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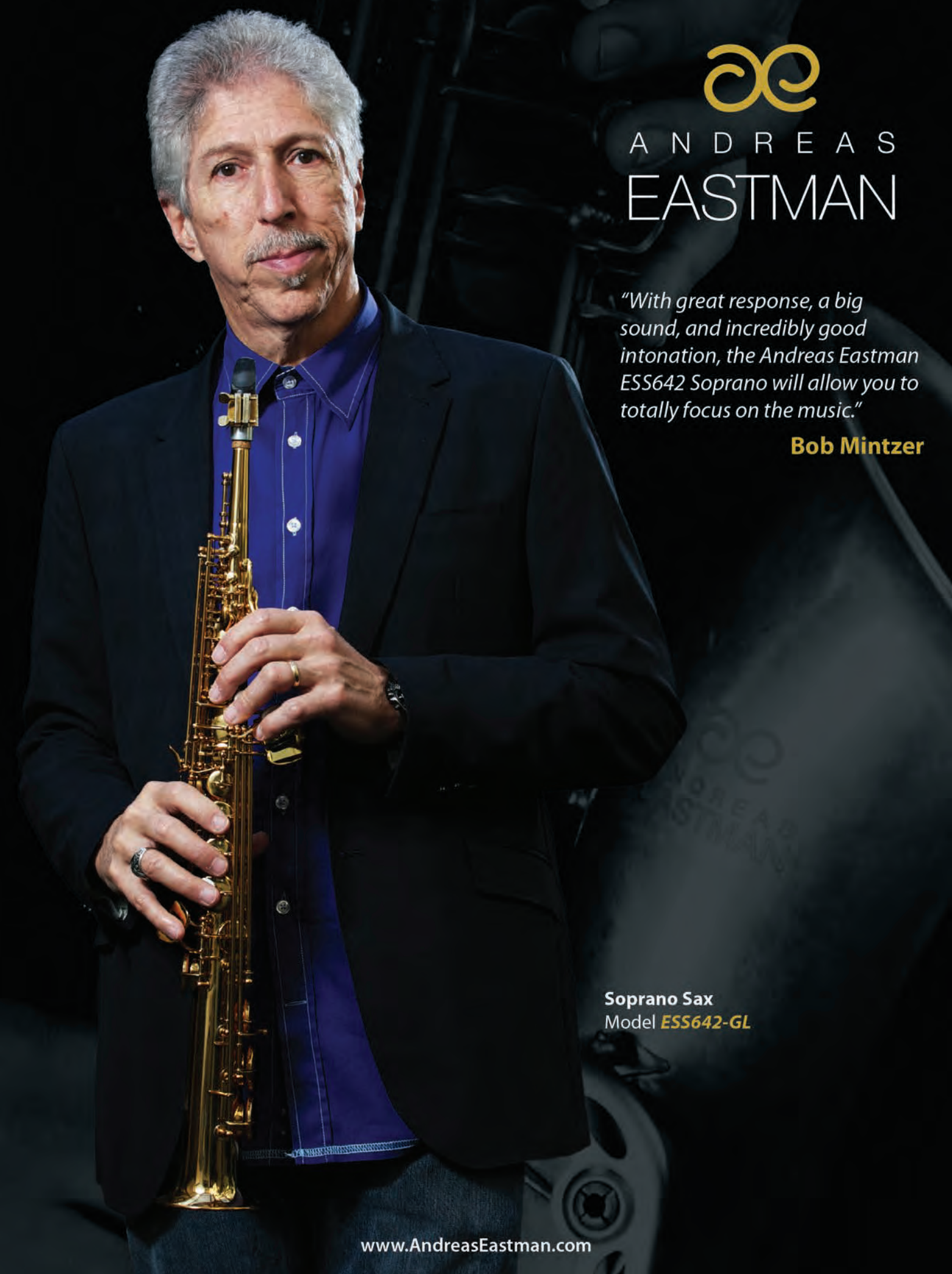
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Reacquainted with His Homeland
BY DAN OUELLETTE

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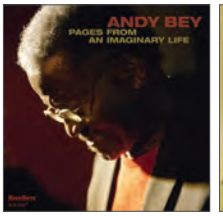

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Justin Kauflin (left) and Clark Terry are in the new documentary *Keep On Keepin' On.*

Surround Sounds

WHERE IS THE AUDIENCE FOR JAZZ? AND IS THAT AUDIENCE GROWING?

In his new autobiography (reviewed on page 92), George Benson writes, "I can't tell you how many times somebody has pulled me aside and said, 'George, what are we going to do for jazz? How can we get more people to listen?'" As the editor of DownBeat, people ask me the same thing. A lot of people are fretting about the supposedly declining interest in jazz.

We all know that physical album sales aren't what they used to be. We know that digital sales aren't going to turn most jazz artists into millionaires. But these aren't reasons to give up hope for the future of jazz. Thanks to technology, there are more opportunities than ever to hear this music. And as young people get exposed to this music, they will become the next generation of fans who avidly support it.

Jazz surrounds me. I hear jazz all the time, via artist and radio station websites, using streaming apps on my smartphone, downloading podcasts, listening to the Chicago-area radio station WDCB and going out to jazz clubs and festivals.

Most exciting of all is the current wave of jazz on the silver screen—and the resulting buzz in the media. Alan Hicks' documentary *Keep On Keepin' On* is a tender portrait of the friendship between jazz pianist Justin Kauflin and legendary trumpeter Clark Terry (see story on page 18). Damien Chazelle's *Whiplash* (which netted two awards at this year's Sundance Film Festival) is a fictional tale about a teenage jazz drummer with a scary mentor at a music conservatory. Alejandro González Inárritu's *Birdman* stars Michael Keaton as an aging actor, and the movie's percussion-centric original score is by Antonio Sanchez of the Pat Metheny Unity Group (voted the top jazz group in this year's Readers Poll; see page 42).

Plus, out now on DVD is the mesmerizing *Arrows Into Infinity*, Dorothy Darr & Jeffery Morse's documentary about saxophonist Charles Lloyd. Ornette Coleman, Herbie Hancock and Jack DeJohnette are among the artists who appear in this superb film (see the 5-star review on page 80).

At home, on my modest TV system, my DVR is frequently near capacity, ever since I started doing a routine search for the keyword *jazz* under the "Search and Record" menu. Right now it's chock-full of movies: *Pete Kelly's Blues* (1955), *The Gene Krupa Story* (1959), *Paris Blues* (1961), *Lady Sings the Blues* (1972) and *Passion Play* (2010), not to mention "Losing Streak," a 1976 episode of *Starsky & Hutch* in which "a jazz pianist unknowingly endangers his life by stealing counterfeit money." (Yes, the keyword search can lead to some strange places.) I've also got a Ravi Coltrane concert, some jazz documentaries and a public TV special, "Kenwood's Journey," about pianist Jason Moran's collaboration with Chicago's Kenwood Academy Jazz Band (the subject of First Take in our October issue).

Jazz seems to be everywhere—and the audience for it is bigger than some folks think. Tony Bennett & Lady Gaga's collection of jazz standards, *Cheek To Cheek,* recently hit No. 1 on the Billboard *pop* chart.

And then there's the DownBeat Readers Poll, where we had a record number of voters this year: 27,504. We're grateful to all the participants and we're proud to bring you the results in this issue.

