavier Davis, piano, Fender Rhodes; Robin Eubanks, trombone (6, 8); Peter Washington, acoustic bass (1-5, 7-10); Steve Davis, trombone (1-7, 9, 10); Kenny Davis, electric bass (6); Pedro Martinez, congas, bongos, campana (10).

**Ordering info:** [jazzdepot.com](http://jazzdepot.com)

Ethan Iverson  
Lee Konitz  
Larry Grenadier  
Jorge Rossy  
**Costumes Are Mandatory**



**Ethan Iverson/Lee Konitz/  
Larry Grenadier/Jorge Rossy**  
**Costumes Are Mandatory**

HIGH NOTE 7249  
★★★★½

You can't accuse Ethan Iverson of playing to the galleries. Though *Costumes Are Mandatory* opens and closes with an easy-swinging blues, "Blueberry Ice Cream," what comes between focuses less on the gut and more on the head of the listener. Those who have followed his trajectory, and in particular the writings of those who attach their commentaries to it, won't find this surprising. Come to think of it, judging from the detached perspective that Iverson brings to his music, his supporters probably aren't the type to seek or register surprise about much at all.

The parameters set by this quartet are clear. Solos settle in the instrument's middle range; anything beyond a couple of octaves is apparently off limits, perhaps because dramatic dashes up or down tend to obscure the thought process behind what Iverson and Lee Konitz play. Ditto for dynamics: The whole album adheres to a somewhat muted volume while also avoiding the hushed emotionalism of, say, Bill Evans.

Then there's rhythm. On the medium-up tracks, the group seems to acknowledge the necessity of meter. Except for those two blues, they tend to assign the groove to one of the players while the other three play as they want around it. For example, on "317 East 32nd," Larry Grenadier locks onto a steady eighth-note walk, freeing Jorge Rossy to reverse up- and down-beats, leave the meter and otherwise join the others in stretching out.

This formula changes from one track to the next; sometimes it's Rossy who anchors the beat. In any event, the point is not to swing as much as to create a reference point in the midst of various degrees of abstract invention. On "Blueberry Hill," this manifests at the top by replicating the old-school r&b intro.

Once we're past that, though, Iverson begins alternating fairly clear references to the tune with flurries of notes that accelerate and lose any tonal center before coming back again to a familiar riff or cadence. The intention here seems to be to illustrate the group's methodology as clearly as possible while at the same time having a lit-

tle fun with the seriousness of it all. Other examples of possibly humorous intent include the anti-groove metronome tick on "Bats" and the snapback echo on "It's You (Tempo Complex)."

Almost despite themselves, the quartet creates some gorgeous moments, often in more intimate configurations. In a duo performance, Grenadier and Konitz explore "Body And Soul" insightfully, with the bass part in particular showing an understated virtuosity. And the sheer oddity of Konitz's wordless vocal, Rossy's and Grenadier's inter-

play, and Iverson's glimmering dissonances makes "My Old Flame" a standout.

But, by and large, *Costumes Are Mandatory* speaks most eloquently to those who seek their muse cerebrally. It's jazz for nerds, in the very best sense. —Bob Doerschuk

**Costumes Are Mandatory:** Blueberry Ice Cream Take 2; Try A Little Tenderness; It's You (Tempo Complex); It's You; What's New; 317 East 32nd; Body And Soul; Blueberry Hill; A Distant Bell; Bats; Mr. Bumi; My New Lovers All Seem So Tame; My Old Flame; Blueberry Ice Cream Take 2. (55:52)

**Personnel:** Ethan Iverson, piano; Lee Konitz, alto saxophone, vocals; Larry Grenadier, bass; Jorge Rossy, drums.

**Ordering info:** [jazzdepot.com](http://jazzdepot.com)

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## Deep Convictions and Holy, Intense Communication

**Freddie King: *The Complete King Federal Sides* (Real Gone Music 0114; 79:48/79:08 ★★★★★½)** Freddie King, influenced by B. B. King (no relation) and Muddy Waters, revealed aggressive Chicago blues guitar glory when recording for the Cincinnati-based Federal label between 1960–'66. As with his guitar work, King went about singing with easefulness and an absolute concentration of intent. Among the dozen or so flawless gems on this 54-song collection are the 1961 r&b hit "I'm Tore Down" and the famous instrumental "Hideaway." The rest of the performances speak almost as clearly of his conviction and technical skill.

**Ordering info:** [realgonemusic.com](http://realgonemusic.com)

**Luther Kent: *Luther* (Atoula 001; 44:42 ★★★★★½)** Brandishing a voice as big and deep as Lake Pontchartrain, Kent sings Chicago blues, New Orleans r&b, old-time pop fare like "Careless Love" and Randy Newman's "Louisiana 1927" with an intense sincerity that communicates the immediacy of lyrics to the listener. This native New Orleanian is a lucky man. Many of the best musicians in town—starting with pianist David Torkanowsky and tenorman Tony Dagradi—help out and most of the arrangements, bridging jazz and blues, came from luminaries Wardell Quezergue and Charlie Brent (both now deceased).

**Ordering info:** [lutherkent.com](http://lutherkent.com)

**Mighty Mike Schermer: *Be Somebody* (Finedog 61039; 47:56 ★★★★★½)** Mike Schermer, admired for his guitar playing in pianist Marcia Ball's band, draws on his personal experiences in the West Coast and Texas blues camps in creating his own engaging hybrid of Americana. The slightly wan timbre of his singing voice and the dogged self-assurance of his guitar attack are evident in strong original songs, honest revelations on love and mortality. Schermer couldn't have asked for better rhythm sections, counting on colleagues in San Francisco and Austin. Slide guitarist Elvin Bishop's presence benefits "Corazon."

**Ordering info:** [mighty-mike.com](http://mighty-mike.com)

**Clay Swafford: *Rooster* (Lost Cause 120; 49:07 ★★★★★)** Clay Swafford, a 29-year-old blues and boogie-woogie pianist out of Alabama, has the ability and dexterity to make in-the-tradition originals and restorations of material by the likes of Little Walter and Big Mama Thornton worthy of our attention. Not inclined to sing, he calls upon the resourceful vocalist Dianna Greenleaf to tear up four of the 11 core tracks. Guitarist Bob Margolin and harp player Bob Corritore show up on pedestrian bonus tracks.

**Ordering info:** [lostcauserrecords.com](http://lostcauserrecords.com)

**Scott Ramminger: *Advice From A Father***



**To A Son (Arbor Lane 918; 48:19 ★★★★★)** Washington D.C.-area singer and saxophonist Scott Ramminger gets his bearings on seven songs with four leading Crescent City musicians—drummer Johnny Vidacovich, keyboardist David Torkanowsky, guitarist Shane Theriot and bassist George Porter Jr. Beltway blues friends accompany him on the reggae-inflected "Sometimes You Race The Devil" and two more. Not someone to grab a listener by the throat, Ramminger instead gives a nice reassuring pat on the back.

**Ordering info:** [scottramminger.com](http://scottramminger.com)

**Junior Watson: *Jumpin' Wit Junior* (Regal Radio 10038; 53:10 ★★★★★)** Junior Watson's jazzy, unpredictable guitar takes its resonance from reactions to snapping and swinging rhythms that decades ago were the rage in Los Angeles clubs frequented by Pee Wee Crayton and Joe Houston. On his third solo album, the former Canned Heat member and his sidekicks on piano, upright bass and drums apply thick-smoke atmosphere to a program of old TV show themes and original songs every bit as curious as titles like "Knee High Boogie" and "Mr. Downtime." Watson's singing voice, seldom heard, has a crude yet appealing quality.

**Ordering info:** [regalradiorecords.com](http://regalradiorecords.com)

**Steve Forbert: *Over With You* (Blue Corn Music 1203; 36:58; ★★★★★½)** Born and raised in Mississippi, singer-songwriter Steve Forbert has been dedicated to his craft and his vision since the 1970s—and his latest album, produced by Chris Goldsmith (Blind Boys of Alabama, Charlie Musselwhite), ranks among his best. Showing character, he elevates the human spirit with melodic songs containing elements of blues, country, folk and rock. **DB**

**Ordering info:** [bluecornmusic.com](http://bluecornmusic.com)



### Dick Hyman/Ken Peplowski ...Live At The Kitano

VICTORIA 4393

★★★★★

If duets have a way of sounding a bit short of oxygen, maybe it's no different than scaling a mountain. Once you acclimate to the thinner air, the music no longer sounds like a series of codas. You breathe easier. Dick Hyman and Ken Peplowski have been breathing such air for ages, and they never sound winded before this enthusiastic New York crowd. Interestingly, this release comes on the heels of a similar, though slightly freer, format from Eddie Daniels and Roger Kellaway.

On clarinet, Peplowski plays in the classic manner, which is to say in the shadow of Benny Goodman. Though he has his own way, he has been less inclined to fight this than some of his peers, maybe because he played in Goodman's final band. Here, Peplowski passes closest on "How High The Moon," which was a Goodman staple for 40 years. He skips any Goodman licks, but with Hyman in his Teddy Wilson/Mel Powell groove, the spirit is there, including the sprints of the thermal power. On tenor saxophone, Peplowski plays with classic romantic sound laced with a Ben Websterish stubble.

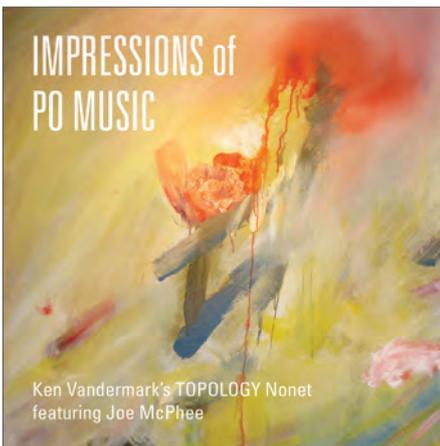
Hyman, who is surely America's most pre-eminent keeper of everybody else's style, may have a few proprietary licks of his own. But what draws the ear in these duets is the way each player's swooping arpeggios meet each other in mid-air, entwine in little brief encounters and move on. Hyman's "style" may be simply the tactile sensitivity of his touch. And because his left hand is as sure as his right, the vacuum left by drums and bass is fully filled.

The interesting thing here is their capacity for surprise. This is because surprise is a relative term that cannot exist without expectations. Given the firm and familiar rules of tempo, melody and harmony that ground this music, it's the perfect framework for the unexpected in the clean lines of these two sly masters. —John McDonough

**...Live At The Kitano:** The Blue Room; Gone With The Wind; I Mean You; Yellow Dog Blues; Lucky To Be Me; The World Is Waiting For The Sunrise; Ugly Beauty; My Ship; Lover, Come Back To Me/Quicksilver. (64:48)

**Personnel:** Ken Peplowski, clarinet (1, 3–8), tenor saxophone (2, 9); Dick Hyman, piano.

**Ordering info:** [victoriarecords.net](http://victoriarecords.net)



**Ken Vandermark's Topology Nonet Featuring Joe McPhee**  
*Impressions Of Po Music*

OKKADISK 12095

★★★★★

**Vandermark/Gustafsson**  
*Verses*

CORBETT VS. DEMPSEY 009

★★★★½

Professional musicians have often been encouraged to learn more than one instrument, and there's no assailing the versatility of Ken Vandermark, who links these two quite dissimilar records, and who has up to four horns at his command. But what these albums exemplify is another multi-threat capacity, one that is more essential to his art. Vandermark is an adroit free improviser, but also a distinctive composer and arranger.

*Verses* is a paean to instantaneity. Quite surprisingly, this is the first that longtime confederates Vandermark and Mats Gustafsson have played as a duo. But what comes across from the first note is the utter certitude of their playing. There's never any question that each can make sense of whatever the other plays, and from this security comes the confidence to take some thrilling individual risks.

The ascending tenor figures that Vandermark plays on "The Madness Of Branches" create the impression that he is climbing the tree as fast as he possibly can. Gustafsson's spiraling alto exhortations put so much extra spring in his step, it seems like he has slinkies in his boot soles. On "Ripolin," tiny pops in space coalesce into an intricate dance between dust devils. There's plenty of poetry in their interactions, sometimes elegiac, more often bold, but thrilling from start to finish.

In recent years, multi-instrumentalist Joe McPhee's music has been mostly improvised. But between the '70s and early '90s, McPhee wrote many marvelous tunes, nine of which Vandermark has arranged for a nonet. His arrangements extrapolate from elements of the original pieces, rather than beefing them up for a larger band. But, they're still recognizable, even when markedly transformed by genre substitutions or the bold, craggy sonic edifices that Vandermark erects when he has enough horns at his disposal. He has turned the original abstract-

ed, Miles Davis-in-miniature funk of "A Future Retrospective" into a walloping, earthy blast worthy of Julius Hemphill.

There are also some exquisite quiet moments, the loveliest being McPhee and Vandermark's yearning introduction to "Goodbye Tom B." McPhee plays a role similar to the one he played in the Brötzmann Tentet. Although his playing is quite authoritative, his solos do not dominate the music. Instead he interjects poised statements that open up possibilities for the other players beyond those already suggested by his melodies. His light hand balances the firm impression made by Vandermark's bold and

burly settings.

—Bill Meyer

**Impressions Of Po Music:** Impressions Of Astral Spirits/Age; Impressions Of Future Retrospective; Impressions Of Sweet Dragon; Impressions Of Goodbye Tom B.; Impressions Of Eric Tinu; Impressions Of Pablo/Violets For Pia; Impressions Of Knox. (57:08)

**Personnel:** Joe McPhee, tenor saxophone; Jason Adasiewicz, vibraphone; Josh Berman, cornet; Jeb Bishop, trombone; Tim Daisy, drums; Kent Lessler, bass; Fred Lonberg-Holm, cello, electronics; Dave Rempis, saxophones; Ken Vandermark, clarinets, tenor saxophone.

**Ordering info:** [okkadisk.com](http://okkadisk.com)

**Verses:** The Madness Of Branches; Ripolin; Fortunate Rust; I Never Dreamed; Beside Me, Images; We Turn The Page. (40:45)

**Personnel:** Ken Vandermark, tenor saxophone, B-flat clarinet, bass clarinet; Mats Gustafsson, alto, tenor, baritone saxophones.

**Ordering info:** [corbettvsdempsey.com](http://corbettvsdempsey.com)

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**Trio 3 + Jason Moran**  
*Refraction—Breakin' Glass*

INTAKT 217  
★★★★

Since its inception more than 20 years ago, Trio 3 has seen no change in personnel, and has become a prime vehicle for saxophonist Oliver Lake, bass player Reggie Workman and drummer Andrew Cyrille. In the wake of the brilliant tribute to Mary Lou Williams with Geri Allen, it seems that Trio 3 is on a roll. From the beginning of this disc, the chemistry is there. The title track is a poem written and read by Lake with music penned by Moran. The power of the words is matched by a striking melody that also brings some wonderful empathy.

Workman's "Cycle III" serves as a reminder that all band members are leaders in their own rights. It offers a little detour via South Africa and has the bass player in control as he carries the melody and instigates the shifts. Lake's "Luthers Lament" is a rare opportunity to hear the saxophonist tackle the soprano. It is performed as a duo with Moran and the two engage in drawing dazzling arabesques. The other pieces showcase the band's typical mix of melody and angularity at its most effective.

At this stage of their collaboration, Lake, Workman and Cyrille can operate in telepathic ways, and Moran does a fine job at finding his place, without being a distraction.

—Alain Drouot

**Refraction—Breakin' Glass:** Refraction—Breakin' Glass; Cycle III; Luthers Lament; AM 2 1/2; Summit Conference; All Decks; Listen; Vamp; Foot Under Foot; High Priest. (62:29)

**Personnel:** Reggie Workman, bass; Oliver Lake, alto saxophone, soprano saxophone, vocals; Andrew Cyrille, drums, vocals; Jason Moran, piano.

**Ordering info:** [intaktrec.ch](http://intaktrec.ch)



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**Billy Bang**  
*Da Bang!*

TUM 034  
★★★★



Recorded just three months before his death in April 2011, violinist Billy Bang's last work captures the energy and acerbity that made his playing immediately recognizable, but fails to coalesce into anything approaching his best work. Stylistically unique, Bang reached a late-career high water mark in 2001 with his apocalyptic *Vietnam: The Aftermath*—as much a psychological reckoning as an artistic statement. It might be too much to ask anyone to scale those kinds of emotional peaks again.

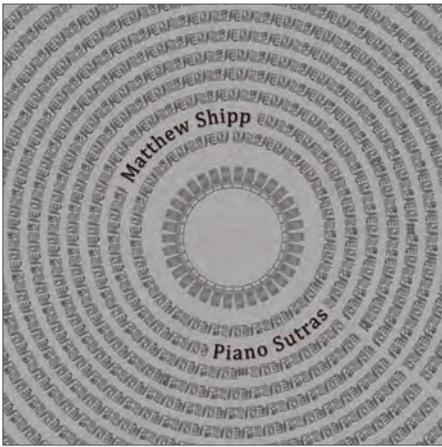
*Da Bang!* is filled with amiably loose playing that contains numerous expressions of individuality but little cohesion. Wracked with the lung cancer that would soon kill him, Bang still sounds unstoppable, displaying his characteristic sense of explosive propulsion. He reels off a three-minute showcase of his diverse signatures to begin "Guinea," but a relatively straight take on "All Blues" is an odd choice for a quintet with such a rough-hewn sound. *Da Bang!* is not a bad swan song, but there are far better ways to remember this distinctive artist.

—James Hale

**Da Bang!:** Da Bang; Guinea; Daydreams; Law Years; All Blues; St. Thomas. (57:44)

**Personnel:** Billy Bang, violin; Dick Griffin, trombone; Andrew Bemkey, piano; Hilliard Greene, bass; Newman Taylor-Baker, drums.

**Ordering info:** [tumrecords.com](http://tumrecords.com)



**Matthew Shipp**  
*Piano Sutras*

THIRSTY EAR 57207.2  
★★★★

**Evan Parker and Matthew Shipp**  
*Rex, Wrecks & XXX*

ROGUE ART 50  
★★★★★

The two recent releases featuring pianist-composer Matthew Shipp are as engaging and enigmatic as his singular style. Since the mid-'80s, Shipp has established himself as one of the more inventive players on the improvisational music scene, both as a sideman and soloist. *Piano Sutras*, Shipp's latest foray into solo playing, is a 13-track collection of pieces that are in turn meditative and aggressive, at times in the same song. The title cut begins with a delicate theme; through the course of the performance, Shipp builds the intensity up to a wave of dissonant passages that sometimes touch on his initial phrase, only to slam back into another surge of new ideas. The album also further reveals Shipp's mastery of dynamic playing, his awareness of both the timbral limits and sonic possibilities of the piano.

"Blue To A Point" is a minor blues riff stretched to elasticity. Shipp widens the theme into a controlled rumble of tonal clusters and bass-heavy accents. "Cosmic Dust" and "Uncreated Light" find union with Sun Ra, evoking the galactic jazz forefather's solo piano excursions. The former flies along in a stream of fast-paced concepts; the latter blends thunderous chords and rolling, soulful riffs. Shipp dips further into his roots with two short, but sweet, covers. Coltrane's standard "Giant Steps" receives a refreshingly, almost-defiantly delicate interpretation, while Wayne Shorter's haunting "Nefertiti" melody is opened up into pure chordal exploration. A *sutra* is a Buddhist teaching on enlightenment, and Shipp's *Piano Sutras* shows his ability to tap into the creative realm of the present moment.

*Rex, Wrecks & XXX* is a two-disc set that features Shipp joining forces with iconoclastic British saxophonist Evan Parker. Previously, the pair collaborated on 2007's *Abbey Road Duos*. The two "Wrecks" pieces are solo offerings, while the duo "Rex" pieces mix motion and introspection.

On "Rex 2" and "Rex 4," Parker introduces a legato line, with Shipp pushing the music forward with quick, intervallic jabs. As the pieces evolve, roles are reversed, with Shipp dropping glacial-sized chords as Parker spits out split tones and upper-register wails. A motif or melody that might serve as a strong opening salvo is soon dismantled, repurposed and engulfed by the next wave of ideas, only to reappear minutes later in an evolved state.

Each player, armed with an arsenal of concepts, experience and technique, aims for a shared target, an alien melodicism centered on emotional expres-

sion, pulled from the unknown. On the 40-plus minute "XXX," a seamless flow of energetic improv is as impressive in its volley of conversational playing and changing moods as it is in the sheer physicality of its creation.

—Daniel A. Brown

**Piano Sutras:** Piano Sutras; Cosmic Shuffle; Surface To Curve; Blue To A Point; Cosmic Dust; Giant Steps; Uncreated Light; Fragment Of A Whole; Space Bubble; Nefertiti; Angelic Brain Cell; Silent Cube; The Indivisible. (52:10)

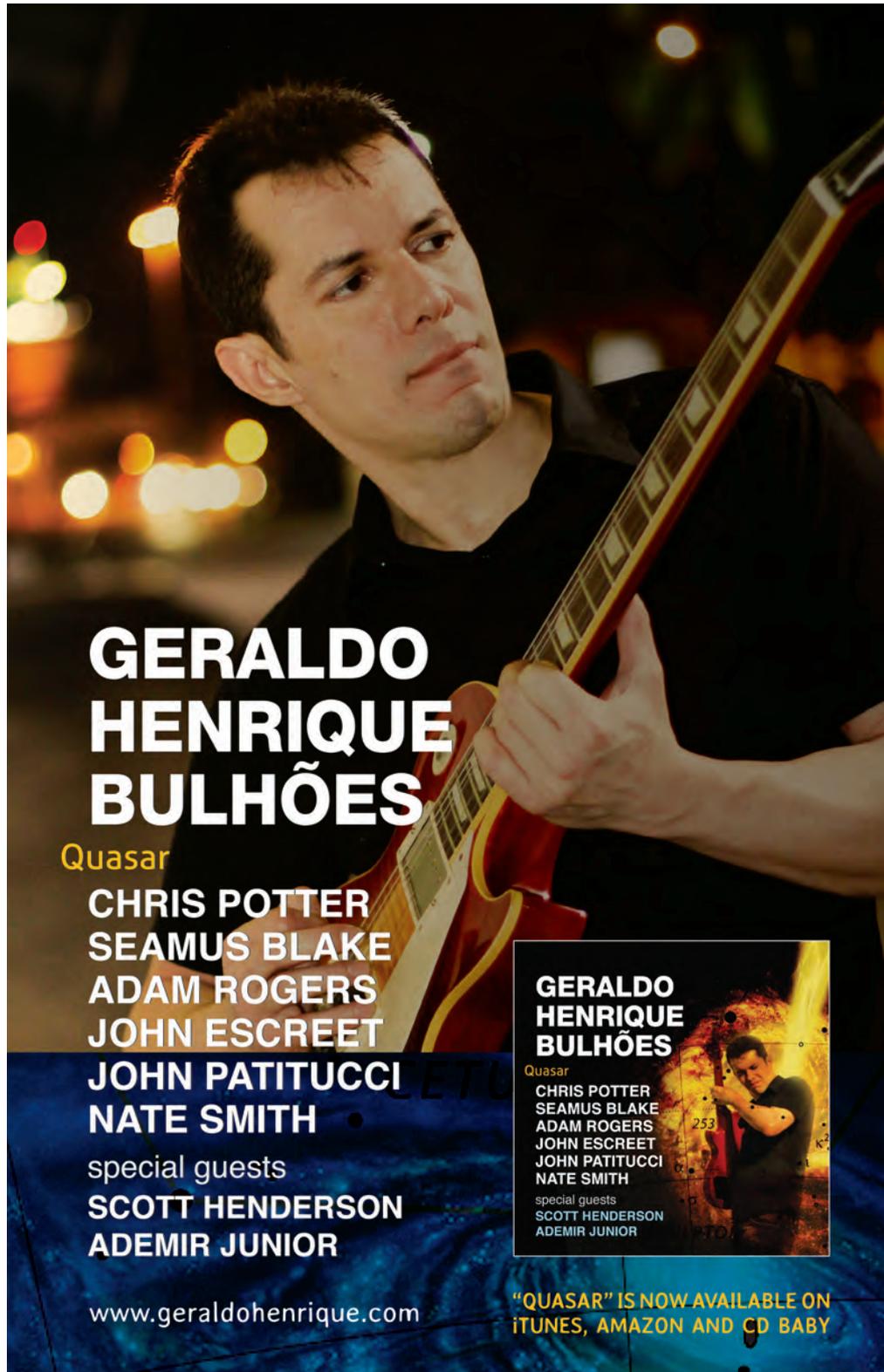
**Personnel:** Matthew Shipp, piano.

