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JANUARY 2014

ON THE COVER



BY ED ENRIGHT

We celebrate the late tenor saxophonist's 90th birthday year with an update on his enduring legacy, two book excerpts that recount his friendship with label executive Bruce Lundvall and three historic articles from DownBeat's archives.

FEATURES

- 34 Tom Harrell 'Magic Can Happen Anytime' BY PHILLIP LUTZ
- 40 Aaron Parks' Arrival BY TED PANKEN
- 45 Best Albums of 2013 5-, 4½- and 4-star Reviews From the Past Year



Cover photo of Dexter Gordon by Francis Wolff, courtesy of Mosaic Images



67 Gillet Singleton Duo



68 Matana Roberts



70 The Thing

THE WEE TRIO

77 The Wee Trio

DEPARTMENTS

- 10 First Take
- 12 Chords & Discords
- 15 The Beat
- 22 Players
- 63 Reviews
- **114 Blindfold Test** Joe Lovano

- 87 SPECIAL SECTION | JAZZ SCHOOL
- 88 John Clayton Arranging Dave Brubeck for Big Band at Monterey
- 92 Bob Mintzer Motivic Development in Improvisation
- 96 Tónica Jazz Education Blossoms in Guadalajara
- 98 Jazz Academy An Educational Project by Jazz at Lincoln Center

- 102 Master Class BY PETE MCGUINNESS
- 104 Pro Session BY BRIAN CHARETTE
- 106 Solo Esperanza Spalding
- 108 Toolshed

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The Art of Making **Music That Lasts**

WHEN YOU THINK ABOUT THE THOUSANDS OF ARTISTS WHO HAVE graced the pages of DownBeat, the guestion comes to mind, "What makes an artist's work lasting?'

It's a fitting and fair question in the context of this January issue, which is packed with artists new and old, past and present.

Each of these artists has done their level best to make music that's in the moment, of their time, but that ultimately becomes timeless. Thousands try. Mercilessly, few succeed. Dexter Gordon is one of those select few.

Why, 90 years after his birth and 23 years after his death, are we still talking about Dexter Gordon?

It's partly his personality. Gordon was a larger-thanlife character, physically and artistically. At 6-feet, 6-inches tall, he was known as the "Sophisticated Giant," which hinted that the only thing larger than his stature was Gordon's undeniable ability to woo an audience.

"Dexter even walks bebop," is just one great quote from Dan Ouellette's new



book on legendary record executive Bruce Lundvall. Beginning on page 30, we have two excerpts from Bruce Lundvall: Playing By Ear (ArtistShare), where Ouellette chronicles the friendship between the mighty tenor man and the mighty record man.

That relationship illustrates one of the most important aspects of creating art that lasts-having others see value in that work and even carry an artist's torch long after they're gone.

As the president of CBS Records during the late 1970s, Lundvall took a big chance in signing Gordon to the Columbia label. After all, Gordon had lived and worked mainly in Europe for the previous 15 years—at a time when the world seemed much larger than it does today. Lundvall also endorsed Gordon for his Oscar-nominated starring role in the great jazz film Round Midnight.

Maxine Gordon, Dexter's widow and longtime manager, continues to champion his legacy, organizing performances, discussions and even the traveling celebration "Dex @ 90" that will hopefully come to a town near you.

Another artist who had all these attributes and more was the great Dave Brubeck, who passed away on Dec. 5, 2012. During the past year, the outpouring of support for his life's work has led to numerous festival tributes, perhaps none more important than John Clavton's "Sweet Suite Dave: The Brubeck Files." Beginning on page 88, read all about the big-band arrangements of Brubeck tunes that the Clayton-Hamilton Jazz Orchestra performed at Monterey in September.

And while we're connecting the dots, be sure to check out this month's Blindfold Test on page 114 with another great tenorist, Joe Lovano. This was a live event at Monterey and was conducted by Ouellette. Lovano's ability to listen, combined with his deep knowledge of this music's history, is priceless.

But there's another essential element to creating music that lasts. Gordon, Brubeck, Clayton and Lovano all have an openness, honesty and optimism that draws listeners in. It's a rare quality.

In an interview in the Feb. 10, 1977, issue of DownBeat, Gordon made that exact point: "I'm very optimistic. About the future, and about music. These last five years, I think, have been good. All over Europe and here there has been a renaissance in music, and jazz in particular. And that's what we're talking about-jazz. I like the word jazz. That word has been my whole life. I understand the cats when they take exception to the name, you know. But to me, that's my life." DB

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Chucho Reigns

I would like to commend DownBeat for the marvelous interview with Chucho Valdés ("Chief Messenger," November). Journalist Josef Woodard asked some terrific questions, which made for an engrossing read. I remember running

into a Haitian jazz bassist I used to work with, and when I told him how impressed I was with seeing Gonzalo



Rubalcaba's first concert in the States at Lincoln Center, he said, "Man, you've got to hear Chucho. He's from an older generation, and he's the guy the younger guys are coming from." The bassist loaned me an Irakere cassette (this was a *long* time ago), and I've been hooked ever since. Not too many pianists blow me away, but Chucho always has, especially because of the way he incorporates my former teacher Cecil Taylor's techniques, which is rare in Cuban music.

MARK N. JONES CORTLANDT MANOR, N.Y.

Tootie's Tongue

Albert "Tootie" Heath was spot on with his November Blindfold Test comments on the Wayne Shorter Quartet's "Zero Gravity" from the 2012 live album Without A Net. Tootie's comments could apply to the entire CD. At one point, someone yells out, "Oh my God!" and I remember thinking to myself, "Yes, 'Oh my God'-I paid good money for this?" How that album was voted the DownBeat critics' top jazz album of the year baffles me. I'm with you, Tootie.

TOM MORIARTY BURTONSVILLE, MD.

Grunts and Grins

Thank you for two excellent features in the September issue ("Keith Jarrett Goes Classical" and "Kermit Ruffins: Picnic State of Mind") Thanks for the (unintended?) stark contrast between Keith Jarrett-whose self-indulgent grunts and childish tantrums estrange me from his music-and Kermit Ruffins, whose infectious joy draws me in (despite the fact that I'm a bigger fan of Jarrett-type music than Ruffins' style). The music never speaks

for itself; it always reflects the personalities of diverse human beings for better or worse.

TOM BARRETT CALIFORNIA, MD.

Metheny: Reward vs. Punishment

I've been reading DownBeat since before Pat Metheny was born. My daughter (admittedly, an orchestral cello player) used to use *Song X* to threaten her twin daughters when they got too rambunctious: "One more outburst like that and it's going to be 10 minutes on the couch listening to *Song X*!"

I found Ken Micallef's interview with Metheny to be one of the best features I have ever read in the magazine ("Singular Intention," December). It was very insightful and well written. The rapport between author and subject was wonderful.

I especially liked the "Pat Metheny Through the Decades" time line on page 34. It would be good to see that approach in all of the DownBeat interviews and histories. Both the chronology and the use of periodspecific graphics made Pat's life and career easy to place in a continuing context of life, associates, music and public recognition. It would have been great to see such a time line in the same issue for the Wayne Shorter article, "The High Life" (which is another good example of DownBeat at its best).

TOMMY TAYLOR THOMASWMTAYLOR@GMAIL.COM

Corrections

- In the December issue, a review of *Rare Metal* (AACE Records) by Francisco Mora Catlett and AfroHORN incorrectly identified the musicians. Roman Díaz contributes percussion and vocals to the album, and Rashaan Carter plays acoustic and electric bass.
- In the July issue, a review of Marc Cary's 2013 release For The Love Of Abbey implied that it was the first album to pay tribute to Abbey Lincoln since her death. However, Teri Roiger's album Dear Abbey: The Music Of Abbey Lincoln (Inner Circle Music) was released on Sept. 12, 2012.

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The Moroccan Connection

Western & Middle Eastern musicians bridge cultural gap on Jajouka benefit album

The name Jajouka has become a touchstone for Western lovers of world music. A small village in the Rif Mountains of Morocco, Jajouka is home to musicians who play idiosyncratic rhythms and harmonies that create mesmerizing, trance-like instrumentals. This music has beguiled visitors such as Ornette Coleman, the Rolling Stones, Steve Lacy and William S. Burroughs.

That fame has brought much needed income to the high-desert village, but it hasn't been enough. The roads, schools, hospitals and lodging are still typical of a poor African country. Right now, for example, the leader of the Master Musicians of Jajouka, Bachir Attar, is dealing with a health emergency involving his son Salahadin, who has to travel the rutted roads to Tangier for treatment. So there was a plaintive urgency in his father's voice during a recent phone interview.

"I want to share this music with other musicians in America and Europe because if we're stuck only in Morocco, this music is going to die," Attar said. "I can save this music only if I can get involved with other musicians. We want people to come to this village so they can play this music and we can build a school. We want to build a guesthouse for visitors to stay in Jajouka. I'm building this huge bridge between cultures. This album is called *The Road To Jajouka* because when music is different, you have to travel a distance to make the connection."

The Road To Jajouka is the latest in a long string

of Western albums documenting Attar's band, the Master Musicians of Jajouka. It began with *Brian Jones Presents The Pipes Of Pan At Joujouka*, recorded by the Rolling Stones guitarist in 1968 and released in 1971; it continued via collaborations with Coleman, Bill Laswell, Randy Weston, Elliott Sharp and Talvin Singh.

This new project, overseen by producer-percussionist Billy Martin of Medeski Martin & Wood, takes a slightly different approach. Digital technology made some intriguing collaborations possible, as Martin handed previously recorded Jajouka tracks to various jazz musicians (and jazz-friendly rock musicians) and asked them to respond as the moment moved them. The results have been

Riffs



Remember That Name: Jazzmeia Horn took first place in the second annual Sarah Vaughan International Jazz Vocal Competition, held on Nov. 10 at the New Jersey Performing Arts Center in Newark, N.J. Horn won the Sassy Award, a \$5,000 prize, with her rendition of "East Of The Sun." First runner-up was Barbara Lica, second runner-up was Camille Thurman and the winner of the Rising Star Award was Kate Davis. The other finalists were Teira Church and Lydia Harrell.

Smokin' Albums: The New York venue Smoke Jazz & Supper Club-Lounge has launched a new label, Smoke Sessions Records. The first four titles are Harold Mabern's *Right On Time*, Vincent Herring's *The Uptown Shuffle*, Javon Jackson's *Expression* and David Hazeltine's *For All We Know*. The new label will document performances recorded at the club, and titles will be available on CD and as digital downloads.

Freshman Lineup Change: Vocal group The Four Freshman has a new lineup. After 13 years in the quartet, Vince Johnson has departed to pursue other musical interests. Stein Malvey has now joined the group, which also includes Brian Eichenberger, Bob Ferreira and Curtis Calderon. Details: 4freshmen.com

In Memory: Bassist Edward "Butch" Warren passed away from lung cancer on Oct. 5 in Silver Spring, Md. He was 74. Warren recorded with Dexter Gordon, Donald Byrd, Sonny Clark, Herbie Hancock, Joe Henderson, Kenny Dorham and numerous other jazz artists.

They Are the Champions: WBGO, the Newark, N.J., radio station, honored Cephas Bowles and the Thelonious Monk Institute of Jazz during its annual WBGO Champions of Jazz Gala on Nov. 6 at the New Jersey Performing Arts Center. Bowles has led WBGO for the past 20 years, first as its general manager, then as president and CEO. released as a fundraiser for the home village's Jajouka Foundation.

For example, the new album's opening track, "Hand Of Fatima," began as the five-minute introduction to the Master Musicians of Jajouka's 20-minute instrumental "Bughudia," from the 1996 album *Jajouka Between The Mountains*. Martin had secured the rights from Peter Gabriel's WOMAD organization, which had released the source album, and once he had separated the tracks into mixable form, he sat down and started playing his trap drums to what he was hearing.

He recorded a funk pattern and took the new mix to a Medeski Martin & Wood recording session in Woodstock, N.Y. Chris Wood started improvising bass parts, and John Medeski found a place where the verse changes could shift into a bridge. The Senegalese percussionist Aiyb Dieng was staying with Martin at the time, so he added some West African drumming to the mix. Martin sent those tracks to Marc Ribot, who sent back 16 takes, some with banjo and some with guitar.

"When I heard the banjo," Martin recalled, "I almost wept, it was so beautiful. I was worried

that it was too Western, but both musics had a rural quality. Morocco has gut-string hollowbody instruments, too, so it made sense that way. Bachir wasn't in New York to play with us, but we had a connection to him because he had been a guest artist at the Medeski Martin & Wood's Camp MMW in the summer of 2012. He opened for us at the Whitney Museum that week by improvising for 15 minutes. That was the initial lightning bolt of energy; it reminded

me of being a kid and shopping at Tower Records and discovering King Sunny Ade or Manu Dibango or early hip-hop."

Martin's original discussions with Attar about the album had been to do a dance remix of the Jajouka recordings. Growing up in the '80s, Martin had loved similar remixes, and Attar shared his enthusiasm. But when he sent out the tracks to potential collaborators, that's not what they sent back; they sent back improvisational conversations that may or not have had danceable grooves but were more concerned with rhythmic and harmonic variations on the original themes.

"We had an idea, but I wasn't going to force people to give me a dance beat if they heard something else," Martin explained. "I got Lee Ranaldo's track back, and while you can dance to the end of it, you couldn't to the beginning. Then I got Ornette's track and Howard Shore's track and they weren't dance mixes. But they were so beautiful you couldn't deny them."

Like many of the artists on this album, Martin first discovered the Master Musicians of Jajouka on Coleman's 1975 album *Dancing In My Head*. The saxophonist had traveled to the Rif Mountains to play with the masters when they were led by Bachir's father, Hadj Abdesalam Attar. Coleman proved himself one of the few musicians from any culture who could preserve his own personality while fitting in with another musical tradition.

"It's useful to spend time and really understand

the music on its own terms," Ribot said. "And if you don't—as I didn't in this case—it's useful to just jam to it without knowing anything. Billy and I are not wanna-be North African musicians, but we are American musicians who grew up on the JBs, American funk and all that African music that flowed through it. You could say we took a funkological approach."

"It's better to go in without preconceived ideas and just see what happens," Martin said. "When Ornette plays with the Jajouka musicians, it sounds like him."

Martin was deeply committed to involving Coleman in the project, but the saxophonist, now 83, had cancelled his 2012 tour due to a food-poisoning attack and his health was still shaky. In the end, he didn't feel strong enough to record something new, so he sent Martin a half-hour tape recorded in 2009 at Coleman's Manhattan apartment with the Master Musicians of Jajouka. The resulting track, "Jnuin," is about 7 minutes long and features Coleman on alto saxophone and Attar on ghaita.

Coleman sent DownBeat this message via Martin: "Jajouka has the healing power of love.



They have a quality that allows everyone to participate equally, improving the quality of people's lives through music. I think creativity is religion."

Gradually the album took shape. Howard Shore, who had worked with Coleman on the Naked Lunch soundtrack, not only contributed his collaboration with the London Philharmonic Orchestra and the Jajouka musicians on his soundtrack for the 2000 film *The Cell* but also released *The Road To Jajouka* on his own Howe Records label. Another section of "Bughudia" was given to turntablist DJ Logic and drummer Mickey Hart (of Grateful Dead fame), who added their contributions to create a track titled "Baraka."

Laswell, who had produced the Master Musicians of Jajouka's 1992 album *Apocalypse Across The Sky*, added bass to another excerpt from the WOMAD album. Martin had prepared another WOMAD fragment for a possible Coleman solo, but when that didn't happen he grafted on a solo that Red Hot Chili Peppers bassist Flea had originally recorded with the Jajouka musicians at London's Meltdown Festival; Martin then asked John Zorn to add a sax solo.

"Each track on this album takes me deep when I listen," Attar said. "I wasn't able to get with the artists on the album this time, but in the future I hope to play with all of them. I know we can make great things. My dream is in the sky; it's a Baraka, a blessing. We will connect." —Geoffrey Himes

European Scene / BY PETER MARGASAK

Pitches & Spaces

In an Oslo café this past September, Norwegian composer and pianist Christian Wallumrød was coming off the high of observing a riveting performance of his first orchestral work, *When Celebrities Dream Of Casual Sleep*, by the Norwegian Radio Orchestra the night before.

Part of Oslo's Ultima Festival, it was the second performance of the polymetric piece, originally commissioned by Bologna's Angelica Festival.

Asked about future symphonic work, Wallumrød, 42, sighed. "It's very hard to tell at the moment, or this close to the process," he said.

Later that night he was back in more familiar environs, serving as a guest musician with the improvisational duo Streifenjunko, whose two members—tenor saxophonist Espen Reinertsen and trumpeter Eivind Lønning—happen to belong to the pianist's primary working outfit, the Christian Wallumrød Ensemble, and appear on its most recent album, the elusive Outstairs (ECM).

It was within this group that the pianist first articu-

lated his shifting priorities from the mainstream jazz he loved when he enrolled in Norway's prestigious Trondheim Conservatory in 1990 to a more ambiguous hybrid of Scandinavian folk traditions, contemporary classical sounds and free improvisation. Wallumrød said this change began occurring in the mid-'90s, not long after the formation of his trio Close Erase with bassist Ingebrigt Håker Flaten and drummer Per Oddvar Johansen. Yet, upon reflection, he said his concerns weren't adequately addressed in this trio, which disbanded around 2006.

"I think we made a lot of nice music," he said. "Still, it's very much in the thought of this soloistic mode. Maybe that is a main point, that I really wanted to deeply escape from that idea and to shape music in a different way." Wallumrød became increasingly interested in contemporary classical music. "I found things that I was really intrigued and surprised by and attracted to," he continued. "I heard something in the music that I had started missing in jazz in a way—lots about colors or the sound part of it, but also the openness and the different solutions, a sort of total escape from anything that had to do with conventional forms. I was thinking about solo accom-



paniment and that the solo always seems to be the driving force of everything, or the expectation that you'll build up something with the solo. I just kind of lost interest."

The ensemble has made five albums for ECM since 2001, and on the surface each seems more controlled and organized than its predecessor, but close attention disabuses the listener of this notion. These days, Wallumrød barely notates his music for the group. "I prefer to keep it to the pitches and the spaces," he said. "When there's six of us, it can be hard to start rehearsing by heart or ear. Everything about how to play and the dynamics, I never write. It's all verbal."

Most of the music on *Outstairs* was originally composed for and rehearsed by a different lineup of the group. When Reinertsen and cellist Tove Törngren joined the pianist, Lønning, Johansen and violinist Gjermund Larsen as new members, the shapes of the music were totally overhauled. "We rehearse a lot to give the music and the situation time to develop, to swap voices, to see what happens if we move things around—and without that time, it wouldn't work like this at all," he said. "It probably sounds as if there is a lot of control, but for me it's just a tool to get that sound."



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Star-Studded Event Raises Funds for Coltrane Home

JAZZ MUSICIANS ROY HAYNES, JIMMY Cobb and Jimmy Heath, along with rock stars Carlos Santana and Elvis Costello, were part of a large turnout at a benefit for Friends of the John and Alice Coltrane Home on Oct. 6 at En Japanese Brasserie restaurant in New York. The aim was to raise \$85,000—and ultimately reach a goal of \$350,000 by mid-2014—to complete a decadelong endeavor to restore the ranch house in Dix Hills, Long Island, where John Coltrane composed *A Love Supreme* after moving there in the summer of 1964.

Over time, the organization's mission has expanded from simply resurrecting the house from a state of disrepair into creating a combination park-museum-educational facility.

"The more you invite the youngsters to John Coltrane and Billie Holiday, they will stop the carnage and the shooting," Santana exhorted in his opening remarks. "Let us do what we can individually and collectively to help transmit [Coltrane's] music, morning, noon and night. The more his music is presented, the faster you will see humans behave like angels instead of beasts."

Professor Cornell West delivered a sermon that illuminated Coltrane's achievements.

"I want to thank all of those who have the

vision and the courage to bring us together, to make sure that the world always understands that John Coltrane is embodied *love*, John Coltrane is courage *exemplified*, John Coltrane is genius *enacted*," West said. "He enriched my life in a way that I do not have words to describe. He set each and every one of us on a Socratic quest we take very seriously: 'The unexamined life is not worth living.' But it takes tremendous courage to try to examine yourself. Let us never forget those who deal upon the legacy of that Socratic quest of John William Coltrane, born in

Hamlet, Jim Crow, Gutbucket, North Carolina. In the face of so much terror and trauma and stigma, what did he do? He kept dishing out that love. He kept dishing out the quest for truth. And most importantly, he mastered his craft and his technique through practice, practice, practice, so that his soul could touch our soul, so that we could be here today with smiles on our faces and sparkling eyes saying, 'We want to preserve the house, because that house has something to do with the future of who we are as a people.'"

West introduced Ravi Coltrane, who was still a toddler when his mother, Alice Coltrane, left Dix



Hills for Los Angeles shortly after John Coltrane's death in July 1967. The tenor saxophonist—who would play at the Village Vanguard that night with his quartet of pianist David Virelles, bassist Dezron Douglas and drummer Johnathan Blake—launched an abstraction on the theme of "Countdown." The group went on to play Virelles' "Biankomeko," Charlie Haden's "For Turiya" and the concluding "Mr. Day," which was included on the classic 1962 LP *Coltrane Plays The Blues.* Riding Blake's huge beat, Coltrane swung in the manner of his iconic father, finding his own pathways, wringing out the possibilities. —*Ted Panken*





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Frank Wess: 1922–2013

FLUTIST AND SAXOPHONIST FRANK

Wess, whose long career included a stint in Count Basie's band in the '50s and '60s, passed away from kidney failure on Oct. 30. He was 91.

Wess was a key figure in defining the flute as a strong solo voice in modern jazz. His groundbreaking flute work won him DownBeat Critics Poll awards in the Flute category from 1959 to 1964. In 2007 he became a National Endowment for the Arts Jazz Master.

Wess' albums as a leader include Jazz Is Busting Out All Over (1957), The Frank Wess Quartet (1960), Flute Juice (1981) and Going Wess (1993), among others. He recorded Hank And Frank (2006) and Hank And Frank II (2009) as a co-leader with pianist Hank Jones. Wess was also a sideman on numerous recordings, including sessions with Zoot Sims, Houston Person and Thad Jones.

"You can play jazz on any instrument, but you've got to have the feeling and conception for it," Wess told DownBeat in the Oct. 7, 1965, issue. "Where jazz and the flute are concerned, there's a whole lot more to be done on the instrument."

Born Jan. 4, 1922, in Kansas City, Mo., Wess played tenor saxophone and clarinet in the U.S. Army band while he served in World War II. After his military service, he joined the Billy Eckstine Orchestra in 1946 and also played with the bands of Eddie Heywood, Lucky Millinder and Bull Moose Jackson. He later studied flute in Washington, D.C., with Wallace Mann, the flute soloist of the National Symphony Orchestra.

In 1953, Wess joined the Count Basie band and helped transform its sound during its "New Testament" phase, playing alto and tenor saxophone, as well as flute. He also contributed compositions and wrote arrangements for the group. Wess stayed with the band for 11 years.

Wess performed with a diverse array of acts, including the Clark Terry Big Band, Roland Hanna's New York Jazz Quartet, Dameronia, the Toshiko Akiyoshi-Lew Tabackin Big Band and the Carnegie Hall Jazz Band. Additionally, he played in Broadway pit bands for shows such as *Golden Boy* (starring Sammy Davis Jr.), *Irene* (with Debbie Reynolds) and *Sugar Babies* (with Mickey Rooney).

Wess continued performing and recording for eight decades. On June 11, the IPO label released Magic 101-an album of standards by such composers as Irving Berlin, Duke Ellington, Johnny Mercer and Harold Arlen, and Thelonious Monk, as well as the Wess original "Pretty Lady"-which Wess recorded in 2011 with pianist Kenny Barron, bassist Kenny Davis and drummer Winard Harper. In the Hot Box review of Magic 101 in the September 2013 issue of DownBeat, critic John McDonough wrote, "The mood is gentle, the sound intimate and amorous. ... Wess comes to us here in full flower, skills and sounds intact." DR

Drummer, Composer Ronald Shannon Jackson Dies at 73

DRUMMER AND COMPOSER RONALD Shannon Jackson passed away from leukemia on Oct. 19 in Fort Worth, Texas. He was 73.

Jackson recorded more than 20 albums as a leader during his career. In 1979, he founded the eclectic, hard-driving band The Decoding Society, whose members included, at various points, Billy Bang, David Fiuczynski, Robin Eubanks, Melvin Gibbs and Vernon Reid. Among the band's recordings were *Eye On You* (1980), *Decode Yourself* (1985) and *Live In Warsaw* (1999).

A frequent sideman and collaborator who was known as a unifying force among creative musicians, Jackson was equally fluent in funk, fusion, free-jazz and world beat styles.

Over the course of his career—which was temporarily sidelined by drug addiction in the late 1960s and early '70s—he performed with a diverse array of musicians, including Charles Mingus, Joe Henderson, Jackie McLean, McCoy Tyner, Stanley Turrentine, Herbie Hancock, Wayne Shorter, James "Blood" Ulmer, Wadada Leo Smith, Peter Brötzmann, Sonny Sharrock, Bill Laswell, Bill Frisell and James Carter. His work with Ornette Coleman, Albert Ayler and Cecil Taylor pushed new frontiers of avant-garde jazz.

Born Jan. 12, 1940, in Fort Worth, Jackson attended M. Terrell High School, where he was preceded by Coleman, Julius Hemphill and Dewey Redman. After starting his career in Texas, play-

ing with local musicians and working with members of Ray Charles' band, Jackson moved to New York City in 1966.

In the August 1982 issue of DownBeat, Jackson described watching blues artists like Muddy Waters, Lightnin' Hopkins and Howlin' Wolf perform in his hometown. "I went to hear them because I always liked to hear what the



drummers were doing; it didn't make no matter what kind of music it was," he said. "It wasn't a thing of the type of music or race or whatever in that period—just so long as I could hear some drums."

Jackson received numerous awards and honors worldwide, including an NEA Jazz Composer Grant and three Meet the Composer awards. **DB**

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Players >

AMIR ELSAFFAR *Exquisite Alchemist*

n Aug. 3, Iraqi-American trumpeter Amir ElSaffar received a standing ovation at the Newport Jazz Festival for "The Great Dictator," the 15-minute first movement of a suite combining Middle Eastern motifs with postbop improvisation.

ElSaffar's sextet Two Rivers started with an introduction performed on oud and buzuq lutes. It morphed into a dervish-like reel driven by bassist Carlo DeRosa and drummer Nasheet Waits, opened into a staccato solo by tenor saxophonist Ole Mathisen and concluded with the band together in an odd-metered snap. Cheers followed.

It was a gratifying Newport debut for ElSaffar, another distinctive turn in the career of the softspoken 36-year-old who has just released *Alchemy*, his fifth album, on Pi Recordings.

ElSaffar was born and raised in suburban Chicago, taken to the South Side's Checkerboard Lounge to hear the blues at an early age by his Iraqiimmigrant father and educated, at his American mother's insistence, in classical trumpet. "When I was younger I wasn't so fond of trumpet," he said during a phone interview from Manhattan. "I was into the guitar and singing. But my mom encouraged me, so I performed the Haydn trumpet concerto when I was 13."

In his early teens, ElSaffar was a Beatles maniac. He locked into jazz upon hearing Miles Davis' *Kind Of Blue.* At DePaul University he studied with the Chicago Symphony Orchestra's principal trumpeter, Adolph "Bud" Herseth (1921–2013), and performed in the CSO's training ensemble. He also immersed himself in the music of Robert Johnson, Duke Ellington, John Coltrane, Art Blakey and Keith Jarrett. He performed in as many groups as he could, playing r&b, salsa, rock and jazz at dances, weddings and bar mitzvahs. Each morning he returned to classical studies. Inevitably, he had an aesthetic crisis.

"The role of horns in blues was not well defined," he explained, "but I always thought the black American trajectory was the source of everything in American music that came after. I felt I had to be in touch with that music, and that if I became a classical player I'd be shortchanging myself. I was always more interested in being a creative musician and improviser."

In 1990, when Iraqi dictator Saddam Hussein's invasion of Kuwait led the United States and United Nations allies to start the Gulf War, ElSaffar's Middle Eastern interests were awakened. "Growing up, there were other Iraqi families living near us and I had cousins we'd visit weekly, so I'd eaten the food, heard the language—which I didn't understand a word of—and the music in the background. It didn't mean much to me. But at 13 I came out strongly against the war. I didn't support Saddam's invasion, but I didn't think war was the solution. I was in the streets protesting." Two years later ElSaffar visited Iraq for three weeks, connecting with family.

He returned to Iraq in 2002. By then he'd relocated to New York City, met jazz innovators Vijay Iyer and Rudresh Mahanthappa, worked with Cecil Taylor and won the Carmine Caruso International Jazz Trumpet Solo Competition. Inspired to study Iraqi makam—a highly structured modal tradition—he spent six months in Iraq learning Arabic and immersed in the culture. Over the next five years he traveled in Europe, seeking Iraqi émigré masters who advanced his knowledge and technique, learning the santoor hammered dulcimer and singing makams. His influences came together.

"My suite *Two Rivers*, composed in 2006, was my first music attempt at integrating both cultures and musical traditions into one cohesive statement," ElSaffar said. "That's when I began to exist as an Iraqi-American."

Rather than the mixed instrumentation of the *Two Rivers* album and group, *Alchemy* features a quintet with pianist John Escreet, bassist Francois Moutin, drummer Dan Weiss and saxophonist Mathisen. Still, the music enfolds the special tunings and decorative elements of makam into jazz forms. ElSaffar frequently talks about makam's specifics and the difficulties of bringing the two lineages together—a challenge that he's accomplished with aplomb. But he knows that people who aren't steeped in musical knowledge listen for something else.

"The emotional element, that's what I always relate to, first and foremost," he acknowledged. "I don't want to just play for musicians; that's not communicating. When people who are 'normal,' like the audience at Newport, are moved by the music to resonate with it, I'm really encouraged." He can take heart: The Newport ovation validated ElSaffar's blending of makam and jazz, his still-in-development alchemy. —*Howard Mandel*

Players >

JOHNNY RAWLS The Real Deal

ohnny Rawls spent five years serving as the bandleader to singer O.V. Wright. They grew so close that Rawls stood by his side when the Memphis soul legend passed away in 1980 at age 41.

"The day he died in the back of that ambulance, the torch had been passed to me," Rawls said. "But I didn't know it until way later."

That legacy sounds rejuvenated on Rawls' *Remembering O.V.* (Catfood). He sings nine songs from his mentor's repertoire—including "Blind, Crippled And Crazy" and "Ace Of Spades"—but with his own phrasing. While Wright usually hung back on a melodic line, Rawls charges forward. "Blaze Of Glory," which closes the disc, is a tribute that he wrote with bassist Bob Trenchard. Singer and recent Blues Hall of Fame inductee Otis Clay, who recorded on the same label as Wright, appears on three tracks as a special guest.

"No one could sing O.V. songs like O.V.," Rawls said. "But I like to bring them to the 21st century with a little funk, soul and a little Johnny Rawls in there to mix it up and still give O.V. his respect."

Rawls discussed the project on the phone from near his hometown of Hattiesburg, Miss., just before a gig at the Mobile Street Renaissance Festival. Even though he's lived in Milwaukee for more than 40 years, Mississippi still resonates throughout his music. That's where he sang in church as a child. Drawn to his grandfather's guitar playing, Rawls also picked up trumpet and saxophone in school.

Carl Gates, Rawls' high school band instructor, recruited him for his dance band when he was in ninth grade. The group regularly backed Southern artists who came through the region, including singers Z.Z. Hill, Willie Hightower and Wright. A couple years after Rawls moved to Milwaukee, Gates told him about the job opportunity as Wright's musical director.

"Sometimes life doesn't go your way no matter how hard you try—I learned that from O.V.," Rawls said. "Many things went wrong for O.V., and he had a demon on his back. He was unhappy at the end. But you got to keep on fighting to make it right." After Wright's death, Rawls started releasing his own records. He also scouted talent for the British blues label JSP, bringing such singers as Deitra Farr to the company.

While Rawls plays in blues festivals and clubs around the world, his compositions do not adhere strictly to that musical genre. Gospel heavily informs his soul-inflected songs, which, not coincidentally, was also true for singers like Wright.

Rawls does advocate for purism, though, when it comes to including a horn section on his recordings. The brass arrangements on Rawls albums like *Memphis Still Got Soul* (Catfood, 2011) are a notable contrast to contemporary soul-blues performers who rely on synthesizers.

"Everything is real on my records," Rawls said. "I don't want synthetic nothing. I want the real deal like in the '60s. Everything's going to have to come back to the real sound, anyway." —*Aaron Cohen*



ROBERT ERLANDSSON QUARTET - NEWS

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"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".

"His compositions are uptempo gunshots of sound, his lustrous guitar beefed up through unison melodies with either saxophonist."

- Jon Ross DOWNBEAT MAGAZINE * * * 1

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A salient example bridges the funky "Arrival," a soundtrack to street life in Kigali, and "River (ii) Dark Horizon," which dwells on conflict in Rwanda, Congo and Zimbabwe. The city hubbub culminates in dissonance, out of which Bradfield's soprano takes a spiraling descent picked up by Wojciechowski's tenor. The two saxes encircle each other before an urgent riff underpinned by a clustery piano figure generates further tension. For "Forsaken," Cohan creates a dark, limpid pool in which Carrillo's forlorn muted trumpet floats.

"There is a lot of trust between the musicians," insists Cohan. "I have worked with them over a long period and leave plenty of space in the music for them to take risks."

Beyond complexity and craft, Cohan doesn't neglect the groove seasoning critical to winning over unfamiliar audiences at less jazz-enlightened stops around the world.

The quartet that traveled to Africa deepened their emotional investment after visiting an installation commemorating the Rwandan genocide. "We stood over a mass grave that was also like a tomb of the unknown soldier," Cohan said. "It left us speechless. As we exited, a local woman thanked us for listening to the stories and attending; we

hicago pianist-composer Ryan Cohan is unfailingly polite and courteous, traits belying the grit and determination behind his music. *The River* (Motéma), his fifth album as a leader, is his best yet. The album teems with vibrant, intelligent writing and feisty playing from a crack septet: drummer Kobie Watkins, percussionist Samuel Torres, bassist Lorin Cohen, trumpeter Tito Carrillo, reedist Geof Bradfield and saxophonist-flutist John Wojciechowski.

Superbly recorded at Chicago's Hinge studio by Rich Breen and co-produced by Cohan and perfectionist Steve Rodby, this program of original material was inspired by the pianist's 2008 tour of East and Southern Africa sponsored by U.S. State Department and Jazz at Lincoln Center.

Cohan and Bradfield, his DePaul University classmate and longtime compadre, applied for Doris Duke Chamber Music grants before the trip. They both pitched the idea to compose works tied to the African voyage, following the ambassadorial footsteps of Dizzy Gillespie, Duke Ellington and Louis Armstrong. The experience proved to be life-changing.