At DownBeat, we work hard to attract a large audience of musicians and fans devoted to jazz, educators who teach this music, students, and open-minded music enthusiasts. The opportunities to draw new fans to jazz have never been more plentiful. For those of us who have loved jazz for decades, there is a shared mission to spread the word. If we do, good things will happen. **DB**

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Chords & Discords

Verbal Boxing

John McDonough is my favorite DownBeat critic. I feel that way in part because I usually agree with his analysis and in part because he does a very, very good job of justifying his opinions. I agree with his comments in The Hot Box about 70 percent of the time. But here is something from that *other* 30 percent.

In the September Hot Box, McDonough gave a 1½-star rating to *Visitation* by the Saxophone Summit and wrote: "When the avant-garde opened the gates, the irony was it left no place to grow."

This comment presents an opportunity for DownBeat to set up a debate. Get two respected music critics to write showdown articles: one who agrees with that position, and one who disagrees. Publish their essays side-by-side. I think this would split the jazz community right down the middle and generate great discussions, from basement jam sessions to academic classroom analyses.

Incidentally, that September issue definitely smoked. Cover to cover, it was one of the best issues that I can remember.

TOMMY TAYLOR
THOMASWMTAYLOR@GMAIL.COM

Who's Bad?

In your October cover story, Frank Alkyer writes that Wycliffe Gordon plays "with the swagger of the baddest trombonist on the planet—which, arguably, he is." OK, let's argue. Has Alkyer heard, for example, Andy Martin, Mark Nightingale, Bill Watrous, Bob McChesney or Scott Whitfield—any one of whom could arguably lay claim to the title of "baddest?"

Also in your October issue, in a remembrance of Charlie Haden, Ed Enright writes that Haden "elevated the instrument from its traditional supporting role in jazz rhythm sections to a front-line voice on equal par with woodwinds, brasswinds, keyboards and singers."

That statement reduces the role of such masters as Ray Brown, Paul Chambers, Charles Mingus, Leroy Vinnegar, Oscar Pettiford, Sam Jones and even Slam Stewart and Jimmy Blanton, among others, to that of mere timekeepers.

JACK BOWERS
ALBUQUERQUE, NEW MEXICO

Going Gaga

With all due respect to the longevity and success of Tony Bennett's career, he has little if anything to do with jazz—and, of course, Lady Gaga has absolutely none ("Mutual Admiration," November).

I've often been mystified at DownBeat's cover choices (e.g., the deaths of Tony Williams and Charlie Haden not meriting cover stories), so this appears par for the course.

RICHARD FREEMAN
RFREE@SONIC.NET

Modern Appeal

Lady Gaga on the cover? What is wrong with you people at DownBeat? Is your November

cover some kind of lame attempt to appear relevant to modern America—a culture that celebrates mediocrity?

JOHN VEYLUPEK
JVEYLUPEK@GMAIL.COM

Missing Names

Your feature "The 80 Coolest Things in Jazz Today" (July) was fascinating, but I am puzzled that Maria Schneider did not make the list. After all, winning Grammys in both the Jazz and Classical fields is quite an accomplishment. I also feel that Anat Cohen is truly remarkable. On the other hand, no list will please everyone.

JOHN GREENSPAN
SANTA FE, NEW MEXICO

Let's Go Cruising

Regarding your list of "The 80 Coolest Things in Jazz Today," I want to draw your attention to two omissions: The Jazz Cruise and The Smooth Jazz Cruise.

My only issue with these events at sea is that they only last one week. After flying over from Down Under and then recovering from jet lag, a week is not long enough!

ROBERT SOFER
MELBOURNE, AUSTRALIA

Corrections

- In the November issue, the review of *The Need's Got To Be So Deep* (Hipnotic Records) by Darryl Harper misspelled the artist's name. Also, the text implied that Carla Bley performs on the track "Postures." Bley composed the song; Helen Sung is the pianist on the track.

- In the November issue, The Hot Box should have included John Corbett's comments to accompany his 2-star rating of Diana Krall's *Wallflower* (Verve): "For diction, Krall gets 5 stars. You can chew on every single delicious word of these '70s songs we'd hoped would stay in the past. No such luck. Instead, she draws them out, achingly, brutally, laid bare in all their MOR glory."

DOWNBEAT REGRETS THE ERRORS.

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The Beat

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Mezzrow Piano Room Opens in New York

Spike Wilner at Mezzrow, his new club in New York City

WILLIAM BROWN

Few musicians have functioned as proficient artists while simultaneously running a commercial jazz venue. But after opening Mezzrow on Sept. 3, pianist Spike Wilner, the owner of Smalls, can claim two successful jazz clubs on his resume.

Situated in the basement of 163 W. 10th St. in New York City, just east of Seventh Avenue South and across the road from Smalls, Mezzrow is predominantly a lounge for piano-bass duos and piano-bass-guitar trios. Wilner, 48, has booked some of New York's finest, with a first-month schedule featuring elders like George Cables and Richard Wyands as well as Alan Broadbent; such widely respected veterans as David Hazeltine, Bruce Barth and Michael Kanan; high-visibility improvisers such Ethan Iverson and Ron Carter, on a first-ever encounter in early October; and rising stars like Aaron Parks and Luis Perdomo. Functioning as artist-in-residence is pianist-singer Johnny O'Neal, who performed on opening night with bassist Hassan Shakur and will work there Monday nights, complementing a regular Sunday night gig at Smalls.

Pianists at Mezzrow perform on a refurbished 5-foot 10-inch 1923 Steinway O, situated on a small bandstand in a rear section, where 30 of the 55 seats are located. A caricature of the club's avatar, the late clarinetist-raconteur Mezz Mezzrow (1899–1972), overlooks them from the back wall. The front half lounge contains a small antique bar made of cherry wood, cocktail tables and stools. To the left of the front door is an exit sign of red stained glass that used to hang inside the Top of the Gate—the piano room at Bleecker and Thompson where Wilner ran a jam session in the early '90s.

Indeed, the Top of the Gate is one of several piano rooms—others were Bradley's, Zinno, the West Boondock and Whippoorwill—that defined a certain jazz attitude in New York City through the end of the 20th century. Wilner said he hopes to attract a similar mix of informed "civilians," intellectuals, off-duty musicians, artists and tourists.

"I am a pianist, so I have fond memories of places in New York where you could walk in and hear Kenny Barron or some great pianist playing in a duo setting, where it was quieter, a little more civilized, a little more adult," he said. "That's the idea. It's a room for the best piano players in the city, if I can get them, and I'm trying to keep the bar raised high."

After signing a 10-year lease on the commercial space early this year, Wilner and Smalls founder/co-owner Mitch Borden began a full gut renovation. "We decided to create basically our dream club, all the things we weren't able to do at Smalls," Wilner said. "We soundproofed the shit out of the place. We put in a full Italian marble floor. I went to a guy in Philadelphia who does bar salvaging and bought an antique bar, kind of Art Deco, from Chicago, 1920s. Between the end of February, when we started construction, and mid-July, when we finally finished, creating this space was a really joyful experience."

Why did Wilner choose Mezz Mezzrow as the club's avatar?

"Mezz Mezzrow wrote one of the greatest jazz books ever, [the 1946 autobiography] *Really the Blues*, which is an amazing tale of Chicago and New York, the speakeasy scene and the gangsters, and of course his life, and his passion for jazz and blues, his friendship with Louis Armstrong and Sidney Bechet, and many other things," Wilner responded. "I identify with Mezz Mezzrow as a guy who was a Jewish immigrant who embraced African American culture and jazz as his very own. He was an advocate for equal rights and civil rights in this country long before it became an issue anywhere. He was a record producer. He was an author. And he was a fantastic musician who supported the universality of the spiritual elements of this music—traditional, but with a modern thought. I thought he was a great symbol for the club."