**Ordering info:** [thirstyear.com](http://thirstyear.com)

**Rex, Wrecks & XXX:** Disc 1: Rex 1; Rex 2; Wrecks 1; Rex 3; Wrecks 2; Rex 4; Rex 5; Rex 6 (48:14). Disc 2: XXX. (41:47)

**Personnel:** Evan Parker, tenor saxophone; Matthew Shipp, piano.

**Ordering info:** [rogueart.com](http://rogueart.com)

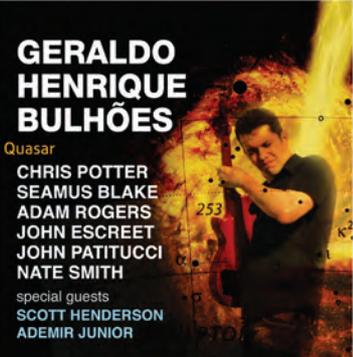


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## Beyond / BY JOHN EPHLAND

# Golden Sounds From Arhoolie

The four-CD box set *They All Played For Us: Arhoolie Records 50th Anniversary Celebration (Arhoolie 540; 76:16/72:23/74:49/75:20 ★★★★★½)* is a ripe compilation of live shows celebrating Chris Strachwitz's El Cerrito, Calif., record label. The genres covered—including folk, Zydeco, Cajun, blues and traditional jazz—are a soundtrack to a party that includes players who have made their marks across the last five decades and, in some cases, before. But, of course the story is less about them than it is about the durability of the company.

If there's an emotion that best describes the whole of this collection, it's joy. Even Country Joe McDonald's commercially successful 1960s antiwar anthem "I Feel Like I'm Fixin' To Die Rag" is positively energized because of the setting. That's from disc three, which also includes the Savoy-Doucet Cajun Band, Treme Brass Band, Suzy and Eric Thompson with Laurie Lewis and Maria Muldaur, and a soulful, bluesy lap slide on "End Of My Journey" with the rock-in' church music of the Campbell Brothers. The themes are familiar ones: McDonald's solo folksy side on full display with Woody Guthrie's jaunty "Oklahoma Hills," old-timey jazz with "My Bucket's Got A Hole In It" (spearheaded by earthy vocals from the late bass drum player "Uncle" Lionel Batiste, to whose memory this set is dedicated) and Memphis Minnie's "In My Girlish Days," featuring Muldaur at her raunchiest best.

Disc one serves as a sampler for this set, with great renditions from song to song and artist to artist. Emcee Nick Spitzer's intro to this three-night affair sets the stage for two tasty Tejano spots, courtesy of Santiago Jiménez Jr. and Los Centzontles, followed by soulful, fun blues from Ry Cooder ("Woolly Bully" lives!), and folk, Cajun and bluegrass via the Any Old Time String Band. Disc two continues with violinist-bassist Lewis, then heads into Saturday night with a lighthearted quartet of songs by the veteran Goodtime Washboard 3, four from the Creole Belles, more jazzy sounds from Barbara Dane and Bob Mielke's Jazz All Stars, and some tender moments from Toni Brown and Terry Garthwaite.

Disc four starts off with more Campbell Brothers, tearing things up with "Going Home On The Morning Train," followed by more down-home Cajun sounds, courtesy of the Savoy Family Band. Taj Mahal (moving between piano, banjo and guitar) delivers five emotional solo



Santiago Jiménez Jr.

performances and the fitting closer "Goodnight, Irene" with an assembled cast; one can get the sense of how the variety dovetails with the unity of purpose to *They All Played For Us*.

*They Played For Us All* was recorded in 2011 at the Freight & Salvage Coffeehouse in Berkeley, to benefit the Arhoolie Foundation. It is a companion to the Grammy-winning box set of early recordings from the label, *Hear Me Howling!* These five hours of music, deeply rooted in 20th century America, may be the best reflection we have in the 21st century of a truly amazing cross-section of musical cultures.

Away from the big box, there continues to be an outpouring of related releases from Arhoolie. **Cajun Honky Tonk: The Khoury Recordings Volume 2 (Arhoolie 541; 76:28 ★★★★★½)** is a time capsule of 27 lo-fi recordings from the '40s and '50s. Artists like Nathan Abshire, Shuk Richard and The Oklahoma Tornadoes offer up a dizzying cocktail of guitars, accordions, fiddles, steel guitars, singing, bass and drums. It's "Scrambled Eggs," "The Cameron Waltz" and the "Grand Mamou" all rolled into one. This CD and its extensive liner notes are a tribute to the late record store owner and entrepreneur George Khoury.

HowellDevine's ***Jumps, Boogies & Wobbles (Arhoolie 544; 51:57 ★★★★★)*** is a new recording inspired by the Mississippi blues of Fred McDowell and R.L. Burnside. Across 12 tunes, Joshua Howell's plaintive vocals, woolly slide guitar and effacing harp are supported by drummer-percussionist Pete Devine and, alternately, bassists Safa Shokrai and Joe Kyle Jr. This collection of originals and covers bypasses today's more rowdy blues for a return to Arhoolie's raison d'être: the rural blues of Southern juke-joint music from the '30s and '40s.

Ordering info: [arhoolie.org](http://arhoolie.org)

DB

**Avishai Cohen With  
Nitai Hershkovits**  
*Duende*

SUNNYSIDE 1373  
★★½

After making a splash in New York, Israeli bass player Avishai Cohen returned home and started to give a new direction to his music and to make new musical connections. One of them is the young pianist Nitai Hershkovits, whom Cohen met in Tel Aviv. *Duende* documents their duo, which is presented as a departure from Cohen's two previous recordings, although they all share some sensibilities. In particular, a classical feel dominates most of the album.

If Cohen can write a lovely tune—the touching “Ann’s Tune” really stands out—the real originality of the duo is on display on the standards. A re-harmonization of “Central Park West” provides a new perspective on this John Coltrane gem, and the jauntiness of Thelonious Monk’s “Criss Cross” has rarely been so evident. The interpretation also testifies to the degree of communion between the two musicians.

While the duo performs the original material with taste, poise and acumen, it remains too nondescript. Some of the tunes stop short of sentimentalism and call for more varied approaches. Hershkovits has a delicate, light touch while Cohen enjoys probing the depth of his bass, but his few solos do not have much emotional heft and are reduced to exercises that will remain more admired than remembered.

—Alain Drouot

**Duende:** Signature; Criss Cross; Four Verses/Continuation; Soof; All Of You; Central Park West; Ann’s Tune; Calm; Ballad For An Unborn. (34:05)  
**Personnel:** Avishai Cohen, bass, piano (9); Nitai Hershkovits, piano (1–8).  
**Ordering info:** [sunnysiderecords.com](http://sunnysiderecords.com)



**Anthony Branker  
& Word Play**  
*Uppity*

ORIGIN 82635  
★★★★½

Anger and injustice are strong themes on composer and conductor Anthony Branker’s new album. Knowing the backstory of Branker’s compositions, told in his lengthy liner notes, is essential to a complete understanding of the project, though the funky performances on the primarily instrumental recording are not nearly as frustrated.

“Let’s Conversate!” bounces alongside Jim Ridl’s Fender Rhodes, while Kenny Davis holds down a groove on electric bass and seamless horns dash in and out of Branker’s tight formation. “Dance Like No One Is Watching” continues that feel, intricately playing the three horns off of each other. The album peaks with “Across The Divide,” a driving ensemble tune led by trumpeter Eli Asher that solicits strong solo spots from trombonist Andy Hunter and Ridl.

The biggest gap between sound and fury is “Ballad For Trayvon Martin.” Recorded less than six months after Martin’s senseless killing, the ballad employs syrupy synthesized strings that detract from tenor saxophonist Ralph Bowen’s engaging and contemplative solo.

—Sean J. O’Connell

**Uppity:** Let’s Conversate; Dance Like No One Is Watching; Three Gifts (From A Nigerian Mother To God); Across The Divide; Uppity; Ballad For Trayvon Martin. (41:50)

**Personnel:** Ralph Bowen, tenor saxophone; Andy Hunter, trombone, keyboards; Eli Asher, trumpet, flugelhorn; Jim Ridl, piano, Fender Rhodes; Kenny Davis, bass; Donald Edwards, drums; Charmaine Lee, vocals (3); Anthony Branker, composer, musical director.

**Ordering info:** [origin-records.com](http://origin-records.com)

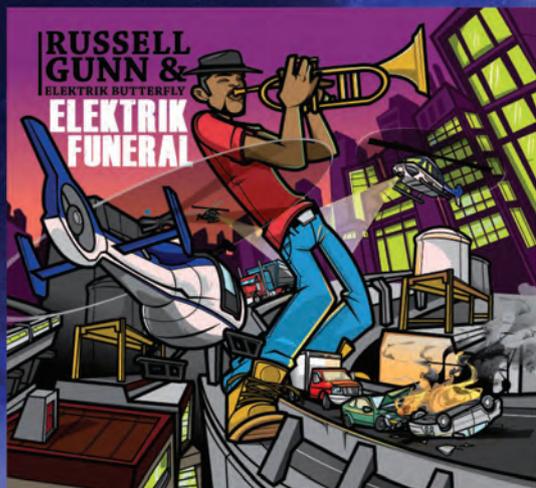
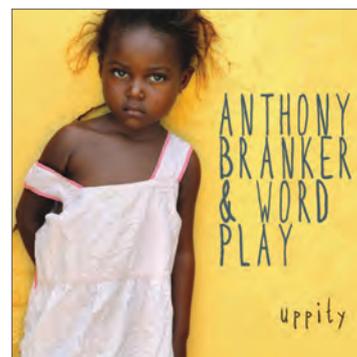


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## Ben Monder *Hydra*

SUNNYSIDE 1357  
★★★★½

There are many paths to musical ecstasy. Guitarist Ben Monder is well on the way to finding his. On *Hydra*, his blissful new album and his first as a leader in eight years, Monder uses four elements—guitars, voices, bass and drums—to create detailed sonic landscapes of mystery and power. With prodigious fingerpicking skills on his Ibanez semi-hollow body guitar, he is also a pioneer of

unusual voicings.

He uses these gifts to compose contemporary music that often doesn't sound like jazz or, for that matter, like anything else.

In addition to his infrequent solo outings, Monder is one of the busiest and most versatile guitarists in New York. A member of the Maria Schneider Jazz Orchestra, he has also appeared as a sideman on releases by a who's who of forward-leaning jazz artists including Paul Motian, Marc Johnson, Bill McHenry and Guillermo Klein, among many others. On stage, he can be so self-effacing as to appear barely present (he was once called "a statue of harmonic liberty"). Commercially, his low profile seems to fit his introspective nature. Nevertheless, he has a growing reputation as a guitarist's guitarist.

His abilities as a composer have grown steadily since his first solo album, *Flux*, in 1997. He has big ears and many influences—Jim Hall, Bill Evans and 20th Century classical composers, especially György Ligeti—with occasional invigorating forays into heavy metal jazz. He started as a rock guitarist, and has not left it behind.

Monder has described the music of his previous solo album, *Oceana*, as being "in almost constant flux ... there is often no tonal center, so the effect is to be swept up in something without a feeling of grounding or stability."

This can be both beautiful and terrifying. *Hydra*—the title alludes to the multi-headed sea monster of Greek myth—carries that feeling of surrendering to the void even further, immersing the listener in sounds that suggest deep space or oceanic vastness.

The outstanding band assembled for this record includes three remarkable vocalists: Monder's frequent duo partner Theo Bleckmann, who sings on most of the tracks, as well as Gian Slater and Martha Cluver. Bassists John Patitucci and Sküli Sverrisson and drummer Ted Poor round out the ensemble. Most of the pieces here begin with complex fingerpicking patterns, some more tonal than others, all starkly beautiful. The album's first track, "Elysium," creates an other-worldly ambiance by layering guitars and effects, as well as a memorable, ghostly melody sung by Slater.

Impressive as it is, "Elysium" barely gives a hint of the variety of sonic effects to come. The title track is 24 minutes of hypnotic guitar patterns and odd meters. "Tredecadrome" features dazzling, unison heavy metal lines played by Monder and Patitucci, mathematically complex rhythms and superbly arranged choral sections featuring a multitracked Bleckmann.

The haunting "Yugen" is a sonic evocation of a Japanese aesthetic term meaning "a profound, mysterious sense of the beauty of the universe ... and the sad beauty of human suffering." All are ambitious, intricately arranged and, ultimately, moving.

Monder is a serious composer who thinks orchestrally. Jazz fans and the public should pay serious attention. —Allen Morrison

**Hydra:** Elysium; Hydra; Aplysia; 39; Yugen; Tredecadrome; Postlude; Charlotte's Song. (78:22)

**Personnel:** Ben Monder, guitars; John Patitucci, Sküli Sverrisson, bass; Ted Poor, drums; Theo Bleckmann, Gian Slater, Martha Cluver, vocals.

**Ordering info:** [sunnysiderecords.com](http://sunnysiderecords.com)



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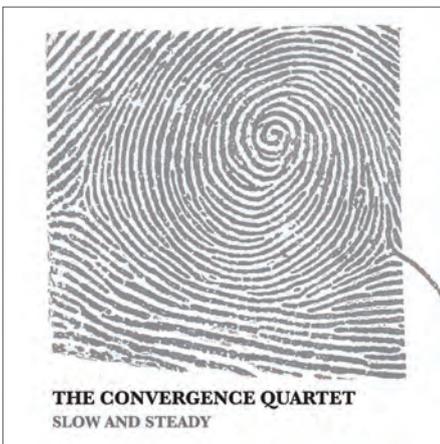
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**The Convergence Quartet**  
*Slow And Steady*

NO BUSINESS 53  
★★★★

**Book Of Three**  
*Continuum (2012)*

RELATIVE PITCH 1012  
★★★★½

Inside versus outside, composed or improvised: These dualities express a form of binary thinking that has never been helpful in understanding jazz and utterly fails to take into account what many musicians really do. Certainly it does nothing to advance one's appreciation of the latest records by these two ensembles, which share cornetist Taylor Ho Bynum and a commitment to wide-open but thoughtful music-making.

The Convergence Quartet first convened in 2006, when Englishmen Dominic Lash and Alexander Hawkins invited Taylor Ho Bynum and Harris Eisenstadt to come to the U.K. for a tour. *Slow And Steady* is their third album, and while it continues to display the conscious bridging of aesthetics that first motivated the quartet's assembly, it also shows how that has become part of their identity. Some pieces are made from more than one theme, most notably "Remember Raoul/Piano Part Two," which opens with a briskly cantering post-bop line by Bynum and ends with a disassembled ballad by Hawkins, but the really interesting combinations take place within the pieces.

Hawkins' "Equals/Understand (Totem)" starts out as an Anthony Braxtonian march, then breaks out parts of the opening statement and uses them as fuel for a fleet run with piano to the fore. Bynum tries to break in with the march, as though he's the one guy who didn't get the memo; Eisenstadt starts complicating the meter until the music comes to a stop; and then Lash leads the group into a fractious free passage. Genre, personal style, consent and dissent are all grist for the mill, and the music is best appreciated by considering how these vectors move the proceedings along.

Book Of Three's music betrays less consciousness of stylistic combination, but contains plenty of it anyway. This recording is the trio's second, and it has a certain humility about it that is enor-

mously appealing. It doesn't try to make a grand statement about combining aesthetics or nationalities; it's just three guys who like to play together, either playing tunes they like or collectively improvising. The opener "Comin' On," a playful Bobby Bradford tune, manages to skip blithely through the melody markers even though both Hébert and Cleaver introduce dizzying rhythmic rip currents that'll pull you under if you aren't careful. A similar dynamic unfolds on "Henry," a Cleaver-penned ballad with a distinctly mournful air, but on the collective improvisation "Open City," patiently proposed contrapuntal statements

by all three players come together so harmoniously that it's the elegant construction, not the roughness of certain horn and string passages, that you notice.  
— Bill Meyer

**Slow And Steady:** Assemble/Melancholy; Third Convergence; Remember Raoul/Piano Part Two; Equals/Understand (Totem); Oat Roe+Three By Three; The Taff End; Slow And Steady. (51:30)

**Personnel:** Taylor Ho Bynum, cornet; Alexander Hawkins, piano; Dominic Lash, double bass; Harris Eisenstadt, drums.

**Ordering info:** [nobusinessrecords.com](http://nobusinessrecords.com)

**Continuum (2012):** Comin' On; Aware Of Vacuity; Henry; Open City; Jamila; Journal Square Complications; Precoda/Henry (reprise). (56:50)

**Personnel:** Taylor Ho Bynum, cornet; John Hébert, contrabass; Gerald Cleaver, drums.

**Ordering info:** [relativepitchrecords.com](http://relativepitchrecords.com)



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## David Arney

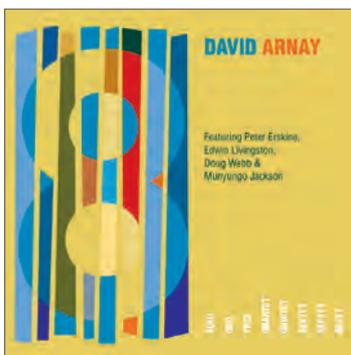
8  
STUDIO N 06  
★★★

Pianist David Arney's newest release is driven by a premise. With each track, a player is added until the album concludes with an octet. There are inherent limitations to this concept. Are better ensemble tracks forfeited in order to keep up the theme? Are musicians added to tunes just for the sake of a headcount? Arney leads his expanding crew through a largely self-penned, straight-ahead set that pleasantly glides along the simple theme.

Arney establishes his piano as the guiding voice with a swinging solo rendition of the Duke Ellington standard "Caravan." Bassist Edwin Livingston gets in a crisp solo on Arney's "11/12/11" and saxophonist Doug Webb asserts himself nicely with his introduction on "Step Four," but the band's might does not expand with each added member. A frictionless rendition of John Coltrane's "Giant Steps," with Arney doubling on piano and synthesizers, is a little too smooth. A bag of hand percussion employed by Munyungo Jackson does not help; "Giant Steps" should not be paired with chimes. The band returns to form for the last two tunes, "Six Of One" and "Dream Groove," filling out the ensemble with three horns and guitarist Paco Loco. If the ensemble had stopped at four members, it would have been a welcome offer, though a considerably shorter album. —Sean J. O'Connell

**8:** Caravan; 11/12/11; Billville; Step Four; Old Man Says; Giant Steps; Six Of One; Dream Groove. (38:00)  
**Personnel:** David Arney, piano (1–8), synthesizer (6); Edwin Livingston, bass (2–8); Peter Erskine, drums (3–8); Doug Webb, tenor saxophone (4, 7), bass clarinet (5), soprano saxophone (6), reeds (8); Munyungo Jackson, percussion (5–8); Paco Loco, guitar (6, 8); Dan Fornero, trumpet (7, 8); Vikram Devasthali, trombone (7, 8).

Ordering info: [davidarnay.com](http://davidarnay.com)



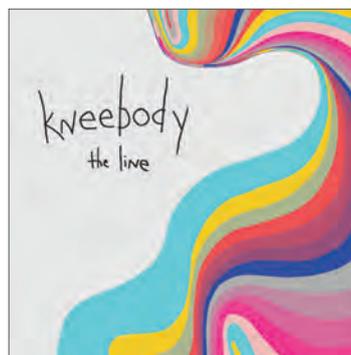
## Kneebody

*The Line*  
CONCORD  
★★½

Give Kneebody points for focus and degree of difficulty. The 12-year-old quintet writes fiendishly difficult arrangements, ripe with odd meters and accents going every which way. But they are no fun.

Despite a front line of saxophone (Ben Wendel) and trumpet (Shane Endsley), their overall sound is prog-rock. *The Line* is their fourth album and first for Concord. It's not that any single element taken in isolation is objectionable. The overlapping staccato keyboard figures underpinning "Lowell" are nubby and pliant, and the succeeding anthemic horn line rises with promise. But the cumulative effect is irritating, even oppressive.

Discontinuous rhythms, displaced accents, angular dissonance—any of these elements by itself could be tasty. But not when they're all right up in your face for the duration of these mercifully concise pieces (the longest tops out at 6:23). The relentless patchwork of rock and hip-hop beats crowds the space of each piece. Occasionally, a horn solo breaks out, and each composition is fashioned with separate episodes of melody or rhythm. In this context, the ballad tempo of "Greenblatt" is almost a pastoral. But otherwise, the metallic aftertaste of every riff and the busy rhythms push the listener into a corner. —Jon Garelick



**The Line:** Lowell; Cha-Cha; Trite; Sleeveless; Still Play; The Line; E And E; Pushed Away; Work Hard, Play Hard; Towel Hard; Greenblatt; What Was; Ready Set Go. (57:27)

**Personnel:** Adam Benjamin, Fender Rhodes, synthesizers; Shane Endsley, trumpet, effects; Kaveh Rastegar, electric bass, electric guitar; Ben Wendel, tenor saxophone, effects; Nate Wood, drums.