Cohan's music already reflected a humanitarian bent. His 2007 album *One Sky* (Motéma) included an eponymous suite subtitled "Tone Poems For Humanity," and his interest in longer-form composition was expanding. He began yoking motivic elements with a prelude to his piece "Looking Glass" from Here And Now (2001), and his sponge-like intellect was absorbing many styles of music. Ramsey Lewis, impressed by his debut CD, Real World (1997), commissioned Cohan to write a solo feature for him fusing classical, Spanish tinges and tango. A six-year association resulted, with Cohan making contributions to Lewis' albums Dance Of The Soul, Appassionata and Meant To Be and composing the theme to Lewis' TV series "Legends of Jazz." Others who have sought Cohan's broad skill set include trumpeter-orchestrator Orbert Davis and his Chicago Jazz Philharmonic (Cohan himself deployed both jazz and symphonic musicians on Real World) and vibraphonist Joe Locke, who solicited orchestral arrangements for Wish Upon A Star (2013).

Despite his erudition and early enthusiasm for Bach, Chopin and Liszt, Cohan's travels in Africa as an envoy for jazz and America as a nation caused him to emphasize the importance of basic communication within his music. Such intent lies behind the symbolism of *The River*. Representing no specific channel of water per se, the theme concerns cultural as much as physical confluence. "It's a timeless analogy, I suppose," says Cohan. "The river as connecting body, always changing, always in motion. I tried to connect the pieces in the suite in a similar way."

all walked off in different directions and had to collect ourselves."

"Storm Rising" and "River (iii) Aftermath" reflect diverse tribal and political turbulence in Africa. "The Rwandan situation, in particular, solidified that our mission was to share cultures and forge positive relationships, that the world could not turn its back, that we are all accountable to stand up and speak out before such atrocities are permitted to play out," he said.

The River also illustrates positive, encouraging aspects of Africa: "Domboshava" (a gorgeously mellow homage to a national park in Harare featuring Wojciechowski's flute), "Last Night At The Mannenberg" (inspired by a mbira choir and local dance) and the meditative soprano sax feature "Kampala Moon" celebrate the natural beauties of the region and the uplifting melodies and rhythms of Shona tradition.

Cohan offers props to collaborator Rodby for his big-picture vision of *The River*. "I had wanted to work with Steve ever since I heard his work on Michael Brecker's last album, *Pilgrimage*. He instinctively understood how to get the best out of the music, masterfully balancing what needed to be left as raw and what could be tweaked in post-production."

Take note, Grammy judges: *The River* is a strong candidate. —*Michael Jackson*

Players >

GABRIELE MIRABASSI Dancing Clarinetist

ast the gray-green leaves of the olive trees behind his home on the rural outskirts of Perugia, Italy, clarinetist Gabriele Mirabassi has an unobstructed view of the old walled city on the hill settled by Etruscans a few millennia ago.

"My family is from Perugia forever," said Mirabassi, 47. He noted that he is "maybe the only professional

national Italian jazz musician" who hails from the seat of the Umbria Summer Jazz Festival. Under those auspices, at the Morlacchi Theater two days later, he would perform in duo with Colombian harp virtuoso Edmar Castañeda, his partner in several 2013 encounters at harp festivals in France and a *choro* event in Brazil.

Two highlights of their Pan-Americanoriented recital were Mirabassi's interpretation of the bolero "Alfonsina Y El Mar" and a reading of the brisk "Luarto" on which he mirrored Casteñeda's undulating harp lines, offered some Jimmy Hamilton-isms and uncorked a declamation that he accompanied with a graceful dance—balancing on one foot, bobbing and weaving, planting his feet and leaning forward, like a satyr figure by Matisse.

"I can't stop it," Mirabassi said of his inability to stand still when playing. "I do the same thing when I play classical music. If I start thinking about it, I cannot play anymore. My teachers didn't like it at all. But now they don't have power over me."

Mirabassi explained that while he was attending Perugia's Morlacchi Conservatory, he was trained "in the very old Italian school suitable for becoming a player in an opera orchestra—a small sound, precise, with very little dynamic range." His teacher proscribed him from playing jazz on grounds that "it would completely destroy my embouchure, sound and tuning." At home on piano, "with no academic responsibility," he taught himself the codes, playing along with his father's jazz LPs, which included Johnny Dodds, Louis Armstrong's All-Stars with Barney Bigard, Duke Ellington and Charlie Parker. "I went completely mad for those records," he said, pointing to the shelves of LPs in his music room. By his teens, Mirabassi was gigging on piano with local bands.

While in school, Mirabassi evolved into "a modern music specialist"—he still performs repertoire by Olivier Messiaen and Giacinto Scelsi, and commissioned works that utilize classical forms.

IORGIO RICC

After graduating, he began to reinvent his sound so that it would be "efficient with the drums while not losing the timbre." He documented this approach on the acclaimed 1990 post-bop date *Electroacoustic Quartetto* (Quadrivium). Soon thereafter, he met accordionist Richard Galliano, who told Mirabassi that his dream was "to do a record with a clarinet like Buddy DeFranco," an ambition realized in 1992 on *Coloriage* (EGEA), which incorporates tangos, chansons and Thelonious Monk tunes.

Over the next decade, Mirabassi issued a series of duos and trios on EGEA—with pianist Stefano Battaglia; with pianist Enrico Pieranunzi and bassist Marc Johnson; and with pianist John Taylor and bassist Steve Swallow. "My landmark is to keep this chamber music approach," said Mirabassi, who cites Tony Scott and Jimmy Giuffre as deep influences. "Clarinet works amazingly well in a context where you have space and communication, where you can have groovy elements but also play with the breath of chamber music."

The presence of these qualities in *choro* is one reason why Mirabassi describes his involvement in the Brazilian idiom over the past decade—documented on the EGEA releases *Graffiando Vento* (2004), *Canto di Ebano* (2008) and this year's *La Testa In Giù* (*De Cabeça Para Baixo*)—as "life-changing."

"I consider myself an interpreter, and I was interested in expanding repertory," Mirabassi said. "I didn't want to forget classical music in order to play jazz, and I have this love for swing, for improvisation. Finally, in Brazil, I found the key to enter a space that allows me to do all these different things I am able to do—a music that is erudite and popular, with the degree of formal complexity and rigor typical of classical music, but where the most important thing is the rhythm, to move the body." —Ted Panken



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A confluence of activity surrounding Dexter Gordon's 90th birthday shows no signs of letting up. In the following pages, we bring you up to date on the long-departed tenor saxophone hero's enduring legacy. Veteran music label executive Bruce Lundvall recounts his personal relationship with Gordon in excerpts from a new Lundvall biography. And we close out with some of Gordon's more memorable appearances in the pages of DownBeat.



EVERYBODY LOVES 'DEX'

BY ED ENRIGHT

hen people talk about Dexter Gordon, one of the greatest jazz saxophonists who ever lived, they seldom speak in the past tense. Even though he passed away at age 67 in 1990, Gordon and his music continue to exist in the collective consciousness of jazz fans worldwide who still listen to his recordings, talk about his legacy and watch him on video. Everybody loves "Dex"—and recent events honoring the long, tall tenor man indicate that folks simply can't get enough of him.

Gordon would have turned 90 last Feb. 27. To honor his birthday, his widow and longtime manager, Maxine Gordon, has spent much of the past year taking his legacy on the road for a series of presentations, listening sessions, discussions, performances and screenings of the 1986 feature film *Round Midnight*, in which Gordon played the starring role. Dubbed "Dex @ 90," the traveling celebration of his life and music has gained so much momentum that it will continue into 2014, well past his 91st birthday.

"Dex @ 90" began with two nights at Dizzy's Club Coca-Cola in New York on Feb. 26-27, 2013. The festivities included a listening session with Michael Cuscuna, who produced several Gordon recordings on the Columbia label. Attendees were treated to a performance by a Gordon tribute band led by pianist George Cables and featuring drummer Victor Lewis, bassist Dezron Douglas, vibraphonist Joe Locke, trumpeter Brandon Lee, and tenor saxophonists Jerry Weldon and Walter Blanding Jr. In 2014, the event at Dizzy's will be expanded to four nights, Feb. 27-March 2.

Since that initial celebration, Maxine has hosted events in Copenhagen, Paris, Istanbul and across the United States, visiting jazz festivals and universities in such locales as Hartford,



Conn.; Lawrence, Kan.; Monterey, Calif.; Madison, Wis.; Philadelphia; Chicago; Cleveland; and the Independent Film Center in New York.

"Dex @ 90" has also helped to fuel the rapid growth of the Dexter Gordon Society, a New York State non-profit organization that will achieve federal tax-exempt status in 2014. Its purpose is to increase public appreciation for the cultural and artistic contributions of Gordon (and his musical contemporaries) through historical research, educational workshops, musical performance, panels and archival work. The society also offers three educational scholarships.

Gordon's official Facebook page (facebook.com/dextergordon.official), which is overseen by Woody Shaw III (son of Maxine and her previous husband, jazz trumpeter Woody Shaw), has also played a major part in the recent resurgence of all things Dex. "Only two years ago, we had somewhere between 5,000 and 10,000 fans," said Shaw, who was the curator and project director for the seven-CD box set *Dexter Gordon: The Complete Columbia Albums Collection*, released in 2011. "We're reaching 60,000 likes. It may seem like there should be 600,000, but the fact that it has grown so quickly is huge to us."

Meanwhile, Maxine has been writing a book about Gordon for University of California Press that's due out in the second half of 2014. Titled Dexter Calling, it will be more than just a Gordon biography; the book will serve as a cultural history of bebop and the musicians who created and perpetuated it. "I've tried to look at the bigger picture around Dexter, around the scene at the time, the other people and the environment he came from," said Maxine, whose continuing education has made her an expert in African American and diaspora history. "He left Los Angeles at 17 to

go with Lionel Hampton. We forget how young these people were. Illinois Jacquet was only 18. He met Melba Liston when she was 11 and he was 14. So, these relationships and how they lived and his family background are very important to who he became and also what is happening in bebop, what is happening in the Billy Eckstine band, how these young people who didn't fight in World War II created this music and developed this style.

"My goal is to complete what Dexter began," she continued. "He started an autobiography, almost fictionalized, writing in the third person. He called himself 'Society Red,' which was one of his nicknames early on, and he was writing about this person. Then he said, 'If I don't finish it, will you finish the book?' I had to go back to college and then graduate school before I could really know what I was talking about."

Gordon's extensive archives reside at the Library of Congress, where a large collection of recordings, many of them unreleased, are in the process of being digitized. The music will be made available for streaming, according to Maxine, who stressed that she's "not afraid of bootlegging." In 2014, a substantial number of unreleased Gordon recordings from the collection are going to be made available through the Dexter Gordon Society.

Come February, Gordon's Selmer Mark VI tenor saxophone the one he played in his late period—will be featured in an exhibit at the Musical Instrument Museum in Brussels, Belgium, marking the bicentennial of saxophone inventor Adolphe Sax. It will be the only instrument on display that was actually owned and played by a professional musician. "They chose Dexter because he had lived in Europe," Maxine said. "They identified with that connection."

Nothing identifies more powerfully with Gordon's lengthy European sojourn (1962–1976) than the landmark 1963 Blue Note album *Our Man In Paris*. Recorded with French bassist Pierre Michelot and expatriates Bud Powell and Kenny Clarke, it features some of Gordon's best playing and remains one of his most popular albums. Blue Note recently released digitally remastered versions of *Our Man In Paris* and Gordon's acclaimed 1962 album *Go* as part of the label's push to reissue 75 titles in high definition for its 75th anniversary (available on HDTracks and on iTunes).

Over the long and convoluted arc of his career, Gordon stirred a certain passion in jazz aficionados and critics alike. After his initial stints with the Lionel Hampton band and Louis Armstrong's orchestra, Gordon gained his first real recognition in Eckstine's big band starting in 1944, where he played with Dizzy Gillespie, Charlie Parker and Gene Ammons. "Dexter said one of the reasons he was able to develop a sound that carried and was so big was from being in the band with Gene, because he said Gene didn't need a mic," Maxine said. "He said, 'If I was gonna play next to Jug, I'd have to learn how to project."

By late 1945, Gordon was leading his own groups. He had established himself as a fixture on New York's 52nd Street, and he returned to the West Coast frequently to play gigs on the Central Avenue scene in Los Angeles. A quintessential bebopper who was incessantly inventive with his melodic lines, Gordon played with authority at all tempos and maintained a commanding presence on the bandstand. His enormous sound, swaggering approach and innate sensitivity would profoundly influence generations of bebop, hard-bop and post-bop saxophonists—Sonny Rollins and John Coltrane among them.

Gordon went through dark times during the 1950s, when he fell out of public view because of drug problems and incarceration. His career was rejuvenated in the early 1960s with a series of recordings on the Blue Note label, and he relocated to Europe starting in 1962, eventually settling in Copenhagen. Gordon continued to record and perform, occasionally coming home to visit friends or make a session, but over time he lost the connection he'd once shared with American musicians and listeners. Happy with his life in Denmark, he stayed abroad for nearly 15 years and finally returned to the States with much fanfare in 1976. Listeners rejoiced upon Gordon's homecoming, and he topped the Tenor Saxophone category of DownBeat's Readers Poll from 1977-'81 (he won the same category in DownBeat's Critics Poll in '77-'79) and was named Jazz Musician of the Year in 1978. In 1980, DownBeat readers elected him into the Hall of Fame and again voted him Jazz Musician of the Year.

Gordon experienced yet another career revival in 1986 when he was cast in *Round Midnight*, received an Oscar nomination and went on a 10-concert tour with the band from the film. That year he was honored as a member and officer of the French Order of Arts and Letters, and he was named a 1986 NEA Jazz Master.

In the years that followed, Gordon decided to lay low, and eventually it was discovered he had cancer of the larynx. He received treatment, and even took on a role as a mute character in another film, *Awakenings*, starring Robert De Niro and Robin Williams. In the end, Gordon went back to his doctors for an aggressive treatment in hopes of being able to play his horn again. He passed away on April 25, 1990, at Thomas Jefferson University Hospital in Philadelphia. The official cause of death was kidney failure.

"He died too young, but it had a happy ending," Maxine said. "He said, 'Anyone who really knows me, they won't cry.' At his 65th birthday, we had a big party. During the toast, he said, 'If you would have told me that I would be at my own 65th birthday party, I would have called you a liar.'"

Gordon's last performance was in fall 1988, while he and Maxine were relaxing on a jazz cruise and he was invited to sit in with the band. Captured on video, his performance with Clark Terry and others is part of a 12-minute film by Arthur Elgort called *Dexter on Vacation*, currently at the Library of Congress and not commercially available.

Ever the phoenix rising, Gordon lives on in all the current activity surrounding his legacy. And with "Dex @ 91" just around the corner, the renewed enthusiasm for his music shows no signs of letting up. One of Gordon's biggest fans of all is Bruce Lundvall, the music industry veteran who signed the saxophonist to the Columbia label and became one of his closest friends.

"He told beautiful stories with every solo," Lundvall wrote in the liner notes to the 1996 six-CD box set *Dexter Gordon: The Complete Blue Note Sixties Sessions.* "His sound was larger than life. The very essence of modern jazz, the very definition of hipness. And my favorite tenor saxophonist of them all."

Gordon was, and forever remains, "the very definition of hipness," indeed—one of the finest and most stimulating horn men in jazz.





Recording industry veteran Bruce Lundvall is the subject of a new book by DownBeat contributor Dan Ouellette titled Bruce Lundvall: Playing By Ear (ArtistShare)—excerpted here and on the following page. Lundvall is a lifelong fan of Dexter Gordon who enjoyed a close friendship with the iconic saxophonist. When Gordon returned to the United States from Europe in 1976 with help from his road manager Maxine Gregg (who at the time was Woody Shaw's wife, and would later marry Gordon), Lundvall signed him to Columbia Records. The deal—a brave move considering that Gordon had been living out of the country and was largely forgotten by the American listening public-was inked the day of Gordon's comeback appearance at New York's Village Vanguard. Inspired by his long-held passion for Gordon's music, Lundvall decided to sign the saxophonist after catching his showcase performance at George Wein's East Side club Storyville, which Gregg set up to generate a buzz prior to the Vanguard gigs. It was Lundvall's first time seeing his hero perform, the eve of what would be Gordon's historic homecoming.

t was a late fall day in 1976, and it was snowing. There was a line around the corner waiting to get into Storyville. "Dexter was so great," Bruce says enthusiastically. "I had listened to his records for so many years, and seeing him live was great. He was so charismatic on stage. I went backstage and said, 'You don't know me, but I'm from Columbia Records, and I want to sign you.' Dexter's response? Slowly he said, 'CBS.' The next day I signed him."

The next day, Maxine Gregg and producer Michael Cuscuna went to Bruce's office to make the deal. "Things happened very quickly," says Cuscuna, who previously had only known Bruce in passing. "To put it in context, Bruce had been elevated to president of Columbia Records, which was an all-powerful position. So, everything aligned itself perfectly. There's Dexter right in front of him, and Bruce now has the power to sign him and finally record jazz. He had always vicariously done that through Teo Macero and John Hammond, who were the A&R guys. But to actually sign an important artist like Dexter was what Bruce always wanted to do. And it changed Dexter's life."

Gordon's successful performances at Storyville set the stage for his dramatic shows at the Village Vanguard. Bruce decided that since Dexter was so powerful and graceful on stage that he wanted to do a live album, which Maxine executive produced and Cuscuna produced-starting the long string of albums he worked with Dexter on. But an important hurdle needed to be jumped before any tapes would roll. Dexter was still under contract with the Copenhagen label SteepleChase, founded in 1972 by Nils Winther, a student at the time at the Copenhagen University.

Dexter had signed a one-page contract with Winther in the bar of the Copenhagen club Jazzhus Montmartre. "It was in the dark, the handwriting wasn't good and Dexter didn't even remember signing it," says Maxine. "When I first came to Bruce, I asked Dexter about the SteepleChase contract, and he said, 'Oh, it's nothing. He's just a young guy and I'll just call him. He'll be happy for me.' Well, he wasn't happy and even made a statement where he said that Dexter was nothing until he signed him to his label."

So, the dream story quickly became a legal nightmare of lawyers battling lawyers.

It was a Friday night. Dexter's band with Woody Shaw, Ronnie Matthews, Louis Hayes and Stafford James was at the Vanguard, and engineer Malcolm Addey was ready to start taping. But Dexter, Cuscuna and Marvin Cohen, Columbia's head of business affairs, were still at the Columbia offices waiting for the telex to come in from Copenhagen that officially released Dexter from his contract there. Cuscuna watched the clock and was convinced the taping wasn't going to happen. It was 7 p.m., then 7:15 and still nothing. The set was scheduled to start at 9:30.

Where was Bruce at the time? "Bruce was at the Vanguard," Maxine says. "And he kept saying not to worry. They'll fix it."

Finally, at 7:30 permission for the buyout was granted. Dexter and Cuscuna rushed down to the Vanguard in a cab. "We were the last two people into the club, and that includes customers," Cuscuna says. "Finally Dexter got on stage, we rolled tape and it was great."

Two nights were recorded, Dec. 11 and 12, 1976, and much to Vanguard owner Max Gordon's surprise, there were lines around the block trying to get in the club. The performances captured on tape were so wonderful that Bruce decided to release *Homecoming: Live At The Village Vanguard* early the next year as a double-LP. "It was not cheaply priced," says Cuscuna, who produced the recording, along with Dexter's five subsequent Columbia studio LPs. "But it sold 40,000 copies within the first two months, which was 10 times more than any other jazz album at the time. Eventually it sold 100,000 copies worldwide."

Meanwhile, Bruce continued to encourage Dexter to reach for the sky. Maxine remembers seeing Bruce come to Dexter's show at clubs where musicians wanting to have Bruce "discover" them would crowd around him with cassettes. "You'd see Bruce with pockets full of cassettes," Maxine says. "Dexter would see that and wanted to protect him. He'd tell people, 'Leave him alone. He just wants to hear the music. This is not his office. Let him relax."

As for Bruce's friendship with Dexter, Cuscuna says, "I'd say it was love at first sight. They had a relationship with a common understanding of music. Bruce could talk to Dexter about those Savoy recordings that Dexter had forgotten. Bruce knew so much about music that they could communicate."

Another characteristic that both Maxine and Michael noticed was how Dexter and Bruce always talked about things together in a whisper so no one else could hear them. Maxine says, "That's the way it was with Miles and Gil Evans. They'd whisper to each other."

Cuscuna adds, "Like schoolboys." Gordon had Lundvall to thank for his starring role as jazz musician Dale Turner in the 1986 film *Round Midnight*, which jumpstarted the saxophonist's career yet again and earned him an Oscar nomination for Best Actor (Paul Newman won the award for his lead in *The Color of Money*). By that time Lundvall had left Columbia, moved to Elektra in 1982 and was hired by EMI in 1985 to revive the long-dormant Blue Note label, where he would remain as president until 2010.

hile Bruce was at Blue Note in 1985, he received a call from French pianist Henri Renaud, who had been in Columbia's Special Marketing Division. He said that film director Bertrand Tavernier wanted to make a film about a jazz man loosely based on the biography *Dance of the Infidels* by Francis Paudras, who wrote his story about befriending expatriate Bud Powell in the late '50s and early '60s. Renaud also noted that Tavernier, who loved jazz, wanted to use musicians in central roles. Bruce's immediate response was that Dexter would be perfect. Renaud agreed.

When contacted by Bruce, Dexter reluctantly agreed to see what the project was about. Tavernier, Bruce, Dexter and Maxine met in New York at the apartment of the producer of the film, Irwin Winkler. Maxine says Winkler's Pierre Hotel apartment was an upscale home, adorned with original artwork by Picasso, Matisse and Degas.

"Dexter showed up an hour late, as usual," says Bruce. "One of the first things Winkler asked Dexter was: 'Why doesn't jazz sell?' There was a long pause and Dexter said, 'Art form.""

Maxine adds, "Bruce and Dexter behaved badly at first. It was like they had a bad attitude this attitude when people see how rich someone is and they do this reverse snobbism thing. But we soon found out that the guy had taste. They asked for wine, and we had a few drinks."

When Tavernier and Winkler met Dexter, they thought he personified the role they had in mind. Bruce says, "They were blown away. Bertrand said, 'Dexter even walks bebop.'" Bruce told Dexter that he was going to be a star. His response? First it was simply, "Hollywood." Then it was, "I'll believe it when it happens."

Dexter passed the screen test and asked to see the script for *Round Midnight*. What he found in the lines he quickly recognized as insensitive, inaccurate and stereotypical of what the artistic sensibility and '50s jazz life encompassed. "Dexter started rewriting the script on the set, almost every day before they shot," says Bruce. Cuscuna and drummer Billy Higgins also helped. Maxine adds, "Bertrand would ask what Dexter's opinion was, and we'd rewrite everything." Tavernier, an artist's director, approved and let Dexter have his way in truly portraying the life of a jazz musician in the film.

When Bruce and Dexter first saw the uncut version of *Round Midnight*, everyone was crying at the end. Bruce recalls a similar occurrence at the film's premiere at the New York Film Festival. "There was applause for a half hour," Bruce says. "And then we had a great party with the cast at The Plaza Hotel after."

Overnight, Dexter became a sensation.



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OUR MAN IN DOWNBEAT: DEXTER THROUGH THE YEARS

The Time for Recognition

t was the second Monday in May when the phone rang and a voice said, "Guess who I heard at the Jazz Gallery Saturday night-Dexter Gordon! He sat in with Kenny Dorham and sounded like a lion. I tried to call you ...

The exuberant caller was a young woman who occasionally serves as field reporter without portfolio. When she calmed down, she added the information that Gordon was in New York City for a week's time to record for Blue Note. I began to get excited. After all, he hadn't been in New York since 1948 and the album he had done for Jazzland in October 1960 was his first time on record since the end of 1955.

NOV. 9, 1961

In the mid-1940s, immediately after he left Billy Eckstine's band, Gordon appeared many times on 52nd Street and at the Sunday afternoon sessions held in such places as the Fraternal Clubhouse on West 48th Street or the Lincoln Square Center, near St. Nicholas Arena.

He was an exciting player, and he had a sense of the dramatic that commanded an audience's attention even before he began to play. He was handsome, of imposing height, and of "cool" manner. Often he would make a belated entrance and upset everything merely by putting his tenor saxophone together in view of the crowd.

His work with Eckstine ("Blowing The Blues Away" and "Lonesome Lover Blues," for instance) and his solo on "Groovin' High" with Dizzy Gillespie indicated to interested listeners that Gordon was a man of emotional power and harmonic awareness. He became the first to translate successfully to tenor saxophone the new ideas happening in jazz. His influence on other tenor men was readily apparent.

The most important aspect of his influence, however, came to flower in the '50s, in John Coltrane and Sonny Rollins. (Players such as Jackie McLean, Clifford Jordan, Jimmy Heath and Bill Barron also show the Gordon stripe.) Coltrane and Rollins, of course, became strongly individual musicians, but the presence of Gordon in their backgrounds reflects Dexter's stature. DB



hen Dexter Gordon won the 1971 DownBeat Critics Poll, the honor could hardly be considered premature. He is one of the great seminal voices in modern jazz.

For nearly a decade, the tall, debonair tenorman has made his home in Copenhagen, Denmark, where this interview took place.

JA: Why do you think you won the poll? DG: Because I'm the world's greatest tenor saxophonist, ha, ha, ha! No, I really don't know.

JA: In what way can it be of importance to you?

DG: Well, first of all, recognition-to have a little recognition, that is very nice, you dig it. It is good for the ego, and for the psyche. A recognition of what I've been trying to do for years—it's certainly not just a spot opinion; I mean, it's something that obviously has been building up for years. Of course, it is also very good for publicity, and it is the kind of recognition that maybe will help financially, also.

JA: If you had lived in the States, would winning the poll have meant more when it comes to jobs and money? DG: Hmm-ves. I think so. But since this has happened, I've had all kinds of interviews for radio and the papers and all of this is very good.

JA: Why do you live in Copenhagen? DG: Because I looove Copenhagen!

JA: Why?

DG: Because of the weather. Ha! Ha! No, I

find-other than the fact that I like the Danes; they seem to be kind of neutral-that it is very conducive to my well-being, peace of mind. I feel relaxed and comfortable.

JUNE 22, 1972

JA: And that is important to make good music?

DG: I think so. Of course, they always say that jazz musicians lead a hard life. But I've done that already. The presence of the Club Montmartre, a jazz club where I have worked on and off and which I like very much—I dig the atmosphere—has of course been a big factor in choosing Copenhagen before other cities in Europe. Then also that I've always been very well accepted and popular here.

JA: What has it meant musically to live in Europe?

DG: Well, for me, it has been very good because my whole lifestyle is much calmer, much more relaxed. I can devote more time to music, and I think it's beginning to show. It's not that everyday scuffle, and I'm able to concentrate more on studying. Of course, the music scene is more competitive in the States. I think it would be very easy for an American jazz musician to come over here and just relax and play by rote, so to speak, but I think that's very rare.

JA: What do you prefer to call your music-iazz or black music? DG: What I'm doing—I prefer to call that jazz, because to me it's not a dirty word; it is a beautiful word—I love it DB

Dexter Drops In

in sure that very few people in the Rainbow Grill audience knew who Dexter Gordon is, but when he rose, clad in a handsome dark suit, to his full imposing height, responding to an elegant introduction from his former boss, Billy Eckstine, the audience gave him a welcome that went beyond such knowledge. Gordon has the personal magnetism that evokes Gordon has the personal magnetism that evokes divided

responses of this kind, even when he is not playing. But he thought that Eckstine's remark that he'd been living and playing in Europe might have influence the reaction.

"The European thing got them," said Dex. "It always impresses people. Being there so long, I had forgotten how it affects people over here."

Gordon is visiting the U.S. for the first time since 1965. "Last time I was very excited about coming, but this time not as much," he said. "Personally, I'm more relaxed. I was wondering if I'd been forgotten, but I have been really impressed with all the love and concern I've received—very warm."

His reason for the trip was two record dates for Prestige. But he decided to stay on a bit longer, and opened April 22 at the Village Vanguard with his own quartet. In the offing, too, was an engagement at the Blue Coronet in Brooklyn.

Then it's back to Copenhagen to renew his Danish residence and work permits. Last year, there had been a rumor that Gordon was applying for Danish citizenship. He admits the thought crossed his mind, but his present plans don't include such a move. In fact, he says he intends to "commute a little more."

From 1965 to the beginning of 1968, Gordon divided his time between Paris and Copenhagen. Since then, he has made the Danish metropolis his home base. He no longer plays the Club Montmartre, where he once reigned supreme.

"I became 'local' in Copenhagen," he explains. But Dexter did a recent taping for a Danish TV with Teddy Wilson and singer Inez Cavanaugh. "It hasn't been shown yet," he says, "but it will be shown all over Scandinavia. Jazz gets much more exposure on radio and TV in Europe. It's very common to do a show with your group. Jazz is appreciated as an art."

If he doesn't play often at the Montmartre, Dexter does play in other parts of Scandinavia. He has become a regular at the annual Molde Jazz Festival in Norway and has played concerts in Stockholm, Gothenburg, and some in the smaller Swedish towns. Certain of these concerts are subsidized by the government, as is a school in Malmo where Gordon taught for three months at the end of last year.

He was also guest instructor for one week at a summer jazz school run by the Jazz and Youth society in 1968 at Vallekilde, a Danish prep school. "It was beautiful," he says. "Expansive lawns and five minutes to the beach. There were six instructors, 50 students and 10 auditors. The 50 were broken up into different groups representing all styles of jazz. I went from group to group, playing and offering instruction."

In New York, Gordon took in some of the boxing matches at the Felt Forum. This is a pastime he pursues in Europe, too. There, he also has his weekly sauna bath—"sometimes two" and does a lot of walking in the summer months.

For at least two hours a day he practices saxophone and is thinking about adding alto flute to his instrument bag. He also works out on the piano, exploring harmonies and arranging in general. "Once in a while, a tune comes up," he says smilingly. **DB**





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By Phillip Lutz Photo by Jack Vartoogian

TOM HARRELL IS STILL. Head deeply bowed, a shock of gray hair falling casually over his eyes, the trumpeter silently sits, betraying nothing to a nearby questioner. Is he contemplating the questioner's inquiry? Dismissing it out of hand? The seconds tick off. The tension rises.

Tom Harrell **=**

Ha

Then comes an answer. Uttered in Harrell's low-pitched drawl, it is an insightful gem, exquisitely shaped and defiantly idiosyncratic. The tension breaks. And the process begins again.

The setting is a music room tucked away in Harrell's upper Manhattan apartment. The room, a small space packed with the paraphernalia of a musical life, is where Harrell spends his days. The fruitful pattern of tension and release he establishes is not confined to the room. It is evident on the bandstand, where Harrell spends his nightsan edgy, enigmatic presence who lets loose musical declamations both soaring and powerfully restrained.



"I try to avoid anything that is ordinary," he said. Harrell, born in Illinois and raised in California amid a jazz scene he says has been broadly misconstrued (more on that later), has been dodging the ordinary for most of his 67 years—perhaps at no time more than now. While he has been operating at enviable heights since landing a spot in Stan Kenton's band straight out of Stanford University in 1969, he has never been more in-demand as a player, more prolific as a composer, or more inventive as an artist.

In mid-October, Harrell booked two largely distinct ensembles for a two-week stretch at the Village Vanguard. The first, his longtime quintet, features Wayne Escoffery on saxophone, Danny Grissett on piano, Ugonna Okegwo on bass and Johnathan Blake on drums. The second is a piano-less quartet featuring Mark Turner on saxophone, Adam Cruz on drums and Okegwo on bass. Each group played to packed houses for six nights. Harrell also counts a nine-piece chamber ensemble as a working project. And he is writing material for all of them.

For Harrell—whose compositions have been performed by Joe Lovano, Kenny Barron, Ron Carter and Hank Jones—writing is first a discipline. He explained that he composes every day, to build writing chops "the same way you build chops as a player."

But Harrell, an avowed believer in a higher power, also sees writing as a matter of inspiration: Stacked atop the piano in the music room is a pile of manuscript books, pocket-sized for portability and filled with meticulous sketches, fragmentary scores and the like. Amid the musical notations, the name of the spiritual teacher Baba Ram Dass also appears.

The name, inscribed in capital letters, conjures up the detachment of the yogi and may, in some sense, offer a clue to Harrell's inscrutable bearing. Harrell does little to discourage the possibility, admiringly invoking the notion of detachment in connection with Miles Davis' performing stance, which was a subject of discussion in Davis' day—as Harrell's is today.

"I try to keep a detachment so things don't get too heavy," he said.

In Harrell's life, things have got heavy many times. Yet he has remained constantly prolific, penning perhaps 500 compositions over the course of his career. A few years ago, Harrell wrote an entire chamber piece, "Perspectives," while waiting for news about his wife, Angela, in a hospital emergency room in Paris—where she had injured herself on a train.

Wherever Harrell's writing takes place, much



of it is accomplished between Vanguard engagements, twice-yearly staples that provide him a reliable forum for airing new music before the band takes it into the studio. (It was the setting for his acclaimed 2002 concert album for RCA Bluebird.) Minutes before Harrell sat down for the October interview, his quartet, Trip, had finished a rehearsal in the music room, where he presented the band members with the tunes that would make up the core of the Vanguard sets that week and be recorded the following week.

The tunes Trip tackled were a wide-ranging lot that constituted a primer on the art of the piano-less combo. They formed a guide, of sorts, to the exploration of space left open by the absence of a chordal instrument, and it was not much of a stretch to connect that exploration with the group's primal concept, embodied in its name, which Harrell said he cooked up "thinking about an experience where the music takes you somewhere."

The "you" Harrell had in mind was the plural pronoun, referring to both the listener and player. And among both groups, the music won high praise, particularly from those who know Harrell's music best. Prominent among them was Escoffery, who has played on the six albums Harrell has released since 2005 on the HighNote label, including his latest, *Colors Of A Dream*.

"Having been an associate of Tom's for so long, one might think that I wouldn't be surprised by his writing," said Escoffery, who along with Grissett attended the first night of Trip's stint at the Vanguard. "But I was really blown away and impressed. I was amazed at how fresh and different the writing sounded."

Four days into the week, at an Oct. 18 early set that was sold out, the band was still sounding fresh, despite the somewhat calculated aspect of the set list. Throughout the week, the lists were largely predetermined, with the sets functioning as de facto rehearsals for the recording session that would follow. But the predictability ended there: The band's interplay was spontaneous, and the writing clearly had met Harrell's objective to imbue each tune with its own aesthetic.

"I try to make each composition unique," he said. "That's my goal—each composition is a world unto itself."

The result, at the Oct. 18 performance, was a set of remarkably varied tone and temperament. At one end of the scale, Harrell offered an accessible "Shuffle," which was just that, although a few slyly delivered, angular twists kept the piece from descending into the generically danceable. At the other end, he served up a six-movement suite, which he had debuted at Dave Douglas' Festival of New Trumpet Music in October 2012 and ranks as one of Harrell's most ambitious works.

The suite, which Harrell has yet to title, was still something of a work in progress. Nonetheless, it vividly illustrated his ability to compose for his band members' specific strengths. Okegwo was unfazed when given some tricky turns to negotiate, at one point picking up the melody line after it had been stated by the horns; at others, navigating improbably wide-interval double stops.