—Ted Panken

Riffs ⟩


Karrin Allyson

Fresh Sets: During her fall-winter tour, pianist-singer Karrin Allyson will preview tracks from a new album of original music that's expected to be completed early next year. Her tour dates through December will offer a diverse set list anchored to an introduction of Allyson's new material but also including fan favorites. As the holidays approach, Allyson's set list is likely to shift toward tunes from her self-released 2013 CD, *Yuletide Hideaway*. Another highlight of the tour—exclusive to Allyson's stops at Birdland in New York (Nov. 11–15), Catalina's in Los Angeles (Dec. 11–13) and The Folly Theater in Kansas City (Dec. 19)—will be a focus on what she's calling "a classic organ trio ... with a twist." **More info:** karrin.com

Krall CD, Tour Postponed: Due to ongoing complications brought on by a case of pneumonia, pianist-singer Diana Krall has been forced to postpone her scheduled album release and U.S. fall tour. *Wallflower* (Verve Records), originally due out on Oct. 21, is now set for North American release on Feb. 3, 2015. (The U.S. leg of Krall's "Wallflower World Tour" was to kick off in Phoenix on Nov 7.) Krall's condition became more chronic than first anticipated, and her doctors advised her not to travel or engage in any promotional or touring activities for a period of several weeks. "Performing is both a privilege and a joy for me," Krall said in a written statement apologizing for the postponements. "When I go out on stage I want to be able to give it everything. Taking this time to rest and recuperate will allow me to do that. It is frustrating to be so close to the record release and have to delay, but I am very proud of this record and want to be able to give you all my very best when we finally present this music to you. Thank you so much for your understanding." (For more on Krall, see page 58.) **More info:** dianakrall.com

Winning Composer: Alex Cassanyes won 1st prize in the XXVII Concorso Internazionale de Composizione per Orchestra Jazz (27th International Big Band Composer Competition) at the Barga Jazz Festival in Tuscany, Italy, this summer. His winning piece, "Horizontal Balance," was performed by the Barga Big Band, consisting of 18 prestigious Italian musicians under the direction of Mario Raja.
More info: alexcassanyes.info

Caught ⟩


Patricia Barber performs at the OutBeat jazz festival in Philadelphia on Sept. 21

RYAN COLLERD

Bey, Barber Provide Highlights at OutBeat

THROUGHOUT THE ALL-DAY CONCERT that culminated the weekend-long OutBeat Jazz Festival in Philadelphia on Sept. 21, many performers chose to acknowledge the festival's groundbreaking LGBT theme. Bassist-vocalist Jennifer Leitham, whose male-to-female sexual reassignment surgery was documented in the 2012 film *I Stand Corrected*, celebrated the idea and joked about "the things you gotta do to get a gig these days." Saxophonist Andrew D'Angelo polled the audience about the event's controversial "America's First Queer Jazz Festival" tagline, concluding with a defiant, "Own that shit, right?"

Others chose to let the music do the speaking for them. Pianist-vocalist Andy Bey never made mention of the fest's theme during his mesmerizing solo set. But the spell that he cast with his wide vibrato, its troughs gritty with 74 years of life, kept the crowd in thrall. The standard-heavy set was highlighted by a spare reading of Cole Porter's "Love For Sale," punctuated with stabbing chords and Bey's impassioned but playful interjections ("I don't give no freebies"); a mournful "But Not For Me"; and a stark, stirring rendition of his own "The Demons Are After You." ("Love For Sale" is also a highlight of Bey's excellent new album on HighNote, *Pages From An Imaginary Life*.)

Responses to the fest's theme ranged as widely as the sounds represented on the stage of Union Transfer that Sunday—from the classic crooning of David Coss to the jagged skronk of D'Angelo's Gay Disco Trio with Trevor Dunn and Jim Black to the nightclub intimacy of Patricia Barber's quartet set.

Though she has long been open about her sexual orientation, Barber claimed that she has only written two "gay" songs: "Narcissus," from her *Mythologies* song cycle, and "Devil's Food," from her latest, *Smash* (Concord); she performed both during her set. Barber noted the honor of being invited to play the inaugural OutBeat fest and hailed what she sees as an increasingly diverse makeup of jazz-school student bodies, predicting "an explosion of a variety of jazz musicians."

Terri Lyne Carrington—one of the most respected drummers in jazz—headlined with her Mosaic Project, an ensemble of top-shelf players that could headline almost any type of jazz fest.

The fact that OutBeat was such an impressive and genre-spanning *jazz festival*—in a city desperately in need of one—supported the weekend's much-repeated contention that there is no single "gay aesthetic."

According to organizers and performers alike, OutBeat was an important and historic step in raising the public's awareness of jazz and LGBT issues alike.

The historical importance didn't seem to be lost on the audience. The most emotional response from the crowd was generated by Dena DeRose's moving rendition of "Imagine," John Lennon's call for peace and equality, which seemed to resonate all the more deeply on this occasion. —*Shaun Brady*

Diversity Thrives in Monterey

THE 57TH EDITION OF THE MONTEREY JAZZ FESTIVAL, HELD SEPT. 19–21 in Monterey, California, triumphed as a study in artistic contrasts. Headliners performing at the Arena main stage each night of the weekend-long event ranged from Herbie Hancock's blazing electric splash with his quartet on Friday to crooner Michael Feinstein celebrating Frank Sinatra on Sunday backed by the festival's student big band, Next Generation Jazz Orchestra. Smack in the middle was Saturday's funk-meets-rap-meets-rock party by The Roots.


Pianist Billy Childs (left) and singer Becca Stevens at the Monterey Jazz Festival on Sept. 20

©MONTEREY JAZZ FESTIVAL/CRAIG LOVELL

Two other shows on Saturday night exemplified the diversity of artistic expression at Monterey this year. At Dizzy's Den, the Philadelphia Experiment served up a hefty slab of spontaneous jazz-funk. The trio of Philly natives (keyboardist Uri Caine, bassist Christian McBride and Roots drummer Ahmir "Questlove" Thompson—the latter two high school jazz buddies) were joined for part of the beat-propelled set by special Hammond B-3 guest Booker T. Jones. An hour later in the Arena, Billy Childs premiered his sublimely melodic *Map To The Treasure: Reimagining Laura Nyro* project, which is documented on a new studio album released by Masterworks. The two performances were worlds apart, but each was a crowd-pleaser.

The Philadelphia Experiment opened quietly with Caine noodling on the electric keyboards before Thompson and McBride (on fretless electric bass) supplied the groove. The extended jams were packed with potent dynamics—no gravity here, just elevation. Thompson noted that this was the Experiment's fourth show in the last 14 years (the collective released its eponymous debut in 2001), then launched into such crunchy tunes as "Grover" and "Ain't It The Truth," with all heads bobbing on stage and in the packed crowd. When the stately, dapper Jones joined the group, he cast his own soul shadow on the stage and dug the groove deeper.

Most noteworthy of all was Caine's dazzle on the keyboards. His lengthy recorded oeuvre ranges from the recasting of classical works to the far-out avant reaches, but here he tastefully and frenetically kept the beat freaky and slamming.