Ordering info: [concordmusicgroup.com](http://concordmusicgroup.com)

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**Ross Hammond  
Quartet  
Cathedrals**

PRESCOTT 020  
★★★★★

"This Goes With Your Leather," a track from the Sacramento-based guitarist Ross Hammond's arresting 11th album, *Cathedrals*, begins with Vinny Golia's solo soprano saxophone passage, a ghostly whirl. Then, Hammond launches into a crunchy, deceptively simple guitar riff. Electric bassist Stuart Liebig rumbles strongly with the same line. Drummer Alex Cline lays down a clear, fairly strict beat. And Golia sings and twists and turns on top of it all. The joyously intense "Leather" is the most rock 'n' roll piece on the album, but the other tunes aren't far behind. *Cathedrals* is a mixture of rock and jazz, but never feels like an experiment or exercise.

There are other elements at play, too. "A Song For Wizards" is a folkly romp through the woods, marked by Hammond's catchy picking. "Hopped Up On Adrenaline" is built on a bubbling funk groove with Liebig's elastic bass and Cline's steady but uninhibited percussion.

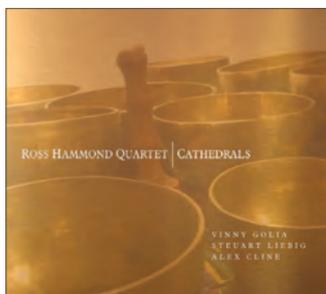
*Cathedrals* is not without downtempo moments, though. "Run, Run IbeX!" is a slow rock jam that shares a vibe with Jimi Hendrix's "Little Wing." And the brief "Goodnight Lola" finds Hammond playing acoustic guitar for the first time on the album, accompanied by just the high-pitched drone of Cline's singing bowl.

—Brad Farberman

**Cathedrals:** A Song For Wizards; Hopped Up On Adrenaline; Telescoping; Run, Run IbeX; This Goes With Your Leather; She Gets Her Wine From A Box; Tricycle; Cathedrals; Goodnight Lola. (52:15)

**Personnel:** Ross Hammond, six- and 12-string guitars; Vinny Golia, tenor, soprano saxophones, flute; Stuart Liebig, bass; Alex Cline, drums, percussion, singing bowl (9).

**Ordering info:** [rosshammond.bandcamp.com](http://rosshammond.bandcamp.com)



**Marcus Printup  
Desire**

STEEPLECHASE 31763  
★★★★

The harp in modern jazz often yields callow exotic affectations rather than bona fide artistic contributions. But trumpeter Marcus Printup has found a remarkable harp collaborator in his wife, Riza Printup, in which the results are more gorgeous than gimmicky.

Much of that success comes from her gift for paring down the technical razzle-dazzle that many harpists bring to the fore, in favor of strumming economical melodies and rhythmic, astute accompaniments that stand out simply for their musical cogency. In many occasions, she brings a human breath sense of space with her note choices, best demonstrated here on the splendid title track, on which she buoys Printup's clarion trumpet with piano-like lyricism, while bassist Ben Williams and drummer E.J. Strickland provide a floating, subtly funky rhythmic undercurrent.

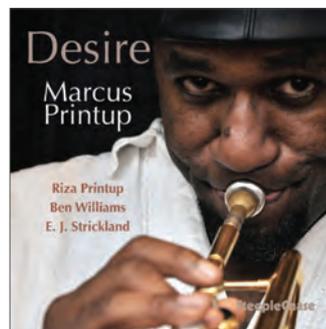
For *Desire*, Printup's third disc to feature the harpist, Brazilian music is a strong current, as evidenced on the delightful take on Antônio Carlos Jobim's "One Note Samba" or his riveting samba "El Gato Travieso," a McCoy Tyneresque romp on which Printup spits out some of the fieriest improvisation on the disc. In other instances, Printup delivers makeovers of Stevie Wonder's classic "I Can't Help It" and "Visions," optimizing the luxurious coupling of trumpet and harp.

—John Murph

**Desire:** Along The Way; El Gato Travieso; Desire; One Note Samba; Visions; Melancholia; I Can't Help It; Bee Dub Blues; Rebirth; You've Got A Friend. (70:51)

**Personnel:** Marcus Printup, trumpet; Riza Printup, harp; Ben Williams, bass; E.J. Strickland, drums.

**Ordering info:** [steeplechase.dk](http://steeplechase.dk)



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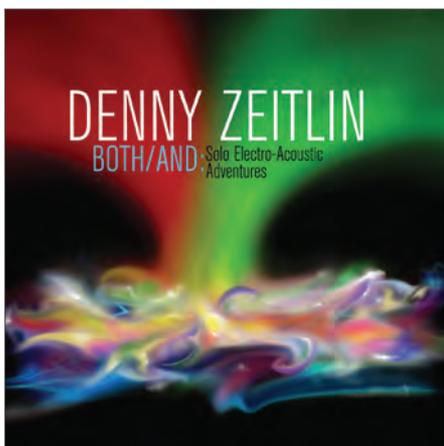
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SUNNYSIDE 1352  
 ★★½

Should a jazz-loving alien, having been enticed by intergalactic transmissions of Denny Zeitlin's music, make its way to Earth for a jazz shopping spree, let's hope the Zeitlin album of choice isn't the new model, *Both/And: Solo Electro-Acoustic Adventures*. This is an anomaly in the Zeitlin discography, in which the pianist we've come to love and respect takes a trip backwards, and forwards, into the synth and digital realms.

**Mark Masters Ensemble**  
*Everything You Did: The Music of Walter Becker & Donald Fagen*

CAPRI 74123-2  
 ★★★★★

Steely Dan, co-piloted by composer-instrumentalists Walter Becker and Donald Fagen, has made good, jazz-informed pop music for 40 years. Jazz orchestrator Mark Masters has taken some of the group's obscure early tunes and turned a clutch of great soloists loose on his charts: Tim Hagans, Billy Harper, Oliver Lake, Gary Foster, Gary Smulyan and Sonny Simmons.

Masters is chameleonic as a writer. Steely Dan tunes typically have compelling rhythmic vamps, played by tight ensembles, but Masters opens up the tunes from their harmonic strictures. Fans will have to listen hard to discern the underpinnings of "Bodhisattva," "Chain Lightning" and "Aja," but Masters leaves markers, like Gene Cipriano's English horn on the snaky melody of "Do It Again." Tim Hagans pulls a free trumpet solo out of the air for "Show Biz Kids" and tangles with Harper on "Kings."

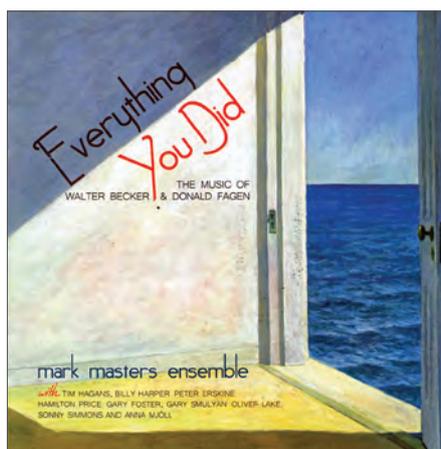
Harper's masculine tenor speaks with robust authority throughout. Foster's buttery solo on "Fire In The Hole" is pure ambrosia in its richness. Percussionist Brad Dutz's well-considered mallet percussion is one of the unifiers in these ensembles, and Erskine's playing, though largely tied to timekeeping duties, is full of shadings, layers and textures. Masters has carefully considered the

Armed with state-of-the-art gear and wrap-around keyboards, and abetted in part by electronic music legend Patrick Gleeson, Zeitlin is following up his electronics-colored lab tinkering of the '60s and '70s, before he became one of jazz's finer, if underappreciated, champions of the grand piano jazz tradition, with an intellectual tinge.

Zeitlin's heavily overdubbed, digitally overloaded misadventures often feel old to the senses and one-dimensional to the mind's ear. Zeitlin makes reference to Weather Report in the Joe Zawinul-flavored opening tune, "Meteorology," and in the exotic, groove-lined "Charango Dream," vaguely reminiscent of Wayne Shorter's haunting Report tune "The Elders." But what is lacking in Zeitlin's hermetic musical creations, compared to the vibrant life of Weather Report, is the breath and interaction of multiple real-time humans in musical motion together.

There is a bold musical brain at work here, on pieces such as the metric maze of "Tiger, Tiger," based on a William Blake poem, and a switched-on version of his Thelonious Monk-inspired suite, "Monk-y Business Revisited." But, some of us prefer to hear Zeitlin un-revisited, back in the box where he seems to shine the brightest: nimbly working the 88s of a piano sans digitalia. Sometimes, old school is best. —Josef Woodard

**Both/And: Solo Electro-Acoustic Adventures:** Meteorology; Dawn; Tiger, Tiger; Kathryn's Song; Dystopian Uprising; Charango Dream; Monk-y Business Revisited. (74:23)  
**Personnel:** Denny Zeitlin, electronics, piano.  
**Ordering info:** [sunnysiderecords.com](http://sunnysiderecords.com)



Steely Dan songs for many years, yet he never lets his brain get in the way of good soloists or fertile settings. Becker and Fagen should be gratified by this sincere tribute. —Kirk Silsbee

**Everything You Did:** Show Biz Kids; Bodhisattva; Do It Again; Charlie Freak; Black Cow; Josie; Fire In The Hole; Kings; Aja; Chain Lightning. (70:40)  
**Personnel:** Mark Masters, arranger, conductor; Tim Hagans, Louis Fasman, Les Lovitt, trumpets; Stephanie O'Keefe, French horn; Sonny Simmons, English horn (3); Dave Woodley, trombone (9); Les Benedict, Dave Ryan, Ryan Dragon, trombones; Brian Williams, bass clarinet; Don Shelton, soprano, alto saxophones, alto flute; Oliver Lake (10), Gary Foster (7), alto saxophones; Billy Harper, tenor saxophone; John Mitchell, tenor saxophone, bassoon; Gene Cipriano, tenor saxophone, English horn; Gary Smulyan, baritone saxophone; Hamilton Price, bass; Peter Erskine, drums; Brad Dutz, vibes; Anna Mjöll, vocals.  
**Ordering info:** [caprirecords.com](http://caprirecords.com)



**David Weiss**  
*Endangered Species: The Music Of Wayne Shorter*

MOTEMA 120  
 ★★★★★

Captured live at the Lincoln Center's Dizzy's Club Coca-Cola in April 2012, trumpeter David Weiss' *Endangered Species* has a torch-bearing reverence for hard-bop. The compositions—most of which date back to Shorter's tenure with Art Blakey, Miles Davis and even Maynard Ferguson—are lesser-known works (hence the disc's title), and these performances yield fresh listening experiences.

On songs such as the lurking "Fall" and the majestic "Mr. Jin," Weiss embellishes Shorter's melodies with sumptuous new harmonies, punctuated by spirited solos from the likes of pianist Geri Allen, saxophonists Marcus Strickland and Ravi Coltrane, and trumpeter Jeremy Pelt, whose blue-flame aside on "Fall" is one of many lustrous moments.

"Nellie Bly" (from Shorter's Ferguson period) bursts with invigorating counterpoint melodies, especially from alto saxophonist Tim Green's piquant, corkscrew improvisations and Steve Davis' supple solo on trombone. In many instances, the large ensemble's vivacious energy, propelled by drummer E.J. Strickland and bassist Dwayne Burno's unrelenting swing, recalls the wide-scope music of Duke Pearson and Horace Silver during their respective late Blue Note period in the '60s and early '70s.

Still, *Endangered Species* is not caught up entirely in the hard-bop of yesteryear. Weiss' "The Turning Gate," the disc's sole original, is a fantastical joyride, marked by E.J. Strickland's insistent rim shots and symphonic rhythmic breaks and Burno's prowling bass lines on which Marcus Strickland unleashes ferocious soprano saxophone improvisations, brimming with many of Shorter's patented nuances. The disc concludes with a soulful rendition of Shorter's "Prometheus Unbound," from 2003's *Alegria*, which comes close to modern chamber music. —John Murphy

**Endangered Species:** Nellie Bly; Fall; Mr. Jin; The Turning Gate; Eva; Prometheus Unbound. (67:43)  
**Personnel:** David Weiss, conductor, trumpet; Tim Green, alto saxophone; Marcus Strickland, tenor, soprano saxophone; Ravi Coltrane, tenor saxophone; Norbert Stachel, baritone saxophone, bass clarinet; Diego Urcola, Jeremy Pelt, trumpets; Joe Fiedler, Steve Davis, trombones; Geri Allen, piano; Dwayne Burno, bass; E.J. Strickland, drums.  
**Ordering info:** [motema.com](http://motema.com)

# Trumpet's Iron Man

Woody Shaw started playing horn the month Clifford Brown died, and he wore seriously the mantle of "Next Trumpet Hero." By the mid-'70s, this ferociously accomplished player with a surprisingly dark tone felt he'd earned it. Some blazing trumpeters blind you with the flame; Shaw's sound was lightning deep in a thundercloud. His concept was partly shaped by early employers Eric Dolphy, with his dramatic wide intervals, and Larry Young, who schooled him on the versatility of pentatonics.

Leaping fourths were in vogue in the mid-'60s, and Shaw leapt in; the wider intervals he loved call for superhuman lip slurs. His December 1965 debut sessions as leader, with Joe Henderson on tenor and Joe Chambers on drums, show how quickly Woody caught on to what Miles Davis' new quintet was up to, even as he cleared his own path. (You'd never mistake Shaw's check-me-out chops for Davis.) One rhythm section has Young on piano and Ron Carter, showing how indispensable that bassist was to the modern Davis feel. The other date with the mighty Paul Chambers takes things back a step, even with Herbie Hancock on piano.

**The Complete Muse Sessions (Mosaic MD7-255; 58:39/43:52/58:19/51:24/63:10/65:04/53:47 ★★★★★)** is Shaw's life in three acts: that belatedly issued 1965 session, five mid-'70s albums with more original tunes and three '80s standards dates where the playing is impeccable but the conceptual fire has died down. Of the middle group, *Little Red's Fantasy* for quintet and *Love Dance* for four horns and five rhythm have the crackle and fire typical of '70s modal hard-bop—vital music written out of jazz history for a while, to make the arrival of '80s Young Lions more compelling. (Shaw was Columbia's great trumpet hope before Wynton Marsalis.)

Shaw liked a rich palette. A septet recorded live in 1976 spotlights billowing four-horn heads, and soft-edged harmonies over driving ostinatos and Louis Hayes's explosive drums; the festival setting heightens excitement. The trumpeter floats on pianist Ronnie Mathews' "Jean Marie," his slowly building solo full of odd turns and top-spin rhythms, climbing fourths and cascading descents, and a uniformly strong tone. Quick repeated notes are clearly articulated; cracked notes are rare enough to be shocking. He also had great taste in swinging sidefolk—like pianists Cedar Walton, Kenny Barron and Mulgrew Miller, drummers Eddie Moore, Victor Jones and Carl Allen and saxophonists Frank Foster, Billy Harper and Rene McLean.



His acclaimed *Iron Man* paid tribute to Dolphy, reviving two tunes they'd recorded together in 1963, including Fats Waller's "Jitterbug Waltz." It teamed him with new stars of the new music, Muhal Richard Abrams on piano (a rare sideman appearance), Arthur Blythe and/or Anthony Braxton on reeds. (Rare Mosaic credits gaffe: Braxton plays soprano on "Song Of Songs," not soprano.) The shifting terrain and jittery partners inspire Shaw's daring as improviser and melodist. He sounded most striking in settings that amplified his individuality.

In the '80s, Shaw went into fitful decline, owing to failing eyesight and drug-related woes, and an industry chasing younger talent. His confidence shaken, and with fewer recording opportunities (he told interviewer Marc Chénard), he stopped composing much, focusing on standards in his last years before his death in 1989 at the age of 44. But even when his life was erratic, he could still deliver when tape rolled, notably on *Setting Standards* for quartet, where he's most exposed, and gets to the heart of the potentially glib "All The Way." It's no criticism of the sterling players involved to say the other soloists don't grab you as Shaw does. The effect is diluted when he's joined by other horns, fine as they are: The companion quintet sessions feature newcomer Kenny Garrett on alto, in audible thrall to Jackie McLean, and frequent trombone sidekick Steve Turre, whose own dark tone and iron chops make him a fine match.

Woody Shaw III's notes are affectionate and informative; you can forgive him for not dwelling on his father's tragic side, but he doesn't ignore it. Braxton's story of how Shaw put him at ease at the *Iron Man* session is heartwarming—a word rarely invoked, recalling Shaw's too-short life. **DB**  
**Ordering info: [mosaicrecords.com](http://mosaicrecords.com)**

JAMIE BAUM



## IN THIS LIFE THE JAMIE BAUM SEPTET +

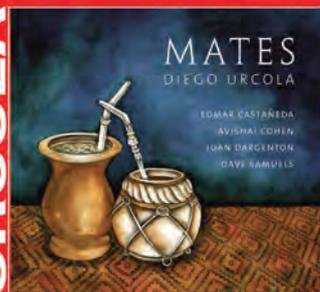
SSC1363 / in stores October 8

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I have always loved the music of South Asia, and more recently the late Pakistani *Qawwali* vocalist Nusrat Fateh Ali Kahn, whose music inspired this CD. With great respect for their traditions and vast language, and without immersing myself in study, my goal with this music hasn't been to play or compose in those styles but to have it inspire new ways of writing and improvising.

—Jamie Baum

DIEGO URCOLA



## MATES

EDMAR CASTAÑEDA harp DAVE SAMUELS vibes AVISHAI COHEN bass JUAN DARGENTON bandoneon

SSC 4112 / in Stores October 8

The friendly tradition of drinking mate served as inspiration for Argentinean born, New York based trumpeter Diego Urcola. For his playfully titled new recording *Mates*, Urcola wanted to mirror this give and take between friends (or "mates") with that of the musical duet. To achieve this, the trumpeter recorded a number of intimate meetings with a handful of his closest musical associates, including bassist Avishai Cohen, vibraphonist Dave Samuels, harpist Edmar Castañeda and bandoneón player Juan Dargentón.



[iTunes.com/JamieBaum](http://iTunes.com/JamieBaum)  
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**Anna Webber**  
*Percussive Mechanics*

PIROUET 3069

★★★★

For many listeners, coming at so-called “new music” from either jazz or traditional classical music, the knock against it is often that contemporary composers don’t pay enough attention to melody. Canadian saxophonist Anna Webber does little to dispel that criticism on *Percussive Mechanics*, an album given to explorations of the ground between reeds and percussion instruments.

The reeds are most often breathy, barely there: A grainy tenor, its keys audibly clacking, twitters like birdsong to introduce “Certain Transcendence”; a tentative saxophone meanders in and out of time with a single drum on the opening of “Histrionics.”



Spare introductions give way to teeming arrays of percussion, building to cataclysmic release, as on the title piece, or sound like random ideas stitched together, as they do on “Vigilance” and “Sleeping Is Giving In.” Webber is more successful when she draws her disparate elements together—threaded counter-lines that

pulse through the second half of “Dan:ce,” or the rippling vertical horn phrases that make “Terrarosa” shimmer.

—James Hale

**Percussive Mechanics:** Dan:ce; Certain Transcendence; Terrarosa; Percussive Mechanics; Vigilance; Sleeping Is Giving In; Histrionics; Let It Cut More Deep; Eins! (59:05)

**Personnel:** Anna Webber, flute, tenor saxophone; James Wylie, clarinet, alto saxophone; Elias Stemeseder, piano, electric piano; Julius Heise, vibraphone, marimba, whistling; Igor Spallati, bass; Max Andrzejewski, glockenspiel, percussion, whistling, drums; Martin Kruehmiling, percussion, drums.

**Ordering info:** [pirouet.com](http://pirouet.com)

**Matt Ulery's Loom**  
*Wake An Echo*

GREENLEAF 1031

★★★★

Bassist Matt Ulery’s followup to his ambitious 2012 large ensemble release, *By A Little Light*, is a smaller group project but no less rich in scope. His quintet, buoyed by a standard piano-bass-drums rhythm section, features the front line of trumpeter Marquis Hill and bass clarinetist Geof Bradfield. The pair creates different textures that help fill out Ulery’s intricate charts with sounds that seem larger than just two sets of lungs puffing away.

Ulery wrote all the album’s sweepingly cinemat-



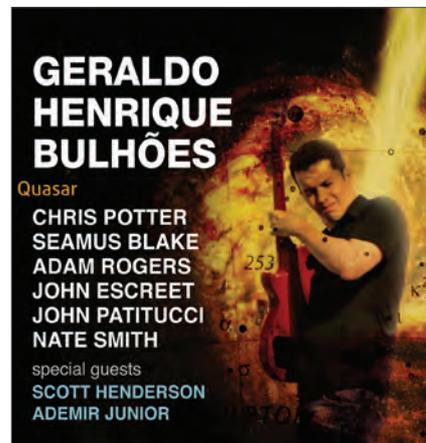
ic tunes. Opener “The Lady Vanishes” pulsates between languid, searching jaunts, while “In Every Lonely Chamber” summons the ghosts of a thousand lovelorn detectives trying to figure out where they went wrong. With the limited instrumentation, Ulery has created a unified sound, with generous solo spaces for most of the band, though the bass itself hangs way in the back.

—Sean J. O’Connell

**Wake An Echo:** The Lady Vanishes; In Every Lonely Chamber; Coriander; Over Under Other; My Favorite Stranger; Carefree; All The Riven. (56:23)

**Personnel:** Marquis Hill, trumpet; Geof Bradfield, bass clarinet; Rob Clearfield, piano, accordion; Matt Ulery, double bass; Jon Deilemyer, drums, cymbals.

**Ordering info:** [greenleafmusic.com](http://greenleafmusic.com)



**GERALDO HENRIQUE BULHÕES**

Quasar

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NATE SMITH

special guests  
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ADEMIR JUNIOR

**Geraldo Henrique Bulhões**  
*Quasar*

SELF RELEASE

★★★★

*Quasar* is an apt title for guitarist Geraldo Henrique Bulhões’ debut disc as a leader, as most of the compositions shine with a brilliant energy and move by at a frenzied pace. With the help of the exceptional saxophonists Chris Potter and Seamus Blake, Bulhões presents a complete picture of himself as a composer and leader, moving through straight-ahead jazz to fusion-tinged rock and earnest, quiet ballads. His compositions are uptempo gunshots of sound, his lustrous guitar beefed up through unison melodies with either saxophonist.