Turner, meanwhile, attracted notice for the clarity of his attack. That, at least, was the effect
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that fellow reedist Escoffery generously noted. "Mark has great technique, crisp, clean articulation," he said. "A couple of the melodies have nice runs, and I think they would sound completely different if I were playing them."

As assured as Harrell can be about his intentions when scoring a piece—especially one as complex as the suite—he can be just as clear about his willingness to make adjustments. According to Okegwo, when it became evident as the week wore on that some sections could be expanded to accommodate more involved improvisation, Harrell readily allowed it.

"Tom is very open for each individual to put in his character," the bassist said. "He writes for specific groups, but he knows how to trust the people he works with."

Just as Harrell displays an innate sense of when to make adjustments, his predilections can act as a natural break on material that threatens to become abstruse. "No matter how complex the harmony," Okegwo said, "there's always something melodic about Tom's music that people can relate to. I've heard from people who don't listen to jazz constantly that there is something that speaks to them directly with the melody."

Harrell's melodic penchant is apparent throughout his oeuvre—especially in the chamber works, and most particularly on personal compositions like "Morning Prayer." The piece's debut brought more than a dozen players to the Vanguard stage before it was released in 2001 as part of *Paradise* (RCA). It was revived to great effect in 2010, with the Harrell quintet joining the local Mista String Ensemble in Cuneo, Italy.

On the score, Harrell has designated a Part 1 and 2. Despite subtle threads linking the parts, the piece is sometimes viewed as two distinct works—opening as a modernist string quintet before Harrell's combo kicks in. At its most impactful, that has proven a powerful moment, with the rhythm section and the strings creating a low-key, high-intensity bed for Harrell's understated flugelhorn. The mixture has generated enthusiastic cheers as well as poignant tears.

"I want people to enjoy it, even if they cry," Harrell said. "Crying's good, too. It's a spiritual experience."

As strong as the melodic component is in Harrell's chamber originals, it may even be more pronounced in his treatments of the French Impressionists. Attracted to them for their lightness of being, Harrell left little doubt that in his adaptations—the list included "Sainte," a Ravel chanson originally set to a poem by Stéphane Mallarmé, and two Debussy pieces, "Beau Soir" and "Passepied"—he had no intention of altering the melody, even as he freely introduced reharmonizations and modern rhythms.

Harrell's respect for the inviolability of melody doesn't obscure his affinity for those rhythms. He integrates them into his concerts—their influence, filtered through his sensibility, could be heard during the quintet's first set on Oct. 11 in the characteristic backbeat on "Trances"—and makes them part of his rhetoric, drawing direct lines between those rhythms and their antecedents. "The way bebop was in the '40s," he said, "hiphop is today."

Harrell views hip-hop in a broader cultural context, marking it as "the most potent music of today." His attitudes are consistent with his broader systems of belief about the African American experience and the business of music delivery in the postwar era.

He recalled growing up in 1950s California at a time when baritone saxophonist Gerry Mulligan, teamed with another horn and bass and drums, was being hailed as the avatar of a new sound. That particular sound, Harrell said, was one whose hollowness he grew to love—and is, to some degree, evoking with Trip—but one that was mislabeled by marketers. In essence, he said, they sought to "sell something" by promulgating the concept of "opposing systems," pitting the nation's coasts against each other.

"I don't subscribe to the phrase 'West Coast jazz," he said.

The sound, he said, actually drew on the work of Davis and Gil Evans, who were experimenting with classical forms in the salons and clubs of New York as early as the late '40s. Meanwhile, "a lot of the black musicians were overlooked," he said, citing Charlie Parker, Wardell Gray, Art Farmer and Eric Dolphy as prominent African Americans who played Los Angeles. "That was a thriving scene, and it was West Coast jazz, too."

To this day, Harrell said, he rejects, at some peril, attempts to pit groups against each other. "I try to embrace all music, even if it gets me in trouble," he said. "There are cliques, and if you are outside a certain clique you could even be risking your life. I believe I'm going to take that chance. I try to embrace all music, but I try to be authentic."

No one has challenged Harrell's authenticity; far from it. He commands fierce loyalty from his quintet sidemen, all of whom have been with him for the entire run of HighNote recordings. Having lived with Harrell on the road, they concur with Escoffery's estimation of the trumpeter's labors. "None of it's contrived," Escoffery said.

The Colors Of A Dream project stands to some extent apart from its piano-less counterpart, Trip. It has three horns, two basses and wordless vocals. For this project, Harrell has recruited saxophonist Jaleel Shaw and Esperanza Spalding, who plays bass and contributes the vocals and, as a result, has a soundscape at once more opaque and varied.

"You look at the whole bass scenario differently," Okegwo said. "It gives you more space and more sound." Sometimes he and Spalding play in unison, functioning as a bass section with all the power attendant to it. At other times they play off of each other, with one walking and the other creating chords or simply laying out.

The collaboration with Harrell marks another key step in Spalding's artistic evolution. A March engagement with the *Colors Of A Dream* group at the Vanguard "was one of the richest experiences of my life," she said in an email. Referring to Harrell, she added, "The breadth and variation in his playing, arranging and writing is mesmerizing, totally inspiring and uplifting to one's mood (to say the least!)."

Spalding will tour with the band for several weeks this summer. An avid Harrell fan, she said the prospect of touring with him is a "dream come true." The core members of the group agreed that she has become part of its fabric—and they are eager to tighten the weave on tour.

At least one new title will be added to Harrell's discography in 2014. His chamber ensemble went into the studio last April for the label Harmonia Mundi. But the album that the session yielded, *First Impressions*, will be vying with the album Trip recorded in October to be released first, according to Angela Harrell, who co-produced *Colors Of A Dream*.

During the October session, the group recorded the six movements of the suite, as well as "Sunday," one of the few tunes that both the quintet and quartet had played at the Vanguard dates.

She said her husband has a backlog of perhaps 100 tunes waiting to be recorded, and he continues his regimen of daily writing—a practice that Okegwo said had been constant since he first met Harrell in the early 1990s, when they shared a stage in saxophonist David Sánchez's band.

"He's not standing still—*ever*," said Okegwo, who has been in Harrell's bands for 17 years.

Harrell's website currently lists five leader projects, and the trumpeter said he tries to "look at each situation as being on an equal footing." He continued, "Any configuration has the possibility of being totally mind-boggling: solo, duo, trio, quartet, quintet, nonet, big band, symphony orchestra, symphony orchestra with chorus, three symphony orchestras. Music is such a powerful force that the magic can happen anytime."

Just like Harrell's devoted fans, his bandmates aren't sure what will come next. "No one can really tell you what's in Tom's mind except Tom," Escoffery said. "But his compositions go in waves."

The question, then, is, What exactly will be the next wave? Harrell's reply placed him in full enigma mode. "I've done pretty much everything I'd like to do," he explained. "As Mulligan said, 'I just maybe want to play one more tune."

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By Ted Panken / Photography by Bill Douthart

THE FORMER TEEN PRODIGY REACHES NEW HEIGHTS WITH A SOLO ALBUM.

On Oct. 10, three days after he had turned 30, Aaron Parks launched a short tour to coincide with the release of *Arborescence* (ECM), his first solo piano album. After participating in an afternoon Thelonious Monk birthday celebration in Manhattan, Parks flew to Europe for recitals in Eindhoven, Netherlands, and Gliwice, Poland.

Before he departed, Parks said that he would not be attempting to replicate the repertoire on *Arborescence*—a contemplative, patient suite of scratch-improvised art songs, which he plays with refined touch, calibrated phrasing and a lyric sensibility. The ghosts of Monk and past ECM recitals by Keith Jarrett and Paul Bley are in the vicinity, and vocabulary drawn from Béla Bartók, Arvo Pärt, Erik Satie and Kenny Wheeler emerge within a mélange of refracted influences that infuse the flow.

"A large portion of what I play will be like the songs on the record, but I don't feel tied to the concept," Parks said. "Since I made it, I've learned a lot, and I'd approach it differently now. I'll be winging it. I might start playing something, then let a song emerge, stay inside it awhile, and then move on. Each one is its own little world and has its own internal sort of narrative."

Solo piano was a minor component of Parks' musical production when producer Sun Chung approached him with the idea in 2011. They booked several days at Mechanics Hall, a Worcester, Mass., venue famous for its remarkable acoustics. Once on site, Parks warmed up with pieces from Bach's *The Well-Tempered Clavier*, then played standards, original songs and a bunch of improvisations with the intention of "storytelling, trying to be open and vulnerable, making music without necessarily any goal, but letting the pieces develop coherently, thinking semi-compositionally, sticking with whatever idea I started."

Listening back to the session, Parks honed in on the improvised pieces as "the things that felt the most alive. They made me feel like trees and things like that, but I hadn't been thinking about that at all." A year later, ECM head Manfred Eicher—who had hired Chung as a producer in the interim—decided to issue the finished product, as well as *Lua Ya*, on which Parks and accordionist Rob Curto accompany singer Yeahwon Shin.

Parks seems fondest of the dark, turbulent "Toward Awakening," which he said "felt cathartic, like working something out emotionally in music—having this one made it OK to put out the whole record."

The concluding track, the hymn-like "Homestead," is a meditation on an older piece that Parks remembered after many hours in the studio: "I played part of it, soloed on the chords but forgot what they were, so I kept going into whatever happened next."

A brief abstraction, which Parks titled "Squirrels" for its "scampering" quality, originally prefaced a reading of "Body And Soul" that was left on the cutting room floor. Directly after it is



Aaron Parks

"Branchings." "It's one of several tracks that has a certain flow until another element appears," he explained. "An opening motif gets tested, like a character in a story, and undergoes some trials and tribulations to see what it's about—a slightly difficult feeling, like being pulled apart. Somewhere in the middle, a clear fifth in the middle-high register jumps out, and I have to deal with it. I go back to where I was, and it asserts itself again, and a thread follows from it. It's like a door opening, or a scene-change, different worlds within one song but still together—this feeling of starting somewhere and then being taken on a journey. I like having things that give you some surprise."

This blank-slate sensibility was less apparent during Parks' Sept. 27 one-nighter at the Park Avenue lounge Kitano with bassist Ben Street and drummer Justin Faulkner. Within a program of swinging standards and harmonically rich ballads, he played "Siren," an anthemic number on which the composer postulated ominous chords and built tension with romantic clusters, before a concluding decrescendo. "On the lead sheet, I wrote things like 'Oh-no, oh-no, shipwreck' and 'into the ocean," Parks remarked later. A pared-down version of the song appears on *Alive In Japan*, offered as a free download on Parks' website, documenting his iPhone recording of an animated Mito City club date with bassist

Thomas Morgan and drummer RJ Miller.

The swing-oriented feel of these trio performances contrasted to Parks' 2008 CD, *Invisible Cinema* (Blue Note), on which guitarist Mike Moreno, bassist Matt Penman and drummer Eric Harland interpret eight originals that incorporate information drawn from Björk, Brian Eno, John Zorn's Masada, and Bulgarian and West African music. Neither the extensive post-production nor the multitude of "stuff going on under the hood"—jagged intervals and exotic, shifting time signatures—interferes with collective freedom of expression or imperatives of beauty and groove.

Invisible Cinema was Parks' only Blue Note album, and it had middling sales. Its release coincided with personal issues he described as an "existential crisis, coming from a combination of romantic heartbreak, the pressure of being in the spotlight, and some shady characters in my life at the time." He added, "I wasn't in a head space to do promotion, and hardly toured

the record. I felt burned out on music. You could probably call it depression."

Still, the album quickly assumed signpost status for a sizable cohort of Gen-X and millennial jazzfolk, among them Joshua Redman, who joined forces with Parks, Penman and Harland in the still-extant collective quartet James Farm, which made an eponymously titled album for Nonesuch in 2011 and is due to record the follow-up in 2014.

"[Invisible Cinema] is a great jazz instrumental interpretation of the various elements of music that Aaron was listening to—jazz, popular music and rock—during the period when he wrote the pieces," Penman said. "We went for a certain sonic fullness in the studio, a closer presence than you hear on a lot of jazz records. Aaron isn't hung up on style or sounding like anyone else; he's willing to let music flow through him. He's someone who's willing to fight for the music. I hear the struggle to make things up, have things be different every time, and pull whatever jewels you can unearth from every situation."

"I love that album," said trumpeter Terence Blanchard, who hired the 19-year-old Parks in 2002 for a five-year run during which he recorded several of his compositions. "Aaron's writing is fresh and logical. He uses odd meter not because he feels he needs to, but because that's where his melodies logically fall. We still play his beautiful ballad 'Ashé' [from the 2007 Blue Note CD *A Tale Of God's Will*], which people always respond to. They don't realize there's a 3/8 section in the middle, a 5/8 bar and other odd meter changes."

In the wake of *Invisible Cinema*, Parks told a journalist that though he loved "classic jazz," he felt that playing music that was so much a product of its time would not reflect his here-and-now experience. His views have since evolved.

"I spent a long time trying to figure out what the rhythm of our times is, but I don't even know what that means anymore," he said. "During the period when I wrote the songs on *Invisible Cinema*, I was mostly listening to electronic music

and songs by bands with words and drumbeats and interesting production. I was consciously trying to make a break from tradition. But at a certain point, I started to feel disconnected from what had drawn me into the music in the first place.

"I was more interested in individuality then than I am now. When you try so hard to find your own voice, it can be a lonely place. I no longer care about whether something is original or new. I just want it to feel good. I've become more interested in the dance of 4/4 swing—not as something that happened at a certain time, but as a continuum I could join and let my individuality and personality emerge without self-consciously seeking it. My songs are simpler. I don't have any objections to *Invisible Cinema*, but, honestly, it feels like a long time ago. "

Parks grew up in a small island village near Seattle. At 14, he enrolled in the University of Washington's early entrance program with a triple major in mathematics, computer science and music, and was soon moonlighting as a gigging pianist at Tully's, the popular Seattle coffee shop. On his first two albums (recorded when he was 15 and 16), complex changes are no barrier, his time is impeccable and his lines are notable for their clarity and thematic focus. At 17, he won the American Pianists Association's Cole Porter Fellowship competition.

"Aaron was blessed with a sense of identity at a very young age," Blanchard said. "When he joined me, he wasn't necessarily up to the emotional challenge

of playing on our level. But he developed more power in his playing month by month. His need to express himself, along with his musical talent, is the source of his unique musical personality."

Blanchard hired Parks on the recommendation of Kenny Barron, his teacher at Manhattan School of Music, where Parks matriculated at 16. "One of my dreams when I came to New York was to play with Terence's band," Parks said, adding that he had "worn out" his copy of *Wandering Moon*, Blanchard's 2000 session with Edward Simon. "The experience was incredible. He challenged us not to sit back and play what we know, but to take chances and not be afraid to fail."

Shortly before making *Invisible Cinema*, Parks joined Kurt Rosenwinkel's quartet (an association later documented on the guitarist's 2012 album *Star Of Jupiter*). "After *The Next Step* came out in 2001, I dreamed of playing with Kurt," Parks said. "But with Kurt, I had to adjust.

He wanted me to be free and involved; but rather than just coloring on top, to serve the song, be part of its motor when I'm comping—playing chords, a good rhythm, hooking up with the drums, like Red Garland or Sonny Clark. I definitely needed that, because it was missing."

In thinking of his own next step, Parks, who says he has enough material to make two or three records, is looking for ways to accommodate both the more curated, epic *Invisible Cinema* approach and the imperative—showcased at Kitano—of "playing standards and originals that can be treated like standards."

"I've been assembling a band with musicians who have spent substantial time in rock bands to play my more rock-oriented music," he said. "I love the way they're able to play a written-out part like it's not a drag. Not reinvent, but interpret it, make it sing, inhabit it like a classical musician would."

Still, the will to swing now occupies equal pride of place in Parks' consciousness. "It's so open and grounding," he said. "It's circular and flexible, but it's sturdy—you can rely upon it, and breathe and be yourself within it. Trying to swing is one of the most nerve-wracking things you can do. But when it's happening the right way, joining that circle and putting the rhythm into your body—it's the most amazing feeling."

After recent recordings and tours with vocalists Gretchen Parlato and Maria Neckam, Parks said he hopes to play with more duos and trios with singers.

"I've been approaching music differently," he said. "Success at a young age can be a trippy thing. When you're growing up and everybody tells you that you're special, then you start thinking, 'Well, I guess I'm supposed to be special.' But then you have moments where you don't really feel that special or [you] feel you have nothing to say. I was never looking to be a generational voice. But that's the funny thing about hype. If you're not mature enough, you can start to believe it, or believe that what's said about you is what you're supposed to be."



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DOWNBEAT BEST ALBUNS



We are pleased to present the Best Albums of 2013, a recap of the releases that received 5-, 4½- and 4-star reviews in the pages of DownBeat. As indicated in the key accompanying our Reviews section (page 63), a 5-star album is a masterpiece—a historically significant recording that is essential to any jazz lover's library. A 4½-star album is nearly flawless, while a 4-star album is defined as excellent. On the following pages, you'll find both new and historical titles, the label that issued the album and the month the original review appeared in DownBeat.

BESTALBUMS





KEITH JARRETT/GARY PEACOCK/JACK DEJOHNETTE

Somewhere

AUGUST

The "Standards Trio" seizes ownership of its selections from the Great American Songbook here, rendering them in a wide assortment of styles, depending on the mood of the moment.



ALAN BROADBENT

Heart To Heart: Solo Piano CHILLY BIN NOVEMBER Broadbent treats the solo piano format of this CD like a devotional, an exhibition and a playground. His playing fulfills the potential of the instrument as an orchestra in a box.



MICHAEL FORMANEK Small Places

FCM

JANUARY

The bassist's group with alto saxophonist Tim Berne, pianist Craig Taborn and drummer Gerald Cleaver is a mesmerizing unit. The collective's musical syntax continues to suggest there aren't four musicians here but one.



SAVION GLOVER

fours (DVD) HALF NOTÉ MAY

The tap dancer's series of summits with four great jazz musicians—pianists McCoy Tyner and Eddie Palmieri, and drummers Roy Haynes and Jack De-Johnette-show just how manifold his gifts are on this stellar DVD.



FRED HERSCH AND JULIAN LAGE Free Flying

PAI METT DECEMBER This piano-and-guitar duo album features two profoundly lyrical players with vast chops and imagination. There's a constant exchange of ideas, sometimes expressed as classic counterpoint, at other times as contrasting rhythmic and melodic figures. Playing at this high a level rewards repeat listening.

KILLER MIKE

R.A.P. Music WILLIAMS STREET MAY

This superb, provocative collaboration between the Atlanta-based rapper and New York emcee/producer EI-P mixes brilliant storytelling and cultural critique in a robust celebration of music.

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LOS LOBOS

Kiko Live (DVD) SHOUT! FACTORY **SEPTEMBER** This live DVD—from a 2006 House of Blues show in San Diego where the band played its critically acclaimed 1992 album *Kiko*—is as good as it gets when it comes to documenting a Los Lobos concert.

ODDISEE

People Hear What They See Mello Music Group MAY

The D.C.-based producer and emcee draws from numerous influences—especially r&b, soul and funk—and his lyrical flow is comparable to any great jazz soloist.

JOHN ZORN

The Concealed TZADIK JUNE

Virtuosity abounds on this album, which features the saxophonist-composer's stunning sextet arrangements as well as exemplary performances by cellist Erik Friedlander and pianist John Medeski.

EVAN PARKER/ MATTHEW SHIPP Rex, Wrecks & XXX

ROGUE ART **NOVEMBER** 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.



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Paul Motian ECM OCTOBER

SLY AND THE Family stone

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Bridges Posi-tone SEPTEMBER

ALATURKA

Yalniz Tzigane **August**

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FLYING LOTUS Until The Quiet Comes WARP MAY



GATO LIBRE Forever LIBRA JANUARY

PETER GABRIEL Secret World Live (DVD) EAGLE ROCK SEPTEMBER

★★★★½ NEW ALBUMS

All In

AND

ouroboros naked truth

Month Martin

JACOB GARCHIK

The Heavens: The Atheist Gospel Trombone Album YESTEREVE RECORDS JANUARY

JOEL HARRISON 19

Infinite Possibility SUNNYSIDE SEPTEMBER

ALBERT "TOOTIE" HEATH/ ETHAN IVERSON/BEN STREET Tootie's Tempo

SUNNYSIDE



JIMMY HERRING Subject To Change Without Notice ABSTRACT LOGIX JUNE



JASON KAO HWANG Burning Bridge

INNOVA MAY

DAVE KING

I've Been Ringing You SUNNYSIDE **JANUARY**

STEVE KUHN The Vanguard Date

SUNNYSIDE AUGUST

FREDRIK LJUNGKVIST YUN KAN 10

Ten Hoob Jazz **August**



RUDRESH MAHANTHAPPA Gamak AGT

BEN MONDER Hydra SUNNYSIDE NOVEMBER





DUANE ALLMAN

APRIL

Skydog: The Duane Allman Retrospective ROUNDER JULY

JACK DEJOHNETTE

Special Edition ECM JULY

EARL HINES

Classic Earl Hines Sessions: 1928–1945 MOSAIC AUGUST

FREDDIE KING

The Complete King Federal Sides REAL GONE MUSIC NOVEMBER

THE GAY FAMILY

GOG Will Take Care Of You GOSPEL FRIEND FEBRUARY

BESSIE SMITH

The Complete Columbia Recordings LEGACY MAY

VARIOUS ARTISTS

Kassidat: Raw 45s From Morocco DUST-TO-DIGITAL OCTOBER

VARIOUS ARTISTS

They All Played For Us: Arhoolie Records 50th Anniversary Celebration ARHOOLIE NOVEMBER



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BEST ALBUMS



MARK MASTERS ENSEMBLE

Everything You Did: The Music Of Walter Becker & Donald Fagen CAPRI NOVEMBER

BOBBY MATOS AFRO LATIN JAZZ ENSEMBLE

Mambo Jazz Dance LIFEFORCEJAZZ **JUNE**

PAT METHENY

Tap: John Zorn's Book Of Angels, Vol. 20 NONESUCH AUGUST

NICOLE MITCHELL'S ICE CRYSTALS Aquarius

DELMARK JUNE

WALTER NORRIS & LESZEK MOZDZER

The Last Set

AGI FEBRUARY

ARUÁN ORTIZ & MICHAEL JANISCH QUINTET

Banned In London WHIRLWIND RECORDINGS

NICHOLAS PAYTON

#BAM Live At Bohemian Caverns BMF RECORDS JUNE

ERIC PERSON

Thoughts On God DISTINCTION RECORDS FEBRUARY

CHES SMITH & THESE ARCHES Hammered CLEAN FEED MAY



ALLISON MILLER'S BOOM TIC BOOM No Morphine, No Lilies ROYAL POTATO FAMILY JULY

★★★★½ NEW ALBUMS

DR. LONNIE SMITH OCTET

In The Beginning Volumes 1 & 2 Pilgrimage recording December

TOMASZ STANKO NEW YORK QUARTET Wisława ECM MAY

DAYNA STEPHENS That Nepenthetic Place SUNNYSIDE JULY

CRAIG TABORN TRIO

Chants ECM JULY

OTIS TAYLOR My World Is Gone TELARC

MAY

TEMPLE UNDERGROUND

Live At Strange Brew SELF-RELEASE SEPTEMBER

VANDERMARK/GUSTAFSSON

Verses Corbett VS. Dempsey NOVEMBER

WEASEL WALTER/MARY HALVORSON/PETER EVANS

Mechanical Malfunction THIRSTY EAR **JANUARY**

NATE WOOLEY SEXTET (Sit In) The Throne Of Friendship CLEAN FEED DECEMBER

PABLO ZIEGLER & METROPOLE ORKEST

Amsterdam Meets New Tango ZOHO SEPTEMBER

JOHN ZORN

Mount Analogue TZADIK JUNE

JOHN ZORN The Gnostic Preludes: Music Of Splendor TZADIK JUNE

JOHN ZORN

Vision In Blakelight TZADIK JUNE



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BEST ALBUMS



PEPPER ADAMS

Joy Road: The Complete Works Of Pepper Adams MOTÉMA JAN.



LOUIS ARMSTRONG Satchmo At Symphony Hall/65th Anniversary: The Complete Performances HIP-O.SELECT

HIP-O SELECT JUNE

JOHN CAGE John Cage Shock (Three-CD Series) EM JUNE

JOHN CAGE Music Of Changes HAT ART JUNE

JOHN CAGE Etudes Australes WERGO JUNE

JOHN CAGE Sonatas And Interludes JOHN CAGE TRUST JUNE

ARIZONA DRANES He Is My Story: The Sanctified Soul Of Arizona Dranes

TOMPKINS SQUARE

DUR-DUR BAND

Volume 5 Awesome tapes from Africa **OCT.**

JAN GARBAREK

Dansere ECM JAN.

WOODY HERMAN

Blue Flame: Portrait Of A Legend (DVD) JAZZED MEDIA MARCH

JUTTA HIPP

Lost Tapes: The German Recordings 1952–1955 JAZZHAUS SEPT.

TIM MAIA

The Existential Soul Of Tim Maia: Nobody Can Live Forever LUAKA BOP JAN.

MILTON NASCIMENTO

Milton Nascimento ABRIL COLEÇÕES **JAN.**

ORCHESTRE POLY-RYTHMO DE COTONOU

The Skeletal Essences Of Voodoo Funk ANALOG AFRICA OCT.

WILLIAM PARKER

Centering: Unreleased Early Recordings 1976–1987 NO BUSINESS RECORDS MARCH

PINK FLOYD

The Story Of Wish You Were Here (DVD) EAGLE ROCK SEPT.

TERJE RYPDAL

In Studio & In Concert ECM JAN.

WOODY SHAW

The Complete Muse Sessions MOSAIC NOV.

VARIOUS ARTISTS

The Chicago Blues Box STORYVILLE DEC.

BRIAN WILSON Songwriter 1969–1982 (DVD) SEXY INTELLECTUAL SEPT.

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GREG ABATE The Greg Abate Quintet Featuring Phil Woods RHOMBUS MAY

REZ ABBASITRIO Continuous Beat ENJA APBIL

JOSHUA ABRAMS QUARTET Unknown Known ROGUEART JUNE

ACCIDENTAL TOURISTS The L.A. Sessions

CHALLENGE MARCH

MAUCHA ADNET & HELIO ALVES Milagre ZOHO

JUNE

JEFF ALBERT'S INSTIGATION QUARTET The Tree On The Mound ROGUE ART AUG.

RALPH ALESSI Baida

Baida ECM OCT.

RALPH ALESSI/FRED HERSCH

Only Many Camjazz Oct.

FEB.

HARRY ALLEN & SCOTT HAMILTON 'Round Midnight CHALLENGE

KARRIN ALLYSON Yuletide Hideaway KARRIN ALLYSON RECORDS DEC.

KENNY BARRON



MAURICIO EINHORN - IDRISS BOUDRIOUA - LULA GALVÃO - SERGIO BARROZO - RAFAEL BARATA + CLAUDIO RODITI

KENNY BARRON Kenny Barron & The Brazilian Knights SUNNYSIDE SEPT. MARIA BAPTIST Music For Jazz Orchestra BAPTIST DEC. LAILA BIALI

SEPT.

OCT.

AUG.

JULY

Trios

FCM

DEC.

Duality

CORDS

Coconut

OUARTET

As The Sea

CARLA BLEY/

DAN BLOCK

MILES HIGH RE-

ERIC BOEREN

ANDY SHEPPARD/

STEVE SWALLOW

Live In Concert

DAVID BINNEY

BLACK HOST

Candle Mines

Life In The Sugar

NORTHERN SPY

SAMUEL BLASER

Lifted Land CRISS CROSS

BEAUSOLEIL From Bamako To Carencro COMPASS JUNE

NINA BECKER & MARCELO CALLADO Gambito Budapeste

YB MUSIC JAN.

MICHAEL BENEDICT & BOPITUDE Five And One PLANET ARTS JAN.

HAN BENNINK Bennink & Co.

GEORGE BENSON Inspiration (A Tribute To Nat King Cole) CONCORD JAZZ SEPT.

ANDY BEY The World According To Andy Bey HIGHNOTE SEPT.

FEB. GEOF BRADFIELD Melba! ORIGIN

PLATENBAKKERIJ

AUG.

BRÖTZMANN/ NOBLE

IAm Here Where Are You TROST DEC.

OSCAR BROWN JR. & MAGGIE BROWN We're Live ESP-DISK

AUG. GERALDO HENRIQUE BULHÕES

Quasar SELF-RELEASE NOV.

ERIC BURDON

'Til Your River Runs Dry ABKCO **JUNE**

PAUL CARLON

La Rumba Is A Lovesome Thing ZOHO OCT.

MARC CARY

For The Love Of Abbey MOTÉMA JULY

ETIENNE CHARLES Creole Soul CULTURE SHOCK SEPT.

CYRUS CHESTNUT Soul Brother Cool DEC.

GABRIELE COEN Yiddish Melodies In Jazz TZADIK AUG.

STEPHAN CRUMP/ MARY HALVORSON Super Eight

JULY

ALEXIS CUADRADO A Lorca Soundscape SUNNYSIDE DEC.

PAOUITO D'RIVERA Song For Maura

RECORDS SUNNYSIDE RECORDS OCT.

KRIS DAVIS

Capricorn Climber EAN FEED JULY

DENA DEROSE Travelin' Light MAXJAZZ JAN.

FATOUMATA DIAWARA

Fatou WORLD CIRCUIT/ NONESUCH JAN.

DIE ENTTÄUSCHUNG Vier Halbe INITAKI

.IUNE

SWAMP DOGG Total Destruction To Your Mind JUNE

DEZRON DOUGLAS

Live At Smalls **SMALLSLIVE** APRIL

BOYD LEE DUNLOP The Lake Reflections: Solo Piano Improvi-

sations MR. B SHARP MAY

GILAD EDELMAN My Groove, Your Move SHARP NINE

RECORDS OCT.

EL-P Cancer4Cure FAT POSSUM ΜΔΥ

TINSLEY ELLIS Get It! HEARTFIXER

OCT. JOHN ESCREET Sabotage And

Celebration WHIRLWIND DEC.

ELLERY ESKELIN Trio New York II PRIME SOURCE ост.

ELLERY ESKELIN/ SUSAN ALCORN/ **MICHAEL FORMANEK** Mirage CLEÁN FEED

ост.

JONATHAN **FINLAYSON &** SICILIAN DEFENCE Moment & The Message AUG.

TOMMY FLANAGAN/ **JAKI BYARD** The Magic Of 2 RESONANCE

INGEBRIGT HÅKER FLATEN NEW YORK

OUARTET Now Is CLEAN FEED APRIL

JULY

BILL FRISELL Big Sur OKEH SEPT.

SATOKO FUJII MA-DO Time Stands Still

NOT TWO SEPT.

PETER GABRIEL

So (DVD) EAGLE ROCK SEPT.

MICHAFE **GALLANT TRIO** Completely GALLANT MUSIC

JULY

RICARDO GALLO CUARTETO

Tribu Del Asfalto LA DISTRITOFONICA OCT.



KENNY GARRETT Pushing The World Away MACK AVENUE NOV.

DAVID GILMORE Numerology: Live At Jazz Standard **EVOLUTIONARY** MUSIC APRIL

MICHEL GENTILE/ **DANIEL KELLY**/ **ROB GARCIA**

Works CONNECTION WORKS RECORDS SEPT.

JARED GOLD

Intuition POSI-TONE AUG.

BEN GOLDBERG Subatomic Particle

Homesick Blues BAG PRODUCTIONS APRIL

BEN GOLDBERG Unfold Ordinary Mind **BAG PRODUCTIONS** APRIL

BRAD GOODE Chicago Red

APRIL

KARA GRAINGER

Shiver & Sigh ECLECTO ĜROOVE OCT.

FRANK GRATKOWSKI OUARTET

Le Vent Et La Gorge LEO RECORDS MARCH

DREW GRESS The Sky Inside PIROUET

FIRE! ORCHESTRA

RUNE GRAMMOFON

RICH HALLEY Crossing The Passes

PINE EAGLE AUG.

ROSS HAMMOND

OUARTET Cathedrals NOV.

WINARD HARPER AND **JELI POSSE** Coexist

JAZZ LEGACY PRODUCTIONS JAN.

MIHO HAZAMA Journey To Journey SUNNYSIDE JULY

DAVID HAZELTINE

The New Classic Trio SHARP NINE RECORDS FEB.

GII AD HEKSELMAN

This Just In JA77 VILLAGE SEPT.

SID HEMPHILL The Devil's Dream GLOBAL JUKEBOX JULY

IG HENNEMAN

I ive @ The Ironworks Vancouver FEB.

ERIC HOFBAUER American Grace

CNM JULY

DAVE HOLLAND & PRISM

Prism NOV.

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**** NEW ALBUMS

ост. Exit! MAY

BESTALBUMS



JOHN HOLLENBECK Songs I Like A Lŏt SUNNYSIDE MAY

MATT HOLMAN'S DI-**VERSION ENSEMBLE**

When Flooded **BROOKLYN JAZZ** UNDERGROUND RECORDS AUG.

BEN HOLMES OUARTET

Anvil Of The Lord SKIRI JAN.

RICK HOLMSTROM Cruel Sunrise M.C JAN.

RICK HOLMSTROM Cruel Sunrise – The Deluxe Edition JAN.

Charnett Moffett

JULIA HÜLSMANN OUARTET In Full View SEPT.

DANIEL HUMAIR Sweet & Sour LABORIE MAY

HUSH POINT Hush Point SUNNYSIDE AUG.

DICK HYMAN/ **KEN PEPI OWSKI** ...Live At The Kitano VICTORIA

NOV.

VIJAY IYER & MIKE LADD Holding It Down: The Veterans'

Dreams Project DEC.

KEEFE JACKSON'S LIKELY SO

A Round Goal DELMARK DEC.

TERESA JAMES & THE RHYTHM TRAMPS Come On Home

Jasi-Lu MAY

JANEL & ANTHONY Where Is Home

CUNEIFORM MARCH **OLIVER JONES**

Just For My Lady JUSTIN TIME DEC.

THE WILLIE

JONES III SEXTET Plays The Max

HERBERT JOOS WOODY SCHABATA/ **CLEMENS SALESNY**/ **RAPHAEL PREUSCHL**

Live .IA77WERKSTATT APRIL



ASUKA KAKITANI JAZZ ORCHESTRA Bloom

NINETEEN-EIGHT RECORDS JULY **GEOFFREY KEEZER**

Heart Of The Piano MOTÉMA Sept.

DAVE KIKOSKI/ **DAVE CARPENTER**/ **GARY NOVAK/BOB** SHEPPARD

From The Hip BFM JAZZ OCT.

FRANK KIMBROUGH

TRIO Live At Kitano PALMETTO MARCH

DAVE KING TRUCKING COMPANY

Adopted Highway SUNNYSIDE DEC.

KAKI KAKITANI Glow

VELOUR JULY

LEE KONITZ/BILL FRISELL/GARY PEA-**COCK/JOEY BARON** Enfants Terribles: Live

At The Blue Note HALF NOTE JAN.