Just a quick walk away, another stripe of jazz was showcased, with pianist Childs unveiling a refined set of songs composed by the underappreciated Laura Nyro (1947–'97). He was joined by three singers (Becca Stevens, Shawn Colvin and Lisa Fischer) who sang two songs apiece, as well as saxophonist Steve Wilson, harpist Carol Robbins, bassist Scott Colley, drummer Brian Blade and Quartet San Francisco (violinists Jeremy Cohen and Matthew Szemela, violist Chad Kaltinger and cellist Kelley Maulbetsch).

After informing the crowd that Nyro had performed as a teenage rising star at the renowned 1967 Monterey Pop Music Festival, Childs invited Stevens onstage for a compelling take on "The Confession" followed by the articulately arranged "To A Child."

With Childs chiming on the keys, Colvin delved into the core of the 1969 Blood, Sweat & Tears hit "And When I Die" and the anthemic protest song "Save The Country," which also featured a moving guest solo by trumpeter Ambrose Akinmusire. After Childs did his own solo spot on "New York Tendaberry," he invited Fischer onstage to finish the hour-long set in spirited, ebullient fashion with a funky take on "Map Of The Treasure" and a soulful run through "Stoned Soul Picnic."

Childs has played Monterey frequently and scored commissioned pieces for the festival, but his effervescent Nyro tribute proved to be his best outing yet, celebrating the songwriter's music with an adventurous flair.

—Dan Ouellette

Villafranca Puts it All Together

Elio Villafranca didn't major in piano when he attended Havana's Instituto Superior de Arte some three decades ago. He received separate degrees in percussion and composition. But Villafranca found himself inexorably drawn toward the piano, a mandatory second instrument taught by Russian pedagogues, and he attained sufficient proficiency to function within Cuba's super-competitive scene.

Impelled by the will to improvise, to pursue artistic interests without limitations or restrictions, Villafranca investigated the codes of jazz through immersion in a quasi *samizdat* of oft-copied cassette tapes, hand-copied *Real Books*, underground radio shows heard on the sly and encounters with informed elders willing to share their knowledge. All that hard work fueled the ascension of his career once he came to the United States in 1995.

Elio Villafranca at the Detroit Jazz Festival on Aug. 3

LEN KAY/DETROIT JAZZ FESTIVAL

On Aug. 31, Villafranca convened a quartet—Eric Alexander, tenor saxophone; Ricky Rodriguez, bass; Allison Miller, drums—at the Detroit Jazz Festival to perform cross-cultural, border-crossing repertoire from his recent album with the Jass Syncopators, *Caribbean Tinge: Live From Dizzy's Club Coca-Cola* (Motéma), and from a 2008 quartet date with Alexander titled *The Source In Between* (Ceiba Tree). After leaving Detroit, the pianist would embark on a week-long trip to four venues in Bolivia for concerts with another quartet and a performance of Mary Lou Williams' *Zodiac Suite*. Backstage in Detroit, he sat down with DownBeat to discuss his recent and not-so-recent history.

You've been doing multiple projects for a long time, pretty much since you arrived here, and each recording seems to document a different sphere of activity.

I always had very broad musical interests. I didn't grow up in traditional jazz *per se*. I played and listened to classical music, and that training opened my ears to many different things. From there, I got an interest in jazz and in popular Cuban music. But my earliest exposure into music was Congolese traditions, so I always had that interest. I came here because in Cuba I was [playing in popular *nueva trova* singer-songwriter] Carlos Varela's group, and I couldn't really do anything else. So since I've been here, it's been my mission to do different projects. My first album, *Incantations*, was pretty much all Latin music because I felt I owed it to myself and to Cuba. Then I realized that music is way bigger than that. I didn't want to be stuck on just being the Cuban pianist who does only Cuban music. This album with the Jass Syncopators, *Caribbean Tinge*, documents my explorations of the music of the Caribbean, tying it in with classical music, and putting it all together with jazz and everything else.

By what process did you convene the personnel of the Syncopators, which includes trumpeters Sean Jones and Terell Stafford, saxophonists Vincent Herring and Greg Tardy, bassists Carlos Henriquez and Gregg August, and drummers Lewis Nash and Willie Jones III?

I knew that in order to accomplish what I wanted to do, I needed to marry two band concepts—a band formed by American jazz musicians, fully fluent in the language of jazz, and the other band of Latin musicians who are fluent specifically in Latin music. For us Cubans, it's hard to detach from the clave and the *cáscara* and all these traditions. After I came to this country, when I rehearsed a band, I'd look for a drummer who knew about these things. That was challenging because if you play with a Cuban drummer, the jazz language can be a bit compromised. I wanted both things. So I thought that if I get a bassist and percussionists who, along with myself, are knowledgeable in Latin music, I don't need anything else. American drummers, if they study the tradition of jazz, feel rhythm the same way we do. The jazz tradition is pretty close to the tradition of Cuban music. Think about New Orleans and the rhythms. I don't have to tell the drummer, "You need to know the clave on everything," because the clave is around us all the time. "Just listen and play what feels good at the moment."

How about the horn players? Are the pieces tailored to their sounds, or are those musicians interpreting parts?

It's more interpreting parts. When I first talked to Jazz at Lincoln Center, I wanted to do a concert that featured Wynton Marsalis and Paquito D'Rivera to represent the two languages. But they were wise enough to say, "Just form your team, and don't depend on anyone else." That's when I started to think about finding people I know who have that language.

Talk about the band you're playing with here in Detroit. A few years ago, you released an album featuring Eric Alexander, *The Source In Between*.

I chose that title because I wanted to write music that could be played in a Latin Jazz tradition with percussion, and also felt in a jazz tradition. For example, a track called "Oddua Suite" is like the music of John Coltrane but it's basically just a Yoruban chant. I decided to have Eric, who is a very bebop-oriented person I met when I played a couple of tours with Pat Martino. But then, I wanted to have [drummer] Dafnis Prieto, who is very strong on everything, and then Jeff Carney, an American bass player who has nothing to do with Latin music. I wanted those two poles. As long as the musicians you're working with honestly feel what you're trying to do, it's great. The Jass Syncopators is the expansion of the same concept. *—Ted Panken*

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Justin Kauflin (left) and Clark Terry

Terry Keeps on Mentoring at 93

JAZZ RELIES HEAVILY UPON ORAL TRADI- tion to stay vital. Its practitioners are just as frequently asked about who they studied with as who they listened to. The value of that firsthand exchange of knowledge is what ensures not only that the music lives on but the attitude, too. The new film *Keep On Keepin' On* is about Clark Terry, an NEA Jazz Master who, at the age of 93, continues to mentor aspiring musicians though he is bed-ridden. He is a sharp, funny and unflinching subject for the documentary.

Terry started his career in the 1940s, playing trumpet and flugelhorn in the big bands of Count Basie and Duke Ellington. He has recorded numerous solo discs, embracing modern technology and developing his own distinctive, mumbling scat style. Throughout his career, Terry has shared whatever he could. Quincy Jones, at the age of 12, became one of Terry's first students. Some decades later, Terry was teaching at William Paterson University, which is where he encountered first-time director Alan Hicks and pianist Justin Kauflin.

"My original intention was to just have the film be about Clark and his life," said Hicks, who spent a couple of years on the road as a drummer with Terry. "Even if we didn't finish making it, I would've given the footage to an archive. After a year of shooting just Clark, we asked Justin if he would let us follow him around as well. Once we made that decision, the story between those two blossomed."