“Melhor De 8,” written by guest saxophonist Ademir Junior, begins with a piano ostinato in the low register, establishing a quasi-samba rhythm, and then the saxophones and guitar are off at a blistering pace with a vertiginous melody. The addition of a second saxophone—Potter also plays on the track—allows for a bit more depth and some harmonic comingling. The piece shifts grooves between a danceable rhythm and fast swing. Instead of standing out on a CD filled with Bulhões’ writing, “Melhor De 8” finds a comfortable spot, nestled in between the medium-tempo “Quasar” and the tender, comfortable “Tempo Bom Céu Aberto.”

Bulhões cares a lot about texture. On the tunes, he has as many as three guitarists, and the switch between Potter and Blake on saxophone—each have four tunes, with each getting a crack at a ballad—gives the songs shape and variety. By the tunes at the end of the disc—“Radioactive,” “UFO” and “New World”—Bulhões has turned to ’80s rock and guitarist Steve Vai as inspiration, creating prog-ish, distorted lines in his solos, while nearly eschewing jazz altogether. Bulhões ends *Quasar* with a look forward.

—Jon Ross

**Quasar:** Quasar; Melhor De 8; Tempo Bom Céu Aberto; UFO; Thinking Of You; Radioactive; Metamorfosis; New World. (62:39)

**Personnel:** Geraldo Henrique Bulhões, Adam Rogers, Scott Henderson, guitars; Chris Potter, Seamus Blake, Ademir Junior, saxophones; John Escreet, piano; John Patitucci, bass; Nate Smith, drums.

**Ordering info:** [geraldohenrique.com](http://geraldohenrique.com)

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## Drye & Drye Open Letter

NCM EAST 40135

★★½

You might be tempted to mistake Drye & Drye as the name of a law firm. Instead, the moniker references the father and son pair of Howard and Brian Drye on a collaborative effort on which they each take a CD to showcase original compositions devoted to influences. With the total album length barely surpassing 65 minutes, one disc could've sufficed, particularly given the thematic connections between programs.

Howard, the elder Drye, currently moonlighting for a local church choir, pens disc one. Tellingly, of the three tracks he dedicates to musicians, two—"Blues For Jimmy" and "The Empty Chair"—are written for former Duke Ellington band members, Jimmy Hamilton and Johnny Hodges. The homages reflect the baritone saxophonist's catholic tastes. He's polite, elegant and lyrical, all in manners you'd expect to hear a half-century ago. Save for the hard-bop lines and opened-up soloing during "Precious Silver," Howard comes across overly somber. Reminiscing about another age, his buttoned-up contributions droop under the weight of wished-for nostalgia.

Like father, like son? Yes and no. Brian, a Brooklyn-based trombonist that gigs in ensembles such as Bizingas and Banda de los Muertos, opts for a similar sparseness on disc two. He also

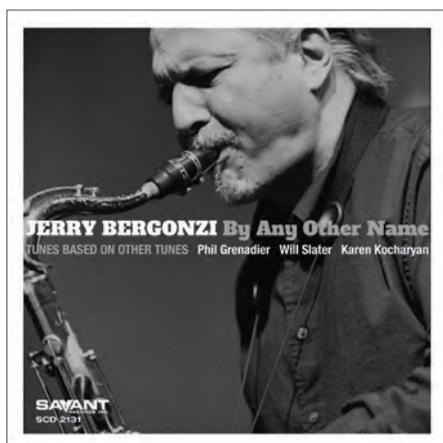


gives homage to Duke in the form of "April 1st, 1910," a tribute to Ellington baritone mainstay Harry Carney. But the younger Drye knows how to loosen his tie and venture into modern environs. He's more playful, more humorous, more interactive—even with pops. Witness the improvisational flights on the peppy "Home Brew" and side-winding "Orion." It's clear why the son is the professional in the family. —Bob Gendron

**Open Letter:** Disc 1: Blues for Jimmy; Yesterday, Today And Tomorrow; Ossification: The Empty Chair; Precious Silver (34:37). Disc 2: Elbows; April 1st, 1910; Home Brew; Sidney; Orion (30:36).

**Personnel:** Howard Drye, baritone saxophone; Brian Drye, trombone; Jeff Hermanson, trumpet, flugelhorn; Mike McGinnis, clarinet, alto, soprano saxophones; Dan Fabricatore, bass; Vinnie Sperrazza, drums.

**Ordering info:** [ncmeast.com](http://ncmeast.com)



## Jerry Bergonzi By Any Other Name

SAVANT 2131

★★★★

Jerry Bergonzi has long reharmonized and reworked standards, a practice he puts into place on *By Any Other Name*. For this date he recorded eight original tunes based on the harmonic and melodic bones of well-trod standards. While the album contains some convincing post-bop moments and hip playing and writing, there's not enough variation or sustained intensity to maintain interest throughout. All of the tempos stay in the medium or medium-up range, the tunes

convey a similar feel and mood, and as a whole, everything feels a bit too safe. Bergonzi's knotty compositions often sound closer to etudes than memorable tunes.

The album opens with "PG 2013." Based on the changes to "Giant Steps," the tricky and slithery head is almost the complete opposite of Coltrane's original line. "First Lady," derived from Tadd Dameron's "Lady Bird," refers to Michelle Obama. Bergonzi took several liberties with Dameron's changes, and like a Cubist painting, Dameron's original line is highly modified but still recognizable—the melody is more angular, and its shape and direction are accentuated and augmented. Bergonzi's twisting and turning line to "Deek" hides its inspiration ("How Deep Is The Ocean?") nicely. While Bergonzi's solo is a highlight, the group as a whole sounds sluggish, almost stuck in the mud. Bergonzi's peers do well—trumpeter Phil Grenadier sports a round sound, switching between bebop and more laid-back lines, and bassist Will Slater and drummer Karen Kocharyan are fine soloists.

Curiously, Bergonzi overdubbed himself comping on piano throughout, giving an almost canned band-in-a-box feel to the rhythm section. One wonders why he didn't just hire a pianist.

—Chris Robinson

**By Any Other Name:** PG 2013; Of A Feather; First Lady; Sprung; Deek; Wilbur; A Granny Winner; 114 W. 28th Street. (65:42)

**Personnel:** Jerry Bergonzi, tenor saxophone, piano; Phil Grenadier, trumpet; Will Slater, bass; Karen Kocharyan, drums.

**Ordering info:** [jazzdepot.com](http://jazzdepot.com)



## VENISSA SANTÍ BIG STUFF AFRO CUBAN HOLIDAY

SSC1365 / in stores NOW

VENISSA SANTÍ voice

François Zayas / Tim Thompson

Chris Aschman / Jef Lee Johnson

John Stenger / Jason Fraticelli

Venissa's artistry stems from the necessity to express the many influences that have nourished her spirit as a Cuban American. She was born in Ithaca, New York and hails from a long line of Cuban artists. But it was her grandfather, Jacobo Ros Capablanca, a Cuban composer who instilled in her a life-long passion for music.

Over time she performed with a variety of Latin, jazz and world music groups. It was from the support and encouragement of this community that inspired Venissa to embark on the first of four life changing visits to Cuba, where she conducted research and studied Afro Cuban song, dance and percussion.

This is her second album for Sunnyside. Billie Holiday and songs she interpreted are the inspiration for **BIG STUFF Afro Cuban Holiday**.

photo: Christopher Brukker



[iTunes.com/VenissaSanti](http://iTunes.com/VenissaSanti)  
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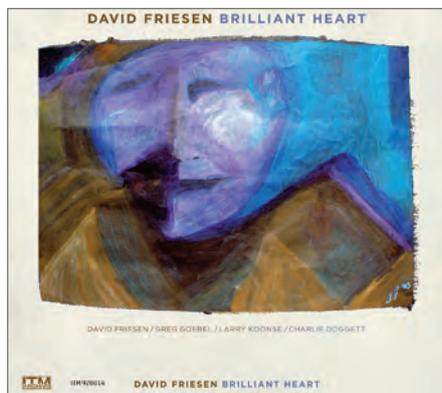
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**David Friesen  
Brilliant Heart**

ITM 920014  
★★½

This album was borne from the most inconsolable of tragedies: the death of a child before the parent. Veteran bassist David Friesen recorded *Brilliant Heart* as a memorial to his son, Scott, a painter, photographer and musician who was born in 1968 and died in 2010. The album cover and CD booklet reproduce some of Scott Friesen's abstract paintings, which brim with bright, rich colors yet also have a wistful quality—and both elements are reflected in the music. There is no heavy grieving discernible, though; the album has a light, and a

**Janis Siegel  
Night Songs: A Late  
Night Interlude**

PALMETTO 2166  
★★★★½

Of the four Manhattan Transfer singers, Janis Siegel can be said to be the most prepossessing soloist. She's also had the most irons in the fire apart from the group; her *Experiment In White* album in 1982 was the first of their independent efforts. This collection is her first in seven years, and it's possibly Siegel's most personal musical statement ever.

These are songs drenched in sensuality, luxuriant in expression and a little self-indulgent in places. Siegel the neo-soul belter is held in check, giving way to a serpentine vocal threading through exotic and love songs. High-calorie romance, wherein Siegel impresses with her pliant phrasing, usually achieves understated intensity.

She takes everything fairly slow, floating upon the rhythm section, often helmed by pianist John di Martino. Smart production surrounds Siegel, with fine musicians supporting her, rather than shining for themselves. Joel Frahm provides a strong counter voice to her melisma-drenched "You're Mine, You." Martin Wind's bass is lovely throughout, but Christian McBride seems to give the ensembles stronger spines.

Siegel's "Sweet September Rain" and the venerable "Midnight Sun" are ripe for overreach and Siegel channels Sarah Vaughan's excesses.

lightness, perhaps as a celebration of life rather than the mourning of death.

A Northwest native who had notable stints with such disparate figures as Mal Waldron and Paul Horn before creating a sizable discography as a leader, Friesen now lives in Portland, where *Brilliant Heart* was recorded. The bassist wrote the title track the day after his son died, the nostalgic tune flowing out of him in minutes at the piano.

Friesen plays an Hemale upright electric bass on the record, and he's joined by kindred spirits guitarist Larry Koonse, pianist Greg Goebel and drummer Charlie Doggett. Koonse has played with Friesen for two decades, so he's used to winding his way through the quirky harmonic paths of the leader's pieces with a glowing flow. But Friesen's bass sound has a synthetic tinge that can pall, despite his fluency.

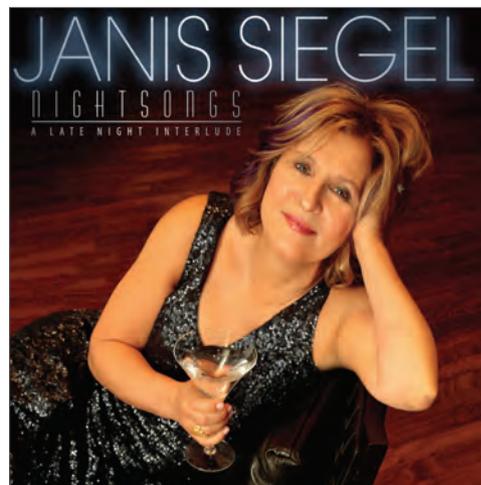
"Sailing" and "Purple Painting" are liquid, buoyant music, like a soundtrack for a Super 8 film of clouds passing across a blue sky. There is a sadness at the lyrical heart of "Be At Rest Oh My Soul," but it isn't until the closing "Scotty F," a ruminative piece with Friesen alone with his bass, that a truly affecting shadow falls.

—Bradley Bamberger

**Brilliant Heart:** Sailing; Violin; Want Of Method; Painting The Blues; My New Gate; Where The Light Falls; Brilliant Heart; Purple Painting; My Doggie; Backyard Haven; Circle Of Three; Be At Rest Oh My Soul; Scott F. (6:3:23)

**Personnel:** David Friesen, upright electric bass; Larry Koonse, guitar; Greg Goebel, piano; Charlie Doggett, drums.

**Ordering info:** [davidfriesen.net](http://davidfriesen.net)



Antônio Carlos Jobim's "If You Never Come To Me," on the other hand, is a light-touch duet with Peter Eldridge that makes full use of Siegel's own dubbed background vocals. She's whipped up a musical dessert here, though it probably shouldn't be consumed all at once.

—Kirk Silsbee

**Night Songs:** Love Saves; Slow; Love And Paris Rain; If You Never Come To Me; Marie; You're Mine, You; Sweet September Rain; A Flower Is A Lovable Thing; Midnight Sun; Lover; Say You'll Go; Clair De Lune. (61:27)

**Personnel:** Janis Siegel, vocals; Dominick Farinacci (2, 9–11), flugelhorn; Alain Mallet (3), melodica; Joel Frahm, soprano and tenor saxophones (6, 11); Steve Khan, guitars, guiro (1); Paul Meyers, guitar (2–4); Rob Moursey, keyboards (1); John di Martino, piano; Martin Wind, Christian McBride (5–8, 11), bass; Joel Rosenblatt drums; Luisito Quintero (1, 2, 4), percussion; Roger Treece (3), Peter Eldridge (4), vocals.

**Ordering info:** [palmetto-records.com](http://palmetto-records.com)

# Blues at the Start of Rock 'n' Roll

Timothy J. O'Brien and David Enslinger's *Mojo Hand: The Life And Music Of Lightnin' Hopkins* (University of Texas Press), easily one of the best music biographies of the year, posits the idea that the Texas blues guitarist was a father of rock 'n' roll. They point to his rockabilly tune "Buck Dance Boogie" and other proto-rock numbers issued on the Shad and Herald labels in the early 1950s and make their case in just a few paragraphs. On a far larger scale, music journalist Larry Birnbaum uses all 380 pages of his *Before Elvis: The Prehistory Of Rock 'N' Roll* (The Scarecrow Press) to trace the careers of hundreds of musicians he believes midwived rock. But wait, what's this? Lightnin' Hopkins and someone named Robert Johnson fail to pass Birnbaum's paternity tests.

*Mojo Hand* might seem like an exercise in redundancy with Alan Govenar's fine 2010 biography, *Lightnin' Hopkins: His Life And Blues* (Chicago Review Press). Perish the thought. Well-written and copiously researched, the 272-page book stands on its own merits. O'Brien, who died from cancer about the time he completed the final draft, casts a wider net than Govenar for interviewees—130 in all, among them Bob Koester of Delmark Records and folklorist Mack McCormick. Moreover, *Mojo Hand* gives readers a stronger sense of the social, cultural and racial times that swirled around Hopkins during his six decades as an unusually resourceful musician.

Hopkins' life story is recounted chronologically, with some information coming from the man himself (no stranger to exaggeration) through documentary maker Les Blank. Sharecropping in the East Texas cotton fields, Hopkins found a degree of relief from the arduous work by teaching himself guitar. Before long, he was providing accompaniment to excitable choir singers in church, and he even attracted the notice of archetypal bluesman Blind Lemon Jefferson. Looking for a better life, Hopkins moved to Houston, where he hustled as a street entertainer and deepened his interest in gambling. The sharp-dressing bluesman signed his first record deal with the Aladdin label in 1946, acquiring the sobriquet "Lightnin'" after a piano-playing friend at a session was called "Thunder." His single "Katie Mae Blues" became a local jukebox hit, and soon after he achieved national recognition behind hot-selling 78s of his "down-home, Southern-style blues." Before his death three decades later, he would become the most prolific recording artist in blues history.

Hopkins wasn't your run-of-the-mill guitarist in technique. Colleague "Texas" Johnny Brown



told O'Brien about Hopkins' "ad-libbed" guitar style. Staunchly free-spirited, the Houstonian didn't adhere to the standard 12-bar blues pattern, confounding many accompanists.

The late-1950s saw Hopkins' career marginalized by the wild onrush of white rock 'n' roll, not that he cared much, keeping busy by either fishing or performing for tips in Houston speakeasies. Things turned around dramatically with the "folk boom" of the early 1960s; he was tracked down by white folklorists and wound up playing Carnegie Hall and the Newport Folk Festival.

Without overloading the reader, O'Brien and Enslinger present all manner of fascinating information about Hopkins: his complex personality, his attitude toward whites, his image as a hipster (wraparound sunglasses, rakishly tilted hat, a dangling cigarette), his wily business sense (he played a song, got paid on the spot) and his influence on John Coltrane. The pages fly by quickly.

While dismissive of country bluesmen, Birnbaum writes at considerable length about musicians in various stylistic camps who he says had a hand in seeding rock: boogie-woogie pianists, doo-wop singers, T-Bone Walker and other blues "string slingers," honking r&b saxophonists, swing jazz bands, Slim Gaillard and jive cats, Western swing players, hokum and jug band practitioners of the 1920s, even pop star Pat Boone. Birnbaum, spurred into researching and writing this book by what he saw as a glaring shortage of literature about rock's pioneers, has pulled off quite an achievement, though he scrimps on critical assessments of musicians and songs.

DB

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# DRUM SCHOOL

DOWNBEAT'S GUIDE TO LEARNING JAZZ



DW Collector's series kit made with cherry wood shells (left)

## TIMBER & TIMBRE

EXOTIC WOODS GIVE DRUMMERS NEW CREATIVE OPTIONS

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Craviotto Stacked  
Solid Shells



Craviotto walnut  
bebop kit

# TIMBER & TIMBRE

HOW EXOTIC WOODS HAVE  
GIVEN DRUM SET PLAYERS  
A WORLD OF NEW  
CREATIVE SOUND  
OPTIONS

By Matt Kern



Gon Bops Alex Acuña  
bongo shell



**FOR THE BETTER PART OF A CENTURY, STAPLE NORTH AMERICAN WOODS** like mahogany, maple, gum and poplar have been used to construct drum shells. There have been plenty of exceptions, of course, starting with some experimental designs in the 1930s and '40s. The 1970s saw a move toward birch initiated by the legendary Recording Customs out of Japan. By the '90s, maple was re-crowned king and could be found extensively throughout the industry.

But it wasn't until the 2000s, while these staple woods were still being used by manufacturers to produce drum shells, that an important new trend began to emerge: exotic woods. In the drumming community, the term has come to represent woods and shell materials that are outside the norm. This doesn't imply that there is anything undesirable about traditional mahoganies and maples; rather, it reflects a growing global trend of drum shell customization, as well as drummers striving for individuality. And, it promises to be a much bigger movement than a

mere drum-industry fad: Exotic woods have opened the door to a whole new world of creative options for drum set players and helped to revitalize the drum industry overall.

"There are so many different types of drummers, and everybody has a different sound they are looking for," said Josh Allen, design engineer for Ludwig. "When you develop a new drum, a new shell, you are trying to get something that speaks to people. It's tough to do that with one type of wood. We try to give them the sound they want to speak with."

"Having your own identity when you are on stage or on tour with your band is important to a lot of drummers," said Mike Ciprari, CEO of SJC drums. "Nowadays, there are so many people who have custom kits that [manufacturers] are going that extra step and actually making the shells speak with their personality."

For drummers wanting to fully define their voice as a function of who they are, it's time to pull back the curtain and shed some light on one of the most fundamental aspects of a drum set: the wood.

## CHICAGO DRUM AND RESTORATION

**JIM MORITZ OF CHICAGO DRUM AND RESTORATION**—which specializes in making Slingerland reproductions—has a rich family history when it comes to drum manufacturing. His great uncle worked at Slingerland when the company was located in Chicago and eventually got Moritz's dad a job in the mid-'50s. After the factory had moved to the suburbs in the mid-'70s, Moritz started working there and was schooled on the job about how drums were built in the '40s, '50s and '60s.

Moritz says the early days of drum manufactur-

the classic sound the company is known for.

Made at the company's North Carolina plant, Ludwig's Keystone drums with American red oak-and-maple hybrid shells have three thin maple layers between two thick plies of oak. According to Ludwig's Allen, the Keystone was trying to "hit a specific kind of sound, a more EQ'd kind of sound that works great for live shows." Being a hard material, oak gives some brightness to the drum sound, but it also has a distinct texture that absorbs different frequencies and gives it a more focused, controlled sound, according to Allen.

When considering what wood to match with the oak, Allen said Ludwig chose maple due to its strength

Superstar series. "Birch was in the limelight for a long time, going on 20 years," said Terry Bisette, Tama's national sales manager. "At the end of the '90s, birch gave way back to maple. There was some dabbling during this time by some brands that started using oak, and some walnut and some ashwood. Nothing was as popular as birch or maple. Tama wanted to come up with something that was going to provide a very different sound but that would still be interesting to our customer base."

Enter the Tama Starclassic series of drums made using bubinga. "Bubinga offers a wider frequency range and more volume than most woods," Bisette said. The Starclassics were originally birch and maple before the decision was made to turn the line into a bubinga hybrid in 2005-'06. Tama was one of the first to use bubinga in a large production capacity.

"We were one of the first companies in modern-day times to combine different shell materials to produce a unique and compelling sound," Bisette continued. "Our most popular high-end kit is our Starclassic Performer bubinga-birch hybrid shell set. You get the focused, clean sound of birch combined with the attack, punch and earthiness of bubinga."

## YAMAHA

**A LARGE COMPANY LIKE YAMAHA HAS A** major advantage when it comes to product innovation: When one of its instrument divisions starts experimenting with a wood, such as the piano or guitar division, that knowledge can be passed on internally. That's where the idea to use kapur for Yamaha's high-end PHX series drums came from.

When Yamaha teamed up with drummer Steve Jordan, kapur was already a favored wood. And while the PHX features a hybrid shell that mixes kapur and the dense hardwood jatoba, the decision was made after a number of prototypes to go with an all-kapur



Yamaha PHX series

ing were less about experimentation and more about simply going with what worked. For decades, the staple was a three-ply drum that was two plies of a thin mahogany, with the grains going horizontally to the drum, surrounding a thicker ply of poplar, with the grain going vertically. In between each ply was a layer of glue that held it all together. The final step was to insert the inner maple re-rings, which stiffened the shell and gave it additional support. Most manufacturers were crafting drums in a similar fashion.

"Back in the day, mahogany was the wood to use," Moritz said. "There was a ton of it, and it wasn't that expensive back then. Mahogany gave you that warm, vintage sound." Moritz remembered that maple slowly started working its way into the mix at Slingerland, although it seemed to be more of a practical manufacturing choice than a conscious decision to switch wood types for some desired sonic effect. In the '70s, Slingerland continued to use mahogany, while maple was often used as the outer veneer for a stained drum. Eventually, the drum moved to a five-ply design by adding layers of poplar and mahogany (or maple).