BASSEKOU KOUYATE & NGONI BA

Jama Ko OUT HERE JULY

MARY LAROSE Reincarnation

LITTLE (I) MUSIC DEC.

BILL LASWELL Means Of Deliverance INNERHYTHMIC FEB.

ERIC LE LANN I Remember Chet BEE JAZZ AUG.

RUDY LINKA

RE: Connect **JPRAPHON** ΜΑΥ

LITTLE WOMEN Lung

AUM FIDELITY JULY

LIVING BY LANTERNS New Myth/Old Science

CUNEIFORM FEB.

JOE LOVANO US FIVE Cross Culture **BLUE NOTE** FEB.

LSD Trio Colossus APRIL

PAUL LYTTON/ NATE WOOLEY The Nows CLEAN FEED FEB.

DOUG MACLEOD There's A Time REFERENCE JULY

MADE TO BREAK Provoke CLEAN FEED MAY

JACÁM MANRICKS Cloud Nine POSI-TONE JAN.

KAREN MARGUTH A Way With Words WAYFAE MUSIC MAY

JASON MARSALIS VIBES OUARTET In A World Of Mallets BASIN STREET RE CORDS JULY

BEX MARSHALL The House Of Mercy HOUSE OF MERCY APRIL

PEDRITO MARTINEZ Rumba De La Isla CALLE 5 JUNE

T.J. MARTLEY Meditations Vol. 1 TZIGANE AUG.

HEATHER MASSE/ **DICK HYMAN**

Lock My Heart RED HOUSE MAY

ROB MAZUREK EXPLODING STAR ELECTRO ACOUSTIC **ENSEMBLE**

The Space Between AUG

ROB MAZUREK OCTET

Skull Sessions CUNEIFORM JUNE

CHRIS MCNULTY

The Song That Sings You Here CHALLENGE APRIL

GETATCHEW **MEKURYA & THE EX & FRIENDS**

Y'Anbessaw Tezeta FEB.

MATT MITCHELL Fiction

DEC.

ROSCOE

MITCHELL Roscoe Mitchell WIDE HIVE RECORDS JUNE

PANCHO MOLINA/ ELIAS MEISTER **Open For Business**

JAN.

FRANCISCO MORA CATLETT AND AFROHORN

Rare Metal AACE RECORDS DEC.

JOHN MORIARTY

Fchoes LYTE RECORDS JULY

MOSTLY **OTHER PEOPLE** DO THE KILLING Slippery Rock

MARCH

VADIM **NESELOVSKYI**

Music For September SUNNYSIDE SEPT.

The Bridge (Solo Bass

Works)

JULY

Roach Songbook Live At Dizzy's Club Coca-Cola NOV.

Ain't I A Woman

MATTHEW SHIPP

Piano Sutras THIRSTY EAR

SHORTER

Without A Net

ALEX SIPIAGIN

SCOTT NEUMANN NEU3 TRIO

Blessed NOV.



SAM NEWSOME The Art Of The Soprano, Vol. 1 SELF-RELEASE FEB.

ARTURO O'FARRILL AND THE CHICO **O'FARRILL AFRO CUBAN JAZZ ORCHESTRA**

Final Night At Birdland ZOHO OCT.

OLD TIME MUSKETRY Different Times STEEPLECHASE MARCH

BRUSHY ONE-STRING Destiny **RISE UP MUSIC** DEC.

MARCO VON ORFI116

Close Ties On Hidden Lanes HATOLOGY JAN.

IRIS ORNIG No Restrictions APRIL

MATT OTTO

Broken Waltz JCR AUG.

OWL TRIO OWL Trio LOSEN RECORDS NOV.

JASON PALMER Take A Little Trip STEEPLECHASE MARCH

EVAN PARKER/ **GEORG GRAEWE** Dortmund Variations

NUSCOPE JAN.

KAT PARRA Las Aventuras De Pasión!

GARY PEACOCK/ MARILYN CRISPELL Azure

SEPT.

JAN.

JEREMY PELT Water And Earth HIGHNOTE MAY

HOUSTON PERSON Naturally HIGHNÓTF JAN.

MADELEINE PEYROUX The Blue Room APRIL

ODEAN POPE Odean's Three IN + OUT JUNE

CHRIS POTTER The Sirens

MARCH



PRETTY MONSTERS Pretty Monsters PUBLIC EYESORE APRIL

MIKF PRIDF Birthing Days AUM FIDELIT AUG.

OUFST Circular Dreaming JULY

CARLINE RAY Vocal Sides CARLCAT RECORDS OCT.

ED REED I'm A Shy Guy-A Tribute To The King Cole Trio And Their Music BLUE SHORTS RECORDS DEC.

REMPIS PERCUSSION OUARTET Phalanx

AEROPHONIC AUG.

JOSE RIZO'S MONGORAMA Baila Que Baila SAUNGU RECORDS ост

MARCUS ROBERTS NONET Deep In The Shed:

A Blues Suite J-MASTER RECORDS MARCH

JASON ROBINSON

Tiresian Symmetry CLINEIEO MARCH

JASON ROEBKE/ TOBIAS DELIUS Panoramic

WALLACE RONEY

Understanding HIGHNOTE AUG.

SEPT.

FRANK ROSALY Cicada Music DEI MARK AUG.

RUSCONI Revolution BEE JAZZ

JUNE **CAROL SABOYA** Belezas

AAM FEB.

FELIPE SALLES Departure

TAPESTRY FEB.

LUCAS SANTTANA The God Who Devastates Also Cures

MAIS UM DISCOS JULY

SÃO PAULO UNDERGROUND Beija Flors Velho E Sujo

CUNEIFORM NOV.

BRUCE SAUNDERS 5 Drift

STRANGE PLANET RECORDS SEPT.

My Life In Music MARCH

GEORGE SCHULLER'S CIRCLE WIDE Listen Both Ways PLAYSCAPE JAN.



JOHN SCOFIELD Überjam Deux EMARCY ост.

KENDRICK SCOTT ORACLE Conviction CONCORD JAZZ MARCH

SEXMOB Cinema, Circus & Spaghetti ROYAL POTATO FAMILY .IUNE

SHABAZZ PALACES Live At KEXP

SUB POP MAY

AVERY SHARPE

Sojourner Truth: JKNM RECORDS MARCH



WAYNE OUARTET

BLUE NOTE FEB.

BEN SIDRAN

Don't Cry For No Hipster JUNE

Live At Smalls DEC.

RONDI CHARLESTON

An Entertainment Tonight "Artist You Should Know"

The remarkable SIGNS OF LIFE fully reveals that Charleston is a songwriter whose poetic, narrative and compositional skills are comparable to such modern masters as Joni Mitchell and Paul Simon. - JAZZ TIMES

TOP 10 PICKS (#5) Jazz singer Charleston has a thick and tawny voice that has caused many to compare her to Abbey Lincoln. But the huskiness of her timbre has its own DNA. - NEW YORK DAILY NEWS

One of those rare artists for whom a song's meaning is as important as its melody. Her personal, thought-provoking, original songs slow the heartbeat and raise the mental senses with a documentarian's acuity. - DOWNBEAT



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BESTALBUNS **** NEW ALBUMS

PATTI SMITH Live At Montreux 2005 (DVD) EAGLE ROCK SEPT.

WADADA LEO SMITH & TUMO Occupy The World TUM ост.

NATSUKI TAMURA/ SATOKO FUJII Muku

JAN.

GREGORY TARDY Standards & More STEEPLECHASE AUG.

THE APERTURISTIC TRIO

Truth And Actuality INNER CIRCLE MUSIC OCT.

THE BAD PLUS Made Possible

EONE JAN.

THE CONVERGENCE OUARTET

Slow And Steady NO BUSINESS NOV.

THE O'FARRILL BROTHERS BAND Sensing Flight

70HC ΜΔΥ

THE SOUL OF JOHN BLACK A Sunshine State Of Mind OCT.

THE SWALLOW QUINTET Into The Woodwork

NOV.

JAN.

THEESATISFACTION awE naturalE SUB POF ΜΛΥ

HANS THEESSINK & TERRY EVANS

Delta Time **BLUE GROOVE**

CHESTER THOMPSON

Mixology DOODLIN' RECORDS MARCH

TRIO 3 **+ JASON MORAN REGGIE WORKMAN OLIVER LAKE** ANDREW CYRILLE

REFRACTION – BREAKIN' GLASS

FRANK VIGNOLA/

VINNY RANIOLO

PAPO VAZOUEZ

MIGHTY PIRATES

TROUBADOURS

SEAN WAYLAND

Click Track Jazz:

Volumes 1 And 2

DAVID WEISS

DAVID WEISS &

Venture Inward

FRANK WESS

KENNY WESSEL

Weights & Measures

POSI-TONE

Magic 101

QUARTET

NONOTONES

WHEELHOUSE

AFROPHONIC

Boss Of The Plains

JUNE

SEPT.

AUG.

AUG.

POINT OF DEPARTURE

Slave To The Machine

SEED MUSIC RECORDS

Endangered Species:

The Music Of Wayne

Melody Magic

AZIC

JULY

Oasis

FEB.

JAN.

Shorter

MOTÉMA NOV.

PICARO

TRIO 3 + JASON MORAN Refraction - Breakin' Glass NOV.

TRUMPETS AND DRUMS Live In Ljubljana

CLEAN FEED DEC.

MAHSA VAHDAT & MIGHTY SAM **MCCLAIN**

A Deeper Tone Of Longing **KIRKELIG** APRIL

CHUCHO VALDÉS & THE AFRO-CUBAN MESSENGERS

Border-Free



KEN VANDERMARK'S TOPOLOGY NONET FEATURING JOE

MCPHEE Impressions Of Po Music OKKADISK NOV.

VARIOUS ARTISTS

Live From Festival Au Desert **CLERMONT MUSIC** JULY

DAVID VIRELLES

Continuum PL RECORDINGS MARCH

BONESHAKER

Boneshaker MAY

ALAN WILSON The Blind Owl AUG.



WARREN WOLF Wolfgang MACK AVENUE OCT.

ERI YAMAMOTO TRIO Firefly

AUM FIDELITY SEPT.

ELI YAMIN/EVAN CHRISTOPHER

Louie's Dream - For Our Jazz Heroes YAMIN MUSIC JULY

SAMUEL YIRGA

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10 / Historica

82 / Books

René Marie I Wanna Be Evil: With Love To Eartha Kitt MOTÉMA 129 ****

It's wise to consider larger-than-life characters when mulling over tribute albums. The more



nuanced stuff—a Bill Evans nod, let's say—can get a little heady, a little snoozy. René Marie made the perfect decision when she pulled the trigger on this Eartha Kitt project. The forever-fabulous actress and singer was an inspired entertainer, and from unabashed sensuality to soulful drama, her music was filled with the kind of palpable emotions that often gave her art a little extra kick.

Marie, a boomer who first encountered Kitt in the schticky role of Catwoman on the 1960s "Batman" TV show, has some true insights into the variety of characters that Kitt brought to the fore. That's what makes this record so entertaining. Marie jumps into these tracks with a level of sass that rivals that of her hero, which is no small task. But Kitt wasn't a jazz singer, per se; there was poise and panache but not a lot of swing in the tracks that made her famous. One of the beauties of *I Wanna Be Evil* is how naturally Marie brings these pieces onto her home turf. It has to do with the sublime arrangements and the vivaciousness the group brings to the table.

On the sultry "Oh, John" her trio moves through a series of subtleties that makes the music simmer as the singer heads toward an orgasmic trail of scatted long notes. Along the way, trombonist Wycliffe Gordon shows us all of his strong suits. The group takes that success to the next level on a bluesy spin through Cole Porter's "Let's Do It." Bassist Elias Bailey, drummer Quentin Baxter and pianist Kevin Bales feed their boss every bit of dynamic info she needs to ride the standard to an address on the gritty side of town.

Marie proves herself masterful as the scenery changes. Whether she's seducing you with "Peel Me A Grape" or declaring her autonomy in the title cut, this is *her* show. Like Kitt, she's got a knack for acting and storytelling, making this one of the year's best jazz vocal albums. *—Jim Macnie*

I Wanna Be Evil: With Love To Eartha Kitt: I'd Rather Be Burned As A Witch; C'est Si Bon; Oh, John; Let's Do It; Peel Me A Grape; My Heart Belongs To Daddy; I Wanna Be Evil; Come On-A My House; Santa Baby; Weekend. (60:04)

Personnel: René Marie, vocals; Wycliffe Gordon, trombone; Adrian Cunningham, tenor saxophone, clarinet, flute; Etienne Charles, trumpet, percussion; Kevin Bales, piano; Elias Bailey, bass; Quentin Baxter, drums, percussion.

Ordering info: motema.com

René Marie



Swing Fever with Clark Terry/ Buddy DeFranco/Terry Gibbs and Jackie Ryan Grand Masters of Jazz

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The cover art of this CD-and-two-DVD package shows three great principals—Clark Terry, Buddy DeFranco and Terry Gibbs—hunched together as a unit as if playing in one terrific jam session. Would that it were. Unfortunately, no such combination materializes. These concert performances were recorded between 1998 and 2001, and each soloist appears separately in a collection whose main purpose seems to be to showcase vocalist Jackie Ryan in major league company.

Though featured on only two pieces, DeFranco unfurls the fast, fluent and effortless perfection that for years made him the gold standard of the clarinet among musicians. His "Speak Low" has become something of a specialty feature, but its fizz still sparkles. Gibbs whirls through "Love For Sale" with a furiously poised control and shares "Liza" with tenor saxophonist Ray Loeckle. On a high-flying "Airmail Special," Gibbs supports five smoldering clarinet choruses by Jim Rothermel. On "Topsy" and "Swingin' The Blues," Terry engages with the band like the master he is.

Backing them all, the nine-piece Swing Fever is worthy of its guests, with journeyman work from Loeckle and Howard Dudune. While Ryan is an appealing singer whose range and flexibility put a nice edge on the better songs, with six of the 14 pieces, she's something of an unexpected guest on a CD that promises the "grand masters of jazz." —John McDonough

Grand Masters Of Jazz: Intro Gibbs; Airmail Special; Intro Buddy; Speak Low; Intro Jackie; Body And Sou!; Intro Clark; Topsy; Love For Sale; That Ole Devil Called Love; You Go To My Head; Autumn Leaves; Liza; My Lean Baby; East Of The Sun; I Want A Little Girl; Swingin The Blues; Please Don't Talk About Me When I'm Gone; Outro, (74:04) Disc 2 (DVD 1): (59:55). Disc 3 (DVD 2): (54:24). **Personnel:** Terry Gibbs (2, 6, 9, 12), vibraphone; Buddy DeFranco (4, 13, 14), clarinet; Clark Terry (8, 16–18), Steve Campos, trumpet; Bryan Gould; trombone; Jim Rothermel, Ray Loeckle, Howard Dudune, Pee Wee Claybrook, reeds; Jim Pitman, guitar, Ruth Davies, Dean Reilly (8), bass; Tony Johnson, Harold Jones (8), drums; Jackie Ryan, vocals (6, 10, 11, 14, 15, 18).

Ordering info: openartproductions.com



John Hollenbeck's Claudia Quintet has a signature sound. Rhythmic modulation, tricky times, chamber-y textures, cyclical minimalist devices mix with open and structured improvisation, virtually always hewing to a strong pulse. It might be a blend of downtown jazz and Bang On A Can, but on their seventh CD, nothing is left partially digested. You'd never mistake Claudia for anyone else.

When the beat briefly breaks down or evaporates, as on "18th: Lemons," miraculous little sonic universes open up, soon to be subsumed in a riff or repetition. As a drummer, Hollenbeck's got a tendency to put 10 notes where two might do, filling everything up, bursting with nervous energy. His playing has an inorganic sensibility-the brushes feel a bit like a washing machine, everything has a pristine quality, sometimes cool and calculated. One might wish for an accident or two, but that's not the vibe. And to be honest there's also an underlying, countervailing warmth, a deep humanity that all the players convey. That might be the result of the leader's interest in oral transmission, reportedly the main manner of composition on September.



On "29th: 1936 'Me Warn You," a recording of FDR's sarcastic voice is dissected and recast, extracting its musicality, reminding of Steve Reich's voice loops or Jason Moran's forays into text. "12th: Coping Song," an elegy on 9/11, shows Hollenbeck has depth as a conjurer of unclassifiable melodies. —John Corbett

September: 20th: Soterius Lakshmi; 9th: Wayne Phases; 25th: Somber Blanket; 29th: 1936 "Me Warn You"; 22nd: Love Is Its Own Eternity: 18th: Lemons; 17th: Loop Piece: 24th: Interval Dig; 16th: Mystic Klang; 12th: Coping Song. (67:19) Personnel: John Hollenbeck, drums, percussion; Red Wierenga, accordion; Chris Speed, tenor saxophone, clarinet; Matt Moran, vibraphone; Drew Gress (1, 4, 7–10), Chris Tordini

Ordering info: cuneiformrecords.com

(2356) bass



Randy Brecker The Brecker Brothers Band Reunion PILOO 007 ***

If you want to party like it was 1971 with some cats who wrote the book on jazz-rock fusion, check out Randy Brecker's new album, which offers crisp precision, orchestral tapestries, seductive grooves and crystalline separation—hallmarks of the genre—with solos ranging from good to marvelous. Unfortunately, Brecker doesn't discriminate between the appealing optimism of that era and its cheesier aspects, such as wah-wah effects, guitar heroism, come-hither soul-jazz vocals and, most objectionable (even if in jest), sexist lyrics and vocal antics.

The highs are dazzling, among them the speedy, multi-part "First Tune Of The Set" (so named because it is); "The Dipshit," a jukebox boogaloo with a "Snake Rag"-style tag, with David Sanborn; and the slow and sexy "R N Bee" with Will Lee's spooky bass line. Brecker salutes his 4-year-old daughter on flugelhorn with "Stellina" and his wife, Ada Rovatti (who plays lovely soprano saxophone on the tune), on "Adina." The bittersweet, synth-orchestrated "Elegy For Mike" is touching. The DVD features Rovatti's big-toned tenor more liberally than the CD, though it also has her triggering silly wah-wah passages.

From such heights it is a great tumble to Brecker impersonating a hapless hustler on "Really In For It" and a rural blues singer on "Musician's Ol' Lady Dues Blues." And while guest vocalist Oli Rockberger's hoarse whisper may well find a spot on the adult contemporary charts, "Merry Go Town" sounds ever so much like something Blood, Sweat & Tears might have recorded decades ago. —Paul de Barros

The Brecker Brothers Band Reunion: Disc 1 (CD): First Tune Of The Set; Stellina; The Dipshit; Merry Go Town; The Slag; Really In For It; Elegy For Mike; On The Rise; Adina; R N Bee; Musician's O' Lady Dues Blues. (73:07) Disc 2 (DVD): First Tune Of The Set; The Slag; Adina; Really In For It; Straphangin'; Stellina; Merry Go Town; Inside Out; Some Skunk Funk. (1:38:03)

Personnel: Randy Brecker, trumpet, flugelhorn (2, 9), vocal (6, 8, 11); Ada Rovatti, tenor, soprano saxophones; David Sanborn, alto saxophone (3, 6); Jim Campagnola, baritone asxophone (6, 8); Mike Stern (1, 6), Adam Rogers (2, 3, 8), Dean Brown (1, 4, 7, 9), Mitch Stein (5, 6, 10), guitar, Will Lee, Chris Minh Doky (7, 9) bass; Dave Weckl, Rodney Holmes (5, 6, 10) drums; George Whitty, keyboards, percussion (1, 2, 9, 10), programming (1, 2, 9, 10), sound design (4, 7, 8), organ (3); Oli Rockberger, vocals, keyboard (4, 8). Ordering info: piloorecords.com

The Box				
Critics	John McDonough	John Corbett	Jim Macnie	Paul de Barros
René Marie I Wanna Be Evil	****	***	****	***
Swing Fever Grand Masters Of Jazz	***	**½	***	***½
The Claudia Quintet September	***	****	****	****
Randy Brecker Brecker Brothers Band Reunion	***½	**1⁄2	***	***

Critics' Comments

René Marie, I Wanna Be Evil: With Love To Eartha Kitt

Swinging, soulful vocalist René Marie has great control and range but has had difficulty defining her territory. Oddly, this tribute album to Eartha Kitt has sparked some originality. Her clever, funky arrangement (in three) of "Let's Do It," a sexy "Santa Baby" and her daringly transgressive original "Weekend" add punch. The earnest Marie is more seduced by Kitt's theatrical "earthiness" than by her winking kitsch. —Paul de Barros

The Eartha Kitt songbook gives this excellent singer a superb array of material (from Dave Frishberg to Cole Porter) in which to show her winking, sinewy stuff. The East Side cleverness and sophistication tilt toward cabaret, but Wycliffe Gordon bridges the gap with humor and a few strange sounds. *—John McDonough*

Successful transfusion of Eartha Kitt's red-blooded, raw sex and exotica, purred and snarled as a steely story of determination and triumph. Marie throws a few of her own curves into the mix, but plays it rather close to the source. —John Corbett

Swing Fever, Grand Masters Of Jazz

Obviously prepared with love and admiration for the swing-pins. Memorable flashes from Clark Terry and Jackie Ryan, and DeFranco's got such a huge presence, but much of the disc and two freebie DVDs falls short of being extraordinary. —John Corbett

Clark Terry, Terry Gibbs and Buddy DeFranco—caught here more than 10 years ago—play with sparkling panache, and San Francisco bandleader Bryan Gould's ensemble honors them with a solid bed of swing. But the CD, stitched from live and studio sessions (with falsely feathered applause to make it sound like it was all one show) promises more than it delivers—the principals never appear together and the expansive (and wonderful) vocalist Jackie Ryan feels like the real star. —Paul de Barros

The Claudia Quintet, September

The interplay of the Claudias has been magical for a few years now, but the eye-opener here is the intrepid nature of Hollenbeck's compositional sense. It's simultaneously more refined and more far-reaching on these pieces, and it's the main reason the disc is so enchanting as a whole. —Jim Macnie

Even when this superb accordion- and vibes-laced quintet is chattering in Morse code or obsessing, Steve Reich-style, over asymmetric chunks of melody, a shimmering spiritual warmth swells up around leader John Hollenbeck's inspired, orchestral drumming. "29th: 1936 'Me Warn You," built from imbedded historical speech, conjures contemporary social reality in a way that much music more readily labeled as "jazz" feels altogether too remote from. —Paul de Barros

If you've never heard FDR's mocking 1936 aria to eternal GOP hypocrisy set to music, you'll enjoy this quirky quartet as it teases and riffs on his rhythms. Politics aside, the music is impressionistic, intellectually vexing and emotionally rather evasive. Its elusiveness is part of its charm and its frustration. —John McDonough

Randy Brecker, The Brecker Brothers Band Reunion

Hard to peg the Brecker brand as nostalgia, but a reunion doesn't lie. Randy and his fusionaires are all on top of a rather half-breed game here, in jazz quarters at least. But the playing has punch, power and wattage. The surprise is Ada Rovatti, who warrants her prominence as stand-in for her late brother-in-law. Companion DVD very well produced. —John McDonough

Glint of light on metallic font—this self-tribute adopts the '70s aesthetic the Brecker Brothers helped codify, down to the design. Glitter of disco + pneumatic thwack of salsa + adrenaline wail of mainstream rock + post-bop infrastructure = music that birthed 100 TV themes. For the record: "Merry Go Town" has some of the dopiest lyrics this side of Men At Work. —John Corbett

Sharp playing on paper, but the studio stuff has a hokey side, and the live stuff truly seems locked in another era. That said, the band scalds through its rather predictable fusion flourishes. —Jim Macnie

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The Jamie Baum Septet+ In This Life SUNNYSIDE 1363 ****

New York-based flutist and composer Jamie Baum's long-gestating record is heavily influenced by her travels in Southeast Asia, but the overall sound of the project cannot be pinpointed to any location on the globe. In This Life roars out of the opening gate with the blistering "Nusrat," a nod to Qawwali vocalist Nusrat Fateh Ali Khan, whose presence reverberates throughout the album. Baum opens with a short, breathy flute statement before the full band jumps in. Drummer Jeff Hirshfield's splashy restraint is pushed relentlessly by tabla player Dan Weiss, who doubles up on the intensity as the furious melody stutters with lightning speed.

The tribal funk of "Ants And Other Faithful Beings" is demolished by a jarring piano solo from John Escreet that does not quite pair up with the meticulous arrangements of Baum's melody, while "Richie's Lament" revels in space with a hymnal-like quality. Bass clarinetist Douglas Yates ascends over that roominess with measured confidence.

Baum later tackles two compositions from Khan, including "The Game" from his early '90s English fusion disc Mustt Mustt. The tune is played like a fairly straightforward jazz affair, eschewing the pop production values of the original as well as the rugged melisma of Khan's vocals. Its Pakistani origins are buried way deep. On In This Life, Baum effortlessly blends seven or eight voices into an orchestra that feels unstoppable at —Sean J. O'Connell times.

In This Life: Nusrat; The Meeting (Tana Dery Na); Ants And Other Faithful Beings; In Another Life; Monkeys Of Gokarna Forest; While We Are Here (For Elise Needell Babcock); Richie's Lament (For Richie Beirach); The Game; In A Nutshell; Inner Voices; Sweet Pain/Nusrat. (66:34)

Personnel: Jamie Baum, flute, alto flute, flute d'amore; Amir ElSaffar, Taylor Haskins (4–6), trumpet; Douglas Yates, alto saxophone, bass clarinet: Chris Komer, French horn; Brad Shepik, guitar; John Escreet, piano, Fender Rhodes; Zachary Lober, bass; Jeff Hirshfield, drums; Samuel Torres, percussion (3); Dan Weiss, tabla (1, 8, 11).

Ordering info: sunnysiderecords.com

Brian Haas/Matt Chamberlain Frames

ROYAL POTATO FAMILY/KINNARA 1319 ***

Serving both as études and miniature mood pieces, pianist Brian Haas composed the 11 pieces on Frames as exercises in various musical keys. He enlisted drummer Matt Chamberlain as a duo partner, and the results are at once unexpected but perfectly in line with their respective catalogues. Haas is a co-founder of the genre-distorting Jacob Fred Jazz Odyssey, which takes a playful pop approach to jazz and jamband improvisation. Chamberlain is a busy drummer in the jazz and rock worlds, including stints with Tori Amos and Pearl Jam. He formed the jazz jamband Critters Buggin and, most pertinent to this release, teamed with Bill Frisell on the electronic project Floratone.

Elements of those projects seep into Frames, but these through-composed pieces are more about atmosphere than invention. Haas penned the music while on a break from JFJO's grueling tour schedule, shortly after a move to Santa Fe, N.M. The pieces contain some of the austere beauty of that desert landscape, rife with the silent mystery of star-filled skies and stark landscapes. There are heavy traces of the influence of minimalist composers like Philip Glass and Steve Reich in the spiraling repetitions of tunes like the opener, "Birth," and the mathematical rhythms driving "Of Many, One." But despite their studied origins,



the songs are not complex for complexity's sake, and Haas draws on both the ambient textures of Brian Eno and the melancholy pop of Nick Drake. More rewarding to immersion than concentration, Haas' tunes occasionally slide from the minimal to the simplistic, threatening to devolve into minimalism-lite. Given the proper state of mind, however, they can conjure evocative imagery and set a vividly suggestive mood. -Shaun Brady

Frames: Birth: Open Windows: Death: An Introduction: Prism: Of Many, One; Niche; Drive; Death: An Observation; Closing Window; An Empty House; From Nothing, Infinite. (31:07) Personnel: Brian Haas, piano; Matt Chamberlain, drums, percussion; Peter Tomshany, guitar; Costa Stasinopoulos, synths, programming; Chris Combs, synths. Ordering info: royalpotatofamily.com



Tim Berne's Snakeoil Shadow Man FCM 2339 ****

Alto saxophonist and alt-jazz hero Tim Berne has been one of the stalwart-yet never stalefigures on the left-end jazz scene since the mid-'80s, and yet his engaging presence and creative fertility have bumped up a few notches just in the last couple of years. With Shadow Man, his second album for the ECM label in as many years, Berne, in the context of his masterful and flexible quartet Snakeoil, moves further out of the shadows and into higher profile, with a potent, poetic and sternum-shaking body of music. It's visceral on impact, but chamber music-like in its intricacy, but also has a feeling of barely controlled freedom. This music rocks and thinks, explores, deconstructs and, yes, it swings, in its own identifiably angular, Berneian way.

Among other talents, Berne has shown a gift in the elusive art of band-making over the years, rattling conventions while concocting his own points of ensemble logic. A bass-less band, Snakeoil is-apart from sprinkles of Wurlitzer piano-an acoustic quartet, though often electric in spirit. Apart from Berne's clearly protagonist role as player and composer, pianist Matt Mitchell is a formidable anchor, and the wily Snakeoil charm is also reliant on the alternately sensitive and intense contributions by clarinetist Oscar Noriega and drummer Ches Smith (who also adds periodic vibraphone touches).

There are moments of grace and delicacy all along the way, especially in the airily tender version of the late Paul Motian's "Psalm," in a spare duo reading by Berne and Mitchell. But Berne's material for the project is also edgy and uncompromising, deliciously complex at times, and sometimes expansive in scope. Berne is emerging, or re-emerging, as an important 21st century jazzman, getting ever deeper into the process of connecting the dots of an avant-garde tradition he has helped to shape. -Josef Woodard

Shadow Man: Son Of Not So Sure; Static; Psalm; OC/DC; Socket; Cornered (Duck), (77:04)

Personnel: Tim Berne, alto saxophone; Oscar Noriega, clarinet, bass clarinet; Matt Mitchell, piano, tack and Wurlitzer pianos; Ches Smith, drums, vibraphone, percussion. Ordering info: ecmrecords.com

Gillet Singleton Duo Ferdinand SELF-RELEASE ****

It's rare that an album changes one's perception of what is possible in music; this is such an album. Recorded during two improvised sessions last March inside a 19th century church-turned-opera house in New Orleans, the Gillet Singleton Duo brings together two keystones



of the city's progressive contemporary music scene: the muscular and deeply groove-driven bassist James Singleton and cellist Helen Gillet, whose musical inclinations range from French chansons to experimental jazz to classical Indian ragas. Though their first duo recording features instruments of the same family, Gillet and Singleton incite in one another such combustible sparks of creativity that *Ferdinand* feels more like the work of 12 musicians than two.

The opener, "Heavy Western," features a looped concert of Gillet's soulful bowing, over which she plucks an additional melodic line while tapping, stomping and slapping a beat out with her hands on the body of her instrument and her heels on the church floor. Quickly picking up on the improvisation's direction, Singleton skids into the fray with a series of jittery bowed phrases before the tension yields to a dynamic climax, landing, finally, at the bottom of the song's scale. "Bow Creek" dispenses with any traditional concept of what a stringed instrument should sound like, as cello and bass harmonize to create the sound of wood stretching to the point of rupture. The effect yields a beauty not unlike that of their makeshift studio's arched yet crumbling ceiling: a song for the space itself. Brimming with risk-induced energy and eschewing all manner of technical limitations, *Ferdinand* plays like an ode to the joy of exploration. *—Jennifer Odell*

Ferdinand: Heavy Western; Tangoid; Ferdinand; Wabash; Bow Creek; Green Shoes; Birimboo; Top Of The Friend Chain; Mission; Messiaen; In the Hills; Lamentico; Sometimes Knows; The One Two Seven Stompers. (4650)

Personnel: Helen Gillet, cello, effects; James Singleton, bass, effects, pocket trumpet. Ordering info: helengillet.com

Bryan Shaw and the Hot Shots The Bluebird Of Happiness ARBORS 19434 ★★⅓2

The jacket cartoon is a night scene of a cozy, thatched-roof cottage with a blue spacejet parked outside. But is this Hot Shot date a time warp to the 1920s, the 2020s, or merely competent, enthusiastic musicians hard



at work? Trumpeter Bryan Shaw invests his band with clean, crisp charts, cheerfully reprising angst-free dance and party music of other eras, modest of ambition except to sing good songs. They blend polished trad reminiscent of '50s Louis Armstrong with buoyant swing entries. Guitarist Brad Roth, who pens four capable, bluesy '50s-small-band-style tunes, picks up banjo to plunk the 2/4 trad rhythms. Shaw shows his lean, scrappy sound on a hot stop-time ("Papa De Da Da") and a tender verse ("Lucky So And So"). It's all a little pat and complacent, but these guys sure do love their melody. I'd sooner go dance to the Hot Shots than just sit and listen. *—Fred Bouchard*

The Bluebird Of Happiness: Love Me Or Leave Me; All My Life; Wang Wang Blues; Vignette; Papa De Da Da; Song Of Dreams; Lucky So And So; Old Man Bowers; Bloomin' Blues; I Lost My Gal From Memphis; Ellie; Blue Room; Chloe; Strange Blues; The Bluebird Of Happiness. (68:31) Personnel: Bryan Shaw, trumpet; Ehud Asherie, piano; Evan Arntzen, reeds; Dan Barrett, trombone; Jeff Hamilton, drums; John Dominguez, bass; Brad Roth, guitar, banjo. Ordering info: arborsrecords.com Myra Melford Life Carries Me This Way FIREHOUSE 12 0401018

Some albums are light. You can throw them on at parties, listen to them in the car or exercise to them. *Life Carries Me This Way* is not one of those albums. Pianist Myra Melford's initial stab at a solo-piano album, this CD is a thick slab of music. It's heavy



and deep and intense and powerful. It is perhaps best listened to at night, alone. And its backstory reinforces those ideas. The songs are a tribute of sorts to painter Don Reich, a friend of Melford's who passed away in 2010. Every tune was composed with a different piece of Reich's in mind. So the album is a celebration of Reich, and art, and music, and friendship—but it truly feels like a meditation on death. Where do we go after this life? Can we take the music with us? One of the most affecting tracks on *Life Carries Me This Way* is titled "Red Land (For Don Reich)." The tune begins with one repeated note and later grows beautifully sad, tearjerking even. It ends on a happy note, though; people only leave us physically. —*Brad Farberman*

Life Carries Me This Way: Park Mechanics; Red Beach; Red Land (For Don Reich); Piano Music; Japanese Music; Attic; Curtain; Moonless Night; Barcelona; Sagrada Familia; Still Life. (56:06) Personnel: Myra Melford, piano, compositions; Don Reich, art. Ordering Info: <u>firehouse12records.com</u>

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Zsófia Boros: En Otra Parte (ECM 2328; 42:33 ★★★★) This evocative solo outing by the Hungarian classical virtuoso is imbued with passion, beauty and grace. By effectively utilizing space and issuing forth warm, ringing tones from her nylon-string guitar, Boros puts her own intuitive stamp on pieces by Cuban composer Leo Brouwer, new flamenco master Vicente Amigo, Ralph Towner and others. A stellar recital.