The film focuses primarily on Terry's mentoring relationship with Kauflin, a Thelonious Monk Competition semifinalist who is more than 60 years younger than Terry and lost his vision at the age of 11. Their bond formed as Terry began losing his eyesight due to complications from diabetes.

"The thing is, it's not blatant," said Kauflin. "Yes, I am blind. Yes, I have a guide dog. I appreciate that the movie doesn't call attention to it much. That's our lives. That's what we are dealing with. No need to make it anything more than it is. I knew that anybody could watch this movie. Everything Clark shares with me and his students is universal."

Keep On Keepin' On paints a sometimes brutal reflection of jazz life and examines the effects of aging and disability. As Kauflin's world expands, Terry's gets smaller and harder to navigate. According to Hicks, Terry permitted the film crew to document anything they wanted. This resulted in amazing footage of Terry in a hyperbaric chamber talking with Kauflin, as well as late-night bedside tutoring sessions that only hint at the lifetime of work required to become a master musician.

"When those health things were happening, it was really tough," Hicks said, alluding to his personal connection to Terry. "We weren't a hired crew. He was our mentor. It was a bit of a roller coaster." But for the most part, the time they shared was good. "We shot 350 hours of footage, plus [we compiled] 100 hours of archival footage. Clark is filled with so much great advice and wisdom."

Hicks struggled to keep the film rolling when a chance visit from Jones at Terry's house led to a new investor in the project.

"The most surreal moment was when I was at the table between Quincy and Clark, seeing their relationship after 70 years. To see them as people and see how much they love each other really brought everything home to me," said Kauflin. "Quincy is one of those students! *I'm* one of those students!"

Keep On Keepin' On is uplifting and heartbreaking, swinging and somber. The film is ultimately triumphant, providing a fascinating look at the beginning and end of a professional jazz musician's career. —*Sean J. O'Connell*

Guelph Artists Reach Stellar Heights

IN THE MIDST OF HIS TRIO'S PERFORMANCE AT THE 2014 GUELPH Jazz Festival, drummer Milford Graves implored the capacity audience: "Take this ride with us tonight." The band had just completed a frenetic improvisation that saw pianist D.D. Jackson alternating between rapid, choppy hand movements and forearm slams and saxophonist Kidd Jordan belying his 79 years with multiple choruses of full-register runs.

A picture of calm behind the drums, despite the dark storms of sound he continuously stirred up, the 73-year-old Graves wanted to express his opinion about how some listeners—and, pointedly, jazz critics—had viewed the avant-garde music he had helped pioneer in the 1960s. He decried the term "energy music" and urged listeners to tune in to the multigenerational groove happening onstage. The music flowed from the assaultive opening through rhythmic chanting and engaging call-and-response to an easy bounce that passed like a wave between the three musicians.


Vijay Iyer at the Guelph Jazz Festival on Sept. 4
LAUREN DEUTSCH

Graves' trio concert was one of several highlights at this year's edition of the adventurous and influential Canadian festival, held Sept. 3–7 in the vibrant community of Guelph, Ontario. Another veteran from the dawn of free-jazz, 79-year-old bassist Barre Phillips, filled the festival's Saturday-morning solo slot. His performance was as self-effacing as his between-song patter, exploring a wide range of sonic possibilities. Phillips didn't make a show of his mastery of various technical approaches to the instrument; he created a seamless tapestry of dissonance and pastoral chords instead.

Sonic exploration also dominated a late-night duet between multi-instrumentalist Joe McPhee (focusing on alto and soprano saxophones) and French percussionist Lê Quan Ninh. Eschewing the stage to set up on the floor of the small auditorium, the pair immediately began reflecting the thunderstorm that had been raging outside, building tension through opposing gestures. McPhee created a hissing stream of air through his alto as Ninh slammed stones together and rolled them like baseballs across the wooden stage, their sound trailing off. Shimmering bass notes—created by scraping a cymbal across the horizontal head of a large drum—contrasted against McPhee's rising and falling soprano statements. And then the musicians stilled the room with quiet permutations of breath, McPhee blowing softly while Ninh puffed air through the opening in the top of a cymbal. Finally, as if on cue, a tremendous thunderclap broke the tension, and both musicians gestured in the unspoken acknowledgement, *We can't top that*.

Creative percussion was also on display during the Sept. 4 performance by pianist Vijay Iyer's trio, with drummer Tyshawn Sorey, a frequent collaborator of Iyer's, substituting for Marcus Gilmore. Sorey's presence radically changed the usual sound of the trio, adding texture and deepening the drama of Iyer's compositions.

But, overall, the festival—including the academic colloquium that ran during the daytime—belonged to Sun Ra, the mysterious keyboardist and bandleader who died in 1993. In tribute to his 100th birthday, the festival showcased research papers, keynote speeches and a multimedia presentation about his communal approach to music and his lasting contributions. Capping this was a joyous concert by the Sun Ra Arkestra, accompanied by the impressionist dance troupe Coleman Lemieux & Compagnie. By its conclusion, more than half the audience had joined the dancers and musicians onstage, with many others dancing in the aisles, all traveling the spaceways in unison.

—James Hale

Wheeler Explored Diverse Sounds

KENNY WHEELER, THE TRUMPETER-FLUGELHORNIST AND COM-poser-arranger who straddled the worlds of conventional music and free-jazz, died Sept. 18 in England. He was 84 and had been in declining health.

Wheeler was held in high esteem by musicians worldwide who admired his harmonically advanced compositions, instrumental command, gorgeous tone and modest personality.


Kenny Wheeler (1930–2014)
DOWNBEAT ARCHIVES

Born in Toronto on Jan. 14, 1930, and raised in Catharines, Ontario, Wheeler moved to London in 1952 and quickly found work playing in dance bands. He joined the orchestra of Roy Fox, followed by gigs with the Vic Lewis Orchestra, clarinetist Karl Bariteau and tenor saxophonist Tommy Whittle.

In 1959 he joined the big band of Johnny Dankworth and began his work as a composer and arranger in earnest. In the mid-1960s, Wheeler studied composition with Richard Rodney Bennett and later William Russo.

He made his first album, *Windmill Tilter*, in 1967 using members of the Dankworth band, including Dave Holland, John McLaughlin, Tony Coe and others. The album showcased Wheeler's compositions and helped to establish him as a highly individualistic writer.

In 1973, Wheeler released *Song For Someone*, a big band album that featured vocalist Norma Winstone in an instrument-like role and two "free" players—guitarist Derek Bailey and saxophonist Evan Parker—as soloists.

He went on to record numerous albums as a leader for ECM, including *Gnu High* (1976), *Deer Wan* (1977), *Double Double You* (1983), *Music For Large & Small Ensembles* (1990), *The Widow In The Window* (1990) and *Angel Song* (1997). His sidemen on these projects included such high-caliber players as Holland, Keith Jarrett, Jack DeJohnette, Bill Frisell and Lee Konitz.

Wheeler was introduced to the avant-garde in the late '60s at London's Little Theatre Club, where he began an association with drummer John Stevens' Spontaneous Music Ensemble. In the early '70s he joined the Globe Unity Orchestra, an all-star assembly of Europe's top "free" musicians led by German pianist Alexander von Schlippenbach, as well as the quartet of Paris-based multi-reedist Anthony Braxton.