## LUDWIG

**LUDWIG DRUMS HAVE BEEN AROUND LONG** enough for the company to have witnessed nearly the entire evolution of the drum set. Ludwig continues to manufacture shells using the same techniques as it did 50 years ago, but thanks to modern manufacturing techniques and quality control, the result is a far more consistent product that maintains

and hardness. Thin maple plies vibrate easily while remaining strong enough to give the shell support and retain its resonant properties.

Ludwig's recently revived Club Date drums in cherry and gumwood were designed to capture the vibe of the original release from 1956. The challenge this time around for Club Date was to match the vintage sound using different materials and techniques. The original Club Date drums used standard maple-and-poplar shells with reinforcement rings; the new Club Dates use cherry and gumwood yet still capture that authentic sound. "The construction is completely different, but the sound is very similar," said Allen. "On the Club Date, cherry is the harder wood and gumwood is much softer."

According to Allen, using woods with contrasting densities is intentional: cherry-gumwood for the Club Date, oak-maple for the Keystone and maple-poplar for Ludwig's Legacy series. The main goal for the contrasting woods is to deliver a more complex sound. "The softer woods tend to give you the lower, darker tones, and the harder woods tend to give you the brighter tones," Allen said.

## TAMA

**DURING THE '80S, BIRCH WAS ONE OF THE** go-to woods that could be found on Tama's



Tama Starclassic series

design for Yamaha's Club Custom kit. "Any choice for wood material for Yamaha is based on sound first, and then after that we start to fine-tune things," said Daryl Anderson, a U.S.-based designer for Yamaha. The benefits of using kapur are its stability, strength, hardness and ability to transmit vibrations.

Jordan approached the Yamaha design team after seeing the PHX kit in action in Japan and asked about making a drum totally out of kapur. The end result was a kit that Anderson described as having all the tone you want yet still very dynamic.

# GILMORE IS LEGACY

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Steve Armstrong, Pearl's director of marketing, described the company's approach to wood. "Blending different woods allows you to utilize the wood specifically for its tonal characteristic," he said. "You have to marry the size of the drum and the wood in order to get the optimal results."

Pearl product manager Gene Okamoto said that research indicates that the inner ply—the surface you see as you look at the inside of the drum—has the most influence on the sound. By choosing a birch, as compared to a mahogany on the inside of the shell, "you can control the brightness or the darkness of the shell, because the reflectiveness of the woods are different," he said. "African mahogany is less reflective, so it absorbs more sound and gives you more lows and a quieter tone as well." Okamoto said when outfitting a customer with a new kit, Pearl will start with a 12-inch maple drum, then adjust from there as sizes shrink or grow to dial in the type of sound the customer is going for. The result is a kit that is balanced across all of the drums, even though the woods may differ.

## GON BOPS

### DURING THE '50S, THE PREVALENT WOOD

of Latin percussion instruments was Philippine mahogany, according to Luis Cardoso, marketing manager for Gon Bops. But in the '70s, as companies started moving production to Asia, the trend shifted to parawood as the common-denominator wood because of its ease of acquisition in the Eastern Hemisphere. Philippine mahogany was no longer an option due to sustainability.

When the idea came about to re-release the original drums that were designed by Gon Bops founder Mariano Bobadilla in the early '50s, the company set out to find a wood that would match the sonic properties of Philippine mahogany and eventually settled on durian. Gon Bops' Mariano line started with congas and bongos, with the djembe added later.

Gon Bops draws from North American woods for its higher-end drums such as the California Series, which uses Appalachian red oak, and the Alex Acuña line, which relies on North American ash.

## MAPEX

### MAPEX HAS MADE A POINT OF COMBINING

two premium woods to produce a single drum



Pearl Reference Series

shell with a distinct sound. Mapex's flagship Saturn series has always been a hybrid shell, with one wood being maple. Over the course of 20 years, some of the secondary woods have been basswood, mahogany, walnut and birch. After rotating through so many combinations, Mapex always seems to return to its maple-and-walnut combination. "That seems to be the two woods that sort of exist with each other really well and end up producing a very individual stylistic sound," said product manager Joe Hibbs.

## SJC DRUM

### AS A NEW DRUM-MANUFACTURING COMPANY

with a relatively small footprint, SJC Drums is able to experiment with designs like a layered mahogany-maple shell where the top third is mahogany, the middle third is maple and the bottom third is mahogany.

SJC's Ciprari said if a customer places an order for a kit and asks for something like a bubinga wood, that usually leads to more questions to clarify exactly what type of sound they want from the kit. Bubinga usually means they are going for more attack, since it is a dense, hard wood, according to Ciprari. "Every single wood has a different property and resonance and tone to it," he said. "But the property of bubinga, more than anything else, is the fact that you get so much attack and tone out of it."

On the more exotic end of the tonewood spectrum, SJC Drums was commissioned by a Boston-based marketing firm to make a custom snare drum out of an old oak Jack Daniel's whiskey barrel. When asked what makes an old wood barrel turn into a great-sounding drum, Ciprari said: "It's all with the construction. Making all the right cuts and using the right glue and making sure the shell is not going to fall apart, and also cutting the correct bearing edge."

## DW

### DW CO-FOUNDER AND VICE PRESIDENT

John Good stressed that while wood type affects the tone of a drum, "grain orientation makes all the difference in the world. For example, horizontal grain is going to be the highest [pitch] because it has more tension," he said. "Vertical grain is the lowest amount of tension, which lowers the pitch.

And the 'X' pattern [diagonal grains] is something that makes it even lower."

Good said he likes working with maple the most due to its "very long, beautiful vibration." He noted that "cherry has a little less of a length of vibration than maple, but it has a darker tonal quality and it has a very nice, round musicality about it." While Good has been making cherry drums on and off for years, he feels he has only recently exploited it to its full potential. Good is currently working on a version of DW's Jazz Series that will merge cherry with a gumwood center. "The tuning range becomes very large because the cherry has a darker sound and it reacts with the gum, which is a little bit darker," he said.

## CRAVIOTTO

### DRUM CRAFTSMAN JOHNNY CRAVIOTTO

said that he is constantly seeking new sounds and color palettes. While maple is Craviotto's base wood because it meets so many sonic demands, the company sometimes turns to other woods.

Bernie Dresel, the Los Angeles studio pro and current driver of Gordon Goodwin's Big Phat Band, owns six Craviotto snares of various sizes that were made from old-growth birch that had been lying on the bottom of Lake Superior for centuries.

Dresel recently got a walnut-maple-walnut Craviotto kit, which he describes as having the warmth of mahogany while leaning toward the brightness or presence of maple. Dresel places the walnut somewhere between the mahogany and maple as far as bite or presence is concerned.

Dresel is going full-circle with the next purchase on his list—a Craviotto mahogany-poplar-mahogany kit—in an effort to "get back to what we had years ago. If anything, I want to go the other way," he said. "The maple is a nice, full, modern sound with a lot of top end, and if I want something different, I'm looking for more warmth, not less."

While there are many factors that go into determining a drum's overall character—heads, bearing edges, hoop material, mounting systems, etc.—understanding wood properties can help today's drummers customize a sound that can be unique and all their own.

DB



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Steve Smith

CHRISTINE VANDORBUS

# Drumming in Odd Time Signatures

**I'VE BEEN PLAYING IN ODD TIME SIGNATURES SINCE MY TEENS,** when my first drum instructor had me work out of books on the subject, including the well-known *Odd Time Reading Text* (Alfred) by Louie Bellson and Gil Breines. In my first semester at Berklee College of Music in 1972, my private teacher, Gary Chaffee, introduced me to the idea of using particular stickings in order to internalize the sound of certain “odd groupings.” Early in my professional career, I played odd times with Jean-Luc Ponty (1976–’77) and my first two years with the rock band Journey (’78–’79), when they were still playing some of their older material.

Since 2002, I’ve been playing with Zakir Hussain, Selvaganesh and other musicians from India, which has opened new doors for me both in playing odd times and in playing long rhythmic phrasing ideas in 4/4. For the past two years I’ve been subbing for Simon Phillips in Hiromi: The Trio Project, which has included some of the most demanding odd-time playing that I’ve encountered to date. Here are some ideas that I use in order to improve my command over odd time signatures.

Count out loud at first, then count internally. My first drum teacher, Billy Flanagan, taught me to count out loud while reading music. This was valuable direction. By using this technique, I could clearly see where the rhythms were occurring in the measures, and my understanding of playing written figures developed quickly. Counting out loud also helped me develop another “voice” in five-way coordination. When playing odd times, in order to clarify the number of beats to the bar, start by counting out loud and playing a simple pulse with hands and feet. Eventually, play the beat or groove of the tune and get comfortable counting the beats out loud. After a while you can count to yourself, but I’ve found that once I can literally count aloud and play, I have an easier time counting internally.

Memorize sticking patterns to learn note groupings, which will be combined to create rhythmic/melodic phrases. As drummers, we memorize sticking patterns when we work on the rudiments. For example, a single paradiddle is a sticking pattern for a four-note-grouping. By memorizing certain sticking patterns, we can easily learn the sound of a rhythm, and eventually we won’t need to use a particular sticking to play the rhythm. However, these sticking patterns lend themselves to natural orchestrations on the drum set.

Use the following stickings for rhythms that consist of two to 12 beats (see Example 1):

- 2: RL
- 3: RLL
- 4: RLRL
- 5: RL RLL (2+3)
- 6: RLL RLL
- 7: RLRL RLL (4+3)
- 8: RLRL RLRL
- 9: RLRL RLRL (4+5)
- 10: RLL RL RLRL (3+2, 2+3)
- 11: RLRL RLRL RLL (8+3)
- 12: RLRL RLRL RLRL (4+4+4)

Notice that the stickings are based on a system: All groups of two or four are single strokes, and all groups of three are RLL. Using this system, you can easily play accented R’s around the kit and keep a steady drone of unaccented notes on the snare drum. For example, play a group of seven like this with all accented R’s (right hand) on the toms and all unaccented L’s (left hand) on the snare: RLRLRLRL.

South Indian Carnatic rhythmic concepts can be applied to odd times. The first South Indian Carnatic rhythmic concept is playing the same rhythm in different note rates. Once you learn this idea in one time signature, it becomes useful because it works in every time signature. It’s a universal rhythmic principle. Let’s jump in and work on this concept in 5/4.

Set your metronome to 110 BPM and program it to play an accented downbeat every 10 beats, or every two bars of 5/4. Play the five-note sticking RLRLRLRL using quarter notes, one note for every click of the metronome. (I use the iPhone/iPad app Visual Metronome, which is easy to program and has a pleasant click sound.) Accent the rights (R) and play the lefts (L) as an unaccented note. (See Example 2.)

Once you are comfortable with the five-note sticking in quarter notes, change the note rate to quarter-note triplets but keep the same sticking pattern of RLRLRL. In quarter-note triplets, three groups of five take the same amount of space as two groups of five in quarter notes, which is the ratio

3:2. After you play three groups of five in triplets, you'll hear the accented "1" on the metronome—that means you are playing the rhythm correctly. Move the note rate up to playing eighth notes with the RLRL five-sticking pattern. Now you'll be playing four groups of five over the 10 beats. Next play eighth-note triplets with the five-sticking, and you'll be playing six groups of five over the 10 beats. And finally, play 16th notes with the five-sticking, and you'll play eight groupings of five over the two measures of 5/4. Reverse the process and work your way down this rhythmic scale until you are back where you started. In Example 2, the brackets underneath the rhythms indicate the phrases of 5. Try this in various time signatures. Match the sticking to the time signature. For example, use the seven-note sticking in 7/4 or 7/8, the nine-note sticking in 9/8, etc.

When playing in the triplet rate, you can use another South Indian rhythmic concept: "reduction/expansion." When you have three sets of the same grouping in a row, you can "reduce" the first, keep the middle the same and "expand" the last. In my 5/4 example, with three groups of five played in triplets, reduce the first five to three, keep the middle five as is and expand the last five to a seven. Now you have 3+5+7 in triplets, which is 15 beats: RLL RLRL RLRLRL. This can be also be played in reverse, as 7+5+3: RLRLRL RLRL RL. (See Example 3.) Try expansion/reduction in seven while in the triplet rate. The phrasing will be 5+7+9 forward and 9+7+5 in reverse.

These ideas work in any time signature, including 4/4. Many people have played paradiddles in triplets not realizing they are applying this concept. You must play three paradiddles in triplets to fill the same space as playing two paradiddles in quarter notes, eighth notes, etc.

Gaining control of playing the same rhythm at different note rates and using the reduction/expansion idea helps you play precisely inside the time signature. To me, this is a different idea than playing familiar 4/4 phrases but making them fit into an odd time by listening to the vamp and cutting some ideas short or making some of your ideas longer in order to come out on the "1." Of course you can do that. It's one of the most widely used and basic ideas of playing odd times: internalizing the vamp.

Internalize the odd-time vamp. The classic example of this is Paul Desmond's tune "Take 5," which was an enormous hit for the Dave Brubeck Quartet. The vamp is so strong that after a while you may not have to count at all but simply play and keep the vamp in your head. Internalizing the vamp is a good way to play odd times, but it's unreliable for all odd-time situations. I've been on quite a few gigs where I have to play a composition, or sections of a composition, that are in odd times and there is no repetitive vamp. I have to count to stay in the time signature or use some of the Carnatic rhythmic devices.

Become "self-contained." One of the keys of playing odd times, especially when playing with highly evolved players, is to remain self-contained and not be thrown off by what the other musicians are playing. There have been times when I'm playing with Hiromi, and if we are in 9/4 (for example) and she continues to play phrases of five over the nine, if I'm not staying focused on the base nine, I can start to question if I'm still keeping the nine. Playing with Hiromi and bassist Anthony Jackson, I've learned to become even more self-contained as drummer, because they are very free in the odd times. I've learned to not play the obvious "1" every bar or two and allow the phrasing to expand in the odd time in a similar way that I usually play 4/4. When I do play the "1," it's usually at the end of a long buildup where the trio is coming to a natural rhythmic resolution. Practice these ideas with the metronome using extended phrasing. For example, when practicing in 5/4, program the metronome to accent "1" every 40 beats. That way you can check to see if you've stayed with or strayed from the time signature. A good way to prepare for playing odd times on the gig is to choose a time signature and a tempo and then improvise conversational rhythms with one or more other musicians.

One way that I think about odd times as a drummer is they may be like playing in various keys for instrumentalists: It could get boring to play every song in the same key. Similarly, it can get monotonous to play every song in 4/4. Each time signature has particular characteristics and offers different rhythmic and mathematical possibilities.

DB

Drummer Steve Smith has toured and recorded with Journey, Jean-Luc Ponty, Steps Ahead and Zakir Hussain. Hudson Music has released his educational DVDs *Drumset Technique: History of the U.S. Beat* and *Drum Legacy: Standing on the Shoulders of Giants*. Smith currently leads the group Vital Information. Visit him online at [vitalinformation.com](http://vitalinformation.com) or [stevesmithdrumart.com](http://stevesmithdrumart.com).

#### Example 1

#### Example 2

#### Example 3

ENGRAVING BY VINCE CLARK

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The Atlanta Young Lions

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## DRUM SCHOOL Woodshed > PRO SESSION BY JAY DITTAMO



**SOMETIMES YOU HAVE TO GO BACKWARDS** to move forward—it's a part of the progression in life. Right now, I would like to go backwards to talk a little about drumming and share a few stories about my life in music.

Music styles have changed for generation after generation, yet some styles have followed us decade after decade. Classical, jazz, blues, rock and ethnic music have all been an integral part of my musical landscape.

I grew up in a family of musicians. My Grandfather Vincenzo and his brothers were conservatory-trained and had symphonic bands. They were music educators. My grandfather's brother Gaetano taught Nelson Riddle.

My first mentor was my Uncle Fred. He was very modest. I never knew that he played with Arturo Toscanini, Leonard Bernstein, Louis Prima and others until someone wrote an article about him and he brought it up during the interview.

My dad, Alfred Dittamo, and guitarist Bucky Pizzarelli grew up together in Paterson, N.J. When I was a kid, my father always had a garden, and Pizzarelli would stop by to get some tomatoes. During one visit, Pizzarelli handed me a little stack of records and said, "If you want to play great drums, play like this guy." I was 4 years old.

I would practice to those albums every day. The year was 1963. Fast-forward to just a few years ago: I was playing a show with Pizzarelli and asked him about those albums he gave me back in the '60s. Who was on those sessions?

Before I get to the name, I first have to say that I feel as though I will never play anything musical that hasn't been done already. I'm just a drummer who encourages you to think about past and present musicians who have paved the way. Now, let's get back to this story.

I was playing at a club one night, and Bernard Purdie was there. (I've been friends with Purdie for years; we often spend time hanging out together at the NAMM shows.) During the break, I told Purdie how Pizzarelli had given me those albums

when I was a kid, and I said, "You were the guy on those albums!" What comes around goes around.

At 20 years old, I was performing in a club in upstate New York. We were playing this high-speed jazz number, and there was a guy in the audience saying, "Push 'em, Jay." He proceeded to compliment the band. Then he said, "You know, when you're playing fast jazz like that, you don't need to play dotted eighths on the ride cymbal. Just play straight quarter notes."

I thanked him for the advice and asked him his name. He said, "My name is Charlie Haden."

Lesson learned: You never know who's out there listening. I ran out to the record store the next day and grabbed an Ornette Coleman LP. I flipped it over, and there was Charlie. This was well over 30 years ago. This is the "other baton"—the one you pass to the next person who's willing to listen and learn.

In my 50-plus years of playing, I've noticed that great musicians have a way of letting their personality transfer to their instrument. Example: In 1973, my brother woke me up late one Sunday night to check out a band on TV. The drummer was playing all these intricate patterns, but his body was hardly moving. It was like watching a person doing martial arts.

Years later, I became friends with the drummer, the great Lenny White. I asked him what his approach to playing drums was. He said, "Bruce Lee." He had adopted his knowledge of martial arts to the drums.

A drummer is the band's conductor. They hold time, drive the rhythm and give the other musicians the comfort of knowing where that time is. Some of my favorite drummers are not the ones with tremendous chops, but the guys who have great feel for the music they're playing.

You are the instrument, and the instrument becomes you. **DB**

Jay Dittamo is a drummer and educator based in the greater New York City area. Visit him online at [jaydittamo.com](http://jaydittamo.com).



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# Antonio Sanchez's Drum-Set Solo on 'Minotauro'

**DRUMMER ANTONIO SANCHEZ TOOK A MAJOR LEAP FORWARD THIS** year with the release of his second album, *New Life* (CamJazz). Featuring all original material written by Sanchez, the CD is essentially a rebirth for this highly in-demand drummer-composer. The track "Minotauro" encapsulates the strength of Sanchez and his Migration band.

Matt Brewer's bass intro sets up "Minotauro" in an elusive way, with a polyrhythmic pedal that skips and transforms as it develops between changing meters. Sanchez, a master of complex polyrhythmic drumming, toys with the ostinato from the beginning while creating a strong, fragmented groove for the composition to grow on. When keyboardist John Escreet takes the first solo, the composition shifts to a steady 6/8 meter, allowing him room to stretch out lyrically. At the 5:06 mark, Escreet's solo closes out and gives way to three choruses by Sanchez.

Taking a cue from Escreet, Sanchez starts off his solo with a minimalist approach, allowing Brewer's bass lines to construct the canvas on which the drummer will paint. Sanchez builds his solos thematically. In measure 6, he borrows a phrase from the main melody of the song and begins to develop a motive between the ride, bass and rim click. What starts in measure 6 is restated in measure 7, and then deconstructed into a three-note phrase in measures 9–12. As is customary in Sanchez's style, the three-note phrase is manipulated in a way that displaces it to different parts of the beat of the subsequent measures, creating a feeling of familiarity in the phrase but tension in its placement. This phrase gets farther apart with each restatement and builds the anticipation through measure 12. In measure 13, Sanchez breaks into a 4-over-6 polyrhythmic dance groove, releasing the original motive. This polyrhythmic groove continues until the pickups to measure 17, where Sanchez moves back to a straight 6/8 feel.

In measure 25, Sanchez begins a new motive that is a call-and-response between an effects cymbal and triplets played as unison double-stops between the hi-hat, bass drum and press/

*Sanchez unleashes an impressive display of fast four-way independence between the hi-hat, ride cymbal, snare and bass drum.*

Antonio Sanchez

buzz strokes on the snare. He restates this motive again in measure 27 and answers it in a shorter amount of time. Sanchez continues this theme of shortening the length of the repeated phrase in measures 28–30. In measure 31, he slides into a double-time swing feel that sets up the rhythmic movement of his next chorus.

Starting in measure 34, Sanchez unleashes an impressive display of fast four-way independence between the hi-hat, ride cymbal, snare and bass drum. Measure 42 is a departure from straight jazz time and moves back to the drums, specifically the snare drum, as he approaches a new motive starting in measure 47. This motive is again double-stops between the bass drum, snare and ride cymbal, reappearing in measures 48–52 and 54. Again, Sanchez answers his new phrase with a call-and-response, this time between the double-stops and two eighth notes on the floor tom to the high tom. Sanchez plays with the rhythmic placement of this call-and-response in mea-

asures 53, 55, 57 and 58 before moving into fast-moving triplets across the snare and toms, à la Art Blakey, in measures 62–65.

The tension builds moving into Sanchez's last chorus and reaches its peak at measure 82 when he slams the crash cymbal on beat 1 (and again on beat 1 of measure 83).

Starting in measure 91, Sanchez begins to bring back a feeling of 6/8 with broken quarter-note triplets and a heavy cymbal emphasis on beats 1 and 3; this makes the listener feel a pulse of dotted quarter notes. In measure 106 he arrives back to the original 6/8 tempo and closes out the solo in the same minimalist way that he started it.

JEFFREY LIEN IS A NASHVILLE-BASED DRUMMER, PRIVATE INSTRUCTOR AND CLINICIAN WORKING THROUGHOUT THE UNITED STATES. SKYPE LESSONS AND ADDITIONAL TRANSCRIPTIONS ARE AVAILABLE ONLINE AT [JEFFREYLIEN.COM](http://JEFFREYLIEN.COM).

## Sabian AAX X-Plosion Hi-Hats

*Power, Crispness, Musicality*

X-Plosion hi-hats are new additions to Sabian's AAX line, providing explosive power, crispness and musicality. They are offered in a traditional 14-inch size, and 16-inch pairs are also available.