Ordering info: ecmrecords.com

Gisle Torvik: Tranquil Fjord (Ozella 051; 42:15 ★★★★) Like his countrymen Jan Garbarek and Terje Rypdal before him, guitarist Torvik distills the icy, slightly melancholic Norwegian aesthetic in his music while also emulating Pat Metheny on this ECM-ish outing. The delicate title track, which he reprises in a stirring solo version to close the collection, is indeed tranquil, while his solo guitar intro to the gentle "Bløming" is a restrained bit of six-string poetry. Elsewhere, Torvik heats up the fretboard on the angular "Kryssande," alluding to Pat Martino in his dizzying single-note runs, then turns introspective on his solo acoustic guitar piece "Stille Song" and his buoyant duet with bassist Audun Ellingsen on "Arv." An exceptional outing.

Ordering info: ozellamusic.com

Calvin Keys: *Electric Keys* (Wide Hive 0313; 48:34 ***½) Bay Area veteran imbues his '70s soul-jazz sound with potent, decidedly modernist runs up and down the fretboard while remaining deep in the pocket. Think latter day Grant Green. The title track and "The Hernia" both have 70-year-old Keys wailing with distortion pedal on stun while "Rhubarb Jam" has him grooving old school. His second-line-flavored "Senior Moment" blends funk and humor, while his remake of "Shawn-Neeq," his thoughtful modal piece from 1971, provides some tastefully searching moments.

Ordering info: widehiverecords.com

New West Guitar Group: *Big City* (Summit 614; 48:19 ★★★½) This group's shimmering arpeggios, collectively strummed chords and intricate latticework patterns are ideally suited to faithful covers of Tears For Fears' "Everybody Wants To Rule The World," Joni Mitchell's "All I Want" and The Police's "Wrapped Around Your Finger." But the Los Angeles-based guitar trio of Perry Smith, Jeff Stein and John Storie also shines on captivating originals like "Every Big City" and the chops-busting "Train Bump," where their tight, crackling interplay and complementary playing recall Anthony Wilson's extraordinary *Seasons* guitar quartet project from 2011.

Ordering info: summitrecords.com

Frank Potenza: For Joe (Capri 74127; 45:15 ****) This Joe Pass tribute reunites the same rhythm section that appeared on Pass' 1964 Pacific Jazz classic, For Django—guitarist John Pisano, bassist Jim Hughart and drummer Colin Bailey. With Potenza they interpret Pass originals like "A Foxy Chick And A Cool Cat" and the burning "Catch Me" along with Pass staples like Earl Hines' "Rosetta," Gershwin's "Love Is Here To Stay" and "Beautiful Love" (which Pisano's wife sang at Pass' funeral in 1994). Pisano's "Blues For Joe" is played as a buoyant jazz waltz underscored by Bailey's brisk brushwork. An accomplished player, Potenza reveals touches of his mentor's brilliance throughout this heartfelt project.

Ordering info: caprirecords.com

Howard Alden/Andy Brown Quartet: Heavy Artillery (Delmark 5008; 59:44 ★★★★) Chicagoan Brown and New Yorker Alden demonstrate an easy chemistry on this two-guitar guartet session. With bassist Joe Policastro and drummer Bob Rummage, they forge burning unisons and intricate counterpoint on Clark Terry's blazing "Chuckles," the joyful swinger "Louisiana," the mellow bossa nova "Vocé E Eu," Thad Jones' "Three And One" and a percolating rendition of Don Redman's "No One Else But You." The title track, a lazy blues written by Django Reinhardt, is rendered with requisite bounce and soul by the two superb plectrists. They burn a blue streak on Tal Farlow's "I Brung You Finjans For Your Zarf" then settle into a swing groove, courtesy of Alden's insistent walking bass lines, on a duet rendition of "If Dreams Come True." Shades of Herb Ellis and Barney Kessel. Ordering info: delmark.com



Matana Roberts Coin Coin Chapter Two: Mississippi Moonchile CONSTELLATION 098

In the second part of her ongoing *Coin Coin* project, composer and alto saxophonist Matana Roberts tackles the complex subjects of race, gender and ancestry, combining jazz, avant-garde, opera, folk songs and spoken word. Despite the wide range of elements here, the music maintains coherence and is also more concise than the first part of the work, 2011's *Gens De Couleur Libres*.

The 18 tracks here flow into each other as one continuous composition. Roberts relies on recurring musical themes and fragments, which vary from abstract long-note phrases to shorter, harsher clusters, to lyrical and lush call-and-response patterns matching up Roberts' alto, Jason Palmer's trumpet, Shoko Nagai's percussive piano and Tomas Fujiwara's percussion. The tracks juxtapose different themes to mostly great effect especially on the pretty "River Ruby Dues" and "Was The Sacred Day."

Mostly the themes work well together, but at certain points they do not. When the music loses structure, Roberts often brings in vocals or a more conventional phrase to ground it and connect it back to the work as a whole. On the last third of the album, Roberts weaves the themes skillfully into tunes with a more familiar structure. Over this, she adds spoken vocals recounting her ancestors' experience with slavery. Coin Coin Chapter 2 has some of Max Roach's social consciousness and John Coltrane's spiritual vision. When Roberts recites her ancestors' history and the social and political power structures in Mississippi, it hits on a visceral level. Jazz rarely has the depth that Roberts brings to her music here, and as this work continues, it is this depth in the music that will distinguish it. -David Kunian

Coin Coin Chapter Two: Mississippi Moonchile: Invocation; Humility Draws Down Blue; All Nations; Twelve Sighed; Spares Of The World; Secret Covens; River Ruby Dues; Confessor Haste; Amma Jerusalem School; For This Is; Responsory; The Labor Of Their Lips; Was The Sacred Day; Lesson; Woman Red Racked; Thanks Be You; Humility Draws Down New; Benediction. (48:43) Personnel: Matana Roberts, alto saxophone, vocals; Shoko Nagai,

piano, vocals; Jason Palmer, trumpet, vocals; Jeremiah Abiah, vocals; Thomson Kneeland, bass, vocals; Tomas Fujiwara, drums, vocals.

Ordering info: cstrecords.com



Diego Urcola Mates SUNNYSIDE 4112 ***1/2

While the title of this date might refer to "mate," a centuries-old South American "drink of friendship," it also, and more explicitly, refers to the series of 14 duets that Buenos Aires-born, New York-based trumpeter Diego Urcola conducts with old and new friends. Among those friends are bassist Avishai Cohen and vibraphonist Dave Samuels, both of whom have recorded on previous Urcola outings. The albums *Libertango* and *VIVA* highlight Urcola as a leader, but he's also been a regular with clarinetist Paquito D' Rivera, the Dizzy Gillespie Alumni All-Stars and Guillermo Klein's Los Guachos aggregate.

None of that expanded palette obviously surfaces on Mates, which also includes exchanges with bandoneón player Juan Dargenton and harpist Edmar Castañeda. In every instance, the music has a singing quality to it, whether it's samba-infused, balladic or simply playful. Playful is one word that might describe the opener, the traditional "Eleguá." Its tart and taut melody played in duet with Cohen is a fairly weak beginning to what leads to more magical encounters along the way. Throughout, the selections become more visits than resting places, with only two numbers clocking in at more than five minutes. You might say chops aren't the order of the day here. Solos are brief, if at all. The intent is tilted more toward the chemistry Urcola engenders between each of his musical partners.

All that said, it is Urcola, the player, who remains center stage, whether playing trumpet, muted trumpet or flugelhorn. The moods tend to be introspective. Bouncy fare offers the counter forward motion that might suggest a lively dance: On Cohen's "Gadu," Urcola's open horn is opposite Cohen's propulsive plucks, climaxing in an equally rare trilling shout from the leader.

-John Ephland

Personnel: Diego Urcola, trumpet, flugelhorn; Avishai Cohen, bass (1, 5, 9, 12); Dave Samuels, vibes, marimba (4, 7, 10); Edmar Castañeda, harp (3, 6, 13); Juan Dargenton, bandoneón (2, 8, 11, 14). Ordering Info: <u>sunnysiderecords.com</u>

Tierney Sutton After Blue BFMJAZZ 302062419 ★★★★½

Before she performed the Joni Mitchell-Charles Mingus composition "The Dry Cleaner From Des Moines" at a recent show at New York City's Jazz Standard, Tierney Sutton recounted her difficulties learning to sing it as flawlessly as Mitchell did on her 1979 album, *Mingus*. "I thought, how hard could it be? After all, I'm a jazz singer, I sing Bill Evans tunes." It proved fiendishly difficult to master, but master it she did, as she demonstrates on this album, easily the best collection of Joni Mitchell material since Herbie Hancock's Grammy-winning *River: The Joni Letters*.

Sutton listened to Mitchell's music for 10 years before she felt ready to record this homage, and it was time well spent. Sutton is utterly comfortable with the Mitchell canon, singing with great purity of tone and depth of feeling, and arranging the songs in ways that open them up musically while honoring the genius of the originals.

Sutton is widely admired for her cool, limpid tone, her precise intonation, and her modernistic arrangements of standards. Her previous album, 2011's *American Road*, involved a more radical restructuring and reharmonization of its source material. Here she sticks closer to the original melodies and, despite the album title, covers a wide range of Mitchell's oeuvre: the 1969 folk of "Both Sides Now"; masterpieces from the iconic *Blue* album; her jazz tunes from the late '70s and '80s; and two ballads representing Mitchell's reemergence in 2000 as the smoky, vulnerable torch singer of *Both Sides Now*.

Reinterpreting iconic songs like "Blue," "All I Want" and "Woodstock" is no walk in the park. Mitchell owns these songs, in more ways than one. Although it's impossible that anyone else could



sing "Little Green" with the soul-baring poignancy that Mitchell brought to it, Sutton's rendition is haunting, illuminated with a somber, probing string arrangement by the Turtle Island Quartet, which also accompanies her on "Blue." The album is stuffed with various pleasures: a playful vocal duet with Al Jarreau on "Be Cool," which includes inspired solos by Larry Goldings on B-3 and Hubert Laws on flute; Goldings' eloquent piano contributions; and, in the album's finale, a romantic melding of "April In Paris" and "Free Man In Paris" that works surprisingly well. The juxtaposition of the Great American Songbook classic with Mitchell's more modern work illustrates Sutton's contention that "Joni's lyrics and music can sit next to the best standards." With this album she proves her case. -Allen Morrison

After Blue: Blue; All I Want; Court And Spark; Don't Go To Strangers; The Dry Cleaner From Des Moines; Big Yellow Taxi; Woodstock; Little Green; Be Cool; Answer Me, My Love; Both Sides Now; April In Paris/Free Man In Paris. (58:00)

Paris/refe Man In Paris, 153:001 Personnel: Tierney Sutton, vocals; Hubert Laws, flute (5, 9); Larry Goldings, piano, B-3 organ; Peter Erskine (5, 9), Ralph Humphrey (6), drums; Serge Merlaud, guitar (4, 10); Kevin Axt, bass (4); Al Jarreau, vocals (9); Mark Summer, cello; David Balakrishnan, Mateusz Smoczynski, violin; Benjamin Von Gutzeit, viola. Ordering info: bfmjazz.com

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Charles Evans Subliminal Leaps MORE IS MORE 132 ****

Charles Evans is a promising young saxophonist whose single focus is the baritone. For a while he had been seeking out one of his heroes, the masterful soprano saxophonist Dave Liebman, for whom he composed the



material featured on this outstanding new album. This pretty unusual marriage bears some impressive fruit. The exchange on the opener, "Dreamed-Out March," shows that the two saxophonists did not need much time to get acquainted. As a result, their two cohorts-bass player and longtime Liebman associate Tony Marino and pianist Ron Stabinsky-seem to be liberated and able to make significant contributions. Evans fully embraces modern techniques and free improvisation, and the music can be challenging. But there is an uncanny lightness that makes those musical excursions endearing and engaging. -Alain Drouot

Subliminal Leaps: Dreamed-Out March; Certain Soprano; Mahler Method; Interruptions; Subliminal Leaps; Reprise. (47:00)

Personnel: Charles Evans, baritone saxophone; Dave Liebman, soprano saxophone; Tony Marino, bass; Ron Stabinsky, piano. Ordering info: moreismorerecords.com

Kronos Quartet with Bryce Dessner Aheym ANTI- 87296 ***1/2

AHEYM

To the roster of eminent composers whose work has been recorded by the Kronos Quartet-a gathering which includes Bill Evans, Philip Glass, Henryk Górecki, Jimi Hendrix, Thelonious Monk, Arvo Pärt, Astor Piazzolla, Steve Reich and Anton

Webern, among others-let us now add Bryce Dessner, guitarist for The National, a Brooklyn-based rock band. Dessner, who holds a master's in music from Yale, knows his way around a quartet, and his style, both mesmerizing and repetitive, fits the 40-year-old group well.

The most compelling of the four tracks is "Little Blue Something," a piece inspired by Czech viola da gamba players Irena and Vojtech Havel, who released a 1991 recording titled Little Blue Nothing. The Kronos song starts out with a kind of gentle walking bass line, with keening upper strings answering in plaintive descending phrases, like a distant squeaking gate. The waltzy, almost folky start gives way to more complicated rhythms, then finds its way back again. It's somehow sweet and eerie at the same time, and lovely throughout. Indeed, the entire record succeeds in setting moods, one after the next. Little of it is easy listening. The opening bars of the title track, in an unsettling five rhythm, slash your ears awake (and may be meant to evoke some of the 20th century nightmares that drove Dessner's grandparents to emigrate to Brooklyn themselves); in "Tenebre," a commissioned homage to the quartet's longtime lighting and stage manager, illumination arrives in the end, but what a dark way it was. Aheym, Yiddish for "homecoming," is Dessner's first recording as a composer (a debt to Reich is evident throughout the disc), and his festival fans for the most part will not recognize him. The most familiar sounds arrive in "Tour Eiffel," written for the Brooklyn Youth Chorus. There is some subdued rhythm-guitar playing, and a little piano, both somehow comforting after all the multilayered drone. -David Zivan

Personnel: David Harrington, John Sherba, violin; Hank Dutt, viola; Sunny Yang, cello; Sufjan Stevens, vocal (3); Bryce Dessner, guitar (4); Brooklyn Youth Chorus, vocals (4). Ordering info; anti.com

The Thing Boot! THE THING 001

Working with Neneh Cherry on last year's The Cherry Thing, the Scandinavian trio The Thing tempered its usual steamroller intensity somewhat to accommodate the singer, in the process developing more of a hulking punk-soul-jazz sound. The bottom-dredging grooves reemerge



on their follow-up, Boot!, but with their slow-grind ferocity fully restored.

The exclamatory bark of the album's title captures its attitude, which amasses the low end of the sonic spectrum for a blunt-force kick to the gut. Mats Gustafsson switches between bass, baritone, tenor and soprano saxes, but even on the straight horn his sound seems to emerge from some deep recess-witness his writhing, squirming lines over a bed of feedback on "Reboot."

Bassist Ingebrigt Håker Flaten summons monolithic, pit-of-the-stomach reverberations, often plunging into tones that threaten to crack the songs' foundations, as in the white noise swell of his distorted bass on John Coltrane's "India" or the epic closer "Epilog."

Drummer Paal Nilssen-Love often provides the forward momentum driving his trio-mates' colossal slabs of sound, whether maintaining the swing feel in Duke Ellington's "Heaven" as Gustafsson pushes his bari to its guttural limits, or exploding into punk outbursts under the oozing sludge of "Epilog."

The trio deftly juggles sheer belligerent force and the nuances to be found in the extremities; its squealing feedback is precisely controlled, as is the grunting of Håker Flaten's bass on "Reboot," even as it resembles a warthog burrowing into the dirt with its snout. The trio members continue to be masters of intensity, never losing focus or form no matter how punishing their approach. —Shaun Brady

Boot!: India; Reboot; Heaven; Red River; Boot!; Epilog. (56:05)

Personnel: Mats Gustafsson, bass, baritone, tenor, soprano saxophones; Ingebrigt Håker Flaten, electric bass; Paal Nilssen-Love, drums. Ordering info: thethingrecords.com

Joey DeFrancesco **One For Rudy HIGHNOTE 7256** ***

Organist Joey DeFrancesco's One For Rudy is a sweet dollop of swing but far from a main course. He and guitarist Steve Cotter and drummer Ramon Banda stroll through 10 tracks of mostly well-worn standards in a nod to recording engineer Rudy Van Gelder, who supervised the ses-



sion last summer. This band has a lot of experience on the road together, but this is their first studio outing. Things progress slowly at first with a breezy, lighter-than-air take on "I Don't Wanna Be Kissed." "Canadian Sunset" gets a tumbleweed rub amid the gently propulsive swing. The band hits its stride on a blistering version of Freddie Hubbard's "Up Jumped Spring." DeFrancesco is at his flamboyant best, opening the tune solo before letting Cotter put an elastic spin on the changes. The trio is in fine form throughout, but they don't shed any new light on the repertoire or the format. The result is an entertaining blowing session-DeFrancesco and his bandmates could make a record like this every single day if they wanted to. -Sean J. O'Connell

One For Rudy: I Don't Wanna Be Kissed; Budo; Goodbye; Canadian Sunset; Up Jumped Spring; Way Out West; After You've Gone; Monk's Dream; Stardust; One For Rudy. (59:26) Personnel: Joey DeFrancesco, Hammond B-3; Steve Cotter, guitar; Ramon Banda, drums Ordering info: jazzdepot.com

Aheym: Aheym; Little Blue Something; Tenebre; Tour Eiffel. (44:34)

Marco Cappelli Acoustic Trio Le Stagioni del Commissario Ricciardi TZADIK 7644 ***

Would you like the Marco Cappelli Acoustic Trio's latest CD any less if you didn't know that it was inspired by the 1930s-set noir crime novels of Neapolitan writer Maurizio de Giovanni? Played by the trio—Cappelli on custom-made "extreme" acoustic guitar, bassist Ken Filiano and percussionist Satoshi Takeishi—these eight pieces are meant to conjure the mood and individual characters, if not specific scenes, from de Giovanni's four-novel *Commissario Ricciardi* series.

Cappelli provides brief scenarios for each piece ("The witness. The man walking on the thin edge between life and death, whose gaze flies over suffering and is polluted by it."). Without that context, what you're likely to notice is an acoustic trio whose adventurousness recalls the String Trio of New York or more recent work by violinist Carla Kihlstedt. So one gets the odd, aggressive accents and dissonances of opener "Detective Ricciardi." Or there are the "extended" effects of scraped strings, harmonics and buzzing bowed bass on "March Of The Dead," where the steady parade-beat thump of drums gradually dissolves into free-time.

These pieces all have a beguiling integrity, occasionally attractive themes and hooky grooves. Even at their most "out," they can swing hard,



with all manner of syncopation driving the music forward. The transparent textures (especially Takeishi's detailed hand percussion) contribute to the music, which is as delicate as it is emotionally raw. Cappelli can conjure a crystalline tone and clean phrasing that reaches into the classical and flamenco traditions. And, yes, there is a cinematic, even sinister quality to a lot of the music.

—Jon Garelick

Le Stagioni del Commissario Ricciardi: Detective Ricciardi; Sergeant Maione: Doctor Modo; Livia; March Of The Dead; Deputy Police Chief Garzo; Enrica; Bambinella; O'Pateterno Nun E' Mercante (Ca Pava 'O Sabbato). (58:16) Personnel: Marco Cappelli, guitar; Ken Filiano, bass; Satoshi

Takeishi, percussion. Ordering info: tzadik.com



Christian Wallumrød Ensemble Outstairs ECM 18469 ****

The lineup in this elusive sextet led by the Norwegian composer and pianist Christian Wallumrød has undergone a steady transformation—from quintet to quartet to sextet—and on this latest recording, tenor saxophonist Espen Reinertsen and cellist Tove Törngren enter the fold, replacing baroque harpist Giovanna Pessi and cellist Tanja Orning. Yet more important than the shifting personnel is the dynamic vision of its leader, who embodies the erasure of stylistic borders as much as anyone in genre-averse Scandinavia. While Wallumrød comes out of the jazz and improvised music tradition—he was part of the trio Close Erase with Ingebrigt Håker Flaten and drummer Per Oddvar Johansen (the latter has been a bedrock of the pianist's ensembles)—his work as a leader has consistently eschewed easy definition, never more so than on the gorgeous-ly contemplative *Outstairs*.

On paper Wallumrød's delicate collision of sounds derived from Morton Feldman, Nordic folk traditions, baroque music and free improvisation seems too arch and clever, but those are all elements at work on this mysterious album. There's a sense of somber minimalist stateliness on the opening piece, "Stille Rock," which progresses at a funereal pace, bobbing between two repeating piano chords and getting caressed with long tones played on the horns, as whispers of extended-technique saxophone textures and thunderous but restrained drum patterns spend eight minutes preparing for the denouement of ethereal string flutters and harmonium swells. "Very Slow" is the most eloquent, resonant and detailed evocation of Wallumrød's hybrid ethos, where genre lines don't dissolve as much as they never existed in the first place. -Peter Margasak

Outstairs: Stille Rock; Bunadsbangla; Tridili #2; Very Slow; Startic; Beatknit; Folkskiss; Third Try, Ornament; Outstairs; Exp. (56:05) Personnel: Christian Wallumrød, piano, harmonium, toy piano; Evind Lønning, trumpet; Gjermund Larsen, violin, hardanger fiddle, viola; Espen Reinertsen, tenor saxophone; Tove Törngren, cello; Per Oddvar Johansen, drums, vibraphone. Ordering info: ecmrecords.com







Tom McDermott Bamboula ™INKY 3 ★★★★

Finally pianist Tom McDermott is getting his due props with a nationally released compilation of his recordings. McDermott's fame as a piano professor who can move from gutbucket street blues to complex jazz figures, Caribbean rhythms to native South American music, is known



throughout the Crescent City and beyond.

Bamboula is a compilation of McDermott's previously released recordings on small labels like Rabadash, STR and Threadhead, curated by famed pianist and arranger Van Dyke Parks. McDermott's style combines more classically oriented material with jazz harmonies and Southern syncopation. On this album, he does wonderful interpretations of works by 19th-century popular pianists and composers Louis Moreau Gottschalk and Scott Joplin as well as tangos, choros and valse-musettes. His versions of the Creole and ragtime pieces help draw the connection to the French, Caribbean and Argentinian compositions that follow.

McDermott plays these songs as living, relevant pieces—not classroom lectures or stale recreations of old music. The elegant harmonies on "For Brenda" pair well with the pretty and mysterious melodies of tunes such as "Lost Rio." The songs are full of tricky syncopations that McDermott navigates deftly with full-bodied chords. Despite the small number of players on each song, there is a lot going on. His duet partners—trombonist Rick Trolsen, soprano saxophonist Aurora Nealand and clarinetist Evan Christopher—weave nimble runs and phrases with solid intonation and gorgeous tone. This CD is a fantastic introduction to both McDermott and some of the songs he loves and plays so well. —David Kunian

Bamboula: Bamboula; Opulence; Irresistivel; Heliotrope Bouquet; Musette In A Minor; For Brenda; Atrapado; Le Manège Rouge; The Big Man; The Chrysanthemum; Tango Ambiguo; Casa Denise; Lost Rio; Insouciance; Realidade É Saudade: Santa Teresa. (69:10)

Personnel: Tom McDermott, piano; Aurora Nealand, soprano saxophone; Evan Christopher, clarinet; Patrick Harison, accordion; Caio Márcio, seven-string guitar; Henry Lentino, bandolim; Sérgio Krakowski, pandeiro; Rick Trolsen, trombone.

Ordering info: minkyrecords.com

Michele Rosewoman New Yor-Uba: A Musical Celebration Of Cuba In America ADVANCE DANCE DISQUES 0354 ****



Modern jazz albums anchored by folkloric Afro-Cuban rhythms and melodies have become so commonplace now that it's easy to underestimate the significance of Michele

Rosewoman's New Yor-Uba project. The pianist and composer conceived the musical concept more than 30 years ago while living in the Bay Area. On this two-disc set, Rosewoman developed original compositions, mostly paying tribute to each of the Orishas (Yoruban deities). From the opener, "Divine Passage," with its gentle melody and hypnotic batá rhythms, the music opens gateways for pleasurable listening without the need to be fully immersed in Afro-Cuban folklore. —John Murph

Personnel: Michele Rosewoman, piano, Fender Rhodes, vocals; Freddie Hendrix, trumpet, flugelhorn; Oliver Lake, alto saxophonist, Mike Lee, tenor saxophone, flute; Vincent Gardner, trombone; Howard Johnson, baritone saxophone, tuba; Yunior Terry, bas; Adam Cruz, drums; Pedrito Martinez, vocals, batá, congas; Roman Diaz, batá, congas, vocals (5); Abraham Rodriguez, batá, vocals, clave; Daniel Carbonell, batá, shaker; Nina Rodriguez, vocals; Chanell Crichlow, tuba. Ordering Info: michelerosewoman.com

Markus Gottschlich Of Places Between INNERCAT 13007

Of Places Between, the second album from Florida pianist Markus Gottschlich, is at its best during a cover of Billy Strayhorn's "A Flower Is A Lovesome Thing." Two minutes in, the ensemble drops into a dub



reggae section and the leader serves up a fun, frisky solo—his best on the album. It's a brave move—there's no obvious musical connection between the two beats—but Gottschlich and company *go for it*. Elsewhere, though, the CD feels unfocused. There's Latin jazz, reggae and Schubert. What's tying it all together? In the liner notes, Gottschlich says the album is about "traveling between continents, between two people, between traditions and forms, between beats and between silences." That's a nice sentiment, but instead of hanging out in the cracks, Gottschlich would have been better off getting right in the thick of it, like he did on "Lovesome." —*Brad Farberman*

Of Places Between: Invitation; Sleepless Night; Wehmut; A Flower Is A Lovesome Thing; Schubert Impromptu Op.90 Nr.3; Sojourner; Lilly; Dark Horses. (42:07)

Personnel: Markus Gottschlich, piano; Federico Britos, violin (1, 7); José Javier Freire, drums; Scott Whitney, bass; Christian Bakanic, accordion (2); Elon Rubin, cello (4); Rajesh Bhandari, percussion (1, 4, 8), djembe (4).

Ordering info: gottschlichmusic.com

Snarky Puppy Family Dinner: Volume One ROPEADOPE/GROUND UP 206

★ ★ 1/2

Led by bassist-composer-producer Michael League, Snarky Puppy is a retro venture in '70s- and '80s-style fusion—complete with r&b accents and vintage keyboard and bass sounds (including a "key bass"). League, in notes to this latest entry in



a series of live CD/DVD releases, says that he's drawn to old-school virtues particularly the "wonderful, imperfect noise" of live albums, with "no prerecorded tracks, no Auto-Tune." Hallelujah to that, as well as to the fact that a portion of the proceeds from this album's sales goes to help fund the education activities of the Music Lab at the Jefferson Center in Roanoke, Va.

Much of Snarky Puppy's appeal depends on one's nostalgia for the fusion era, even when the musicianship and spirit are as admirable as they've been on the band's previous funk-oriented instrumental releases, such as 2012's *Ground UP* (Ropeadope). *Family Dinner* features a 10-piece incarnation of the group accompanying a succession of 10 mostly female solo vocalists and their original tunes in a wide range of styles, from r&b and torch songs to world pop. Alas, for all of the ensemble's sensitive, versatile groove-making, the songs are too often hampered by bland melodies and blander lyrics (whether aspirational or lovelorn). The vocals, too, can be marred by pop cliché, as with the melisma of Malika Tirolien in "I'm Not The One." The frothy Gallic exuberance of accordion-wielding vocalist Magda Giannikou is more distinctive in "Amour T'es Lá." It's really only with the atmospheric minor chords and off-kilter rhythms of "Deep" by vocalist N'Dambi that *Family Dinner* yields anything that sticks to the ribs. —*Bradley Bambarger*

Family Dinner: Volume One: Disc 1 (CD): Free Your Dreams; Gone Under; Deep; Amour T'es Lá; Something; Too Hot To Last; Turned Away; I'm Not The One. (45:07) Disc 2 (DVD): Free Your Dreams; Gone Under; Deep; Amour T'es Lá; Something; Too Hot to Last; Turned Away; I'm Not the One; Da Da'n Da; Ase Me Na Bo; Black Sheep; He Got Away; Sew; Only Love; I'll Do Me. (133:33) Personnel: Chantae Cann, Shayna Steele, N'Dambi, Magda Giannikou, Lalah Hathaway, Lucy Woodward, Tony Scherr, Malika Tirolien, Judi Jackson, Jayna Brown, vocals; Michael League, electric bass, key bass; guitars; Bob Lanzetti, guitars; Mark Lettier, guitars, bass; Cory Henry, organ, Fender Rhodes; keyboards; Bill Laurance, piano, organ, Fender Rhodes; Robert Searight, drums; Nate Werth, percussion; Jay Jennings, Mike Maher, trumpet, flugelhorn; Chris Bullock, tenor saxophone, flute, bass clarinet; Chelsea West, Katya Diaz, Rachella Searight, backing vocals. Ordering Info: mone

New Yor-Uba: A Musical Celebration of Cuba in America: Disc 1: Divine Passage; Dance Of Agayu, Natural Light; Por Ahora y Para Siempre; Vamp For Ochun; Old Calabar; Rezo a Ochun. (50:20) Disc 2: In Praise Of Spiritual Guides; Perdon; Obalube; Where Water Meets Sky; Agua Dulce Del Bosque; Warrior; Earth Secrets. (54:54)
Blues / BY FRANK-JOHN HADLEY

Buzzard Luck

Frank Bey & Anthony Paule Band: Soul For Your Blues (Blue Dot 106; 57:34 ★★★★) Bey's voice is one of the small wonders of modern soul-blues, but only a few people know about this Philadelphian. He's found his dream band in seven Bay Area musicians led by tasteful, intelligent guitarist and producer Anthony Paule. Bey's achievement is to unite the shout of gospel sublimity with a well-organized pace of storytelling and then embossing the result with striking instances of hurt or bittersweet pleasure. Paule also gets to a special place with his disciplined and economical solos on "You're Somebody Else's Baby Too"

and "I Want To Change Your Mind." Aside from John Prine's tedious "Hello In There" and a throwaway instrumental version of "I Left My Heart In San Francisco," the rest of the album also stirs up abiding interest.

Ordering info: beypaule.com

Layla Zoe: The Lily (Cable Car 0311-41; 64:09 ★★★★) Zoe's stirring a cappella version of the famous spiritual "Glory, Glory Hallelujah," which kicks off her fifth album, serves notice why this Canadian is a favorite of European audiences. She sings with earnest elegance and evinces total emotional involvement with the lyric. For some of her second record with German guitarist-bassist-drummer Henrik Freischlader, Zoe employs her idiosyncratic sensibility to fire up original blues-rock numbers about skittish love, scrimping on subtlety but still revealing a human touch. Quieting things down, this fearlessly assured singer offers the uncompromising slow blues "Gemini Heart" and introspective "The Lily" as further proof that she wears her tattooed heart on her sleeve.

Ordering info: layla.ca

The Rides: Can't Get Enough (429 Records 7940; 48:15 * * * ½) In the studio, rock star Stephen Stills has never shown his worth under fire as either a bluesman or blues-rocker. (For instance, he fired blanks on Al Kooper's 1968 gold record, Super Session.) But now he's succeeded by way of a new band co-featuring fellow guitarist and singer Kenny Wayne Shepherd and the old blues keyboard trouper Barry Goldberg. They ignite Muddy Waters' "Honey Bee" with phosphorus guitar bursts that could make your blood turn solid. Shepherd, no longer infatuated with Stevie Ray Vaughan-style technical feats, manages the heat with a lyric touch, as on Neil Young's "Rockin' In The Free World." Ordering info: 429records.com



The Claudettes: Infernal Piano Plot ... Hatched! (Yellow Dog 2065; 39:32 ***) Managed by a stern ex-club owner named Claudette, the Illinois instrumental duo of pianist Johnny Iguana (who once played with Junior Wells and Otis Rush) and drummer Michael Caskey (Koko Taylor) hits listeners upside the head with a mash-up of Otis Spann blues, Albert Ammons boogie-woogie, Ray Charles soul and "Fess" Longhair New Orleans r&b. Better yet—catch them in a chaotic barroom.

Ordering info: yellowdogrecords.com

Ursula George: One Steady Roll (Tommytiger 9249; 44:04 ***½) Singer Lori Urso, out front of blues and vaudeville-jazz revivalists Ursula George for more than a decade, is a self-confident stylist whose affection for Mamie Smith, Perry Bradford and other worthies of the 1920s and early '30s is obvious upon hearing her updates of their mostly risqué tunes. Supported by well-respected drummer Marty Richards, versatile Roomful Of Blues saxophonist Doug James and nine others in southern New England, she dishes out plenty of sass testifying that "My Man Rocks Me" and "My Handy Man Ain't Handy No More."

Ordering info: cdbaby.com

Toronzo Cannon: John The Conquer Root (Delmark 831; 58:01 * * *) Brandishing a guitar forged in the furnace of Jimi Hendrix and singing adequately, bus driver Cannon busts out of Chicago with a promising debut album that more often than not steers away from deadening shuffle and boogie predictability. Rotating blithely on a soul-blues axis with added horns, "Cold World" is worth special notice. A harmonica-heated neo-blues titled "Shame" targets deadbeats and powermongers. DB

Ordering info: delmark.com



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Revews

Beyond / BY JOE TANGARI



Genres Collide in India

During the 1960s and '70s, the soundtracks of India's Bollywood film industry included some of the wildest, most imaginative pileups of genres and musical ideas ever committed to tape. The music has only been sporadically documented in the West, in part because so much of it was produced that it's difficult to compile a representative starting point.

The Rough Guide To Psychedelic Bollywood (RGNET 1302; 1:02:50 ★★★½) doesn't quite solve this problem, but it does take an immensely fun swing through some highlights from scores by R.D. Burman and the composing duos Kalyanji–Anandji and Laxmikant–Pyarelal. The set is split between madcap instrumentals that veer from surf to big band jazz to psychedelia and showcases for some of the finest playback singers, including Mahendra Kapoor, Mohammed Rafi, Lata Mangeshkar and Asha Bhosle, whose duel with a sitar and a slamming tabla beat on "Aye Naujawan Sab Kuchh Yahan" is the highlight of the set.

Ordering info: worldmusicnetwork.com

A somewhat more basic take on the collision between European and Indian musical traditions comes to us from Jaipur Kawa Brass Band. Brass bands have been a part of India's cultural landscape since the earliest days of colonization, and **Dance Of The Cobra (Riverboat TUG1073; 51:31 * * * ***) suggests that it must be a thrill to be in the presence of one of these groups, which are often present at weddings, religious festivals and other events. Jaipur Kawa, who hail from the Rajasthani capital, Jaipur, have an especially cosmopolitan repertoire, with hints of New Orleans jazz, Rajasthani folk, Bollywood scores and martial music.

Ordering info: worldmusicnetwork.com

Also hailing from Rajasthan are the Barmer Boys, a quartet of three percussionists and vocalist and harmonium player Mangey Khan. Their music is essentially modernized (but not electrified) Rajasthani folk, and **At Home (Amarass 008; 1:05:06** $\star \star \star \star$) catches them in a series of fiery single takes literally captured at Khan's house. The band's mastery crystallizes in the mid-section of the 12-minute opener, "Moomal," when the percussion section, underpinned by Gafoor Khan's sonorous dholak bass drum, locks into a set of overlapping patterns that effectively raise the temperature of the piece several degrees in an instant.