In 1976, Wheeler formed Azimuth with Winstone and pianist John Taylor. The trio's gentle, ethereal music is documented on such ECM albums as *Azimuth* and *The Touchstone*.

Wheeler was a proponent of jazz education who conducted frequent clinics and served as a founding patron of the Royal Academy of Music's Junior Jazz course. A humble and self-deprecating type, he was frequently critical of his own playing.

"I hardly ever listen to anything I've played," he said in the August 1997 issue of DownBeat. "When I listen, there's always something where I say, 'Why the hell did I play that phrase?' When you're improvising, you don't have time to judge or fiddle about with what you're playing. It's not like composing, where you can take your time. If I could get into the same trance-like state that I get in when I'm writing, I could play a good solo. But I've never reached it."

On his writing, which showcased a keen ability to make chord voicings sound transparent, Wheeler said his goal was to keep things simple: "I try to write my idea of a nice, slightly melancholic melody. A lot of the old standards were very sad, but when I hear them now it makes me feel quite happy and good. You take sad sounds like Billie Holiday or Miles—they had kind of a melancholic way about them, but I loved it very much." **DB**

Players ⟩

JASON YEAGER

Evolving in NYC

Like many other aspiring jazz musicians who move to New York City to make that incremental leap in their careers, pianist-composer Jason Yeager has added layers of depth to his music since graduating from the New England Conservatory in 2010.

"Getting to New York and being in such a stimulating environment with so many amazing musicians all around has been life-changing for me," says the Framingham, Massachusetts, native. "It's such a hotbed of creativity. There are people from all over the world who want to be here and play here and hone their craft and pursue their art here, and one can't help but be inspired by that. My playing opened up and got freer from being here. I'm taking more risks in terms of how I play and especially how I improvise. And I think the writing has matured and progressed. The compositions now represent a more focused aesthetic in terms of what I'm going for musically, and they chronicle my time here, in a way."

The evidence is clear on *Affirmation*, his second outing on Greg Osby's Inner Circle Music label and first since moving to the Big Apple. With a highly interactive trio featuring bassist Danny Weller and drummer Matt Rousseau, augmented by trumpeter Jean Caze, saxophonist Noah Preminger and singer Aubrey Johnson (each guest on two tracks), Yeager stakes out his own unique territory on originals ranging from the Bud Powell-ish "Stumblebop" to the quirky "Blues For Billy P" (named for the character Billy Pilgrim from Kurt Vonnegut's novel *Slaughterhouse-Five)* to the melancholy ode "Aurora" (named for the tragic events that occurred in the movie theater in Aurora, Colorado, on July 20, 2012).

Yeager's hard-charging "Keep The Fire" was named in honor of one of his NEC mentors, Danilo Pérez. As the Brooklyn resident and Berklee College of Music teacher explains, "I once had him sign one of his CDs for me and he wrote: 'The spirit of your life is inspiring. Keep the fire. Danilo.' I was really moved and struck by that. Soon after, I wrote this tune, which had some unexpected rhythmic hits in the rhythm section. It was sort of my take on Danilo's style."

Yeager also credits pianist Fred Hersch, another of his teachers at NEC (whom he later studied with privately after moving to New York), with helping him expand his harmonic palette. "Fred's a huge influence. Since high school he was one of my heroes at the piano, and I really loved his touch, his sound, his ability to improvise contrapuntally, his compositions. He's definitely had an impact in terms of how I approach creating a warm, beautiful sound on the instrument. I played some of these compositions for Fred leading up to the session, and he gave me some pointers and some arranging tips, which I took to heart."

Hersch is impressed with Yeager's latest effort, which he considers to be an important step in his overall development as an artist. "I worked privately with Jason for two years at New England Conservatory, and he always impressed me with his talent, his curiosity and his desire to create his own music while really investigating the jazz piano tradition," Hersch says. "It has been gratifying to see him find his niche in the New York scene, and this new project shows him as a musician who is continuing to grow and absorb what is going on around him."

Johnson, a fellow Inner Circle artist who introduced Yeager to Osby, offers ethereal vocals on a duet with the pianist on the title track to *Affirmation*. She also delivers a hauntingly intimate take on Yeager's reharmonized rendition of John Lennon's "Julia." And for something completely different, Yeager offers an interpretation of Olivier Messiaen's "Dance Of Fury, For The Seven Trumpets" (from *Quartet For The End Of Time*) that was inspired by yet another of his NEC mentors, pianist-composer Ran Blake. "He's a big Messiaen fan, and he's also someone who inspired me to take pieces of music and not only cover them and blow over the changes, but create my own version, adapt them to my own personal style," says Yeager. "And that's what I tried to do with the excerpts from the Messiaen piece. I think some of Ran's harmonic language comes across on that one."

—Bill Milkowski

Players ⟩

HILARY GARDNER

City Dweller

WALTER BRISKI JR.

"Holy cow—I am *so* far from Wasilla now!" That's the thought vocalist and former Alaskan Hilary Gardner said came to mind in mid-September when she took a guest turn at the Café Carlyle in Manhattan with actor Jeff Goldblum playing piano and leading his tongue-in-cheek Mildred Snitzer Orchestra. Before walking onstage, Gardner looked out at the audience to see several A-list celebs, but what made the moment special was being able to sing the lyrics of "Autumn In New York" in a quintessential venue as fall approached. Her version of that Vernon Duke classic is one of the many highlights on her solo debut, *The Great City* (Anzic).

Gardner has worked assiduously to advance her art and earn a living. After completing a degree in classical voice performance at Brooklyn College, Gardner waitressed while taking every singing gig that came her way—jingles, demos, high-society dances, small showcases with combos. And she has kept her classical vocal chops in top shape as a featured concert soloist with the Rochester Philharmonic, Minnesota Orchestra and Connecticut's Ridgefield Symphony Orchestra.

With performances over the past several years with bands like Vince Giordano & the Nighthawks and the George Gee Swing Orchestra, it was inevitable that Gardner's versatile gifts as a vocalist would catch the attention of artists outside the jazz realm. She appeared on electronica pioneer Moby's 2009 album *Wait For Me* (Mute), lifting the dreamy "Hope Is Gone." The following year she was asked by the Frank Sinatra estate to duet with the ghost of Ol' Blue Eyes onstage in Twyla Tharp's dance revue *Come Fly Away*.

A fuller, more revealing example of how Gardner transforms compositions into personal statements can be found on a CD from trumpeter-composer Ben Bierman, one of Gardner's former professors at Brooklyn College, who spotlighted the singer on *Beyond Romance: Songs By Ben Bierman*. Meanwhile, Gardner has teamed up with Anzic Records labelmates Amy Cervini and Melissa Stylianou to form Duchess, a trio that echoes the Boswell Sisters, and a debut CD is planned for 2015.

In many ways, *The Great City* is one of those maiden voyages that benefited from long planning and growing wisdom on what underlies such journeys. Recorded with a core group of fellow thirtysomethings, the album is a thematic homage to Gotham, blemishes and all. "I think everyone who lives here has a complex relationship with New York," said Gardner, adding that a certain phrase from "Autumn In New York" informed the whole project: "looking down on the city I hate and adore."

Working closely with guitarist and frequent Freddy Cole foil Randy Napoleon, Gardner began choosing the repertoire for the album back in 2010.