Both the 14- and 16-inch AAX X-Plosion hi-hats feature a titanium-weight top cymbal that is paired with a heavy bottom cymbal. An advantage of this combination is crispness, and with these hi-hats the foot "chick" is effortless. The unlathed bell is quite large and has a high profile. Top and bottom cymbals feature a highly polished finish. Since high frequencies and louder volume are a focus, there is minimal hammering. The lathing is relatively light and tightly spaced. The end result is high-powered hats that are also versatile.

Ultra-precise stick definition is easily obtainable with the 14-inch hats, and they have a great, trashy wash when played half-open. These hats aren't as one-dimensional as you might think. They'd make excellent big band hi-hats, and lower-volume situations such as small-group jazz would also be no problem.

The 16-inch is quite large for a hi-hat, but in recent years this unusual size has become more popular. I thought they would be a handful—but, surprisingly, they were easy to play. They manage to retain all of the great characteristics of the 14-inch cymbals but have the potential to be much louder. Incredibly, these are still very playable at a lower volume, and the foot "chick" is crisp and easy to produce. Larger hi-hats can sometimes be tricky to control, with an imprecise "chick" sound and washy characteristics. Sabian has solved this issue with a very controlled, easy-to-play pair of 16s. They are just a little lower in pitch than the 14s but still have the power to cut through at high volumes.

Sabian has bridged a difficult gap with the AAX X-Plosions. At first glance, you might think they're one-sided, heavy rock hi-hats. They are very versatile, though. I would feel comfortable taking both the 14- and 16-inch pairs out on everything from a jazz quartet gig to an arena-rock show.

—Ryan Bennett

Ordering info: [sabian.com](http://sabian.com)



## Gibraltar Turning Point Hardware

### *Stylish & Sturdy 'Wow' Factor*

This year, Gibraltar deepened its Turning Point Hardware series by introducing a new hi-hat stand and snare stand to its existing line of cymbal stands. It seems the purpose of this line is to deliver a professional, high-performance and durable stand that also focuses on style and innovative new features.

I had the opportunity to take the snare stand and hi-hat stand for a test run. I had high expectations after seeing Gibraltar's cymbal stands in action, and the new hardware did not disappoint.

These stands are made out of an alloy that's as sturdy as steel but 20 to 30 percent lighter. They are lighter than other double-braced hardware I own, and they are every bit as sturdy, if not more so.

The snare stand has a very low profile (a low setting of 13 inches) and a firm, low center of gravity. All the stands in this series have Gibraltar's L-bar Aluminum Arrow Lite leg base, which, when combined with their rubber footing, gives an amazing amount of sturdiness without sacrificing portability or playability. The snare tucks into the basket, which is then easily tightened with a solid cylinder-shaped mechanism on the bottom.

Each stand in this line has one thing that will "wow" you. On the snare stand, it's the Ultra Adjust ball-tilting mechanism that attaches the basket to the stand and allows the drum to be freely positioned wherever needed. Aside from the great action, the "wow" factor of the hi-hat stand is its quick-release clutch. A simple push of the thumb attaches the bottom nut to the clutch when assembling, and a quick pull separates it when disassembling; while playing, the clutch is rock-solid. —Matt Kern

Ordering info: [gibraltarhardware.com](http://gibraltarhardware.com)

## Vic Firth Sticks by Erskine & Miller

### *Definition That 'Clicks'*

Vic Firth has teamed up with long-time endorsers Peter Erskine and Russ Miller to create some innovative new offerings. The Peter Erskine Big Band Stick is designed to provide extra power in higher-volume settings, all in a well-balanced stick. The Russ Miller High-Definition (HD) stick has a unique tip design that emphasizes drum and cymbal stick definition. Miller has also added to his HD line a pair of wire brushes that feature two differently sized wire fans.

The Peter Erskine Big Band Stick (SPE3) has a 5B diameter and a long shoulder taper, giving you a little more muscle for big band settings or other higher-volume applications. The stick is so well balanced and easy to control that it also works great in ultra-quiet settings. The acorn-style wood tip is my personal favorite for jazz. This stick brings the most out of cymbals, providing a perfect balance of definition and wood "click."

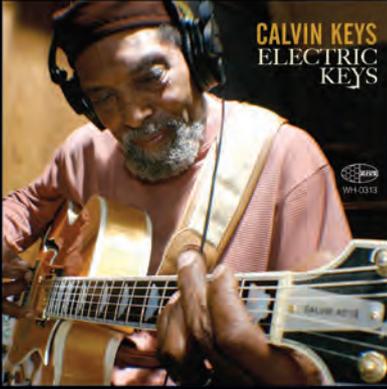
The Russ Miller HD stick (SMIL) has a small "half acorn" tip that has somewhat of an edge to it. This brings out higher-end and more defined characteristics in drums and cymbals, giving them an almost "HD" sound. Another neat feature is a logo marking toward the back of the stick that marks the "sweet spot" for cross-stick strokes. You can visually line up the logo over your snare drum rim for consistent and precise cross-stick strokes. Diameter is slightly smaller than a 5A, with a small shoulder taper.

On the Russ Miller Wire Brushes (RMWB), the "Ride Brush" has a smaller fan, and the "Sweep Brush" has a larger, more traditional-sized fan. The Ride Brush has a thicker gauge wire, which, in addition to higher volume, gives you a more focused sound on the drums and cymbals. The added stiffness gives you more rebound on the snare head, making uptempo work easier. The Sweep Brush has a slightly smaller gauge wire. Sweeping, circular motions are ultra smooth and a breeze to perform. Both brushes overall have a heavier wire gauge than traditional brushes. The added volume this produces would be a big help in larger ensemble settings such as big bands.

Artist signature sticks can sometimes be gimmicky. These are decidedly not. Erskine, Miller and the Vic Firth team did their homework in designing these new models. What they came up with are some innovative ideas that translate into practical features for any drummer performing virtually any style. —Ryan Bennett

Ordering info: [vicfirth.com](http://vicfirth.com)





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## DRUM SCHOOL Toolshed > GEAR BOX



### Cymbal Alloy Snare

Drum Workshop and Sabian have developed a limited-edition snare drum that combines features from Sabian cymbals and DW Collector's Series Edge snare drums. The Vault Edge snare has rings made of Sabian's B20 bell bronze that has been cast from hundreds of cymbals played, and worn out, by artists on tour. Combined with a 10-ply Lake Birch core, it lends the drum a decidedly darker and warmer tone than brass and maple Edge drums. **More info:** [dwdrums.com](http://dwdrums.com)



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### Hush-Hush Drumheads

Remo is now offering a single-ply mesh drumhead for quiet practice applications. The material features a soft, spring-like feel at very low decibel levels. Offered in snare, tom and bass sizes, Silentstroke Drumheads provide an alternative practice experience and offer new sound possibilities. They are available in 8- to 24-inch sizes that are ideal for applications where standard drum-set volumes are an issue. **More info:** [remo.com](http://remo.com)



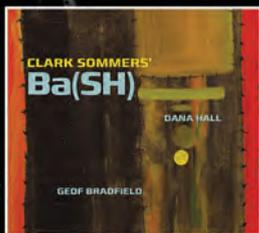
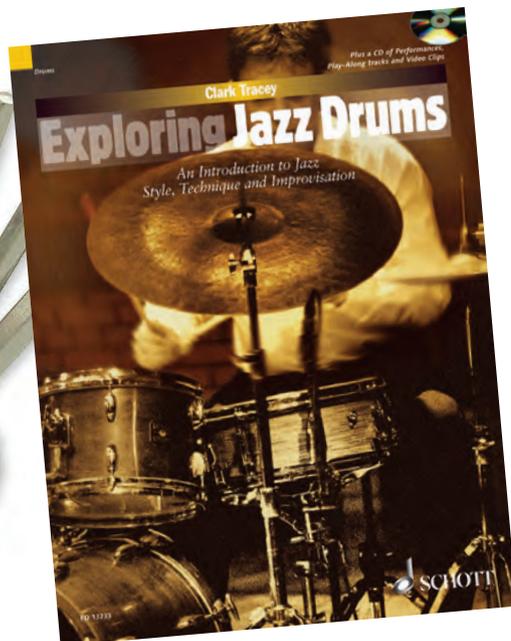
## Drum Fix

CruzTOOLS has introduced the GrooveTech Drum Multi-Tool, which features a standard drum key with a thin-wall socket for easy access to any tension rod, plus nine hex wrenches and various sizes of Phillips and slotted screwdrivers. All of the tools are professional grade and are made using a heat-treated S2 alloy with a polished-chrome finish. **More info: [cruztools.com](http://cruztools.com)**



## Jazz Drumming Basics

Schott Music has published *Exploring Jazz Drums: An Introduction to Jazz Style, Technique and Improvisation*, a book/CD package by Clark Tracey. The styles and techniques of many famous jazz drummers are discussed in detail, often with firsthand anecdotes. **More info: [schott-music.com](http://schott-music.com)**

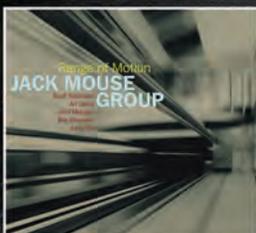


### CLARK SOMMERS' Ba(SH)

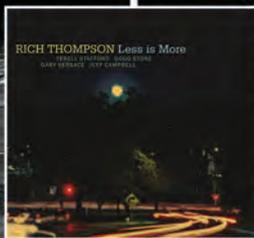
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CLARK SOMMERS bass  
DANA HALL drums

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KELLY SILL bass  
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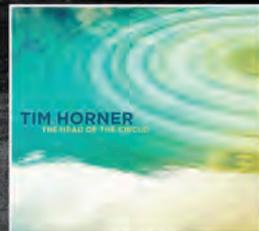
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TED NASH saxes, woodwinds  
DEAN JOHNSON bass  
TIM HORNER drums, perc, vocal



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DOWNBEAT'S 2013-'14 FALL/WINTER

# Festival

GUIDE

## Global Appeal

Our inaugural fall/winter guide includes 56 festivals in more than 20 countries

Bill Frisell at the Panama Jazz Festival in 2013  
(Photo: Panama Jazz Festival/Bill Bytsura)

# United States



Clearwater Jazz Holiday

CLEARWATER JAZZ HOLIDAY

## Earshot Jazz Festival

*Seattle, Washington*

**OCTOBER 1–NOVEMBER 17**

This massive jazz fest is celebrating its 25th year with more than 60 concerts across the city over a six-week period. The festival includes a strong educational aspect, with local student groups nabbing the chance to share the stage with pros.

**Lineup:** Keith Jarrett Trio with Gary Peacock and Jack DeJohnette, Charles Lloyd and Friends with Bill Frisell, Brad Mehldau/Mark Guiliana Mehliana, SFJAZZ Collective, Patricia Barber, The Bad Plus, Bill Frisell's Big Sur, Kneebody, La Familia Valera Miranda, John Medeski, Philip Glass, Omar Sosa Afri-Lectric Experience, Dave Douglas Quintet, Ken Vandermark & Nate Wooley, Nicole Mitchell Ice Crystal Quartet, Yosvany Terry Quintet, Peter Brötzmann & Paal Nilssen-Love, Lucian Ban & Mat Maneri, John Scofield Überjam, Darcy James Argue, John Hollenbeck & the Claudia Quintet.

[earshot.org](http://earshot.org)

## Angel City Jazz Festival

*Los Angeles, California*

**OCTOBER 4–13**

A bounty of cutting-edge festival performances are featured at renowned Los Angeles jazz venues, including a grand finale at the John Anson Ford Amphitheatre.

**Lineup:** Dafnis Prieto Sextet, Dave Holland Prism, Greg Osby Group with Anat Cohen, Jim Black, Tim Lefebvre & Chris Speed, John Hollenbeck Claudia Quintet, John Scofield Überjam, Kneebody, Nicole Mitchell's Sun Dial Ensemble, Richard Sears Group featuring Albert "Tootie" Heath, Robert Glasper Experiment, Yosvany Terry Quintet.

[angelcityjazz.com](http://angelcityjazz.com)

## Oregon Coast Jazz Party

*Newport, Oregon*

**OCTOBER 4–6**

The Oregon Coast Jazz Party celebrates a decade of live jazz this fall. Guests can expect multiple sets from jazz stars, nightclub performances and educational events.

**Lineup:** Bill Charlap Trio featuring Peter Washington and Kenny Washington, John Clayton, Sylvia Cuenca, Ed Dunsavage, Essiet Okon Essiet, Bruce Forman, Gary Hobbs, Holly Hofmann, Lewis Nash, Jason Palmer, Houston Person, Randy Porter, Jackie Ryan, Terell Stafford, John Wiitala, Mike Wofford, Rickey Woodard, Bryant Allard's Picante.

[coastarts.org](http://coastarts.org)

## Amelia Island Jazz Festival

*Fernandina Beach, Florida*

**OCTOBER 6–13**

Now in its 10th year, the Amelia Island Jazz Festival provides a variety of jazz styles, including swing, bebop, Dixieland, big band, Latin, blues and contemporary jazz.

**Lineup:** Mindi Abair, Royal Crown Revue, the Dynamic Les DeMerle Band featuring Bonnie Eisele.

[ameliaislandjazzfestival.com](http://ameliaislandjazzfestival.com)

## Pittsfield CityJazz Festival

*Pittsfield, Massachusetts*

**OCTOBER 9–19**

The Pittsfield CityJazz Festival takes place in downtown Pittsfield, where all concerts and events are within walking distance of

one another. Performers span from local talent to up-and-comers to national touring artists. The festival includes a hodgepodge of educational, local and headline events including the jazz crawl—an entire weekend of non-ticketed presentations by local artists. The concerts are located within a 45-minute drive of the Mohawk Trail, the Massachusetts Museum of Contemporary Art, the Clark Art Institute and Williams College.

**Lineup:** Geoff Vidal Quartet, Brubeck Brothers Quartet, Zoe Obadia.

[berkshiresjazz.com](http://berkshiresjazz.com)

## Duck Jazz Festival

*Duck, North Carolina*

**OCTOBER 13**

This one-day festival showcasing both national and local jazz has a casual atmosphere perfect for jazz fans, families and even pets. Rent or bring a lawn chair and grab some food from local vendors onsite. Jazz events continue throughout the week at local businesses.

**Lineup:** The Delfeayo Marsalis Octet, Lavay Smith and Her Red Hot Skillet Lickers, Peter Lamb and The Wolves, Carroll V. Dashiell Jr. & The CVD Ensemble.

[duckjazz.com](http://duckjazz.com)

## Sun Valley Jazz Jamboree

*Sun Valley, Idaho*

**OCTOBER 16–20**

More than 40 bands and 200 musicians representing an array of jazz styles will perform at this year's Sun Valley Jazz Jamboree, now

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celebrating its 24th year. Attendees can take swing dance lessons and compete in the amateur dance competitions held at the end of the festival.

**Lineup:** Bill Allred's Classic Jazz Band, Bill & Shelley & Westy, Blue Renditions, Blue Street Jazz Band, Bob Draga & Jason Wanner Quartet, Boise Straight Ahead, Bruce Innes & the Original Caste, Cornet Chop Suey, Dixieland All Star Big Band, High Sierra Jazz Band, High Street, Ivory&Gold, Jerry Krahn Quartet, Frey & the Usual Suspects, Joe Fos Trio, Kings of Swing, Lisa Kelly & J.B. Scott Sextet, Meschiya Lake & Dem Lil' Big Horns, Meyers All Star Big Band, Midiri All Star Big Band, Midiri Brothers Sextet, Night Blooming Jazzmen, Paul Tillotson Trio, PBJ, Pearl Django, Pieter Meijers Quartet with Brady McKay, Red Skunk Jipzee Swing, Sherri Cobby's Racket Makers & Friends, Side Street Strutters Jazz Band, St. Louis Rivermen, SVJJ Marching Band, Titan Hot 7, Tom Hook & NOLA Rhythm & Blues, Tom Rigney & Flambeau, Uptown Lowdown, We Three, Yale Whiffenpoofs, Yve Evans & Company.

[sunvalleyjazz.com](http://sunvalleyjazz.com)

## Clearwater Jazz Holiday

*Clearwater, Florida*

**OCTOBER 17–20**

Crowds relish in this popular fest's colorful musical lineup, from smooth-jazz to funk and fusion.

**Lineup:** Chicago, Jane Moneheit, Paul Brown, Larry Carlton, Average White Band, Tower of Power, Amos Lee, Brandi Carlile.

[clearwaterjazz.com](http://clearwaterjazz.com)

## Rehoboth Beach Jazz Festival

*Rehoboth Beach, Delaware*

**OCTOBER 17–20**

Now in its 24th year, this diverse jazz program is held across five venues in Rehoboth Beach and Lewes. Attendees can enjoy the beautiful beaches and the variety of entertainment at local restaurants and bars in addition to the festival's acts.

**Lineup:** Mindi Abair, Gerald Albright, Paula Atherton, Alex Bugnon, Steve Cole, Eric Darius, Will Downing, Four80East, Jeff Lorber, Matt Marshak, Keiko Meadows, Marion Meadows, Najee, Oh Boy! Rock-a-Billy Tribute, Sheila E., Art Sherrod Jr., Joey Sommerville, Elan Trotman, Peter White.

[rehobothjazz.com](http://rehobothjazz.com)

## Texas Jazz Festival

*Corpus Christi, Texas*

**OCTOBER 18–20**

Held on three different stages in Heritage Park, the Texas Jazz Festival is celebrating its 53rd year of attracting jazz musicians from around the country while also showcasing local talent. This year's event features three packed days of jazz, and on Friday and Saturday evening the big band and Latin jazz party continues long into the night.

**Lineup:** Del Mar Jazz Band, William Skrobarczyk, Claudia Melton, Victor Rendon & Blue Mambo, Europa, PM Soul, George Morin, Kyle Turner,



Freddie Martinez, Latin Talk, Allen Herman, Cats Don't Sleep, Vet Funky Jazz Band, Sonny Hill Quartet, Paul Peress, Melina, Adeline Cuesta, Tiburon, Zenteno Spirit, Ric Cortez Latin Jazz Project, Glenn Garcia Big Band, Stephen Richard Band, Jazz Inc, Powerhouse Big Band, Texas Brass Band, Tortilla Factory, EMT, Generations, Armin Marmolejo, Joel Dilley, Bobby Shrew, Joe Gallardo, Carolyn Blanchard Sextet, Ben Martinez Project, Westside Horns, Charlie Boeckman Hot Swing Band, Ronnie King, Galvan Quintet, E. Olivares Dixieland 7, Liscano Quintet, Rene Sandoval, BC & Soul Express, Brooks Conover, Mike Guerra & Trisum, Eddie Olivares Jr. Quartet, Latin Heart/Joe Revelez, Corpus Christi Jazz Ensemble, Ralph Duran, Dave Scott, James Polk.

[texasjazz-fest.org](http://texasjazz-fest.org)

## Edgefest

*Ann Arbor, Michigan*

**OCTOBER 23–26**

The 17th annual Edgefest at Kerrytown Concert House will explore the versatility of the piano and will feature some of the most celebrated multi-instrumentalists on the scene today.

**Lineup:** Myra Melford Solo, Kris Davis LARK with Ralph Alessi, Ingrid Laubrock and Tom Rainey, Connie Crothers with Northwoods Improvisors, Ursel Schlicht and Robert Dick, Thollem McDonas with Soar Trio and BoxDeserter Ensemble, Gary Versace Trio with Ron Miles and Matt Wilson, Michael Formanek Quartet with Jacob Sacks, Dan Weiss and Ellery Eskelin, James Igenfritz, MiND GAmES with Denman Maroney, Andrew Drury and Angelika Niescier, Tad Weed and Ken Filiano, William Parker Raining on the Moon Sextet featuring pianist Eri Yamamoto, Steve Rush Piano Concerto with UM Jazz Ensemble, Kenn Thomas and William Parker, Marilyn Lerner, Lou Grassi and Ken Filiano.

[kerrytownconcerthouse.com](http://kerrytownconcerthouse.com)

## Trance Blues Jam Festival

*Boulder, Colorado*

**NOVEMBER 1–2**

Hosted by blues artist and Colorado native Otis Taylor, this two-day festival encourages attendees to be active participants in creating music. Players of all levels and

all instruments are welcome to partake in collaborative workshops taught by visiting artists. The workshops culminate in a Grand Jam.

**Lineup:** Otis Taylor, Cassie Taylor, Anne Harris, Erica Brown, G'Jai, Larry Thompson, Todd Edmunds.

[trancebluesfestival.com](http://trancebluesfestival.com)

## TD James Moody Democracy of Jazz Festival

*Newark, New Jersey*

**NOVEMBER 4–10**

This weeklong festival held in the New Jersey Performing Arts Center features concerts, panel discussions and workshops in honor of saxophonist James Moody. Included is the Jazz House Kids' Day of Swing, workshops and youth performances geared towards jazz newbies. The Sarah Vaughan International Jazz Vocal Competition finals will also take place during the festival.

**Lineup:** Jimmy Heath Quartet; Vanguard Jazz Orchestra with Barry Harris, Rhoda Scott, Christian McBride and Anat Cohen Quartet; Eliane Elias, Lee Ritenour, Airtio Moreira and Joe Lovano; Vince Giordano and the Nighthawks; Dianne Reeves, Al Jarreau, Jeffrey Osborne, Gerald Albright and Cyrille Aimée with the Christian McBride Big Band and Melissa Walker; Paquito D'Rivera Quartet.

[njpac.org/moody](http://njpac.org/moody)

## Exit 0 Jazz Festival

*Cape May, New Jersey*

**NOVEMBER 8–10**

In its second year, the Exit 0 Jazz Festival will present more than 100 international musicians in the Cape May Convention Hall and other club venues along the beachfront. Stroll from venue to venue, sample a mix of musical genres and enjoy beach sunsets. The festival also features a free, public performance by Kenny Garrett and wine tastings. Outside the festival, Cape May borders a migratory bird refuge and is near a variety of outdoor and wildlife activities.

**Lineup:** Bruce Barth-Gary Bartz Duo, Aaron Diehl Quartet, Dianne Reeves, Kenny Garrett Quintet, Etienne Charles, Jameo Brown, Marc Cary Focus Trio, Joe Locke, Eddie Palmieri, Alicia Olatuja, Frank Bey, Jana Herzen-Charnett Moffett Dou, Alidu.

[exit0jazzfest.com](http://exit0jazzfest.com)

## Jazz Fest at Sea

*Cruise leaving from Miami, Florida*

**NOVEMBER 30–DECEMBER 7, 2013**

This cruise ventures to Jamaica, Grand Cayman, Mexico and the Bahamas for seven nights of celebrating jazz styles that emerged from the '20s to the '40s. During JazzFest Jammer sessions, amateur musicians have the chance to jam with some of the pros from the lineup.