Ordering info: amarass.com

Folk and jazz merge into something much closer to fusion as we usually understand it on Debashish Bhattacharya's **Beyond The Ragasphere (Riverboat TUG1070; 1:01:50 ******). The Kolkata-born slide guitarist has a sinewy, appealing voice on his instrument, and he sounds equally at home meshing with tabla players as he does with a drum kit, flamenco guitarist Adam Del Monte ("Indospaniola"), or John McLaughlin, whose electrified guest spot on the 17-minute workout "A Mystical Morning" is a welcome, amped-up cousin to his work with Shakti. Ordering info: worldmusicnetwork.com

Further south in Bangalore, capital of Karnataka state, classical violinist Jyotsna Srikanth eschews attempts to modernize and syncretize her homeland's musical traditions. **Call Of Bangalore (Riverboat TUG1072; 1:18:18 \star \star \star 1/2)** is an exquisitely played set of Karnatic classical music. Srikanth has a sensitive ear, and knows precisely when lingering on a quartertone or slowing down a slur will maximize the emotional impact of what she's playing. In its best moments, *Call Of Bangalore* is intensely beautiful.

Ordering info: worldmusicnetwork.com

The bowl-shaped kamancha, a cousin of the violin, sets the haunting tone of **The Manganiyar Seduction (Amarass 001, 1:07:05 ****)**, a monumental, hour-long composition by Roysten Abel that returns us to Rajasthan. The region is home to a community of Muslim musicians called Manganiyars. Once court musicians, they are now entertainers for the general public. Abel's composition combines the breathtakingly powerful vocals, atmospheric strings, choral singing and pounding percussion of their music with the theatricality of opera for something complex, mysterious and vibrant. **DB Ordering info: amarass.com** R PH DIALOGUE

Laurent Coq Dialogue SUNNYSIDE 1298 ★★∜₂

Last year, the French pianist Laurent Coq teamed up with saxophonist Miguel Zenón on the highly conceptual *Rayuela*, a riff on Julio Cortázar's novel of the same name. Coq's latest effort is a different kind of collaborative venture, featuring breezy and open compositions that put stirrings of the heart and soul above more analytical delights. *Dialogue* features Coq alongside his former student, guitarist Ralph Lavital, and Martinique-born vocalist Nicolas Pelage, who added a number of Creole lyrics to the Caribbean-tinged melodies.

The result is a sunny pastiche of French West Indian and straightahead jazz concepts built on the foundation of Coq and Lavital's symbiotic duo work. Coq has said that the recordings of Bill Frisell and his former teacher, Jim Hall, helped inspire the project. That spirit is evident on tracks like the nuanced "Refuge," where a hint of melancholy emerges as Coq responds to Lavital's delicate fretwork with similarly restrained phrasing. Together, they convey a depth of emotion without compromising the sense of quietude implied by the title.

A handful of other strong piano-guitar duets pepper the album, but things really take off when Pelage is involved. His molasses-smooth vocal hook in "Mwen Two Kontan" sachets over a pleasantly jaunty piano theme, energizing not only the rest of the tune but the rest of the disc. On the wistful "Sa Ké Alé," Pelage dives outside what seems to be his comfort zone, holding alternately deep and high notes just long enough for the physical vulnerability of his voice to communicate what his words might not. "Souvenirs Ti Manmay" is similarly evocative, featuring deep, warm waves of piano chords alongside Pelage's wordless accompaniment. Very occasionally, Pelage seems to be ambling toward an elusive groove ("Mazouk Pitché"), but such moments are rare. More often, synergy prevails and musical sunshine ensues.

—Jennifer Odell

Dialogue: Mwen Two Kontan; Carrousel; Refuge; Mazouk Pitché; Dialogue; Tree Therapy; Sa Ké Alé; Prêchotin; Souvenirs Ti Manmay; Escalade; Maurice. (56:10) Personnel: Laurent Cog. piano: Baloh Lavital. guitar: Nicolas

Personnel: Laurent Coq, piano; Ralph Lavital, guitar; Nicolas Pelage, vocals (1, 4, 7, 9, 11). Ordering info: sunnysiderecords.com



Rokia Traoré Beautiful Africa NONESUCH 534863 ****

Malian singer Rokia Traoré has always freely tweaked and stretched the sounds of her native land without disrespecting them. She grew up in the capital city of Bamako, but since her father was a diplomat she also spent stretches of time in Algeria, Saudi Arabia, Belgium and, especially, France, where she's currently living during the upheavals in Mali. On her early records she brought a softness and lyricism that owed as much to jazz and the folk of Joni Mitchell as it did to Mande traditions, but her gorgeous hybrids never felt forced or awkward. On her 2009 album she introduced electric guitars and a western drum kit, yet in her assured grasp, the music never felt heavy-handed; it remained as graceful and delicate as ever.

Traoré is still blazing her own trail on her stunning new album Beautiful Africa, but she's radically changed course. Working with producer John Parish-known best for his fruitful collaborations with PJ Harvey-and a cast of distinctive western musicians, she's given her music a gut-punching charge. Electric guitars played by herself, Parish, and especially by the inventive Italian music Stefano Pilia, a musician who usually works in experimental realms, give the music a new edge and drive, but the ubiquity of the rustic, cycling licks played on n'goni by Mamah Diabaté serve as a constant reminder of Traoré's roots, along with her Bambara lyrics (she also sings in French and English on a few songs).

Traoré's lyrics address serious topics, from lamenting the endless cycle of wars in "Beautiful Africa," the album's most angry and aggressive track, to celebrating the women of Mali, who maintain dignity and strength among oppression. On the title track Traoré's fluid coo turns frenzied, revealing a piercing quality and wild energy. It's another great step forward from an artist who doesn't know what creative stasis is. —Peter Margasak

Beautiful Africa: Lalla; Kouma; Sikey; Ka Moun Kà; Mélancolie; NTéri; Tuit Tuit; Beautiful Africa; Sarama. (45:03) Personnel: Rokia Traoré, vocals, guitar, Mamah Diabaté, n'goni; Nicolai Munch-Hansen, bass, John Parish, Stefano Pilia, guitar, Sebastian Rochford, drums; Jason Singh, human beatbox; Fatim Kouyaté, Bintou Soumbounou, vocals. Ordering info: nonesuch.com

Jeff Lederer Swing n' Dix LITTLE (I) MUSIC 105 ****

How do you like your swing and trad? Straight up or twisted? Reedist Jeff Lederer's irreverent crew serves up historical styles with a louche attitude and a dollop of droll, joyously weaving square attire into zoot threads. As in drummer Matt Wilson's Quartet, frontline duties volley between Lederer and cornetist Kirk Knuffke, backed by Wilson's chameleonic drumming—here a will-o'-the-wisp, there a bomb-drop. To distance

the band from slicker forms, Lederer calls upon Bob Stewart's cavernous, gruff tuba. The first storm warning comes 90 seconds into a snappy "Honeysuckle Rose," after Knuffke's snarly, contentious cornet leads into a fantasia of solos for free-fall clarinet and galumphing tuba.

Further bump-and-grind revels—Knuffke's macabre New Orleans dead-march "Silver Spade" and quasi-bop "Ride" and Wilson's quirky "Nibble," with nifty clarinet and cornet solos and "sh" brushwork—lead to shout-outs to the era of band vocals. "I'll Take A Dozen!!!" spoofs Glenn Miller Orchestra's "Pennsylvania 6-5000" with Wilson's dozen four-bar shoe-drops. The closing, title track reinvents "Bye Bye Blues" with zany self-referential lyrics, bitonal alto and parade-beat ostinato fade.



Beauteous simplicity reigns on "Pee Wee's Blues," a New Orleans slow-march with tender-tough solos. "La Rosita," plucked from Coleman Hawkins and Ben Webster, is Latinized, while the poignantly nostalgic "Two Jeffs" pits tuba against flute. Vocalist Mary LaRose's stark cameo—chanting a Shaker hymn—elicits Wilson's shape-note tom-toms. This band's wild ride on a crafty, micro-beat rollercoaster laces classic forms with chili oil and savvy fun. —Fred Bouchard

Swing n' Dix: Honeysuckle Rose; Silver Spade; Ride; Nibble; I'll Take A Dozen!; Pee Wee's Blues; E.S.P.; My Sweet Home In Zion; La Rosita; Two Jeffs; Swing n' Dix (58:45). Personnel: Kink Knuffke, comet, vocals; Jeff Lederer, tenor, alto saxophones, clarinet, vocals; Bob Stewart, tuba, vocals; Matt Wilson, drums, vocals; Mary LaRose, vocals (8). Ordering info: IIttleimusic.com

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Reviews



Matt White The Super Villain Jazz Band ARC 2505 ★★★★

In 2004, trumpeter Matt White, now 33, won a DownBeat Student Music Award for composition. His debut shows once again how solid writing can bring out the best in players. The basic style here is familiar post-bop (his DownBeat award winner, "Like Woody," included here, is dedicated to post-bop master trumpeter Woody Shaw). Each of these nine tracks offers fresh terrain for his band (both quintet and sextet) to blow over. Take opener "The Yankee Poured Out The Bacon Grease" (a joke on a mishap perpetrated by the Illinois-born White on his Mississippi mother-inlaw): an insistent, waltzing piano tremolo introduces a bop fanfare and then serves as an interlude between solo sections. In lesser hands, a conceit like that could kill momentum. But White's use of stop-time figures and a release from 12/8 on the theme to 4/4 on the solos guarantees that each episode propels the next—and gives impressive solos by White and tenor saxophonist Evan Cobb extra loft.

White's use of mixed meters and odd phrase lengths gives the Spanish-tinged theme of "The Muse" (dedicated to his ballerina wife) a sense of narrative expectancy. Even the

smallest arranging details refresh the ear like the rising and falling dynamic of the minor-keyed "Thelma's Revenge," or the way Cobb's tenor slides under White's trumpet solo on an affecting reading of the Tom Waits ballad "Alice." There are other felicitous surprises—you might wonder at first where you've heard that jazz standard that closes the album. Until you realize that it's the Britney Spears hit "Toxic." —Jon Garelick

The Super Villain Jazz Band: The Yankee Poured Out the Bacon Grease; Super Villain Jazz Band; The Muse; Like Woody; Thelma's Revenge; Alice; The Hadron Collider; Frankliolisms (Pravo Horo); Toxic. (74:34) Personnel: Matt White, trumpet; Evan Cobb, tenor

saxophone; Don Aliquo, alto saxophone; Joe Davidian, piano; Jonathan Wires, bass; Jim White, drums. Ordering info: artistsrecordingcollective.biz



CLARK SOMMERS' Ba(SH) DANA HALL GEOF BRADFIELD

Clark Sommers' Ba(SH) Ba(SH) ORIGIN 82646 ****

This Chicago triumvirate conflates the initials of its members-reedist Geof Bradfield, bassist Clark Sommers and drummer Dana Halladding an extra lower case vowel (and parentheses) for onomatopoeic effect. The name represents the trio's chamber aesthetic "sh" and sporadic aggressiveness: "bash." Though it might also suggest the bashfulness of Sommers, who became the effectual leader after writing for the trio and organizing the recording. In the CD's incisive liner notes, Dennis Carroll recalls Sommers' "agonizing intensity" when he first met him-certainly, modesty undersells his talent. Possessed of a massive, tensile sound-well captured by recording engineer Scott Steinman-Sommers makes emphatic musical decisions and is responsible for writing five of the 10 compositions-with three more from Bradfield, plus Thelonious Monk's "Think Of One" and Billy Higgins' "Inga."

Clarity of purpose is a Hall hallmark, too, although he can also be incendiary and unpredictable, investing everything—even shouts of excitement—on the opener "Garrison." A nod to Jimmy Garrison, the driving pulse behind John Coltrane and Ornette Coleman, the song takes after the bassist's proactive, sometimes guitaristic style, which is audible in Sommers' anchored strumming, while Hall's chivvying, plosive polyrhythms echo Elvin Jones.

Bradfield has always been a sturdy Chicago saxophonist, but his 2008 record *Urban Nomad* (Origin) with Sommers gave further notice of his exceptional talent. A controlled, non-gratuitous player, the rich variation and technical acuity in his playing can be overlooked, but not by Hall and Sommers. They assist his brilliant surf-ride on the stop-start "Quanah." Bradfield's soprano curlicues over click-clack rimshots and spartan bass on "On Meditation" is an unforced delight. All told: *Ba(SH)* is a collective, uber-musical sound painting. —*Michael Jackson*

Ba(SH): Garrison; Momentary Flux; Quanah; Fathom-A-Ning; On Meditation; 10; Inga; Trillium; Lano Estacado; Think Of One. (59:38) Personnel: Clark Sommers, bass; Dana Hall, drums; Geof Bradfield, tenor, soprano saxophones, bass clarinet. Ordering info: origin-records.com Travis Sullivan's Björkestra I Go Humble ZOHO 201312

This 12-piece ensemble might be just another tight, modern-day big band if it didn't draw its repertoire from one of pop music's most unusual stars. *I Go Humble* is the band's second disc since it started playing leader Travis Sullivan's arrangements of the sense of Biësk in 2004. And size



the songs of Björk, in 2004. And since that Icelandic fairy princess has nine studio records to her credit, presumably the group can keep going for a while.

The experiment is captivating, in its way. Sullivan's arrangements often sound only like distant cousins of the originals, and Björk fans will find the transformations amusing. "Hyperballad" from Björk's 1995 album, *Post*, was a lovely pastiche of electronic sounds, laid under a plain, plaintive vocal. Here, the hi-hat renders the same clubby shuffle, but then come lush horn arrangements and warm piano chords. Only the vocal line, by Becca Stevens, is essentially the same. That's true of the entire record. Stevens rather convincingly does Björk, down to her quirky inflections, breathy style and occasional growl. And this is no small feat, though it is, in the end, imitative. "Isobel" meanders a bit at the start, but then the quirky arrangement kicks in, with lovely intertwining sax lines. There's no vocal, and with all due respect to the virtuosic Stevens, the tune is more convincing without it. *—David Zivan*

I Go Humble: Hyperballad; Venus As A Boy, Hunter, I Go Humble; Isobel; Army Of Me; Unravel; Joga. (63:00) Personnel: Travis Sullivan, alto saxophone; Becca Stevens, vocals; Ian Cook, Iaptop programming; Sean Nowell, tenor saxophone; Lauren Sevian, baritone saxophone; Nyan Keberle, Alan Ferber, trombone; Kevin Bryan, Eli Asher, Kelly Pratt, trumpet; Art Hirahara, piano; Yoshi Waki, bass; Joe Abbatantuono, drums. Ordering info: zohomusic.com The Wee Trio Live At The Bistro BIONIC 00006 ****

There's a moment about a minute into The Wee Trio's version of David Bowie's "Queen Bitch" where the group's personality comes sharply into focus. James Westfall's vibraphone starts cycling through the original song's chorus, wringing a brightly expressive melody out



of something that David Bowie delivered in a Lou Reed-ish deadpan. The rhythm section bears down on a wild, rubbery groove, and for a few exuberant seconds it feels as though this band could do anything it wants.

If live albums are where a group gets to show what it's really made of, this one should be considered a ringing success. If the group's straightforward trio approach at first seems a little old-fashioned, it is always ready to turn that assumption on its head at any given moment. Jared Schonig's quick drumming gives the music a thoroughly modern push even as his band's direct melodicism swims against the stream of a lot of its contemporaries. The band does interesting things with its covers—one of the album's most stunning moments comes when it hits the main theme of "Cherokee"—but the originals are excellent as well. "Space Jugglers," which the band plays with impressive rhythmic dexterity, has a melody that others might find worth interpreting. The members claim that their goal is never to play a piece of music the same way twice, but their detours never sacrifice melody or musicality. *Live At The Bistro* makes me want to see them in person. *—Joe Tangari*

Live At The Bistro: Cherokee; Drum Intro; Sabotage; Vibraphone Intro; White Trash Blues; Queen Bitch; Bass Intro; There Is No Greater Love; Space Jugglers; New Earth; Ranthem; Tig Mack; Drum Intro; White Out. (77:10)

Personnel: James Westfall, vibraphone; Dan Loomis, bass; Jared Schonig, drums. Ordering info: theweetrio.com



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Reviews

Historical / BY BILL MEYER

Bethlehem Label Revived

In 1953, a young Swiss immigrant named Gus Wildi founded Bethlehem Records. Although the label lasted less than 10 years, it racked up an impressive record of musically and artistically successful efforts by both established performers and future stars. Verve Music Group and Naxos acquired the label's catalog and have initiated a reissue campaign. Each of these discs are remastered from the original analog tapes and presented in vinyl, CD and digital formats with the original covers.

Being a new label run by a man new to the business, Bethlehem was in a prime position to work with young talent. Vocalist Chris Connor wasn't exactly a rookie, having already toured with Stan Kenton, but she'd never recorded under her own name when Wildi approached her at Birdland after a set and offered a contract on the spot. *Sings Lullabys For Lovers* (Bethlehem 1002; 21:06 ★★★½), which was released in 1954, got her off to a good start. Accompa-

nied by a small group with guitar, clarinet and accordion, but no piano, Connor's singing is warm and quite agile in the midrange, thinner yet assured in the higher pitches. She sounds in touch with romantic disappointment, but not burdened by it. The short playing time reflects the fact that this record was originally released as a 10-inch LP, and if you buy the reissue on vinyl, you can get it in that format again; it would have been nice to pair it on CD with another of Connor's Bethlehem titles, like the similarly brief *Sings Lullabys Of Birdland*.

Four years later, Nina Simone recorded her debut for Bethlehem. *Little Girl Blue* (Bethlehem 6028; 45:04 $\star \star \star \prime 2$) lacks the soul stylings of her later work. But even at this early stage, she was still eclectic enough to stand as a singular vocalist rather than a jazz singer. There's not much improvisation in her singing, and plenty of Bach in her piano solos; her love of counterpoint extends to working the melody of "Good King Wenceslas" into her rendition of the title track. But Al Heath's delicious brushwork ensures that things still swing. This album includes one of her first charting singles, a measured rendition of "I Loves You Porgy."

Bass and cello player Oscar Pettiford was, like Connor, in at the beginning of Bethlehem's run. The 10-inch LP **Modern Quintet (Bethlehem 1003; 15:32** $\star \star \star \star 1/2$) was his debut for the label, and despite a stingy running time, its reappearance is highly welcome; this is vibrant bebop of a high order, but sufficiently unfettered by convention to incorporate unusual instrumental colors. His classic composition "Tricotism" makes an early appearance under the name "Trictat-



ism." The way tenor saxophonist Charlie Rouse and French horn player Julius Watkins navigate its arduous melody is precision defined.

The Jazz Experiments Of Charles Mingus (Bethlehem 65; 46:26 $\star \star \star \frac{1}{2}$) was originally released as a pair of 10-inch records named Jazzical Moods, a title that reflected their aspiration to merge jazz instrumentation and rhythms with classical harmonies. Bethlehem renamed them when it reissued them as one 12-inch LP in 1957. This isn't exactly juvenilia, but neither is Mingus at his magnificent best; there's a tidiness about this music that keeps it from matching the fervor of his later work for Candid, Atlantic and Impulse! Thad Jones' gorgeous trumpet lines twine elaborately in the spaces around Mingus' already bold pizzicato melodies.

While going back to the original tapes usually seems like a good idea, it is increasingly problematic when reels of magnetic tape are at the end of their life span. Case in point: Dexter Gordon's **Daddy Plays The Horn (Bethlehem 36; 42:00** \star \star **).** It was recorded in 1955, and the tenor saxophonist's playing is unassailable. Sprightly yet muscular, his sound betrays none of the troubles that dogged his personal life at the time. His phrasing is so elegant, it'll make you want to put on a better suit, and the accompanying trio is quite sympathetic. But the tape seems to be stretched out, so that the music slows down and Kenny Drew's piano slurs in and out of tune.

Upcoming Bethlehem reissue titles include Helen Carr's *Down In The Depths Of The 90th Floor,* Johnny Hartman's *Songs From The Heart* and Simone's *Nina Simone And Her Friends.* **DB Ordering info: bethlehemrecords.com**



Stephen DiBonaventura Not Your Average Banjo SELF-RELEASE ★★★½

The relationship between jazz and the tenor banjo—the flat-picked and strummed instrument, not its plucked bluegrass cousin—was cemented in the early years of jazz by exemplars Elmer Snowden, Harry Reser and Fred Guy but crumbled in the Depression when money woes forced bands to drop string instruments. For the rest of last century on to the present time, the jazz tenor banjo has found a safe haven in trad-jazz. But now—surprise—along comes a suburban Philadelphian named Stephen DiBonaventura, who daringly binds the tenor and modern jazz together in a Gordian knot.

Though one rather than two discs might better attract curious or skeptical listeners, DiBonaventura's new set maintains accessibility for all of its two hours. Drawing on 30 years experience in trad and modern jazz, DiBonaventura comfortably lends his prowess to jazz standards, modern-jazz gems and Latin classics alongside three trusty colleagues. With his banjo sounding bright and clear yet surprisingly warm, he produces solos that unfold with intractable musical logic, never dragging on too long.

Guitarist Steve Giordano-formerly a member of Groove Holmes' band, as well as a respected performer-educator in southeastern Pennsylvania and in his native Italy-is in consistently fine form whether swinging ("On Green Dolphin Street," for one) or revealing intuitive grace (most especially in Freddie Hubbard's "Little Sunflower"). Time and again, the banjoist and guitarist interact with simpatico creativity as string bassist Steve Meashey and percussionist John Mosemann get the job done with taste and finesse. Further illuminating the music is Giordano's arrangingfrom song reharmonization to smart placement of solos. A rote professionalism does surface, but only now and then. -Frank-John Hadley

Not Your Average Banjo: Disc 1: Joy Spring; Like Someone In Love; Icarus; Blue Bossa; Days Of Wine And Roses; Smatter, You Don't Know What Love Is; Stella By Starlight; Receipt, Please. (62:20) Disc 2: On Green Dolphin Street; Desafinado; Little Sunflower; All The Things You Are; We'll Be Together Again; Friends, Alone Together; Spain. (59:26)

Personnel: Stephen DiBonaventura, tenor banjo; Steve Giordano, guitar; Steve Meashey, double bass; John Mosemann, percussion. Ordering info: cdbaby.com



Mike McGinnis +9 Road*Trip RKM MUSIC 014 ****1/2

Mike McGinnis Angsudden Song Cycle 482 MUSIC 1086

Two ambitious works by multi-reedist Mike McGinnis are markedly different in content and context, both smartly performed and realized, showcasing a composer and performer who is not widely known but whose background has created a personal trajectory that is, if nothing else, original. As a clarinetist and saxophonist, McGinnis has worked with an unusually diverse roster, from Anthony Braxton, Ravi Coltrane and Steve Coleman to Bernie Worrell and Yo La Tengo.

On *Road*Trip*, McGinnis and his nine-piece ensemble present the mid-'50s suite "Concerto For Clarinet And Combo," written by composer Bill Smith, a Third Stream pioneer who studied with Darius Milhaud and worked regularly with Dave Brubeck. This four-movement piece is delivered with all the graceful clarity and architectural flow of a building by Mies van der Rohe or Le Corbusier.

Cool heads steer the course here. The charts dart and swing, immaculately portraying Smith's pristine arrangements accompanied by great solos, all the while retaining a polished glass transparency. Often swinging sans a drummer, the assembled brass and reeds perform nearly as one, recreating '50s style with contemporary skill and seasoning. McGinnis takes an exhilarating clarinet solo near the concerto's end, and you want to jump and shout when it's over. McGinnis' three-part "Road*Trip For Clarinet & 9 Players" is equally elegant in direction, but darker in tone. Inspired by Thelonious Monk's "Off Minor" and the film version of Roald Dahl's novel Charlie and the Chocolate Factory, "Road*Trip" is as richly atmospheric as a classic film noir.

Ängsudden Song Cycle also takes an outside source as sustenance, the paintings and poems of Filipino-American visual artist MuKha. Now this is a tougher nut to crack, a combination avant-garde theater piece and poem-song cycle set to music with arrangements for solo saxophone, trio (piano, voice, woodwinds) and chamber ensemble. McGinnis leads his various configurations through eclectic terrain whether creating an ominous leitmotif of reeds and strings ("Even The Pillow"), merging bending strings and blossoming guitar over an urgent samba ("I Am Morning") or arranging flamenco guitars and brushed drums under a plaintive vocal ("We Ate The Wood"). Both *Road*Trip* and *Ängsudden* establish McGinnis as a bold musician who takes on challenges and grabs ambition by the scruff of the neck. He follows roads less traveled, but the journey is totally satisfying. —*Ken Micallef* **Road*Trip:** Concerto For Clarinet And Combo: 1st Movement, 2nd Movement, 3rd Movement, Road*Trip For Clarinet & 9 Players: I. The Rising; II. Settle; III. Up & Out. (44:58)

Personnel: Mike McGinnis, clarinet; Jeff Hermanson, trumpet; Justin Mullens, French horn; Brian Drye, trombone; Barry Saunders, baritone saxophone; Peter Hess, tenor saxophone; Matt Blostein, alto saxophone; Jacob Sacks, piano; Dan Fabricatore, bass; Vinnie Sperrazza, drums.

Ordering info: rkmmusic.com

Ängsudden Song Cycle: You Were With Me Inside The Wind; Last Night The Wind; You Are Morning; Encircled, Repeated; Even The Pillow; It's Still Warm; You Said One Day; We Ate the Wood. (38:59)

Personnel: Kyoko Kitamura, vocals; Mike McGinnis, clarinet, bass clarinet; Sara Schoenbeck, bassoon; Khabu Doug Young, cavaquiño; Sean Moran, acoustic guitar, Jason Kao Hwang, viola; Dan Fabricatore, bass; Harris Eisenstadt, percussion, vibraphone. Ordering Info: 482music.com

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Reviews



Chuck Israels Jazz Orchestra Second Wind: A Tribute To The Music Of Bill Evans SOULPATCH ****^{1/2}

As the famous album title has it, everybody digs Bill Evans. But not everybody has sufficiently dug Chuck Israels, Evans' great, underappreciated bassist from his second trio (1962– 1966). This album, Israels' return to full-time performing after a 30-year teaching career, should win him new fans for his prodigious skills as both arranger and bassist, even as it serves to remind longtime Evans devotees of his significant

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Israels, of course, was the replacement for the legendary Scott LaFaro, who died in a car accident in 1961, the loss of a friend and creative partner that had devastated Evans. Eventually he found his footing with Israels, who had worked with a who's who of greats including Billie Holiday, Benny Goodman, Coleman Hawkins and John Coltrane. Besides being a brilliant technician with a wonderful round tone, Israels was an exquisitely sensitive musical partner who helped bring out the best in the introspective Evans. After his stint with Evans, Israels studied composition and arranging with Hall Overton, who arranged Thelonious Monk compositions for a tentet at Monk's triumphant 1959 Town Hall concert. Later, Israels became a pioneer of the jazz repertory movement, founding and leading the National Jazz Ensemble from 1973 to 1981.

Although Israels has played Evans tunes with others (notably Danish pianist Thomas Clausen on the excellent 2003 trio album *For Bill*), this is the first time he has orchestrated a whole album of songs associated with or inspired by Evans for a larger ensemble. Over the years there have been many other notable Evans tributes, including a 1998 big-band effort by Don Sebesky and, more recently, Chick Corea's *Further Explorations*, which sought to build on and extend Evans' pioneering ideas about the piano trio format as a near-democracy among the piano, bass and drums.

Few, however, have captured the essence of Evans as faithfully as Israels has here, with an octet he has assembled in his new hometown of Portland, Ore. This thrilling, nearly perfect recording, produced with startling in-your-face clarity by David Berger, is old-school in the best sense; it often sounds like a cool jazz octet or nonet from the early to mid-'60s (minus the tape hiss), sometimes calling to mind Oliver Nelson or Gil Evans. Israels is out to capture the harmonic subtleties of Evans' unique voicings, as well as his innate sense of swing, in an octet setting, and he succeeds splendidly. The tightly disciplined unit combines just the right amount of reverence for the lyricism of Evans' originals with opportunities for the talented band to solo. Israels cracks the whip, however-he eschews noodling, showing off and general screwing around with these brilliant tunes.

The set includes classic Evans compositions like the uptempo "Show-Type Tune"; the tricky-timed "Five," an amusing exercise in cool; and, of course, a generous sampling of the melancholy ballads that were Evans' hallmark, including breathtaking treatments of "Detour Ahead" and "Spring Is Here." Evans combined impressionistic harmonies, keyboard virtuosity and indomitable swing to create something totally new; Israels does for Evans' trio tunes what his teacher Overton did for Monk, which is to say, a lot. —Allen Morrison

Second Wind: Show-Type Tune; Detour Ahead; Five; Spring Is Here; Waltz For Debby; Margot's Mood; Some Other Time; Minor Tributar; Who Can I Tum To; Israel, G56:17) Personnel: Chuck Israels, bass, arranger; John Nastos, alto saxophone, flute; David Evans, tenor saxophone, clarinet; Robert Crowell, bartione saxophone, bass Catinet; Paul Mazzio, trumpet, flugelhorn; John Moak, trombone; Dan Gaynor, piano; Christopher Brown, drums; Margot Hanson, Jessica Israels, vocals. Ordering info: soulpatchmusicproductions.com

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Photography: Dale Rothenberg & Marc Vanasse

Allan Browne Trio Lost In The Stars JAZZHEAD 168 ***1/2

It might sound like a preposterous idea to pair pioneering mid-century American jazz pianist-arranger-composer Mary Lou Williams with eccentric German postwar avant-garde guru-composer Karlheinz Stockhausen-even if they both wrote suites inspired by the Zodiac. But 69-year-old Australian drummer Allan Browne's trio with two younger players, pianist Marc Hannaford and bassist Sam Pankhurst, has done just that, juxtaposing the bluesy evocations of Williams with the melodic abstraction of Stockhausen. The execution is as inventive as the concept is fanciful; the album has a fresh, exploratory feel, with good humor in the mix-starting with the title, Lost In The Stars (Kurt Weill's tune being nowhere in sight).

Williams composed her *Zodiac Suite* in the mid-1940s as character sketches of such friends as Duke Ellington and Billie Holiday (and made a recording reissued by Smithsonian Folkways). Stockhausen wrote his astrological suite *Tierkreis* 30 years later; it was originally performed on music boxes as part of a theater work. Arranged ingeniously here, Stockhausen's pieces help imbue *Lost In The Stars* with a free, contemporary atmosphere (and the trio even manages to make some of them swing). Highlights of the album include the "Taurus" pair. Williams' composition is her



Ernie Krivda at the Tri-C Jazz Fest

Ernie Krivda At The Tri-C Jazz Fest CADENCE JAZZ 1237 ***

Describing Ernie Krivda as a driving saxophonist would be an understatement along the lines of calling *Unstoppable* a movie about a runaway train. Listen to him munch Dexter Gordon's "Cheesecake" after the head. It's not sheets of sound—more like breeze-blocks, each note tuck-pointed with a schmear of vibrato as mortar.

Tri-C is Cleveland's Cuyahoga Community College, which has hosted a jazz education festival for decades. These sumptuously recorded



allan browne trio lost in the stars

sketch of Ellington, half impressionistic like Debussy, half grooving like a Harlem house band. Working off Williams' gorgeous, indigo-hued melodies, Hannaford spins lines like unspooled pearls. The trio's interpretation of Stockhausen's tone-row version is wonderfully off-kilter from the opening drum rattle and bass harmonics. The piece comes to an end almost suddenly, as if a reel of tape had run out. —*Bradley Bambarger*

Lost In The Stars: Taurus–Mary Lou Williams; Taurus–Karlheinz Stockhausen; Cancer–Williams; Cancer–Stockhausen; Leo–Williams; Leo–Stockhausen; Scorpio–Williams; Scorpio–Stockhausen; Virgo–Williams; Virgo–Stockhausen; Aries–Williams; Aries–Stockhausen. (47:19)

Personnel: Allan Browne, drums; Marc Hannaford, piano; Samuel Pankhurst, bass. Ordering info: jazzhead.com

live performances are from a 2009 quartet date at the Greg Reese Arts Center, plus a trio rendering of "I Remember Clifford" from the 2008 festival, which features ravishing arco bass from Peter Dominguez. Thick slices of jazz nostalgia showcase Krivda's stentorian tenor with The Detroit Connection, three musicians from the Motor City: the gripping bassist Marion Hayden, the late pianist Claude Black and Renell Gonsalves,

son of Duke Ellington tenor saxophonist Paul

Gonsalves "Round Midnight" is a tad too faithful with Krivda nudging acceptable notes of the melody with his wide, plasticized tone, but, as with all Krivda outings, there's no busking or approximation; he carves into the harmonic clay, like Coleman Hawkins, with utter precision, fashioning a bold sculpture. Black displays unfastidious buoyancy and joy before Krivda descends to a bell note redolent of Sonny Rollins. As if being released atop a bull at a rodeo, one awaits the tenor after the "Giant Steps" theme. Krivda merely lets us know he could indefinitely devour the changes, passing the baton to Black, then Havden. The ambidextrous Black has a ball with extensive parallel lines on "St. Thomas" before the leader, with operatic grandeur, takes a lengthy rococo cadenza. Stirring stuff, not for cissies. -Michael Jackson

At The Tri-C Jazz Fest: Cheesecake; Round Midnight; Giant Steps; St. Thomas; I Remember Clifford. (51.08) Personnel: Ernie Krivda, tenor saxophone; Claude Black, piano (1–4); Marion Hayden (1–4), Peter Dominguez (5), bass; Renell Gonsalves (1–4), Ron Godale (5), drums. Ordering Info: cadencejazzrecords.com



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Books / BY JON GARELICK

Gary Burton's Inner Player

As he approached 70, Gary Burton found it was time to take stock. And that he was finally at a point in his life where he could take stock with some objectivity. Thus, Learning To Listen: The Jazz Journey of Gary Burton (Berklee Press). Here is an autobiography from an innovator on several fronts—as a four-mallet vibes virtuoso, as an educator (for virtually his entire career, at Berklee College of Music), as a bandleader whose groups were the first to play jazz-rock fusion (as he gently keeps reminding us) and as a talent scout who has delivered one star after another, from Larry Coryell to Pat Metheny, Kurt Rosenwinkel and, more recently, Julian Lage.

This is not one of jazz's "extreme" autobiographies (see Miles Davis' *Autobiography* among a shelf-full of other examples). Burton grew up as a middle-class white kid in rural Indiana. A child prodigy gifted with perfect pitch, he was

performing professionally by the age of 8. He was essentially successful and unconflicted from the get-go. He didn't even take a drink until he was in his 30s, because, he says, the drunks who approached him after shows when he was a preteen scared him to death. There's a decade or so of pot smoking, but no serious substance abuse or drama-inducing neuroses.

Instead, Burton himself is the calm center of a story in which other colorful characters provide the extremes. And there are plenty. This, after all, is a man who spent three years touring with Stan Getz. Unfailingly gracious, Burton avoids Davis' favorite 12-letter expletive; his most intense negative reaction to his fellow performers seems to be annoyance. Getz was a handful, but Burton is on the whole more miffed at being subjected to the unprofessional behavior of icons like Anita O'Day (whose musicianship he also questions) and Joe Henderson (whom he describes as behaving "like a total prick" on one tour).