The final track list mixes together standards such as Sammy Cahn and Jule Styne's "Brooklyn Bridge" and Johnny Mercer's "(Ah, The Apple Trees) When The World Was Young" with the bubbly novelty "Sweetheart (Waitress In A Donut Shop)" and a handful of tunes that Gardner holds close to her own experiences in New York: Joni Mitchell's "Chelsea Morning," Tom Waits' "Drunk On The Moon" and the album's bookends, the brooding, sensuous "No One After You" (by Leonard Cohen and Anjani Thomas) and Nellie McKay's mordant summary "Manhattan Avenue." There were long conversations interspersed over the years about which songs would serve "the larger narrative" on *The Great City*, said Napoleon, who added, "Hilary tends to think deeply about what a song means to her, and what it will mean to the audience."

An appreciation for songcraft was certainly evident at the CD release show for *The Great City* at New York's Birdland, where Gardner was joined by the album's rhythm section—pianist Ehud Asherie, bassist Elias Bailey and drummer Jerome Jennings—and tenor saxophonist Jason Marshall. Gardner's clear, strong voice recalls the sophisticated stylings of Rosemary Clooney, Doris Day and Peggy Lee, but each song had a bit of personal umami added to the performances, suggesting she had actually lived the lyrics. When she came to the big line in "Autumn In New York," Gardner gave a snap to the word *hate* and added a slow, luxuriant gush to *adore*, both utterly convincing.

—Thomas Staudter

Players ⟩

WALTER SMITH III

Superior Sequel

PHOTO CREDIT

When Walter Smith III discusses his musical career, the word *casual* frequently pops up. The Los Angeles-based tenor saxophonist has a new album, *Still Casual,* and its title nods to his debut, *Casually Introducing Walter Smith III*. "It is a sequel," Smith explained, "in that my whole career approach is a very casual approach. Nine years after the first record, I'm still approaching it the same way."

It's not a word we often associate with the hard hustle of the jazz world, even in laid-back L.A. (Though Smith lives on the West Coast, his primary work is done either in New York or on tour.) The saxophonist has done his share of hustling for gigs—just not the ones where he's in the driver's seat. "I've never sought leadership opportunities," he said. "I've always wanted to be a sideman." Indeed, Smith is best known as an accompanist, especially for trumpeters: Terence Blanchard, Sean Jones, Christian Scott and Ambrose Akinmusire among them. He's played on albums by all four; Akinmusire returns the favor on *Still Casual*. (Smith is also a member of drummer Eric Harland's band, Voyager, whose bassist and pianist, Harish Raghavan and Taylor Eigsti, also play on the new CD.)

"Walter is just such a thorough musician," Akinmusire said. "I don't know that he has any weaknesses. He always, *always* sounds amazing, and he's always getting better. He can play any style of music, any composition."

Smith disagrees: "Oh, I hate everything I do." Though he was raised in Houston, he refuses to identify with the "Texas tenor" tradition. "The thing that defines that tradition is a really huge sound, and I have virtually no sound," the self-deprecating musician joked. "Most people are trying to *avoid* the sound that I have!"

Smith was born in New Orleans; his father, Walter Jr., learned the tenor saxophone there. The elder Smith took a job in Houston as an elementary school band director, at the school his son would soon attend. Smith began on alto saxophone, which he played all through middle school and for his audition for Houston's High School for the Performing and Visual Arts. (Fellow students at HSPVA included pianist Robert Glasper and drummer Kendrick Scott, who also appears on *Still Casual*.) Smith switched to tenor in the 11th grade and showed enough aptitude to earn a scholarship to Berklee School of Music in Boston.

His ambition was (and to some extent still is) to be a teacher. He graduated from Berklee with a bachelor's degree in music education and then went on to graduate studies at the Thelonious Monk Institute and the Manhattan School of Music. But a funny thing happened: He found fewer opportunities to teach than to play. "The thing that always was happening was gigs," he recalled. "Everybody was calling, and I was making money doing a lot of records and having touring opportunities. Every time I would look for something in the education field, I wasn't old enough, or didn't have the experience."

He did, however, teach a thing or two to Akinmusire—who started playing with Smith while studying at the Manhattan School. "I had a lot of holes in my playing that I probably would have never addressed if I hadn't met him," the trumpeter says. "Just standing next to someone of that caliber every night, it definitely makes you re-evaluate your shit."

Three of Smith's previous albums were released on European labels: *Casually Introducing*, *Live In Paris* and *III*. As these recordings illustrate, Smith's saxophone sound has undergone a transformation: He started out as an aggressive, Sonny Rollins-esque player, and he gradually has softened into the thoughtful stylist heard on *Still Casual*. "[On the early CDs] there are places where it gets too intense for me to listen to at any moment," he said. "I was trying to make *Still Casual* so that … it would be something that I would want to listen to."

He's already working on future projects. Smith has written a new batch of compositions he's ready to workshop. Plus, he received a grant from the Mid Atlantic Arts Foundation, and he's collaborating with French pianist Laurent Coq on a suite to be recorded in December.

Does all this recent activity mean that Smith's career outlook is not so casual now? "Yeah, I know," he laughed. "Maybe that'll be the next album: *Less Casual*." *—Michael J. West*

Players ⟩

MAJA S.K. RATKJE

Sound Poet

Norwegian artist Maja S.K. Ratkje, a hard-to-classify figure in the avant-garde end of the jazz/contemporary music spectrum, has created for herself a special role in experimental music. In addition to being a composer, she is avidly engaged as a collaborative improviser—in the groups SPUNK, Fe-mail, Agrare and POING, and with "free-minded" musicians such as Ikue Mori, Jaap Blonk, Lasse Marhaug, Joëlle Léandre and long-time partner in artistic adventures, Hild Sofie Tafjord.

Most famously, Ratkje is a powerful extended vocalist and force to reckon with—a sound poet who knows how to blend her wild and visceral vocal timbres with an organic tonal palette of electronics and other sonic tools. To catch her at work in solo mode, enlivening and electrifying a room, can be a thrill. Standing before her original command post of malleable electronics and humble noise-makers (including toys her young children might use), she summons up noisy, sometimes cathartic furies of audio textures, pinning the listener to the proverbial wall one minute, and coaxing surprising delicacies and details the next.

In May, she performed at one of the premiere avant-garde destinations in North America: the FIMAV festival in Victoriaville, Quebec. Her concert there was similar to earlier solo work, but somehow wove more tenderness into the mesh.

After Ratkje's FIMAV show, DownBeat mentioned to her the "you have to be there to get it" factor—from a listener's perspective. "Yes," she said, "that is why I love it. It makes no sense to document it. It is there, and then it is gone." She owns that time and space, in her own language.

"The live concert is something that I can't see myself *not* doing, and it is in continuous development," she said. It's very difficult to stand there and invent something new from scratch, and there's an hour concert to fill. It really scares me, and that's perhaps another reason why I want to do it. To improvise and play concerts gives a good balance to desktop composition. I need both."

Keeping her live performance parameters tilting between refinement and rough edges is key to her prevailing aesthetic. As she explained, "I don't work with electronic devices that think too much for themselves. I like to have physical control over all the parameters. I use triggers in order to play with these, and when I use analog instruments, contact mics and oscillators."

Born and raised in Trondheim, Ratkje recalled that as a child she was fascinated by all sorts of sounds: ["I would be] copying sounds or making my own sounds, imitating machines, birds, animals, communication, voices, languages. But I didn't find a connection between sounds in general and music until I was in my late teens and started to listen to contemporary music."