**Lineup:** Vache Brothers Jazz Sextet with Bucky Pizzarelli, Jim Cullum Jazz Band, Bill Allred's Classic Jazz Band, Yve Evans.

[jazzfestatsea.com](http://jazzfestatsea.com)

## Winter Jazzfest

*New York City*

**JANUARY 10–11**

This annual fest heats up multiple venues in Greenwich Village on two winter nights. Last year's edition was held in six different venues and featured over 70 groups.

**Lineup:** Last year's lineup included Rez Abbasi, Michael Formanek, Leo Genovese, Claudia Acuña.

[winterjazzfest.com](http://winterjazzfest.com)

## The Jazz Cruise

*Cruise leaving from Fort Lauderdale, Florida*

**JANUARY 26–FEBRUARY 2**

Voyage to Turks and Caicos, Puerto Rico, St. Maarten and Half Moon Cay alongside some of today's most popular jazz acts. Each night, passengers can choose from two premiere shows, while the rest of the time attendees can come and go from events as they please. This year's theme is "Jazz Around the World."

**Lineup:** Ernie Adams, John Allred, Shelly Berg, Alonzo Bodden, Randy Brecker, Ann Hampton Callaway Quartet, Bill Charlap Trio, Clayton Brothers Quintet, Freddy Cole Trio, Kurt Elling Quartet, Robin Eubanks, John Fedchock, David Finck, Chuck Findley, Bruce Forman, Nnenna Freelon, Wycliffe Gordon, Jimmy Greene, Jeff Hamilton, Niki Haris, Antonio Hart, Tamir Hendelman, Dick Hyman, Tommy Igoe Sextet, Sean Jones, Tony Kadleck, Tom Kennedy, Joe La Barbera, Christoph Luty, Dennis Mackrel, Manhattan Transfer, Marcus Miller Quartet, Lewis Nash Trio, Dick Oatts, Ken Peplowski, Houston Person Quartet, John Pizzarelli Quartet, Gregory Porter Quartet, Poncho Sanchez, Arturo Sandoval, Gary Smulyan, Walt Weiskopf, Jennifer Wharton.

[thejazzcruise.com](http://thejazzcruise.com)

## Newport Beach Jazz Party

*Newport Beach, California*

**FEBRUARY 13–16**

Now in its 14th year, the Newport Beach Jazz Party features top jazz artists in a luxury resort setting at the Newport Beach Marriott Hotel & Spa, located across the street from world-class Fashion Island. The festival features outdoor poolside sessions during the day, concerts in the ballroom at night, plus Saturday and Sunday champagne brunches. Artists perform in various mix-and-match settings including duos, trios, quintets and big bands.

**Lineup:** Clayton-Hamilton Jazz Orchestra, Byron Stripling, Ken Peplowski, Houston Person.

[newportbeachjazzparty.com](http://newportbeachjazzparty.com)

## Lionel Hampton Jazz Festival

*Moscow, Idaho*

**FEBRUARY 19–22**

Now in its 47th year, this four-day celebration inspires students, teachers and audiences with jazz performances, workshops and chances to hang out with world-renowned musicians in an intimate setting. Located about five to six hours from Portland or Seattle, the festival is within minutes from the Palouse—a natural wonder that attracts photographers from around the world and has miles of skiing, fish-

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[kennygarrett.com](http://kennygarrett.com)  
[mackavenue.com](http://mackavenue.com)



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*Sketches of MD: Live at the Iridium featuring Pharoah Sanders* (CD)

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ing, biking and horseback riding.

**Lineup:** Eddie Palmieri Latin Jazz Septet, Yellow-jackets, Grace Kelly, Rene Marie, Sheila Jordan.

[uidaho.edu/jazzfest](http://uidaho.edu/jazzfest)

## Portland Jazz Festival

Portland, Oregon

FEBRUARY 20–MARCH 2

Produced by PDX Jazz, this festival is a cultural initiative that celebrates Black History Month. The Portland Jazz Festival features upwards of 100 ticketed and free events that take place at three separate venues.

**Lineup:** TBA. Last year's lineup included ACS (Geri

Allen, Terri Lyne Carrington, Esperanza Spalding), Jack DeJohnette, Barry Harris, Kurt Rosenwinkel, Sex Mob, Steve Kuhn, Kenny Garrett, Patricia Barber, Afro Cuban All-Stars, Alfredo Rodriguez.

[pdxjazz.com](http://pdxjazz.com)

## Elmhurst College Jazz Festival

Elmhurst, Illinois

FEBRUARY 20–23

The Elmhurst College Jazz Festival has its roots in the American College Jazz Festival that began in the 1960s. The festival presents a forum where collegiate groups can perform, attend clinics, hear performances and receive



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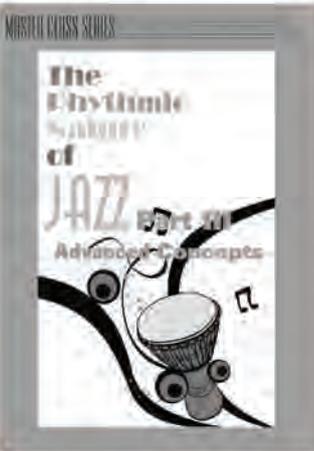
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It is strongly advised that you acquire the first two DVDs which deal with Orientation and Fundamentals if you do not already have them, as they are a prerequisite to understanding the material presented here.

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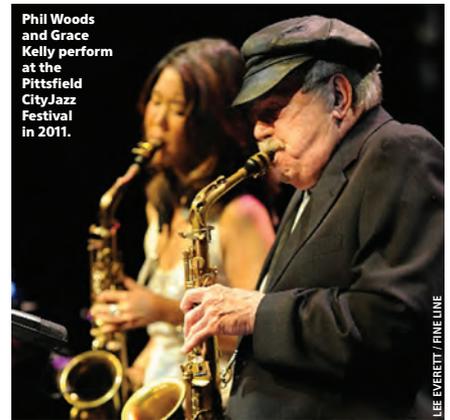
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[elmhurst.edu/jazzfestival](http://elmhurst.edu/jazzfestival)

## RedGorilla Music Fest

Austin, Texas

MARCH 11–16

This free festival in downtown Austin has earned a reputation as a showcase for new talent.

**Lineup:** TBA. Past year's acts have included Macklemore & Ryan Lewis, Cage The Elephant, Nappy Roots, Colt Ford, Andrew WK, Trail of Dead.

[redgorillamusic.com](http://redgorillamusic.com)

## Paradise Valley Jazz Party

Scottsdale, Arizona

MARCH 23–24

The Paradise Valley Jazz Party is an organized jam session featuring top jazz musicians in a series of 30- to 45-minute sets. The event—started in 1978—takes place in one of Scottsdale's finest resorts, the Scottsdale Hilton Resort, with reserved cocktail-style seating in an acoustically perfect ballroom for an intimate and memorable experience.

**Lineup:** Mike Kocour, Shelly Berg, John Clayton, Akira Tana, Houston Person, Warren Vaché, Bruce Forman, Harry Watters, Stan Sorenson, Beth Lederman, Joe Corral, Ted Sistrunk, Greg Warner, Wycliffe Gordon, Max Goldschmid, Nick Manson, Dwight Kilian, John Lewis, Chris Finet.

[paradisevalleyjazz.com](http://paradisevalleyjazz.com)

## Knox-Rootabaga Jazz Festival

Galesburg, Illinois

APRIL 10–12

Knox College and the Galesburg community host three days of concerts and workshops. The birthplace of Carl Sandburg (the festival is named for his children's book *Rootabaga Stories*), Galesburg is a classic prairie city with a thriving arts scene, the historic Orpheum Theatre, the Knox-Galesburg Symphony and Prairie Players Civic Theatre.

**Lineup:** The Knox Jazz Ensemble with the Aaron Diehl Quartet, Knox Alumni Big Band, CALJE (Chicago Afro-Latin Jazz Ensemble).

[knox.edu](http://knox.edu)



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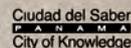
Daniilo Perez new record release Panama 500  
Osvaldo Ayala "Transismico Project"  
John Patitucci  
Berklee Global Jazz Institute  
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Panama Telephone 507.317.1466

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## Akbank Jazz Festival

*Istanbul, Turkey*

**SEPTEMBER 25–OCTOBER 12**

Founded in 1990, the Akbank Jazz Festival is one of the oldest jazz festivals in Turkey. This year's event—which takes place at 45 different venues—features workshops, movie screenings and 50 concerts. Jazz brunch events are held at three different restaurants on three different Sundays with the perfect views of the Bosphorus Strait.

**Lineup:** Cassandra Wilson and Harriet Tubman, Nicholas Payton, Mare Nostrum, Enrico Rava Tribe featuring Gianluca Petrella.

[akbanksanat.com](http://akbanksanat.com)

## Hong Kong International Jazz Festival

*Hong Kong, China*

**SEPTEMBER 29–OCTOBER 2**

This year's lineup features musicians from Europe, South America and Asia. Attendees have opportunities to take workshops with musicians.

**Lineup:** Bob Mocarisky Trio, Diego Figueiredo Duo, Eliane Amherd, Ines Trickovic Quartet, Jangeun "JB" Bae Trio, Lars Danielsson Libretto Trio, maRK, Ntjam Rosie, Søren Bebe Trio, Asaf Sirkis Trio.

[hkijf.com/en](http://hkijf.com/en)

## Jeonju Sori Festival

*Jeonju, South Korea*

**OCTOBER 2–6**

This festival highlights Pansori (or Sori), traditional Korean narrative music that uses percussion and vocals to tell stories. But acts from across the world also perform, making the festival an impressive display of international culture. The fest kicks off with a sori opening performance and also offers several master classes. Home to Gyeonggi Palace, Jeonju is known across the region for its cuisine.

**Lineup:** El Gran Combo, DJ Click, Claudia Aurora, Kamal Musallam Band, Hareem and Gipsy & Fish Orchestra, Bulsechul.

[sorifestival.com](http://sorifestival.com)

## AghaRTA Prague Jazz Festival

*Prague, Czech Republic*

**OCTOBER 3–28**

This festival is held in the Lucerna Music Bar and the AghaRTA Jazz Centrum—a jazz club housed in the basement of a building built in the 1400s. The festival's lineup mixes European and American acts.

**Lineup:** Joshua Redman Quartet, Richard Bona Group, Maceo Parker, Buster Williams Quartet, Magnus Öström, Mike Stern Band, Vein.

[aghartacz](http://aghartacz)

## Angrajazz Festival

*Angra do Heroísmo, Portugal*

**OCTOBER 3–5**

One of the main cultural events of the Azores Islands for the last 14 years, this festival has hosted a number of the world's most important jazz musicians. Angrajazz takes place at the Centro Cultural de Angra do Heroísmo, which is set up as a large jazz club, holding 550 people and hosting double concerts each night. Spend time outside the festival discovering the beautiful Terceira Island and the city of Angra do Heroísmo, a UNESCO World Heritage Site.

**Lineup:** Angra Jazz Orchestra, Pedro Moreira and Claus Nymark, Carla Bley Trio, Fred Hersch Trio, Ray Anderson's Pocket Brass Band, Carlos Bica Trio Azul, Cécile McLorin Salvant Quartet.

[angrajazz.com](http://angrajazz.com)

## Caribbean Sea Jazz Festival

*Oranjestad, Aruba*

**OCTOBER 4–5**

Venture to Aruba for the seventh run of the Caribbean Sea Jazz Festival, a platform for talented regional artists. The three stages attract 7,000 Arubans and tourists each year.

**Lineup:** El Gran Combo, Willy Garcia, Giovanna, Robert Jeandor, Marquese Scott, Ivan Jansen, George Benson, José James, Levi Silvanie, The Groovehunters, Sazon Cubano, BamBu, Krosshart Project, Rufo Wever School of Music,

Edwardo Maya, Beardyman, Live Xpressions.

[caribbeanseajazz.com](http://caribbeanseajazz.com)

## DølaJazz-Lillehammer Jazzfestival

*Lillehammer, Norway*

OCTOBER 10–13

This laid-back festival has been a performing outlet for Scandinavian artists for more than 30 years. The intimate atmosphere in various venues attracts locals and travelers alike. The fest also features day concerts and several free events.

**Lineup:** Helle Brunvoll, Helge Lien Trio, Rino Arbore Quartet, Beady Belle, Sommerflugfisk, Bakken/Lien/Skaansar/Johansen, Heidi Skjerve, Sands/Andersen/Riel, Frøy Aagre Trio, Kyle Eastwood, Hot Club de Norvège, Doffs Poi, Chipahua, Karin Krog and Morten Gunnar Larsen.

[dolajazz.no](http://dolajazz.no)

## Stockholm Jazz Festival

*Stockholm, Sweden*

OCTOBER 14–20

The Stockholm Jazz Festival spreads across the city at more than 20 venues including the acclaimed jazz club Fasching. This year's event presents well-known jazz stars and up-and-comers, the avant-garde and everything in between. Each day ends with a vibrant Late Night Jam. Stockholm is often called "Venice of the North" for its culture, architecture and history. Visit the new ABBA museum or stroll through the Old Town, with buildings built in the 1600s. The Royal Castle is located right in the city center, and the Museum of Modern Art is minutes away.

**Lineup:** Dianne Reeves, Avishai Cohen with Strings, Cindy Blackman-Santana, Carla Bley Trio, Snarky Puppy, Harriet Tubman & Cassandra Wilson Present Black Sun, European Jazz Orchestra featuring Ann-Sofi Söderqvist, Goran Kajfeš Subtropic Arkestra, Kenny Garrett Quartet.

[stockholmjazz.se](http://stockholmjazz.se)

## Skopje Jazz Festival

*Skopje, Republic of Macedonia*

OCTOBER 17–21

Held in three venues across the city, this festival draws a mix of artists from Europe and the States. Stay after the festival to explore the ancient ruins and natural wonders of Macedonia.

**Lineup:** Evan Parker/Zlatko Kaucic, Get The Blessing, Sidsel Endresen & Stian Westerhus, John Abercrombie Quartet, Ruet Regev's R\*Time, Balkan Fever with Kristjan Järvi & Macedonian Philharmonic featuring Vlatko Stefanovski, Miroslav Tadic & Theodosii Spassov, Nicola Conte Combo, Roscoe Mitchell Trio, Harriet Tubman & Cassandra Wilson Present Black Sun, Peter Evans Zebulon Trio, Ibrahim Maalouf Illusions, Dave Holland Prism, Rob Mazurek & São Paulo Underground.

[skopjejazzfest.com.mk](http://skopjejazzfest.com.mk)

## Canterbury Festival

*Canterbury, United Kingdom*

OCTOBER 19–NOVEMBER 2

This year marks the 30th anniversary of the Canterbury Festival in its current form (the original festival started in the 1920s) and will see more than 200 diverse events take place from a variety of genres including world music, theater, dance, literature, comedy and visual arts. This year the Spiegeltent—a highly decorative, 1920s travelling dance hall—will be in Canterbury for two weeks during the festival and will host a packed program of theater, music and cabaret. From young folk and country talent like Ahab and Feral Mouth, to established musicians like Sammy Rimington and Lúnasa, the diverse range of artists ensures an act for every interest.

**Lineup:** Tchaikovsky Symphony Orchestra, Nova Music Opera, Jack Hues & the Quartet, Foundation Bursary Concert, The October Trio, Matthew Barley, Sacconi Quartet, Yevgeny Sudbin, Canterbury Choral Society, Mikhail Rudy, Albert Herring by Benjamin Britten, Nicholas Daniel & Julius Drake, Lesley Garrett & Emma Johnson, Aquarelle Guitar Quartet, The Tallis Scholars, Chris Jagger's Atcha, Ian Crowther & the Festival Chamber Ensemble, Oysterband, The FB Pocket Orchestra, Feral Mouth, Flaky Jake & Bank, Ahab, Luke Johnson, Comic Sausages, Sammy Rimington, Craobh Rua, Doudou Cissoko, CoCo & the Butterfields, Lúnasa.

[canterburyfestival.co.uk](http://canterburyfestival.co.uk)

## Voll-Damm International Jazz Festival of Barcelona

*Barcelona, Spain*

OCTOBER 19–DECEMBER 1

Celebrating its 45th anniversary, this festival draws jazz's premier performers from around the globe for a six-week extravaganza. The fest features an evening of music dedicated to George Gershwin and a concert by ACS, the super-group of Geri Allen, Terri Lyne Carrington and Esperanza Spalding. Also offered throughout the festival are free master classes from 14 renowned jazz artists including Miguel Zenón, Christian McBride and Wadada Leo Smith. This year's event also hosts "Rumba Para Bebo," a memorial concert for the legendary Cuban pianist Bebo Valdés, with his son, Chucho Valdés, serving as the master of ceremonies.

**Lineup:** Chucho Valdés and his Afro-Cuban Messengers, Tindersticks, Jack DeJohnette with Don Byron and special guest Avishai Cohen, Kurt Rosenwinkel, Christian McBride, Miguel Zenón, Daniel Humair y Wadada Leo Smith, Eva Fernandez.

[barcelonajazzfestival.com](http://barcelonajazzfestival.com)

## Jazzuv Festival

*Xalapa, Mexico*

OCTOBER 20–26

The sixth annual International Jazzuv Festival is put on by Universidad Veracruzana and includes outdoor performances, master classes, jam sessions and panel discussions.

**Lineup:** Last year's lineup included Otis Brown,

Kenny Werner, Greg Hutchinson, Giovanni Hidalgo, Mike Moreno, Gary Bartz and Alfredo Rodríguez.

[festivaljazzuv.com](http://festivaljazzuv.com)

## Roma Jazz Festival

*Rome, Italy*

OCTOBER 20–NOVEMBER 2

Held in the Auditorium Parco della Musica, this festival showcases a medley of Italian and American acts in one of the world's most artistically inspiring and historic cities.

**Lineup:** Joshua Redman, Javier Girotto, Peppe Servillo, Fabrizio Bentivoglio, Vijay Iyer, Giuseppe Battiston, Mulatu Astatke, Anthony Joseph, Roy Paci, Carlo Lucarelli, Avishai Cohen, Amiri Baraka, Antonello Salis, Paolo Angeli, Gavino Murgia, Marcello Fois, Erri De Luca, Gabriele Mirabassi, Gianmaria Testa, Fabrizio Bosso, Massimo Popolizio, Napoleon Maddox, Mingus Big Band, Francesco Pannofino.

[romajazzfestival.it](http://romajazzfestival.it)

## Jazzmandu: Kathmandu International Jazz Festival

*Kathmandu, Nepal*

OCTOBER 23–31

Set in the Himalayas, the fest popularly known as "Jazzmandu" features various styles of jazz from around the world, promotes musical education in Nepal and is a platform for cultural interaction.

**Lineup:** Claudia Quintet, Yaite Ramos Quartet, Nick Aggs, Mike del Ferro, Eliane Amherd, Cadenza Collective.

[jazzmandu.org](http://jazzmandu.org)

## Deutsches Jazzfestival Frankfurt

*Frankfurt (am Main), Germany*

OCTOBER 24–26

One of Europe's oldest jazz festivals looks to the future with its title, "Bits'n'Bytes." The festival will explore how jazz is related to electronics amid questions about what the future of jazz will be. Expect one-of-a-kind projects and acts from electronic and acoustic artists from both sides of the pond.

**Lineup:** Guillaume Perret & The Electric Epic, Dave Holland Prism, hr-Bigband plays Kraftwerk, Donny McCaslin Casting For Gravity, J. Peter Schwalm featuring Eivind Aarset, Tomasz Stanko New York Quartet, Ibrahim Maalouf & hr-Bigband conducted by Jim McNeely, Troyka, Pharoah & The Underground.

[jazzfestival.hr2-kultur.de](http://jazzfestival.hr2-kultur.de)

## Baloise Session

*Basel, Switzerland*

OCTOBER 25–NOVEMBER 14

Experience the club-like atmosphere of the Baloise Session festival while seated at round, candlelit tables within viewing distance of the stage. Basel is located on the Rhine River, allowing for numerous outdoor

activities and on-the-water dining.

**Lineup:** Bligg, Zaz, Texas, Alex Hepburn, Gloria Estefan, Stress, Iyeoka, Chris Cornell, Aimee Mann, Patricia Kaas, Birdy, Unheilig, Schmidt, Lovebugs, Kyla La Grange, Glen Hansard, Heather Nova, Incognito, Randy Crawford and Joe Sample, Eric Clapton, Caroline Chevin, The Blackberry Brandies.

[baloisesession.ch](http://baloisesession.ch)

## Guinness Cork Jazz Festival

*Cork, Ireland*

**OCTOBER 25–28**

One of Ireland's flagship festivals, the annual Guinness Jazz Festival in Cork is set to break attendance records since its inception more than 30 years ago. In 2012, more than 1,000 musicians from 30 countries performed, including from Roy Hargrove, Gregory Porter, Chris Dave, Tigran, Rudresh Mahanthappa and De La Soul. Musicians perform in most of Dublin's major theatres. But the music continues day and night throughout 60 clubs, pubs and hotels citywide, with most of the music free of entrance charges. The festival also features master classes and other fringe events.

**Lineup:** Chic & Nile Rodgers, Billy Cobham, Portico Quartet, Mingus Big Band, Snarky Puppy, Dino Saluzzi, Courtney Pine, Rene Marie, Bugge Wesseltoft, Bilal, Garrison Fewell.

[guinnesscorkjazzfestival.com](http://guinnesscorkjazzfestival.com)

## Dominican Republic Jazz Fest

*Puerto Plata, Sosua, Cabarete, Dominican Republic*

**OCTOBER 31–NOVEMBER 3**

The 17th Annual Dominican Republic Jazz Festival is the longest-running jazz event in the Dominican Republic. This celebration of Caribbean and Latin jazz is a free, four-day festival combining culture, music education and some of the world's best Latin jazz groups and musicians.

**Lineup:** Abraham Laboriel, Alex Acuña, Rufus Reid, Marco Pignataro, Ramon Vazquez, Horacio Hernandez, George Garzone, Billy Drummond, Bernie Williams, Riche Flores, Johnny Ventura, Milly Quezada.

[drjazzfestival.com](http://drjazzfestival.com)

## Jazzfest Berlin

*Berlin, Germany*

**OCTOBER 31–NOVEMBER 3**

Founded in 1964, Jazzfest Berlin has shifted its focus to contemporary music, with a specific interest in progressive American artists. Patrons get their fill of European acts, too, in this self-proclaimed "capital city of jazz."