Even Burton's gay identity, which brackets his story, is more of a recurring theme than a central crisis. The intro relates his national-media coming out-at age 51-to Terry Gross on "Fresh Air" in 1994, and the final chapters describe his later gay relationships. But Burton sees himself as more "confused" than tortured by his homosexual inclinations. After two drama-free marriages (and two children), he decides it's time to find out who he really is. That leaves room for plenty of musical history and high-quality musical gossip. A lot of the entertainment value comes from watching Burton play straight man-in more ways than one-to such flamboyant characters as Getz and George Shearing. And there is one epic tale of a Getz night-gone-wrong at Carnegie



Hall that's a slapstick classic worth the price of admission.

But what also comes through in these anecdotes is Burton's discovery of deeper musical truths and the nature of the creative process. Music came easy to him, but getting to the next level-even discovering there was a next leveldepended on "learning to listen," not just to others, but to his own "inner player." The epiphany that will deliver the most punch for non-musician readers (and non-improvising musician readers) is the night Burton finds the music pouring out of him, unbidden and without calculation, as if directly from his unconscious. This is when he finds his inner player, the musician capable of creating true, spontaneous art, from his deepest self. Of course, there's some self-control involved in directing that inner player, but it remains the key to who he is

There's much more here-reflections on business as well as art, on jazz education. Sidebar sections include a short history of the vibes as well as mini-portraits of everyone from Lionel Hampton and Duke Ellington to Steve Swallow and Chick Corea. Still, I would have liked some deeper musical analysis, more of the nuts-andbolts descriptions of what it was like, say, to learn to play tango with Astor Piazzolla. Burton is not a prose stylist, but, as in his music, he knows how to tell a story. In the end, he's still pondering his identity: A jazz musician who happens to be gay? A gay man who happens to be a jazz musician? It's difficult not to be moved when he observes: "It sometimes seems that the real me is standing off to the side, just watching that other Burton, the jazz musician, do his thing." DB Ordering info: berkleepress.com



Scott Hamilton Swedish Ballads ... & More CHARLESTON SQUARE 421 ★★★

The playing on *Swedish Ballads* ... & *More*, the elegant new album from veteran tenor saxophonist Scott Hamilton, is impeccable. Hamilton and the musicians—pianist Jan Lundgren, bassist Jesper Lundgaard and drummer Kristian Leth are swinging, tasteful, studied and technically skilled. The tunes, save for "Dear Old Stockholm," are not extremely well known, but they're coming right out of the jazz tradition, so they seem like old friends. In other words, it's all rather boring. Perfect isn't interesting. And staying complete-ly true to a style can mean sounding anonymous.

The album's concept isn't bad: Hamilton is teamed up with a Scandinavian piano trio to knock out a traditional Swedish tune ("Dear Old Stockholm"), a Quincy Jones track cut in Sweden ("Stockholm Sweetnin'") and five other songs by Swedish composers.

The liner notes offer up interesting backstories for the pieces, each of which was chosen by the leader and Lundgren. "Dear Old Stockholm" was first conceived of as a jazz tune by drummer Kenneth Fagerlund. Olle Adolphson's "Trubbel" was once laid down by pianist Michel Petrucciani. Jones' "Sweetnin" is based on "You Leave Me Breathless." And the bridge from Nils Perne's "Min Soldat (My Soldier)" is borrowed from "If I Only Had A Brain."

The best track on *Ballads* is the loose, album-ending "Blues I Oktaver," by the late ivory tickler Jan Johansson. The intricate head struts and spills and tiptoes, leading to a smart, focused solo from Lundgren. "Oktaver" also offers a glimpse of what could have been. Maybe *Ballads* would have been a more compelling listen if Hamilton and Lundgren had picked more interesting tunes. Al Sandström's "You Can't Be In Love With A Dream" also bears noting. A duet between Hamilton and Lundgren, the sweet and mellow performance uses a can'tmiss combination: acoustic piano and breathy tenor sax. —*Brad Farberman*

Swedish Ballads ... & More: Dear Old Stockholm; Swing In F; You Can't Be In Love With A Dream; Trubbel; Stockholm Sweetnin'; Min Soldat (My Soldier); Blues I Oktaver. (52:00) Personnel: Scott Hamilton, tenor saxophone; Jan Lundgren, piano; Jesper Lundgaard, bass; Kristian Leth, drums. Ordering Info: charlestonsquare.net



Lou Caimano/Eric Olsen Dyad Plays Puccini SELF-RELEASE ***

The website jazzstandards.com lists chronologically the 1,000 most performed songs in jazz. It tells quite a story. The 1920s produced 165 such tunes; the thirties, 362; the forties, 265; the fifties, 208. Proud decades, all, for our great composers. Know how many songs written in the four decades since 1970 made the list? *Eight.* The reasons for the abysmal state of contemporary composition are a subject for another place.

Meanwhile, it's no wonder Giacomo Puccini must seem like fertile ground today for alto saxophonist Lou Caimano and pianist Eric Olsen. They call their combination Dyad—music-talk for two notes—and here they walk the line between classical and jazz in a program of melodies from *La Bohème, Tosca* and *Madame Butterfly*.

There is respectful stateliness to many of these pieces, often quiet and muted, other times with a rich, concert hall swell of orchestra dynamics. But the music tilts to the side of veneration over vitality. Caimano's alto is letter-perfect in its 19th-century sense of poise, composure and emotionally high-toned lyricism. The music opens up a bit in "Act 1 Overture," with a light, fugue-ish playfulness and a jazz sensibility in which Olsen's rolling bass line urges Caimano on before generating some a cappella sparks of its own.

But Dyad's larger intentions can be summed up in its imperiously proper performance of "E Lucevan Le Stelle," a melody from *Tosca*. In 1920, it was that very melody that formed the basis of a famous plagiarism lawsuit. It seems Puccini's opening line was shifted to a major key and published by Vincent Rose as the song "Avalon," which ranks number 109 on that list of jazz standards. It's been played by everyone from Django Reinhardt and Benny Goodman to James Carter. There is apparently much flexibility in Puccini, but Caimano and Olsen do not stretch it far from its pristine propriety. The result is a finely tuned recital, not a Puccini jam. —John McDonough

Dyad Plays Puccini: Musetta's Waltz; Ch'Ella Mi Creda; Act 1 Overture, Madama Butterfly; Che Gelida Manina; In Quelle Trine Morbide; O Mio Babbino Caro; Un Bel Di; E Lucevan Le Stelle; Chi II Bel Sogno Di Doretta; Nessun Dorma. (72:37) Personnel: Lou Caimano, alto saxophone; Eric Olsen, piano. Ordering info: dyadplayspuccini.com



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Slobber Pup Black Aces RARENOISE 032

The members of Slobber Pup have an extensive collective free/noise pedigree, their resumes littered with names like John Zorn, Metallic Taste Of Blood and Merzbow, as well as experimental and electronic rock outfits like Mr. Bungle and Venetian Snares. Together, the four



of them stir up a small pond worth of dark sludge and smear it thickly across a full bludgeoning hour of heavy doom and gloom. Joe Morris opens the album with a peel of almost bluesy guitar, and he's joined in a freewheeling exchange by bassist Trevor Dunn that suggests what follows may be fairly melodic. That possibility evaporates as the 27-minute "Accuser" marches on, gradually descending further into chaos. Lean in, and you'll hear some interesting things going on, mostly in Morris' guitar parts, but for the most part, any sense of contour is blotted away by static organ parts and constant washes of crash cymbal. For all the skill of the members, the various parts of the music rarely unite to make something with resonance. *—Joe Tangari*

Black Aces: Accuser; Basalt; Black Aces; Suffrage; Taint Of Satan. (64:50)

Personnel: Jamie Saft, organ, keyboards; Joe Morris, guitar, Trevor Dunn, bass; Balazs Pandi, drums. Ordering info: rarenoiserecords.com

Peter Evans Zebulon MORE IS MORE 131 ***

In recent years trumpeter Peter Evans has abundantly demonstrated his outrageous skills with extended technique, his protean power and endurance and his boundless imagination. His discography favors free improvisa-



tion, where the lack of formal rules has allowed him to run wild with exhilarating, ever-surprising results. His longtime membership in Mostly Other People Do The Killing has showcased his facility for playing in more-structured settings, breathlessly referencing, commenting upon, and embodying just about every phase of jazz history, but that ensemble's occasionally arch humor and piss-take ethos sometimes prevents the proper appreciation of the trumpeter's pure jazz chops. With the jaw-dropping trio session captured on *Zebulon*, any doubts about his astonishing mastery of the jazz language should be laid to rest.

The recording was cut live with bassist John Hébert and drummer Kassa Overall over two evenings at the titular Brooklyn club, which shuttered its doors at the end of 2012. All four tunes-which range in length from 15 to 25 minutes-were composed by Evans, but as the title of the opener "3625" (named after one of the most widely used progressions in jazz and a virtual love letter to bebop) makes plain, these pieces pretty much exist only as frameworks for heady three-way improvisation. Hébert and Overall stick the forms, giving the trumpeter an endlessly and inventively propulsive platform to blow over, and blow he does. Evans deploys some of his extended technique here-circular breathing, split tones-but it always occurs within the flow and narrative structure of his deeply logical, musical solos. Of course, using the word "solo" here is a bit misleading, as each track is pretty much one lengthy, loosely change-based improvisation. As with all of the best work from Evans, this recording leaves me feeling drained, in the best possible way. -Peter Margasak

Zebulon: 3625; Lullaby; Broken Cycles: Carnival. (78:29) Personnel: Peter Evans, trumpet; John Hébert, bass; Kassa Overall, drums. Ordering info: moreismorerecords.com

Matt Parker Worlds Put Together ^{BYNK 001}

From the opening antsy, Charles Mingus-y blast of two saxophones riding a riff on this album's opener, "Eye Of Rico," something fresh is afoot on tenor saxophonist Matt Parker's impressive debut, *Worlds Put Together*. The Florida-bred, Brooklynbased composer has conjured up a jazz



album which transcends easily categorizable genres or contemporary attitudes, instead adding up to an often picturesque and cinematic whole, which makes its statement through the many and varied parts involved.

On the restlessly inventive 11-track album, contrasts abound but somehow add to the integrated intrigue of the package rather than detracting from it. The family-friendly sweetness of the Euro-waltzy "Zeynep's Piano" gets along beautifully with the free-blowing energy blast-turned-lyrical floater, "Alien Baby," and the loose-fit rework of the record's only non-original, the standard "Darn That Dream," a dialogue between Parker's gutsy tenor and Julio Monterrey's supple alto saxophone work.

Twists keep coming. "WPT" features Parker honking out a bluesy riff, with tap dancer Jimmy Sutherland doing his intricate foot-wise business, before the band kicks in with its unison riff machinery. "New Bossa" refers not to some Jobim-esque terrain, but a rumbling rubato workout, with band and then just pianist Jesse Elder (it's also a tribute to Parker's late employer Maynard Ferguson). *Worlds Put Together* is an apt title for an album best appreciated in sequence, not piecemeal. Likewise, the full name of Parker's record label BYNK—"Because You Never Know"—captures something about the ever-malleable essence of his aesthetic. This promising debut makes him an album-maker to keep tabs on. *—Josef Woodard*

Worlds Put Together: Eye Of Rico; I Can't Help It; Lists; WPT; New Bossa: Up And Down; Alien Baby; Darn That Dream; Full Sun; Zeynep's Piano; New Bossa (Reprise). (45:33) Personnel: Matt Parker, tenor, soprano saxophones; Jesse Elder, piano; Josh Mease, guitar, Alan Hampton, bass; Reggie Quinerly, Mikkel Hess (6), drums; Julio Monterrey, alto saxophone; Jimmy "Taps" Sutherland, tap dance; Zeynep, Noah, Bora, Ezra, Charney, Sharon, Shana Bromberg, vocals (10). Ordering info: mattparker.com

JD Walter One Step Away JWAL RECORDS ****

While JD Walter's slightly under-radar status has yet to afford him top marquee marketability, the New York-based singer and songwriter has been in the game since the late-'90s. And he's built a reputation for going down his own idiosyncrat-



ic path, while simultaneously crafting music that's at once accessible and adventuresome, and undeniably soulful.

Here, he forges an uncanny alliance with Tarbaby, a combo that's not exactly known for accompanying singers. But the pairing works as Walter transforms Todd Rundgren's '80s rock ballad "Pretending To Care" into a pithy lament. Walter gives Paul Simon's "50 Ways To Leave Your Lover" a splendid sense of suspense and swagger as he alternates between elongated phrases and tricky passages. If there's any justice, music impresario Gilles Peterson would scoop up some of these tunes and include them on one of his influential compilations. —John Murph

Ordering info: jdwalter.com

One Step Away: One Step Away; Pretending To Care; 50 Ways To Leave Your Lover; How To Die And Where To Fly; Inward; Inside Outfluence; If I Knew; It's Raining Today; I Will Wait For You. (46:54) **Personnel:** JD Walter, vocals; Eric Revis, bass; Orrin Evans, piano; Nasheet Waits, drums; Marvin Sewell, guitar.



Mats Gustafsson/ Thurston Moore Vi Är Alla Guds Slavar otoroku LP 007 ****

Otomo Yoshihide/Sachiko M/ Evan Parker/Tony Marsh/ John Edwards/John Butcher Quintet/Sextet

In the 20th century, jazz musicians practiced doubling—playing more than one instrument—in order to increase their chances of getting jobs. In the 21st century, venues do something similar. London's Cafe OTO lends its stage to a catholic selection of improvisational and otherwise cutting-edge music, and sells records as well as the requisite selection of beverages. It also releases short-run vinyl LPs of live recordings made at the club via its record-releasing arm, OTOroku. These two releases each pair a visiting guitarist (Thurston Moore, Otomo Yoshihide) who is well versed in noise and pop music with esteemed European saxophonists (Mats Gustafsson, Evan Parker and John Butcher).

Otomo Yoshihide's musical reach encompasses small- and large-band jazz, cataclysmic electric noise-rock and barely-there electro-acoustic improvisation; he also composed the theme for the popular Japanese TV drama "Amachan." The LP documents the final night of Yoshihide's first residency at OTO in 2009, which he shared with frequent associate Sachiko M, Butcher and a trio led by Parker. There could not be a broader aesthetic gulf than the one that separates Sachiko's piercing, nearly static sine waves from the mercurial improvisations whipped up by Parker, bassist John Edwards and the late drummer Tony Marsh, who passed in 2012. But that just gives Yoshihide more room to maneuver, and he takes full advantage of it, ranging between fluid, winding runs and jagged, isolated shards. On the LP's first side, Yoshihide's Sonny Sharrock-like distorted phrases cleave through the English trio's eventful rise and fall like a machete. But he and Marsh soon establish an alliance, bringing the music down to a consonant simmer that resonates with Sachiko's subliminal whine before lashing out anew.

American guitarist Thurston Moore, of Sonic Youth as well as countless free-noise encounters, and Swedish saxophonist Mats Gustafsson have played together in a myriad of settings since the mid-'90s, but *Vi Är Alla Guds Slavar* ("We Are All Slaves Under God"), is their first fulllength duo recording. On other recent recordings, Gustafsson has played electronics as well as saxophones, but here the balance is reversed. For much of the record he generates shuddering waves of noise with a tabletop electronics rig, and only breaks out one horn from his arsenal for a few minutes on the second side. Moore likewise favors stuttering feedback and the bent-tine sonorities that have served him so well in Sonic Youth. The two men work in tandem, piling on sounds until the music acquires a black hole density. By turns exhilarating and overpowering, this music has barely a shred of jazz, but is devastatingly successful on its own terms. —Bill Meyer

VI Är Alla Guds Slavar: Part 1; Part 2. (42:13) Personnel: Mats Gustafsson, electronics, soprano saxophone; Thurston Moore, guitar.

Quintet/Sextet: Quintet; Sextet. (51:28)

Personnel: Otomo Yoshihide, guitar, Sachiko M, sampler, Evan Parker, soprano, tenor saxophones; John Edwards, bass; Tony Marsh, drums; John Butcher, soprano, tenor saxophones (2). Ordering info: otoroku.limitedrun.com



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John Clayton Salutes Sweet Dave

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Toolshed: Reviews of the latest gear John Clayton conducts the Clayton-Hamilton Jazz Orchestra at the Monterey Jazz Festival on Sept. 20 (Photo: ©Monterey Jazz Festival/Tomas Ovalle)



ohn Clayton conducts the Clayton-Hamilton Jazz Orchestra at the 2013 Monterey Jazz Festival (Photo: ©Monterey Jazz Festival/Tomas Ovalle)

One Sweet Suite!

ARRANGING DAVE BRUBECK'S MUSIC FOR BIG BAND AT MONTEREY

By Ed Enright

hen the Monterey Jazz Festival commissioned the Clayton-Hamilton Jazz Orchestra to perform a program of Dave Brubeck's music for its 2013 edition, John Clayton knew he had a big job ahead of him. The bassist, who writes most of the 18-piece orchestra's arrangements (and co-leads it with his saxophonist brother Jeff Clayton and drummer Jeff Hamilton), didn't want to simply rehash Brubeck's greatest hits. He decided he would rather explore Brubeck's vast repertoire and find some lesser-known compositions that the group could sink its teeth into. "Because Dave was so prolific, I thought, How about all of those tunes that are in the bottom drawers that people don't know about?" Clayton said, noting that Brubeck, who passed away on Dec. 6, 2012, helped launch the first Monterey Jazz Festival in 1958 and enjoyed a long association with the annual gathering. "Tim Jackson, the festival's artistic director, put me in touch with Dave's family and the archives at the University of the Pacific's Brubeck Institute, and they supplied me with a jump drive with all these MP3s of obscure and old recordings. So, I had a lot of listening to do."

After paring down his wish list of tunes and deciding on a nine-movement piece, Clayton also had a lot of arranging to do. After all, his big band would be performing tunes originally recorded by Brubeck's quartet, and he needed to not only come up with a plan for how he wanted it all to sound—he also needed to pen individual parts for five saxophones, five trumpets, four trombones, piano, bass, guitar and drums.

The Clayton-Hamilton Jazz Orchestra performed the finished work, titled "Sweet Suite Dave: The Brubeck Files," the evening of Sept. 20 on Monterey's Jimmy Lyons main stage, with Clayton conducting. The suite included Brubeck's "Something To Sing About," "Lost Waltz," "Three's A Crowd," "Softly William, Softly," "Cantiga Nova Swing," "Autumn In Our Town," "Summer Song," "Don't Forget Me" and "Maori Blues," in that order.

A few weeks after the performance, we spoke with Clayton about the songs he selected for the program and how he arranged them for big-band instrumentation.

DownBeat: Let's start by talking about the tunes that constitute "Sweet Suite Dave: The Brubeck Files" and your reasons for choosing them.

John Clayton: I liked the tunes for different reasons. "Something To Sing About" sounds very typically Brubeck and has an almost West Coast vibe—though I hate all those kinds of categories because there are too many exceptions to them. It has a real mellow, chill kind of thing, and I like the melody and the changes. I transcribed Paul Desmond's solo and harmonized it out for a sax section soli.

"Lost Waltz" is interesting because it's not a waltz. I heard something deeper in that song, because it starts out on the original recording with Brubeck playing the melody by himself, rubato, then it goes into kind of an uptempo swing with Paul Desmond playing the melody on alto saxophone. And when I heard Brubeck play it by himself, that's when all the colors started popping into my head, and I ended up making it kind of a romantic bossa nova before going into a more uptempo thing. But then when I went into the up-tempo thing, I used it as a vehicle just to feature the trio of the band—that trio is the Jeff Hamilton Trio with pianist Tamir Hendelman and bassist Christoph Luty, and they play so well together, so I used it as a trio feature after the bossa nova bit.

I used the first part of the suite to focus on all things Brubeck, and "Three's A Crowd" is a song that's in seven. In addition to writing tunes in odd time signatures, Brubeck did some superimposing of meters. So on "Three's A Crowd," even though he's got the seven going on, there's this duple thing that goes on throughout the bars of seven, which is very cool. So I kept that in and played off of that a bit. I had so much material to work with, I tried to keep everything simple: melody, melody, melody, melody. My goal was to have people walk away from this with some more Brubeck melodies ringing in their heads.

"Softly William, Softly" I left as an unaccompanied piano feature. I didn't mess too much with that—maybe a couple of chord alterations, but other than that it's awesome on its own. Russell Gloyd from the Brubeck Institute Summer Jazz Colony was very helpful. He pulled Tamir aside and gave him a little background on "Softly William, Softly," so on the performance I heard a new version of it as a result of the insight that Tamir gained. It was cool—people were always doing things to contribute to helping us understand Dave Brubeck.

"Cantiga Nova Swing" reminded me of an experience I had with Jeff Hamilton when we



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Don't miss Synthesis at the Jazz Education Network Conference in Dallas, Texas. Saturday, January 11 at Noon – Inspirations Ballroom at the Hyatt Regency at Reunion. Their newest CD, *The Day After Yesterday* is available at iTunes, Amazon, and byurecords.com





were working with Monty Alexander. We went to Martinique, and it was our first time there. Jeff and I were able to hear a local band play, and they were grooving so hard and were playing a drumbeat that neither of us had heard anywhere. And they taught it to Jeff. So now fast-forward all these years later, and I hear this "Cantiga Nova Swing" that Brubeck had done, and that experience just popped into my head. So I wrote the arrangement not only to feature Jeff Hamilton but to feature him doing that rhythm that he learned in Martinique. I'd like to see that song really explored, because it could easily be a samba kind of a groove. It asks for even bigger and longer treatment than I had a chance to give it.

"Autumn In Our Town" just felt like I wanted a piece of it. It's a really gorgeous melody, and I found a key that would lie perfectly on the bass, D minor, because of its range. I wanted to get a two- or three-octave range on it, so on the first "A" I could play it in a low register and then I took it up. D minor was great because the way the melody goes, I could use a lot of harmonics and keep it very ethereal and airy sounding.

And that segued into "Summer Song," which was perfect. "Summer Song" is a song where Dave's group accompanies Louis Armstrong on the soundtrack to the jazz musical The Real Ambassadors, which was recorded in 1961 and performed live at the Monterey Jazz Festival in 1962. Bill Cunliffe told me about the song, so I fell in love with it and I thought it was so beautiful and touching the way Louis sings it and Dave accompanies him. And I thought, Man, is there a way I can keep some of that? And I thought, What the hell, I'll just use the whole thing. So I had the actual recording in the middle of the performance, and we accompanied the recording from the stage. There was a whole process involved in that, because when they transfer old recordings from analog to digital, a lot of the times they will be sharp or flat. So we had to take the track and have somebody detune it so it would be in tune with us. It all came together and worked beautifully. And since we had brought the mood down with the "Autumn In Our Town" piece, when the recording of "Summer Song" started playing, there was a nice hush in the audience and then suddenly you heard Louis Armstrong's voice.

After that there was a song called "Don't Forget Me." That song allowed me to focus on my brother, Jeff. His influences and sound aren't from the Paul Desmond school; he is greatly influenced by players like Johnny Hodges, Benny Carter and Marshal Royal. So I was having a hard time figuring out how to get his voice in there. Then I heard "Don't Forget Me" and decided it was a perfect vehicle for my brother to tap into that stuff.

"Maori Blues" was the closing song of the suite. I had to have a blues in there because it's me, and this was one of those 6/8 or 12/8 minor-key blues. It's a riff melody, but it's written in a way that makes it really easy to use counterpoint and echo the melody here and there.

And then I came up with a theme to bookend the piece. It's atonal-esque: I took Dave Brubeck's name and assigned notes to each one of the letters. So it started on a D and moved to A, and I assigned a note for the letter V and found another color for R, etcetera. That was the theme we started with, and it ended that way, too, with a lot of terse and strident harmonies to accompany it.

DB: Describe the approach you took to arranging all of this material for big band.

JC: Each song has its own vibe and mood. The things that guide my writing are, number one, the mood I'm looking for, and number two, the melody, and that would go along with where I want the ear to go. And the third part is the personalities that I'm writing for. I don't write for drums, I don't write a trumpet part, I don't write saxophone parts. I write for Jeff Hamilton, and for my brother. I have found that writing generic music doesn't work for me. Even if I don't know the band or orchestra that I'm writing for, I have to write for an orchestra and a band in my mind, no matter how it gets interpreted later on. So that's the big part of the process right there, and then everything else kind of takes care of itself.

I don't immediately go to a score page. I always sketch, and I usually do multiple sketches, because when I'm done and I go to the score page, it's much faster. If I immediately go to the score page, then I'm snow-blind—I can't see the beginning, middle or end, and I don't know what's going on. So I usually write my sketches out in words, then I address the givens. The given might be that the melody has to be in a certain key. So I deal with that, and after that I write my note ideas in a sketch form. And each time I'm editing along the way. So I might start out in words and roman numerals: "eightbar piano intro"; "saxophones play the melody in unison"; "rhythm section, drums equal sticks"; "bassist playing with a two feel"; "piano accompaniment mid-register à la Wynton Kelly." I write words like that, and when I go to the next step and I've got the melody and I'm actually trying to write down some notes, then I start editing even more. The whole thing is an editing process. By the time I get to the score, it goes really fast. That's my process, and those are the things I think about.

For the saxophone soli on "Something To Sing About," I had to remember ... and this is something I learned when I took a sax soli-writing lesson from Frank Foster ... you really think about the overall sound that you're trying to create instead of thinking of the one chord that you're writing or the one note that you're harmonizing. Frank said to think of it as a wash of sound instead of thinking of it vertically. That has stuck with me, so that's what I did. Then you think about what kind of mood it's supposed to be. The song doesn't have a lot of altered chords to accompany it, and the melody is not that way, either, so therefore it didn't feel natural to me to hip it up with a lot of extensions and altered stuff. I tried to make it [interesting], but I wanted to keep that flavor going. So as a result, I do a mixture of things. Another thing I've learned: When you write from a rule, it sounds like you're writing from a rule. So if you're using five saxophones and you've got four or five notes that you're voicing out, if you take the second voice and put it below the fifth voice-do that "drop two"

thing-it just sounds like you're writing from a rule. So I never do that. I use all those techniques, but I won't try to keep the rule going throughout the soli. When I felt that the melody needed to be reinforced, I would double the lead alto melody an octave lower on the baritone.

On "Lost Waltz," that kind of ballad, romantic bossa treatment that I did, I ended up using a lot of dyad voicings that I interweave. So, for instance, if it's a C chord and I've got a melody note of C, I might have the melody played by trumpet 1, and then have the other trumpets play a fourth down, so you've got the C and the G. And then I might have the alto saxophone play an A natural just above the G, and then the tenors play a D natural below that. And then the trombones, two of them would play an E natural in unison just above that tenor D, and then the other two might play an A natural below that. So as a result, you end up with a full body of sound because you have the entire band playing, but it's a very thinned-out texture and you don't miss any notes; you still have a six-note chord that you're dealing with.

DB: Will you perform the suite again?

JC: I've been talking to Dave's son Chris, and we're trying to make sure that this piece has some life after the premiere. We're talking about recording the piece and possibly publishing it, because it's a shame when you put that much work into something and it's over in one night-especially with something that can have as much life as Brubeck songs.

DB: What did you learn about Brubeck from this experience?

JC: The more I listened to the breadth of his work, the more I understood that he, like the greats, was a sponge. He knew how to allow himself to be influenced by whatever music was around him. On the one hand, he could write a very Satie- or Debussy-esque solo piano work; he could turn around and write a kind of African 6/8 blues; he could turn around and write odd-meter things, but in doing so he could also superimpose other meters on the melody. Whatever he's listening to at the moment, he allows himself to be influenced by it and takes off with it. You hear him do something really simple, and then you turn around and you're listening to "In Your Own Sweet Way."

I remember hearing him in his later years participate in something at the Kennedy Center, and part of the program was a duo with him and Wynton Marsalis. He was slow getting up on the stage, but when he got behind the piano, I remember standing backstage saying, "Listen to his groove!" It didn't falter. I remembered that experience when I was listening to all of this music, thinking how when it came to the music, he had a way of fitting in and bringing it up to that level. The line that went through Brubeck for me was his chameleon-like ability. DR

Bassist and arranger John Clayton will perform at the Jazz Education Network's 5th Annual Conference in Dallas with saxophonist Bob Mintzer, guitarist Dave Stryker and drummer Peter Erskine on Jan. 10. The quartet is scheduled to hit at 9 p.m. on the Inspiration Stage.

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A Compositional devices in improvisation

By Bob Mintzer

G reat jazz soloists have the ability to tell a compelling story that commands the listener's attention. Qualities that are immediately noticeable are honesty, enthusiasm and an interesting story line that moves from moment to moment with connectivity as well as an element of surprise. Honesty and enthusiasm eventually come from hard work and self-reflection. I'd like to share with you some of the things I worked on to hone the ability to tell a convincing story in my blowing, including certain compositional devices.

Bob Mintze

As a young, aspiring saxophonist, I was confronted with learning repertoire, the language of jazz, my instrument, methods for approaching the music from melodic/harmonic/rhythmical angles and how to "play with the band." I was confronted with the playing of Charlie Parker, John Coltrane, Sonny Rollins and all the rest, playing that was virtuosic, dynamic and very powerful to say the least. At times, a large amount of notes would fly out of the horns of my favorite players, and I wanted to emulate that intensity by playing lots of notes, too, usually at a loud volume. Like most of my contemporaries, we were following the quest of emulating the likes of Coltrane, Rollins, Joe Henderson, Stanley Turrentine, King Curtis and Junior Walker.

I soon discovered that emulating those modern players without studying the saxophonists who preceded them was like building a house on quicksand. Buddy Rich called me out for playing like Coltrane in a superficial way. He told me to listen more to Lester Young and Coleman Hawkins. In my study of some of these historic players, I began to identify a continuity to their phrases and a keen use of space between phrases.

Another pivotal moment in my career occurred on a gig where the guitar player came over to me on a break and said that he had a hard time playing with me because I did not leave enough space when I soloed to allow him to contribute to the musical conversation. After a good deal of thought, and a conscious attempt to leave more space in my blowing, I discovered that my ideas didn't always connect logically. I was jumping from idea to idea in rapid succession without a clear direction and story line.

Here, then, are some of the things I have worked on—and continue to work on—to give my soloing a better sense of purpose and clarity.

The first thing I'd like to stress is the power of repetition. Most great jazz solos are full of motifs that repeat several times. Take, for example, George Coleman's saxophone solo on "There Is No Greater Love" from the Miles Davis album *Four And More*. He plays the anthemic line in Example 1 three consecutive times, with some variation, and ends his thought with a wind-up line. This sequence happens twice, and the compositional impact is striking. The band rallies around Coleman's playing and turns the moment into a joyous shout chorus.

Most of the great popular songs written in the '40s and '50s have the same level of repetition. Get out your copy of The Real Book and take a look at Jerome Kern's composition "All The Things You Are." The first eight-bar section repeats note for note in the second eight-bar section, albeit down a fourth. The tune's third eight-bar section starts with a ii-V-I progression in G major, and the second half consists of the same phrase transposed down a minor third to E major. The fourth eight-bar section starts off exactly the same as the first four bars of the tune, and the final four bars are a wind-up cadence to the tonic key of Ab. It's a brilliantly constructed tune, with just the right amounts of simplicity and interesting twists and turns. This is a great tune to use as a model for developing a compositional approach to improvising.

Here's a good exercise: Establish a short rhythmical motif that repeats three times with a wind-up on the third one, changing pitch to conform to the chord changes. Let's try a few different rhythmical motifs over a blues progression in B_b.

By repeating rhythmic figures in your improvisation, you create a strong sense of connection and structure. If you practice doing this, it will work its way into your blowing and pretty soon you won't even have to think about it. (See Example 2.)



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When you displace a motif, you can establish an interesting shape that has an "over the bar line" quality to it and is less predictable sounding. The motif is a quarter note followed by two eighth notes. (See Example 3.)

Another technique you can use to create structure and composition in an improvisation involves using a pivot tone. Let's go back to the blues progression and choose the dominant seventh of the tonic as the pivot tone. In the key of B_b, that would be A_b. This A_b is the suspended fourth of the IV chord (E_b7), and the sharp ninth of the V chord (F7). So this pivot note is a colorful note against the various chords of the blues progression. The idea is to keep returning to the pivot note while choosing a variety of other notes that conform to the chord change you are on. This will create a sense of suspension and tension. (See Example 4.)

You can use any note as a pivot note if you are playing with a pianist who knows how to alter his or her comping to accommodate the dissonance created by your note choice. A cool note to use is the flat sixth (G_p) of the tonic chord. This note is the sharp ninth of the IV chord and flat ninth of the V chord—again, colorful notes. (See Example 5.)

If you want to practice from a melodic slant, select a motif and find a way to move it sequentially through a harmonic setting. I've selected a triadic 3–5–3–1 shape to move through the blues progression. (See Example 6.)

Whenever you are presented with musical information, be it from a book, article or off a recording, it is advisable to not simply play the









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information verbatim. Try to use this information as a jumping-off point and see if you can take the concept at play and plug it into other situations.

My friend Mike Brecker played a shape back in the day that caught my attention. It was very "singable" and easily identified with his way of playing. I'm certain he stumbled onto this shape inadvertently and realized it felt good to play on the horn. I took Mike's shape and deconstructed it slightly, which suggested a few other possible shapes. After a while it no longer sounded like the original, and sent me down a road of discovering new shapes and patterns. Mike's shape is a six-note line that creates a nice feeling when played in 4/4. I took the first five notes and, in groupings of five, moved the pattern down in minor thirds. This line doesn't really have a specific key center, so you can float it over a onechord vamp, a blues progression or even a standard, for that matter. (See Example 7.)

We all listen to lots of great players, and through some level of mimicry, we emulate things that they play. If we are thorough, and listen to a vast cross-section of music, we will have a rich vocabulary and generally not sound like any one player. Coming into your own as a soloist results from taking the compositional approach and implementing new devices into your playing. **DB**

Saxophonist, bandleader and educator Bob Mintzer will present a clinic on "Using Motivic Development and Other Compositional Devices in Improvisation" during the Jazz Education Network's 5th Annual Conference in Dallas. His clinic begins at 1 p.m. on Jan. 10 in Cumberland Rooms I–J of the Hyatt Regency Dallas at Reunion.

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Jazz Blossoms in Guadalajara

By Aaron Cohen / Photo by Daniel Solorio

ew York-based pianist Arturo O'Farrill had to think of a different way of explaining jazz and clave rhythms to about 40 high school-age musicians in Guadalajara last August. He had come to the city to teach at the Tónica foundation's Encuentro Internacional De Jazz En Jalisco (International Jazz Encounter in Jalisco). During the lesson, O'Farrill repeated his horn section drills, cut them off and then asked the players to sing the parts. He then described swing to one saxophonist as imagining trying to talk to a girl. At that point, the student got it.

"Students here are not so entrenched in the methodologies that we have in our schools and our conservatories," O'Farrill said. "But they're just as talented and pick things up just as quickly. Sometimes just telling them that they have the ability to do this frees them up to embrace it in a strong way."

This sensibility also applies to Tónica, which trumpeter Gilberto Cervantes established seven years ago with singer Sara Valenzuela. Cervantes, who studied jazz composition at Berklee College of Music in Boston, wanted to bring education in improvised music back to his hometown. Since then, approximately 4,500 students have taken part in the 10-day program. The organization's summer festival includes nighttime concerts, with visiting artists teaching classes and participating in panel discussions by day. Most students are from Guadalajara, but different regions of Mexico are also represented.

The venture required working with governmental organizations, foundations and artists from across Mexico. That's why Cervantes chose an inclusive name, which translates as "tonic."

"We wanted to create a platform for everyone," he said. "The tonic, that's the root—it's fundamental and where everything develops."

Since Cervantes and Valenzuela had developed a wealth of contacts among musicians in Mexico and the United States, a number of prominent jazz artists have performed and taught at the Guadalajara event, including Dave Holland, Don Byron, John Medeski, Brian Lynch and Ben Allison.

The challenge in bringing such musicians to Guadalajara comes down to funding. Cervantes explained that 52 percent of Tónica's budget derives from the government, and the private sector makes up 36 percent. The foundation's own resources cover 10 percent, and the remainder comes from individual and institutional donors, including the United States embassy. These combined resources have become especially crucial since Tónica expanded its education programs three years ago.

In 2010, the foundation launched its Music For Children From Marginalized Communities program with the help of Lynch, Jay Rodriguez and Danilo Pérez, who has run similar projects in Panama. Valenzuela mentioned that they've reached out to families in impoverished towns in Oaxaca, and Cervantes added that Tónica offers similar help to families close to home. "We work with different social organizations here," Cervantes said. "This includes a team of workers who help indigenous people who live in Guadalajara whose kids are frequently in hard situations."

Rodriguez's class for children, Jazz Para Bajitos, illustrated this ideal. "We're trying to create the idea of what jazz is for a 4-year-old and an 11-year-old," he said. "It takes a minute for them to get it and for us to get it. You see us walking around to demonstrate a walking bass line. The kids always dig that."

Older students can take part in more intensive classes and jazz history courses. O'Farrill teaches an advanced performance course, with students from across Jalisco spending 10 days preparing for a big band concert that helps close out the festival.

Every year, the seminar's top students participate in the Tónica Ensemble, which Lynch directs. The group has performed at the Panama Jazz Festival, and members have attracted notice from international jazz faculties. In 2011, saxophonist Gerry Lopez was accepted to the Paris Conservatory. Another Tónica alum, Ines Velasco, is now completing her studies at Berklee.

"I had no clue about jazz harmonies, so that was an eye-opener," Velasco said. "Tónica has been really groundbreaking and has a special place in Guadalajara's cultural sphere."

Tónica (tonicagdlac.com) is building toward a larger place in its city's educational realm with a plan to offer more scholarship opportunities. "Right now we are launching a fundraising campaign to provide scholarships to 153 players for next season," Valenzuela said. "We are lucky to have the support of amazing musicians and people who believed in Tónica from the beginning of our foundation. Now we just have to keep working." DB

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Jazz School Jazz Education for Everyone, Everywhere

By Allen Morrison / Photo by Lawrence Sumulong

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How about nothing?

That's exactly the deal offered by the online Jazz Academy, the ambitious new project from Jazz at Lincoln Center (JALC), New York's jazz performance and education juggernaut led by Managing and Artistic Director Wynton Marsalis. The project's new website, academy.jalc.org, provides priceless advice from jazz masters, instrumental instruction at all levels and jazz history lessons. The site is an enormous online resource for current teachers and students of jazz, but it also has a loftier goal: to win new converts by demystifying the music.

The staff of the Jazz Academy plans to offer 200 different free video lessons by the end of 2013. Another 200 clips, which have already been filmed, are scheduled to be added by June 30, 2014.

The videos, which are typically about 4 to 10 minutes long, include subjects such as "Finding Your Own Voice" with Oliver Lake, "Gary Bartz Breaks Down Auditioning for a Conservatory," "The Things I Didn't Learn in Music School" by trumpeter Jon-Erik Kellso and an eight-part introduction to "The Origins of Jazz" by historian and JALC Curator Phil Schaap. Eventually, the entire "Jazz 101," an introductory jazz history course from the organization's "Swing University" music appreciation classes, will also be available online—for free.

Among the other jazz luminaries who have recorded video lessons for the website are George Cables, Evan Christopher, Marion Cowings, Vincent Gardner, Victor Goines, Sherman Irby, Bobby Sanabria, Helen Sung, Joe Temperley and Buster Williams.

The program is overseen by a trumpeter, educator and jazz advocate from Columbus, Ohio, named Todd Stoll, who serves as JALC's vice president for education. The gregarious Stoll met Marsalis more than 30 years ago when he was a high school band director and Marsalis was teaching a clinic at his school; they cemented their friendship the next day on the basketball court.

"A couple of years ago, Wynton invited me to his house," Stoll recalled while seated in JALC's 12th floor headquarters above Columbus Circle. "And he asks me, 'Man, have you seen this [educational website] called the Khan Academy? This guy Salman Khan is teaching math and science, and all these classes online for free.' So we got on the website, and it was amazing. That could be the future of education. And Wynton says, 'Let's do this for jazz.""

The program's purpose, Stoll said, is not only to educate musicians and future musicians, but also to build the audience for jazz domestically and

azz at Lincoln Center Orchestra members Ted Nash (left) and Joe Temperley have filmed videos for the Jazz Academy.

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around the world.

Stoll and Marsalis share more than the trumpet and a love of basketball; they have the same philosophy about how to teach music, and specifically jazz, to children. "I don't believe in putting things in front of kids that are watered down so they can play it better," Stoll explained, "or in trying to get a 'perfect performance' out of kids. Music education should address the *content*. Most of the kids in your ensembles are not going to be professional musicians. So why not give them the greatest art you can give them, not a watered-down version of it? Let them struggle with the greatest art they can, and they'll learn something about their humanity."

Jazz Academy's videos reflect that approach, never "talking down" to the viewer or watering down the music to make jazz more digestible even though instruction is available at the beginner, intermediate and advanced levels. The expanding library eventually will include several categories of videos, such as jazz lessons, family activities, Jazz for Young People, and oral histories featuring reminiscences by such legends as drummer Albert "Tootie" Heath and baritone saxophonist Joe Temperley.

The library is fully searchable: Visitors can quickly locate videos by instrument, subject, style of jazz, viewer's level of proficiency, instructor's name or other parameters.

None of this would matter much if the videos weren't fun to watch. Stoll and his team have



ensured that they have high production values, visual panache, snappy editing and a consistent look and feel across the library.

Equally important, they carry the authority of the master musicians who present the material. For example, in Bartz's video on "The Importance of Melody," the alto sax master blows the simple, haunting "Star Eyes," demonstrating the melody as written and as embellished. "Don't disrespect the melody," he cautions. "Learn the melody properly. Listen to singers. Know the lyric, because sometimes there may be a tender moment in the lyric, and if you don't know it, you might play it too rough."

Reed, a seasoned teacher of master classes and private students, is enthusiastic about the online initiative. The pianist's videos, filmed with his quartet, cover such subjects as "Comping Under a Bass Solo," "Trading Solos" and "Maintaining Clarity in an Upbeat Song." Reed said the experience of filming the videos was almost exactly the same as leading a master class: "I don't consider it so much teaching as it is mentoring or encouraging," he said. "There's only so much that a person is going to figure out by themselves or by listening to records. Some things have to be explained." Reed plans to tape additional segments on solo piano playing, and on the inspiration behind improvisation—subjects that could easily form the basis of full-term courses. "Til have to figure out how to condense them," he noted.

"There are other jazz instructional websites with thousands of videos," Stoll acknowledged. "But the difference with ours is that it's free. We're a fan of free. Break down the barriers."

JALC is "looking at another solid three years of work" on the online Jazz Academy, Stoll said. "This is not a sprint; it's a marathon." Perhaps the most ambitious aspect of all is a plan to incorporate interactive learning into the site, allowing users to submit multimedia content for feedback from the pros.

Will it be possible to provide that type of personalized service at no charge? "We're planning on it," Stoll said with a laugh. "We might get to a point where our free model changes, but ultimately we want to keep things free."

Pragmatically speaking, what would happen if the interactive audience dramatically increased in size? "That would be a dream," he said. "If we have that many people who want to interact with us and really engage with jazz, well, that will be a good problem to have." DB

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Famous Alumnus Returns: Trumpeter Wynton Marsalis will become the director of jazz studies at The Juilliard School beginning July 1, 2014. Marsalis, who serves as the managing and artistic director of Jazz at Lincoln Center (JALC), is a Juilliard alumnus. He will oversee the Spring 2014 auditions and admissions cycle to select the entering class for Fall 2014, while immediately planning for how the program and curriculum will evolve under his leadership. Juilliard and JALC have announced a substantial new initiative to give Juilliard students increased access to JALC's education programs, concert opportunities and audience development projects. juilliard.edu

New Name: The University of Nebraska–Lincoln's School of Music has been renamed the Glenn Korff School of Music in honor of Glenn Korff, who announced in August a gift of \$8 million to the University of Nebraska Foundation to support the school. The gift from Korff, who died on Aug. 27 shortly after announcing the gift, creates a permanently endowed fund to provide annual support for students, faculty and programs within the school, which is part of the Hixson-Lied College of Fine and Performing Arts. arts.unl.edu

For the Love of Dave: University of the Pacific's Brubeck Institute has announced the lineup for its 13th annual Brubeck Festival celebrating the music and life of Dave Brubeck. Eddie Palmieri, Al Jarreau and Terri Lyne Carrington will perform on March 27-29, in Stockton, Calif. Palmieri will perform on March 27 at San Joaquin Delta College. Jarreau will perform March 28 at the Bob Hope Theatre in Stockton and then take part in a free public symposium the following day at University of the Pacific. Carrington, who is a professor at Berklee College of Music in Boston, will lead her band during a March 29 performance at Fave Spanos Concert Hall; her appearance is being co-sponsored by University of the Pacific's Black History Month Committee. brubeckinstitute.org

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MASTER CLASS BY PETE McGUINNESS

Scat Singing Thinking Like an Instrumentalist

VOCAL JAZZ IMPROVISATION AND INSTRUMENtal jazz improvisation are often perceived as coming from two very different worlds. Jazz vocalists have more concerns that are in the forefront of their minds than instrumentalists, such as the need to communicate the story of the lyrics and other dramatic aspects of delivering a song. These "singer skills" are indeed part of the art. And when it comes to vocal improvisation, or "scat singing," there can be some confusion for singers about what it means to get away from lyrics and simply create music on the spot—especially melodies that fit in with what the instrumentalists are doing.

As a trombonist and vocalist, I know firsthand that instrumentalists and vocalists can operate in the same musical world of improvisation. I view it as a melodic and rhythmic language that can be performed by any musician, regardless of their instrument. It all comes down to what you hear and how you articulate it.

For singers, this might mean using certain scat syllables to project the rhythmic qualities we hear in the way instruments perform. I recently saw a performance by Jon Hendricks at the Blue Note in New York. His scat singing at one point imitated the sound of an upright bass. He chose sounds and syllables that really made me think of that instrument. Most importantly, his overall rhythmic feel and content were so strong that I didn't feel I needed to hear an actual bass. His voice (sound and pitch) and his mouth (syllables, accents, etc.) did all the work of producing the music. Of course, he first had the great lines and melodies in his ears from years of listening. So, how does a singer gain the vocal improvisation ability of someone like Hendricks, Louis Armstrong, Ella Fitzgerald, Chet Baker, Sarah Vaughan or the other great scatters?

An important starting point for singers is learning to "pre-hear" musical lines before performing them. Singers

who even have decent relative pitch can learn to pre-hear long strings of notes. One way to make practicing long lines easier is to start by mastering the first and last (or resolving) note of the phrase, firmly hearing how these notes relate to the underlying chords. This focuses the ear on the "starting line" and "finish line" of a phrase. Once those pitches are firmly planted in the ear, other connecting notes within the line become easier to hear, as we are now working with clear sign posts to work away from (the starting pitch) and toward (the note of resolution).

Young scat singers should reinforce everything at the keyboard. Basic piano skills are a must for any serious vocalist who wants to learn intricate melodies. Learn lines slowly, enough so that you can sing them in tune and in time. We only learn when we master something gradually, not when we repeatedly bang up against a tempo we cannot yet handle.

Scat syllables can be another area of mystery for singers. They are a vocalist's way of articulating the rhythmic content of the music, much like a brass or woodwind player uses his or her body to create rhythmic action. The two are closely related. For example, a brass player's lips vibrate just like vocal chords to create sound as the air travels through the instrument and out the bell. If you listen closely to Chet Baker scat, you will clearly hear his tongue striking the back of his front teeth to articulate the notes in a manner similar



to the way he plays the trumpet. His trumpet lines are often made up of long, smooth and legato eighth notes. When he scats, there is usually very minimal movement of his mouth, as he relies mainly on a legato tongue articulation. Whereas if you listen to Louis Armstrong, you hear a wide variety of scat syllables and greater degree of mouth movement. I suggest listening to Armstrong's performance on "Hotter Than That" from 1927. You'll hear a great trumpet improvisation followed later by a wonderful scat chorus. Listen to how the two solos relate. Much of the material is similar, but hearing Armstrong scat his melodies is almost like getting a glimpse into what he is really thinking about when he is playing.

For vocalists, as the mouth opens, a sung note can sound "bigger," which is useful when you want to accent a note. As the mouth closes, the opposite happens. Pair that with the various levels of percussiveness of different scat syllables, and a singer can project various levels of accent. "Dah" has both a open-mouth and a clear "D" attack. "Doo" is less open, but clearly attacked (again using "D"). Take away the "D" and you get "ah" or "oo" (smooth/ unaccented). As the mouth closes further, we might use an "n" or "dl" syllable, as in "dah-dl-oo." Here, the first note ("dah") gets the main accent, with the "dl" as the swallowed note and the "oo" being more neutral. That's three shifts of accent in one group of notes! There are, of course, many more





types and levels of syllables/attacks ("bah," "shoo," "wee," "n," etc.). It becomes a matter of taste at a certain point. But, if one can transcribe and learn instrumental solos and apply some of this basic scat syllable/mouth-size logic, a singer has a shot at projecting groove just like instrumentalists do.

Check out the two scat-solo examples I've provided—one is over a standard jazz chord progression, the other over a blues in C. Note the relationship between the scat syllables I've chosen and the accent level of the notes they correspond to.

Listen to the great scat singers of jazz history, and choose ones who seemed to have "figured it out" as your role models. Much of how we learn is through listening and imitating, absorbing different ways of creating melody and projecting groove. I discovered Baker's style when I was about 25 years old and began memorizing and practicing many of his solos. With the inspiration I've received from my vocal role models and the hours of practice I've put into becoming a good musician, I feel I can scat-sing improvisations that sound and feel much like what you would hear from an accomplished instrumentalist. Indeed, if you think like a horn player when you scat, you'll discover that the two worlds of instrumental improvisation and vocal improvisation are really one in the same. DB

Trombonist, vocalist, composer, arranger and bandleader Pete McGuinness is a professor of jazz studies at William Paterson University. His latest CD, *Voice Like A Horn*, is available on Summit Records. Visit him online at peterncquinness.com.



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Drawbar Settings for Modern Jazz Organ

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Waller and Count Basie began incorporating its use in their performances and recordings. Many techniques have been developed by various players over the decades, most of them involving Hammond drawbar organs like the B-3.

I would like to share with you what I think are the most important drawbar settings for modern jazz organ. I'll also give you some musical examples so you can see them in action and get a feel for the different ways drawbar setting can affect the organ's tone.

In these examples, the setting on the lower manual and bass pedals will stay the same for the bass lines, with the first and third drawbar pulled all the way out. I sometimes push them in just a little if the bass is a little too loud. You can also pull the second drawbar out to 3 for a slightly thicker sound. The pedal drawbars should have the first drawbar pulled out to 7.

Example 1

This is probably the most famous Hammond organ solo setting. The first three drawbars are pulled all the way out; the percussion setting is on/soft/ fast/3rd harmonic; the Leslie is on "stop." This setting has been used by everyone and is said to have been originated by Jimmy Smith.

In Example 1, I have put together a few very popular licks that I associate with this drawbar setting. The left hand plays a blues bass line, and the left foot taps the pedals (if you have them) on quarter notes. If you are new to playing pedals, just try tapping very lightly with a flat foot on the B in the middle of the register. The idea is to get the percussive sound without the note sounding. In the right-hand part, I've given you some very idiomatic organ



clichés. Almost all the material here comes from C minor and A minor pentatonic with a few F#s from the C blues scale thrown in. Try familiarizing yourself with the shapes of the line and try altering the direction and timing of the licks for variations. You can sound great just manipulating these ideas for a whole solo.





Example 2

Our second example is inspired by organist Larry Young, who also had the first three drawbars all the way out, but he used a different vibrato (C-1) and often used a slow percussion decay with the Leslie on "stop." A common Young device with this setting is to arpeggiate two different triads in triplets. In the first bar, I use Eb and F triads over an F7 chord. In the next bar, I use F minor and Eb triads over Fm7. In the third bar, I mix an F triad with an Ab minor pentatonic scale to get interesting altered lines. The last bar of this example mixes triads in minor thirds from the root: F, Ab, Cb (B) and D. This gives us a quick vehicle for creating interesting diminished sounds while also adding intriguing interval combinations.

Example 3

This example demonstrates the classic organ technique known as "squabbling," sometimes referred to as the "Erroll Garner setting." Pull the first and last four drawbars all the way out. The percussion can be on or off. When on, go with the percussion settings that we've already talked about in the above two examples. The idea is that the thumb and pinky of your right hand play octaves while your other fingers "smush" notes in the middle. Some people do this by curling their middle three fingers and playing with their knuckles. I simply use a flat palm and play sloppily. The left hand walks a bass line with the left foot used on the pedals as above.

Example 4

This setting is sometimes called the "gospel setting" or "soul tone," and it can be used for soloing or comping chords. Pull the first four drawbars and last drawbar all the way out, with percussion off. With this setting, it sounds great to turn the Leslie rotary speaker from "fast" to "slow" and back for more expression. To play the exercise, the pinky of my right hand holds the high D. The second finger of my left hand plays the low D. The first and second fingers of my right hand play the notes in the middle. Try this riff when you're playing with a horn band and want to get over the top.

Example 5

Mel Rhyne, the organist in Wes Montgomery's famous trio, had an unusual sound on the group's early recordings. The first four drawbars are out, and the percussion setting is on/normal/slow/2nd harmonic, usually with no vibrato. Rhyne would play beautiful bebop lines with this setting over the fiercely swinging rhythm section. In Example 5, the left hand (with the foot tapping) plays a bass line over "I Got Rhythm" changes in Bb while the right hand spins melodic riffs made up of modes and chromatic notes.

Brian Charette is a Grammy-nominated, Nord-endorsed recording artist. He performs and teaches all over the world. Charette has worked with Lou Donaldson, Chaka Khan, Joni Mitchell and many others. He will be releasing three new albums this year: a trio recording for Posi-Tone Records, a sextet studio album on SteepleChase and a live sextet recording on the SmallsLIVE label. Visit Charette online at kungfugue.com.

Esperanza Spalding's Bass Solo on 'Love In Time'

FROM HER 2008 SOLO ALBUM ESPERANZA (HEADS UP),

bassist Esperanza Spalding plays a magnificently well developed solo on her composition "Love In Time." The song is a light jazz waltz in E_{b} , and even though it's in a swung three, Spalding plays off the triplet so often that it creates an impression of being in 9/8. Throughout this improvisation we hear her shifting seamlessly from swung eighth notes to triplets.

But besides just playing triplets and swung eighths, Spalding does some other interesting things off the triplet in bars 10, 12, 32, 33 and 43. Instead of playing on the first and third notes of the triplet grouping to create a swinging feel, she plays on the first and second notes of the grouping to suggest a kind of inverted swing. At measure 12, she plays the entire bar with this rhythm.

A great example of Spalding's mastery of the triplet happens in measure 27, where she plays one of these "reverse swing" rhythms, then a regular swing triplet, and then on the last beat plays the middle and ending notes of the triplet grouping. In one measure, she plays all the possible permutations of two notes on the triplet. It could also be heard as a quarter-note triplet that starts on the second part of the first beat.

Spalding even varies her use of quarter-note triplets, which are not a common device in 3/4 time for most players. Spalding not only plays them starting on the downbeat, as in measure 5, but also starting on the second beat, as in measures 3, 11, 25 and 36.

Another notable aspect of Spalding's solo is the way she revisits certain motifs and paraphrases her own ideas. Right out of the gate, she lets us know that this is a technique she intends to employ. Her first two solo licks are essentially the same idea modified to fit the harmony: The phrase in measure 1 has the same basic shape and rhythm as the one in measure 3, with the 5–6–7 of the Elpmaj7 transposed dwn to 1–2–1/3 on the Gm7 chord.

Her very next lick is a key one. We hear $D-E_{p}$ - B_{p} -D-C. It creates a harmonic minor sound against the C7, but it's also interesting to

Sol



note how the lick works intervalically: up a minor second, down a major third, then up a minor third, and down a major second to resolve to what would be the root, except the chord has changed to Fm7, so she has landed on the fifth of the new harmony (and on the downbeat).

For the next phrase, she plays the exact same series of notes, only in the key center of Fm $(G-A_{P}-E_{P}-G-F)$ to give us that resolution to the root of the current chord. Spalding then makes an abrupt left turn to end the line a tritone away on a B_{P} (which was the major seventh in the previous C7 lick but also helps set up the Gmaj7 that's coming up).

This lick occurs again in bar 19, but with the rhythm altered, and again across measures 21–22. Later, Spalding pares it down to just the 7–2–1 in measures 37, 43 and 46. By this time the motif has become quite familiar to us, and it's so fitting that she uses it as one of the final ideas we hear before she brings the vocal back in. DB

Jimi Durso is a guitarist and bassist based in the New York area. Visit him online at jimidurso.com.



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Antigua BS3220 Rock-Solid, Resonant Bari Sax

hen it comes to buying a new baritone saxophone, you're lucky if you can find a horn with professional features in the so-called "student model" price range. One such instrument is Antigua's BS3220 baritone saxophone, a strong and accurate horn that will surprise you with its ability to be played expressively.

A good bari should be built to withstand decades of wear-and-tear, and the BS3220 appears to be up to the task with its rock-solid construction. I played the instrument over several months, and it held its regulation nicely with no unwanted "migration" of keys or deadening of spring tension. I could easily see this sturdy horn surviving plenty of run ins with other objects on the bandstand, in the practice room and all points between—not to mention Father Time.

A good bari should play responsively, too. Whatever amount of ϵ and air you put into it, the BS3220 will instantly give back to vibrancy and volume. Low notes resonate, mid-range notes pop ... high notes sing—the horn's entire range sounds excellent. A fairly wide dynamic range gives the instrument plenty of depth in the hands of more advanced players.

Intonation and keywork benefit from the marvels of modern engineering. This horn plays pitch-accurate and moves fast enough for bebop. Key spacing is very reasonable for someone with small hands, and key heights feel just right.

The BS3220 is made of yellow brass and comes with Pisoni pads and metal resonators. The lacquer on this model is clear nothing fancy here except for some tasteful bell engraving. A high F-sharp key, low A key

nothing fancy here except for some tasterul bell engraving. A high F-sharp key, low A key and contoured palm keys come standard.

The BS3220 performed admirably in a big band, a blues group and a rock horn section. With a street price of less than four grand, it's a great value. —*Ed Enright* Ordering info: antiguawinds.com

The Jazz Conception Company Education Innovation

Saxophonist Jim Snidero's latest educational offering, the Jazz Conception Company, offers two multimedia courses: Jazz Improvisation–Part 1 and Jazz Saxophone. Each course—which contains interactive video lessons and play-alongs, e-music books, inte-

grated historical performances and a patented study and assessment system—can be streamed online. An Apple iPad app allows content to be downloaded and viewed without the Internet as well.

The improv course, which consists of 10 video lessons and 19 play-alongs, covers ear training, basic scales and chords, articulation, the blues and practice techniques. It also teaches solo construction, including rhythm, timing, balance, symmetry, form and vocabulary. The jazz saxophone course, which offers six video lessons and eight play-alongs, explores developing a good tone, relating jazz articulation to the masters, swing feel, equipment and playing over a ballad.

The Jazz Conception Company is a great resource for

teachers who want to give their students additional means to study jazz. More courses are in the works, and as Snidero has said, this material will get students sounding more "convincing and authentic." A one-year subscription for a 10-lesson course is \$49.95, and the six-lesson course is \$39.95. —*Zachary Sollitto* Ordering info: [azzimprovisation.com





Claudio Pagelli Massari Archtop

Sleek & Unique

There are only a few luthiers who create new instruments that stretch the envelope of traditional archtop design. One such luthier is Claudio Pagelli, a visionary craftsman who has broken new ground with the introduction of his Massari model archtop. It's the only Pagelli guitar to be offered through dealerships (all other instruments are available direct from him), and it radiates cool from the first glance.

The guitar is basically a 17-inch archtop and features a single cutaway. However, in true Pagelli style, the body contour has an asymmetrical shape with striking curves throughout. The Massari's back and sides are solid Canadian quilted maple. Its top is hand-carved out of Swiss Alpine spruce that is "moon-cut." The 25 ½-inch scale neck is made from a solid piece of flame maple, and the guitar utilizes ebony for the binding, bridge, tailpiece, finger rest, pickup cover and fingerboard.

The Massari is an incredibly comfortable guitar with a lightweight and ergonomic feel. It features a comfortable bevel along the upper bout and another carved into the cutaway. The neck profile lends itself to fluid noting up and down the fingerboard.

The Massari is a fully acoustic instrument that produces a rich and responsive tone on its own but really comes to life when amplified. It uses a single floating SSH-266 humbucker built by Spanish archtop luthier Fernando Alonso Jaén, and the volume and tone controls are hidden underneath the finger rest. What really stands out with the Massari is how effortlessly the guitar plays. The setup is amazing, and the tone is balanced, clear and full with great note separation, whether the player is using a pick or bare fingers. The Massari is an amazing instrument that straddles the line between art and functionality. *—Keith Baumann* **Ordering info: pagelliguitars.com**

Theo Wanne Mantra Soprano Saxophone

Responsive & Expressive

In creating the Mantra Soprano Saxophone, Theo Wanne has implemented many of the same design elements that made the Mantra Tenor Saxophone such a sensation when it was introduced in 2012. Those innovations and advancements contributed in no small part to the original Mantra's reputation as an incredibly responsive and expressive instrument—qualities the new soprano model clearly shares with its predecessor, as demonstrated by a recent play-test.

The Mantra Soprano lived up to my expectations of a free-blowing saxophone that resonates with a warm, fat sound. Key ergonomics are excellent on this horn. Heights are consistent and require a small range of motion. Tight and quiet, the action feels effortless and supports smooth, fast playing.

Like the Mantra Tenor, the Mantra Soprano has what Theo Wanne calls a "reticulated finish" on the inside and outside of the horn. Tiny dimples in the finish improve airflow through the instrument in the same way that a shark's rough skin creates water microturbulence, allowing it to slip through the water with less effort. This increases the Mantra's ability to project and improves its response time noticeably.

The Mantra Soprano is outfitted with high-quality Roo Pads (made from kangaroo skin) that are installed with Maestro Star resonators. It features an adjustable stack height and adjustable side keys, so you or your technician can easily get it feeling just right. The instrument's angled triple neckstrap hook allows for three mounting positions that can make a big difference in how the horn hangs around your neck.

The Theo Wanne Mantra Soprano Mouthpiece, featuring a Liberty Ligature with interchangeable reed pressure plates in gold-plated brass and heavy copper, is highly recommended for use with this instrument. —*Ed Enright*

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CAD has expanded its Sessions series of headphones with new color additions. The new Sessions MH510GD phones in gold/white are now available, and they will be followed by custom colors such as chrome/white, hightech grey/white and pink/white. cadaudio.com

Deluxe Capos

Shubb Capos' C-series of nickel-plated capos have been upgraded to include design features formerly available only on its deluxe, stainless steel models. Upgrades include a roller design, contoured lever and rounded edges. <u>shubb.com</u>



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Wound in White

La Bella Strings has introduced 7710T White Nylon Tape Wound strings for double bass. Unlike the original 7710N Black Nylon Tape Wound sets, La Bella's 7710T strings are wound with a clear proprietary nylon to create an even smoother-to-the-touch string with brighter tone and clarity. Labella.com

Miller's Pad

The All-N-1 Russ Miller signature practice pad from ProLogix features a variety of interchangeable stick- and brush-playing surfaces. The pad's SHM technology lets users mount it on top of any 14-inch snare drum hoop, preventing any contact from the drumhead underneath. prologixpercussion.com



Protection Patch

Rico's Reserve Mouthpiece Patch is designed for clarinetists and saxophonists who want to protect the surface of their mouthpiece where it makes contact with their teeth. The patch adheres securely to the mouthpiece, yet it can easily be removed or transferred to another mouthpiece. It is available in black (.8 mm thick) and clear (.35 mm thick) options. <u>rloreeds.com</u>



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Blindfold Test > BY DAN OUELLETTE

Joe Lovano

S axophonist Joe Lovano was a busy man during the 2013 Monterey Jazz Festival in September. As the festival's Artist-in-Residence, he played with his Us Five ensemble and in his Sound Prints quintet (co-led by trumpeter Dave Douglas), performing music inspired by and commissioned from Wayne Shorter. Lovano was also a soloist with the fest's all-star student band, the Next Generation Jazz Orchestra. For his third Blindfold Test, Lovano was tested onstage at Dizzy's Den in Monterey.

Hank Mobley

"Remember" (Soul Station, RVG 1999, rec'd 1960) Mobley, tenor saxophone; Wynton Kelly, piano; Paul Chambers, bass; Art Blakey, drums.

That was Hank Mobley with Art Blakey on drums and maybe Sonny Clark on piano. The feel is amazing. Hank's ideas and his flowing conceptions tell a story—just like every solo he ever played. His approach is so personal. Was this from *Soul Station*? This was the period where Hank was playing really free on his horn. You can hear the beautiful communication and phrasing between Hank and Art. They played a lot together through the years.

Thomas Chapin

"Jitterbug Waltz" (*Radius*, Muworks, 1990, rec'd 1984) Chapin, mezzo-soprano saxophone; Ronnie Mathews, piano; Ray Drummond, bass; John Betsch, drums.

Very spiritual. Very soulful. Very beautiful. I hadn't heard that before. "Jitterbug Waltz" is the tune, but I don't know the player. Is it Rahsaan Roland Kirk? I liked this a lot. It's a personal statement. You can feel the emotion in his playing. Maybe it's Lucky Thompson, but I don't think so. [*after*] It's Thomas Chapin on mezzo-soprano? I knew him. He used to come to my loft in New York. At the beginning, Thomas was in the Knitting Factory scene. I never heard him play the mezzo, just the alto, but you can hear how creative a player he was.

Roswell Rudd/Steve Lacy

"Twelve Bars" (*Regeneration*, Soul Note, 1982) Rudd, trombone; Lacy, soprano saxophone; Misha Mengelberg, piano; Kent Carter, bass; Han Bennink, drums.

That had a joyous feeling. They got a groove together and demonstrated the collective feeling of an ensemble. I hadn't heard this before, but it was definitely Steve Lacy on soprano. He had so much clarity in his improvising. He played inner structures within the music both the way he phrased in the ensemble as well as in his solo excursions. What he played, he made a statement with each note and phrase. I'm not sure of this recording. Is that Roswell Rudd on trombone? [*after*] They came up together in the early days in more traditional jazz settings, but you could hear their communication with how they created their own melodies within the piece.

Keith Jarrett

"Angles Without Edges" (*The Impulse Years, 1973–1974*, Impulse, 1997, rec'd 1974) Jarrett, piano, soprano saxophone; Dewey Redman, tenor saxophone; Charlie Haden, bass; Paul Motian, drums.

Wow, I love that. It was one of the most amazing statements of music. I loved Keith Jarrett in that period. He had such a powerful collaboration with Paul on drums and Charlie Haden on bass and, of course, the great Dewey Redman on saxophone. [Redman] was one of the most honest improvisers I've heard. He was a storyteller, and when I played with him later, it was always a thrill. After the John Coltrane quartet, this was the next important quartet to me. I was so hip to this band. It had a lot to say and lived in its own world within the world of jazz. They created a world of magic that explored so much. I had the chance to hear them a number of times in the early '70s. To be in the room with those cats went beyond just listening to a recording. The music unfolds in front of you. That captured me deeply. They were the people I wanted to get to know and play with. I played with them all, except for Keith. I haven't played with him yet.



Alison Wedding

"Remain" (*This Dance*, groundUP/Ropeadope, 2012) Wedding, vocals; Chris Potter, tenor saxophone; Bill Laurance, Fender Rhodes; Ignacio Hernandez, guitar; Michael League, electric bass; Keita Ogawa, percussion; Zach Brock, Maria Im, violin; Josh Henderson, viola; J.Y. Lee, cello.

That has a street party, Brazilian feel. The saxophonist is Chris Potter, but I don't know the singer. Is it Luciana Souza? [*after*] Alison Wedding? I've never heard of her, but she has a beautiful sound and clarity in her articulation. Chris has a beautiful clarity in his playing and articulation, too. He's always developing and creating in a variety of settings—challenging himself all the time so that he is moving the music forward. He knows how to play within many settings, so it works well here as an accompanist with a singer.

Charles Lloyd/Jason Moran

"Pictogram" (Hagar's Song, ECM, 2013) Lloyd, tenor saxophone; Moran, piano.

I'm not sure who this is, but it almost sounds like Dewey on an alto. The tune has great communication between the saxophonist and the pianist. I didn't hear them playing off a theme. The theme was stated toward the end. So it was a journey, with a collective flow of awareness of each other. But I'm not sure who's playing. It doesn't sound like anyone I'm familiar with. [*after*] It's Charles Lloyd? Oh yeah, I hear that now. So that means it's probably Jason Moran on piano. I love Charles. Through the years, he's been an inspiration to me as a spiritual player. Charles is coming from within the tradition of all the saxophone players and developed a deep, soulful way of playing.

Lester Young

"St. Tropez" (*The Complete Lester Young Studio Sessions On Verve*, Verve, 1999, rec'd 1957) Young, clarinet; Harry "Sweets" Edison, trumpet; Oscar Peterson, piano; Herb Ellis, guitar; Ray Brown, bass; Louie Bellson, drums.

Aahh! [*responding to two audience members dancing*]. Lester Young would have been happy. He was playing his soul and ideas and feelings. Lester told some beautiful stories. He was a storyteller. Of course, here he's playing clarinet on a blues. In an interview once, Lester said, "Everyone's got the blues, but only some people can play it." I love that. That's what he does here. He didn't record much on a clarinet, but you can tell it was Lester. His voice comes through. You can hear the whole history of music in his playing.

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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