**Lineup:** Christian Scott, Joachim Kühn with Pharoah Sanders, Abraham Inc., John Scofield, Jack DeJohnette Group featuring Don Byron, Dafnis Prieto Proverb Trio, Food, Frankfurt Radio Bigband with Michael Wolny & Tamar Halperin, Michael Riessler, M. Wroblewski Trio & Terence Blanchard, Luten Petrowsky's birthday bash, Sons of Kemet, Gebhard Ullmann Berlin Suite, Monika Roscher Bigband.

[jazzfest-berlin.de](http://jazzfest-berlin.de)



Maceo Parker performs with WDR Big Band at Jazzfest Berlin in 2008

## Tampere Jazz Happening

*Tampere, Finland*

**OCTOBER 31–NOVEMBER 3**

This festival is one of the premier destinations for European and Scandinavian jazz, while also drawing acclaimed U.S. artists. Tampere, the third largest city in Finland, is home to a variety of museums and historical sites.

**Lineup:** Last year's lineup included the Gerry Hemingway Quintet, Vijay Iyer Trio, The Jazz Passengers Reunited.

[tamperemusicfestivals.com](http://tamperemusicfestivals.com)

## Wangaratta Festival of Jazz & Blues

*Wangaratta, Australia*

**NOVEMBER 1–4**

Since 1990, this fest has offered more than 100 concerts at 10 nearby venues, from concert halls to a cathedral, pub and outdoor stages.

**Lineup:** The Magic Trio, Paul Grabowsky Sextet, Peter O'Mara Affiliation, Jef Neve, Frøy Aagre Electric, Barney McAll, Paul Bollenback Trio, Eric Vloeimans' Gatecrash, Gerald Clayton Trio, Chris McNulty with the Paul Grabowsky Trio, Joe Chindamo, Julien Wilson Quartet, Charlie Parr, Old Gray Mule, Chris Wilson, Geoff Achison & Chris Wilson: Box of Blues, The Backsliders, Barry Wratten's New Orleans Pelicans, Expose: David Trolley with Tony Hicks & Brett Thompson, Anning-Wilson-Browne Trio, Mace Francis Nonet, The Differences, Jonathan Zwartz Ensemble, Dixie Jack, Gian Slater & Shannon Barnett: U.Nlock, B For Chicken, Nock-Magnusson-Wilson, Way Out West, The Subterraneans, Tight Corners: Phillip Johnston/Jex Saarelaht Quartet, Peter Knight, Steve Grant Quartet, Blow, Trichotomy, Drumbling, The Vampires, The Finer Cuts, The Cope Street Parade, Paul Williamson's Hammond Combo, Mirko Guerrini/Stephen Magnusson: Acquacheta, Callum G'Froerer Ensemble, Russell Morris, Jeff Lang, Muddy Waters Tribute Australia, Kerri Simpson, Steve Tallis & The Holy Ghosts, Andrea Marr & the Funky Hitmen, Catfish Voodoo.

[2013.wangarattajazz.com](http://2013.wangarattajazz.com)

## Jazzdor Festival

*Strasbourg, France*

**NOVEMBER 8–22**

Jazzdor Festival will celebrate its 28th anniversary in 15 different venues in and around Strasbourg. The festival predominantly showcases emerging artists and new projects from France and Europe but doesn't neglect to include well-known international artists as well.

**Lineup:** Dave Holland, Gonzalo Rubalcaba, David Murray, Joachim Kühn, Louis Slavis, Bojan Z, Nils Wogram, Vincent Peirani, Mike Ladd, Elina Duni, Boi Akih, Luc Ex, Marcel Kanche.

[jazzdor.com](http://jazzdor.com)

## Leverkusener Jazztage

*Leverkusener, Germany*

**NOVEMBER 8–17**

This festival has evolved over the past 26 years to become one of the largest cultural events in Germany. More than 20,000 people flock to Leverkusen for an eclectic event that draws acclaimed artists from a variety of genres and countries.

**Lineup:** Paul Kühn & Band with the German Film Orchestra, Incognito, Shakatak, Snarky Puppy, Candy Dulfer, Ivan Lins & SWR Big Band, Sheila E., Zawinul Legacy Tape, Marcus Miller, Larry Graham & Graham Central Station, Omar Hakim featuring Victor Bailey & Rachel Z., WDR Big Band featuring Chano Dominguez Group, Medeski Martin & Wood, Roger Cicero, Schmidt, Bob James, David Sanborn & Steve Gadd, Cindy Blackman Santana, January Prax Quartet, Jamie Cullum, Randy Crawford & Joe Sample, Holly Cole.

[leverkusener-jazztage.de](http://leverkusener-jazztage.de)

## Vilnius Mama Jazz Festival

*Vilnius, Lithuania*

**NOVEMBER 13–17**

This festival in Lithuania's capital strives to include both jazz giants and new discoveries in its diverse lineup. The festival brings international jazz to Lithuanian audiences and provides an environment for new artists

to participate in national and international projects. Master classes are provided for new jazz musicians, and the festival features a free jam session that lasts until morning.

**Lineup:** TBA. Last year's lineup included Lieder Leaders, Wallace Roney Quintet, State of Monc, Vilkšū Pa Muguru.

[vilniusmamajazz.lt](http://vilniusmamajazz.lt)

## London Jazz Festival

*London, England*  
NOVEMBER 15–24

Producers of the London Jazz Festival offer up a 10-day, diverse array of rock- and funk-infused jazz artists, along with a hearty mix of traditional and fusion talents that make the festival one of the top U.K. jazz events each year. It all happens in the confines of London's esteemed concert hall.

**Lineup:** Geri Allen, Terri Lyne Carrington, Esperanza Spalding, Snarky Puppy, Hugh Masekela and Larry Willis and Zena Edwards, Paolo Conte, Arild Andersen and Trio Red, David Sanborn and Bob James and Zoe Rahman Quintet, Patty Griffin and Julia Biel, Joe Stilgoe, Sonny Rollins, Tigran Hamasyan and Elina Duni, Gwilym Simcock, Courtney Pine and Monty Alexander, Gilad Atzmon, Brad Mehldau & Mark Guiliana: Mehliana, John McLaughlin and Zakir Hussain, Marcus Miller and Carleen Anderson, Madeleine Peyroux, Carla Bley, Steve Swallow and Andy Sheppard, Stan Sulzmann's Neon Orchestra and Brass Jaw, Sclippenbach Trio, Noszferatu, Ketil Bjørnstad and Tim Whitehead.

[londonjazzfestival.org.uk](http://londonjazzfestival.org.uk)



The Canterbury Festival's opening parade

## Festival de Jazz de Montevideo

*Montevideo, Uruguay*  
NOVEMBER 18–23

Performances occur all around Uruguay's capital city, with the Teatro Solís as the principal venue and four days of outdoor programming in beautiful Plaza Matriz. Festivities include workshops and jams.

**Lineup:** Jerry Gonzalez Trio, Javier and Nirankar Khalsa, Flavio Bolto & Eric Legnini Quartet, André Fernandes, more.

[jazz.com.uy](http://jazz.com.uy)

## Riviera Maya Jazz Festival

*Playa del Carmen, Mexico*  
NOVEMBER 28–30

One of Riviera Maya's signature annual events, this festival offers free entrance, an array of music and the unforgettable beauty of Riviera Maya. The festival takes place right next to the ocean and is surrounded by white sand beaches, coral reefs and archaeological sites.

**Lineup:** Aguamala, Allan Holdsworth, Brent Fischer, HBC Henderson, Berlin & Chambers, Jim Beard, Ed Motta, Celso Piña, Matthew Garrison, Earth, Wind & Fire.

[rivieramayjazzfestival.com](http://rivieramayjazzfestival.com)

## Havana International Jazz Festival

*Havana, Cuba*  
DECEMBER 19–23

Also known as Havana Jazz Plaza, this festival has become an important tradition in Cuban and Latin jazz, where top performers display their talent for locals and travelers alike. The festival features concerts by both Cuban and guest musicians, as well as jazz discussions.

**Lineup:** Last year's lineup included Arturo O'Farrill, Bobby Carcasses, Chucho Valdés.

[cubarte-english.cult.cu](http://cubarte-english.cult.cu)

**Panama Jazz Festival**  
*Panama City, Panama*  
JANUARY 13–18

For more than 10 years, the Panama Jazz Festival has been a hub for some of the best cultural and educational interchanges between Latin America and the rest of the world, thanks to jazz legends such as Herbie Hancock, Wayne Shorter and Jack DeJohnette who support the work of Artistic Director and UNESCO Artist For Peace Danilo Pérez. The festival is also an opportunity for admission and scholarships to some of the world's best music schools, as well as an educational space where music students from extreme poverty can

access jazz legends and their teachings. The festival hosts the Latin American Music Therapy Symposium and is located only steps away from the Panama Canal and a myriad of other geographic and cultural gems.

**Lineup:** TBA. Last year's lineup included Herbie Hancock, Wayne Shorter Quartet, Bill Frisell, Susana Baca.

[panamajazzfestival.com](http://panamajazzfestival.com)

## Dubai Jazz Festival

*Dubai, United Arab Emirates*  
FEBRUARY 13–21

More than 55,000 fans flocked to last year's event, held in the massive Dubai Festival City. The eight-day festival brings jazz and other genres to huge audiences but also provides a smaller, more intimate setting with its Jazz Garden performances.

**Lineup:** TBA. Last year's lineup included Gary Honor, Nicholas Cole, Guy Manoukian, Chuck Loeb, One Republic, 3 Doors Down, Sax Gordon, Brian Whitley, Toni Lynn Washington, Barrence Whitfield, Boston Blues All-Star Review, Yellowjackets, J-Lee, Deep Purple, The Script, Paul Brown, Marc Antoine, Oli Silk, Lin Rountree, Brian Simpson.

[dubaijazzfest.com](http://dubaijazzfest.com)

## Jakarta International Java Jazz Festival

*Jakarta, Indonesia*  
FEBRUARY 28–MARCH 2

Celebrating its 10th anniversary, this festival drew more than 100,000 attendees last year at the huge Jakarta International Expo. The lineups of years past have been expansive and inclusive of international and Indonesian acts, ensuring a unique experience in Indonesia's vibrant largest city.

**Lineup:** TBA. Last year's lineup included Brian Simpson, James Carter Organ Trio, Jimmy Cliff, Joss Stone, Marcus Miller, The Kenny Garrett Quintet, Chucho Valdés, Magnus Lindgren with special guest Gregory Porter.

[javajazzfestival.com](http://javajazzfestival.com)

**Cape Town International Jazz Festival**  
*Cape Town, South Africa*  
MARCH 28–29

"Africa's Grandest Gathering" includes more than 40 acts on five stages and boasts attendance numbers upwards of 30,000. This enormous festival, right in the heart of Cape Town, draws a rich mix of both new and renowned African artists, but also features world-class international acts, workshops and master classes.

**Lineup:** TBA. Last year's lineup included Jill Scott, Buena Vista Social Club, Jack DeJohnette Trio featuring Joe Lovano and Matt Garrison, Gregory Porter, Portico Quartet, Zonke, Jean-Luc Ponty, Ibrahim Khalil Shihab, Steve Turre Quintet, Robert Glasper Experiment featuring MF DOOM, Reza Khota Quartet, more.

[capetownjazzfest.com](http://capetownjazzfest.com)

## Cornell to Receive Moog Synth Archives Amid Controversy

When Michelle Moog-Koussa unlocked her father's workshop in Asheville, N.C., in 2006—a little more than a year after his death—she found boxes filled with documents and artifacts related to the infancy of electronic music. Here were engineering schematics by legendary inventor Bob Moog for some of the world's earliest synthesizers, hundreds of reel-to-reel tapes and actual prototypes for Moog's theremins, synth modules and Minimoogs.

"Every box we opened revealed new secrets and revelations," said Moog-Koussa. "Photos of Wendy Carlos and correspondence with her. Early tapes with Herb Deutsch, the musician who advised him on the first synthesizer. Notebooks from 1961 through 1982 where he jotted down notes on every phone conversation he had, including his dealings with the Beatles, Rolling Stones and Keith Emerson. Our feeling was that we were looking over his shoulder as history was unfolding, and that's the feeling we wanted to bring to the world."

Now a controversy has erupted over the fate of those archives. The inventor's widow, Ileana Grams-Moog, announced, privately in February and publicly in July, that she was donating the archives to Cornell University. This upset the Bob Moog Foundation, run by Moog-Koussa, because the group had been housing and restoring the majority of the archives for seven years and was in the final stages of negotiations with Grams-Moog to become the permanent custodians. Moog-Koussa and Bryan Bell, president of the foundation's board, both claim they had reached a verbal agreement with Grams-Moog just days before she changed her mind and announced the gift to Cornell in February. Grams-Moog scheduled an interview for this story and then cancelled it through her publicist, claiming health problems. No one else in her camp, including Mike Adams, the current owner of Moog Music, responded to interview requests.

Further complicating matters is Grams-Moog's decision to sell Bob Moog's publicity rights to Moog Music, the instrument manufacturer now run by Adams. Adams was a sitting board member of the non-profit foundation, but he convinced Grams-Moog to turn the publicity rights over to him and his company rather than her stepdaughter and the foundation, which had received a \$600,000 seed grant to build a Moogseum centered on the archives and Moog's legacy. Bell claims that Adams also advised Grams-Moog on the donation of the archives.

All this matters because Bob Moog can justifiably be regarded as the father of electronic music. In 1964 he introduced the first synthesizer widely used by professional musicians. This bulky, ungainly machine contained a series of oscillators and filters that allowed a musician to shape the timbre, pitch and envelope of each note. By trial-and-error experimentation, a musician could create sounds no one had ever created before. It was a time-consuming process, but it appealed to sonic adventurers such as Sun Ra, Joe Zawinul, Herbie Hancock, P-Funk, Stevie Wonder, Kraftwerk, Jan Hammer, Pink Floyd and classical pianist Walter Carlos (now known as Wendy Carlos).

Moog created a smaller version called the Minimoog, but his machines were overtaken in the '70s by synthesizers from ARP and Roland that were cheaper and easier to use and in the '80s by digital devices from companies like Kurzweil and Yamaha. But if the reliable predictability of these later instruments satisfied many, it left some dissatisfied, and musicians such as John Medeski sought out vintage Moog instruments so they could shape sounds themselves.

This renewed interest also led to the creation of the Bob Moog Foundation after its namesake died in 2005 at age 71. The foundation, based in Asheville, also the home of Moog Music, was in the process of cleaning, storing and exhib-



iting the materials from the inventor's workshop. Fundraising for the planned Moogseum had stalled during the recession, so the organization decided to focus on preservation in the meantime. The group had signed a lease on archival and work space at the North Carolina Department of Natural Resources and had hired a part-time archivist. Based on these investments, the foundation has filed a \$150,000 lien against the archives to be reimbursed for improving its value.

At press time, Cornell had not actually received the archives, said Katherine Reagan, the Cornell Library's curator of rare books and manuscripts, so the school wasn't sure exactly what it was getting. She further emphasized that Cornell had not been in negotiations with Grams-Moog before she approached the school with the donation. Reagan pointed out that Cornell is a leader in making college collections available to the general public through digitization, exhibits, loans to other institutions and liberal access at the library itself.

"We've been focusing increasingly on 20th century music in recent years," Reagan said. "Moog is unquestionably important to the development of music in the second half of the 20th century. It seemed a logical fit, especially given his personal connection to Cornell and the area."

Moog earned a Ph.D. in engineering physics at Cornell University in 1965, and he set up the R.A. Moog Co. (later renamed Moog Music) in nearby Trumansburg, N.Y. He spent the last 25 years of his life in Asheville, N.C., where he established a new company called Big Briar (later renamed Moog Music when the inventor reacquired the rights to the name) and became a research professor at the University of North Carolina.

"Our purpose is to illuminate the true history of electronic music," declared Moog-Koussa, "because there are misconceptions about Bob's work and his legacy. One of the important misconceptions is that Bob invented the synthesizer and lived this charmed life. The archives make clear that there were many highs and lows in his life. Another misconception is that he was solely responsible for the instruments that bore his name. He tried to dispel that while he was alive and the archives make it clear how many people contributed to the instruments and how he tried to give them credit and how much he appreciated them—especially the musicians. People try to put Bob up on a pedestal, but these materials make it clear how human he was."

—Geoffrey Himes

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## Albert “Tootie” Heath

With a long career that includes significant gigs with Sonny Rollins, the Modern Jazz Quartet, the Heath Brothers and the Bobby Timmons Trio, drummer Albert “Tootie” Heath, 78, has seen, heard and done it all. He distills these experiences on the trio date *Tootie’s Tempo* (Sunnyside)—his first leader album since 1971’s *Kawaida*—with pianist Ethan Iverson and bassist Ben Street.

### Willie Jones III Sextet

“I Get A Kick Out Of You” (*Plays The Max Roach Songbook*, WJ3, 2013) Jones, drums; Stacey Dillard, tenor saxophone; Steve Davis, trombone; Jeremy Pelt, trumpet; Eric Reed, piano; Dezron Douglas, drums.

Clifford Brown, Max Roach, George Morrow, Richie Powell, Harold Land. If it’s not, it’s imitators. Thank you—imitators. That sounds like Clifford Brown with a firecracker in his ass. It’s like cartoon music, like the record is on the wrong speed. You can’t pat your foot, can’t feel it; you’re just bombarded with notes. The piano player is trying to make a statement, and here comes the drum solo. It’s great, but what’s the point? Of course it’s a challenge to play that fast. But you’re playing for people. It’s drums. Where’s the beat? On the serious side, great musicianship, fantastic technique. The guys have mastered their instruments. [after] I’m 78 years old. I get out of the street because cars are moving too fast. You don’t see anybody 78 in the clubs, listening to that fast crazy music. It’s young people. At least we had an excuse. We were high, and we thought the audience was high. I’m sober.

### Warren Wolf

“Things Were Done Yesterday” (*Wolfgang*, Mack Avenue, 2013) Wolf, vibraphone; Lewis Nash, drums; Benny Green, piano; Christian McBride, bass.

I can feel the beat. It’s not going by so quickly that you can’t sing it. There’s the bridge. It’s a composition. It repeats, so people can follow you. I like these guys, though I have no idea who they are. The vibes player is great. It’s not Bobby Hutcherson, who would have played a thousand notes by now. You can’t bend the note on vibes, but Milt Jackson got that kind of sound. These young people don’t have identity in the solos. 5 stars. [after] Lewis Nash is unbelievable. He plays whatever you have on the paper, embellishes immediately, knows what’s connected with what, and makes it sound like something.

### Brad Mehldau Trio

“Airegin” (*Where Do You Start*, Nonesuch, 2012) Mehldau, piano; Larry Grenadier, bass; Jeff Ballard, drums.

What’s the guy’s name who used to smoke the pipe? He played the craziest shit on the piano. Paul Bley. He’d play that kind of stuff, with a typewriter in the background. Paul Motian is gone, so it can’t be him. [states theme] After they fool around, they play a song. I like this, but I like Miles Davis and Philly Joe and Paul Chambers playing it better. That’s what happens when you get old. You get stuck on something. You hear the same thing by somebody else, and it doesn’t quite do it. Great piano player. Benny Green does that two-hand thing, but Phineas Newborn did it before. I like the drums and bass. The drum solo is very musical. 5 stars.

### Branford Marsalis Quartet

“Endymion” (*Four MFs Playin’ Tunes*, Marsalis Music, 2012) Marsalis, tenor saxophone; Justin Faulkner, drums; Joey Calderazzo, piano; Eric Revis, bass.

I love that tenor sound. Now, the guys with him sound like they’re playing in another room. Where’s the song? Sing it! [sings opening] I love that part. But this is awful. The drummer should not have accepted the recording session.

### Ahmad Jamal

“Blue Moon” (*Blue Moon*, Jazz Village, 2012) Jamal, piano; Reginald Veal, bass; Herlin Riley, drums; Manolo Badrena, percussion.

I like it because it has a beat. I can handle that ... until a horn player comes in



and starts playing a million notes or a piano player plays all 10 keys at once and messes it up. It’s a nice introduction. Where’s the song? That sounds a bit like Ahmad, but Ahmad wouldn’t play that. I liked the drums in the beginning, but they did that for six months. [after] Ahmad Jamal was one of my favorite pianists when he had Vernell Fournier and Israel Crosby. After that, he left me. He’s supposed to. Artists paint different pictures. That doesn’t mean I have to love it.

### Wynton Marsalis Quintet & Richard Galliano

“What A Little Moonlight Can Do” (*From Billie Holiday To Edith Piaf: Live In Marciac*, Rampart Street, 2010) Marsalis, trumpet; Galliano, accordion; Walter Blanding, tenor saxophone; Dan Nimmer, piano; Carlos Henriquez, bass; Ali Jackson, drums.

I don’t hear the drummer. It’s so fast. ... [drum solo] Oh, tap-dancing. I like it. [trumpet solo] What the fuck is all of that? Too many choruses. He gets to the climax, and instead of quitting he goes past it. It’s not necessary. When you get a nut, it’s over. It’s not Dizzy. It’s Busy Gillespie. [after] Ali Jackson is a fabulous musician.

### Dafnis Prieto Sextet

“En Las Ruinas de su Infancia” (*Taking The Soul For A Walk*, Dafnison, 2008) Prieto, drums; Yosvany Terry, alto saxophone; Peter Apfelbaum, tenor saxophone; Avishai Cohen, trumpet; Manuel Valera, piano; Yunior Terry, bass.

A statement. I love it. Yeah! The phrase repeated several times, which allows you to anticipate it’s coming again. Now they went somewhere else. The drums and piano are paying attention to each other, laying a foundation. The solos can be as crazy as they want, because they’ve got some kind of foundation going on. There’s the theme again. You can feel something. 5 stars.

### Wayne Shorter Quartet

“Zero Gravity” (*Without A Net*, Blue Note, 2012) Shorter, tenor saxophone; Danilo Pérez, piano; John Patitucci, bass; Brian Blade, drums.

That’s somebody practicing the bass. The piano player is practicing, too. That’s not a bad thing, but when you’ve got a recording, you make music. We’ll give it three minutes, though it’s going to skin up my ears. Now the drummer came in. This is not jazz. You need to call this something else. [after] Wayne Shorter?! I love some of his compositions, but what he played there is awful. Brian Blade, it sounds like you threw the drumset down the stairs. I love you when you’re playing some music.

DB

The “Blindfold Test” is a listening test that challenges the featured artist to discuss and identify the music and musicians who performed on selected recordings. The artist is then asked to rate each tune using a 5-star system. No information is given to the artist prior to the test.

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# GREG OSBY

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Saxophonist, composer, producer and educator, Greg Osby has made an indelible mark on contemporary jazz as a leader of his own ensembles and as a guest artist with other acclaimed jazz groups for the past 20 years.

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