In music school, she teamed up with similarly exploratory musician Tafjord and formed SPUNK, in 1993. Two SPUNK albums were released this fall: the evocative, choreographer-commissioned *Adventura Botanica*, on the Rune Grammafon label (which also released her early, attention-grabbing 2002 album, *Voice*), and a live recording from the Molde Festival, with Léandre as guest, on the Norwegian +3dB label. Also in the fall, Ratkje curated a week of music at John Zorn's The Stone in New York and, from her composer-soloist niche, performed in her Concerto for Voice with the Ensemble Intercontemporain.

Norwegian "noise" musician Lasse Marhaugh—who has collaborated with Ratkje for many years, including on the bracing, infamous Fe-mail album *All Men Are Pigs*—views her as a unique vocalist. "Her voice is the central point of her expression," Marhaugh said. "No matter how many layers of electronics she filters it through, it still carries its quality clearly. Even in her written orchestral works I hear it."

Juggling projects and artistic attitudes has become a norm in Ratkje's musical life, to the point that she has carved out her own nonlinear path. "This path is not something that I have decided," she said. "I try to be honest to my intentions with the music, try to confront outer motivation, and try to stay curious." —*Josef Woodard*

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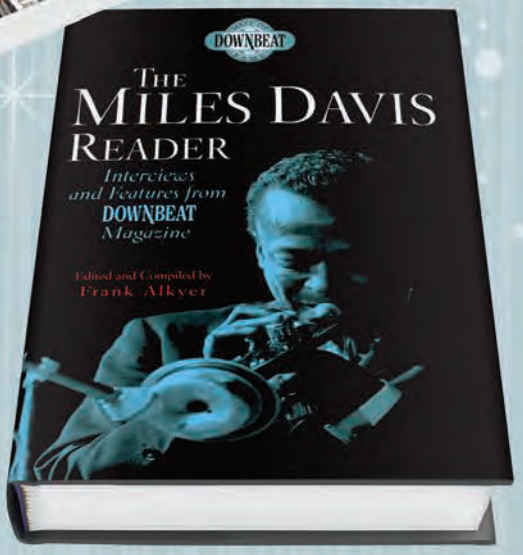


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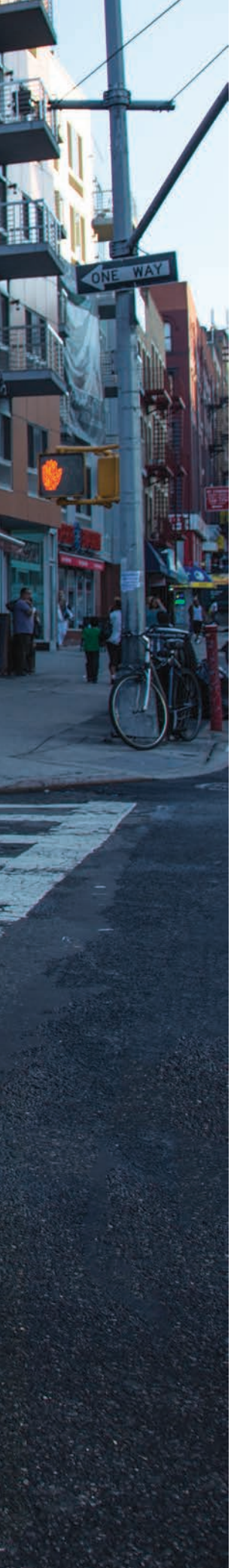


Photo by Jimmy & Dena Katz

MIGUEL ZENÓN

REACQUAINTED WITH HIS HOMELAND

BY DAN OUELLETTE

It's early September, and in that rare state of mind at the convergence of satisfaction and anticipation, Miguel Zenón is sitting in El Barrio (aka Spanish Harlem) in a Nuyorican community arts room at Los Pleneros de la 21. The space has a wall of mirrors for aspiring *bomba* and *plena* dancers, conga drums and speakers scattered about, and posters of upcoming events and classes. He's comfortable here in a neighborhood that has been one of the primary landing points for Puerto Ricans arriving in New York City.

Zenón, who was born and raised in Puerto Rico's capital city, San Juan, smiles as he tells how he never expected to arrive at the creative pinnacle where he finds himself today—one of the most esteemed and singular-voiced alto saxophonists in jazz; a formidable bandleader as well as a founding member of the SFJAZZ collective (2004); a recipient of both a Guggenheim Foundation Fellowship and a MacArthur Fellowship in the same year (2008); and, most importantly, a passionate spokesperson who has explored his homeland's music in the context of jazz—especially on his ambitious new album, *Identities Are Changeable*—and simultaneously probed the social and cultural issues faced by Puerto Ricans who live in the United States.

The album, three years in the making, developed out of a 90-minute multimedia production commissioned in 2011 by the Montclair (New Jersey) State University's Peak Performances series. (It premiered in February 2012.) The recorded voices of seven Puerto Rican interviewees are complemented by Zenón's compelling, rhythmically profound six-part song cycle performed by his core quartet augmented by a 12-member brass ensemble. In selected concert appearances, a video installation created by artist David Dempewolf features footage of the interviews along with colorful, abstract image collages. Even though some of the music has been played in concerts with his quartet and his big band, Zenón has been eagerly awaiting its recorded life.

"This comes out of my interest in Puerto Rican music," he says, noting that since his 2005 release *Jibaro* (Marsalis Music), he has been fully exploring the rich heterogeneous music of his homeland. "It represents my roots, my foundation as a Puerto Rican. There's the folk element in my music that is very powerful. People identify with it even if they have never heard it before. It's coming from the generations; it's something that came from the earth."

While ramping up for the Nov. 4 release of *Identities Are Changeable*—his ninth album as a leader—Zenón is basking in the success of the ninth edition of his Caravana Cultural. The program presents free concerts in rural areas of Puerto Rico, featuring Zenón and various assembled musicians. The last tour in late August focused on the music of Joe Henderson. "It's the greatest experience in my whole life doing this," says the soft-spoken 38-year-old. "It's connecting to humanity. This one old lady brought her kid to one of the shows. She had never heard jazz. She had heard that it was crazy or music just for certain people. But she told me after the show, 'Now I love it.' That's what I want to do."

Miguel Zenón at Chicago's Rockefeller Memorial Chapel during the 2012 Hyde Park Jazz Festival

MICHAEL JACKSON

Early in his jazz life, Zenón began to formulate a series of goals for his future that have evolved into grand manifestations—titanic sequoias that remarkably grew from tiny seeds.

When he was a youngster in Puerto Rico, he studied classical piano and then saxophone at San Juan's Escuela Libre de Música. Zenón became enthusiastic about jazz during his teens and figured he needed to come to the States to take the next step in his proficiency.

After garnering a Berklee College of Music jazz scholarship at the Heineken Jazz Festival in San Juan in 1995, he was able to cobble together other funds to make the move north to Boston. Did he experience culture shock? "A little, but I had been visiting my family in New York since I was 10," Zenón recalls. "They were living in the Bronx in Echo Park and the Grand Concourse. Those were my first experiences outside of Puerto Rico, but it felt like home away from home. Everyone spoke Spanish, listened to the same music, ate the same food."

He says that he was happy in Boston working with such teachers as Bill Pierce and Hal Crook as well as hanging and jamming with some of his peers. "They were from all over the world," he says, "and here I was from Puerto Rico, where I played with just a few people."

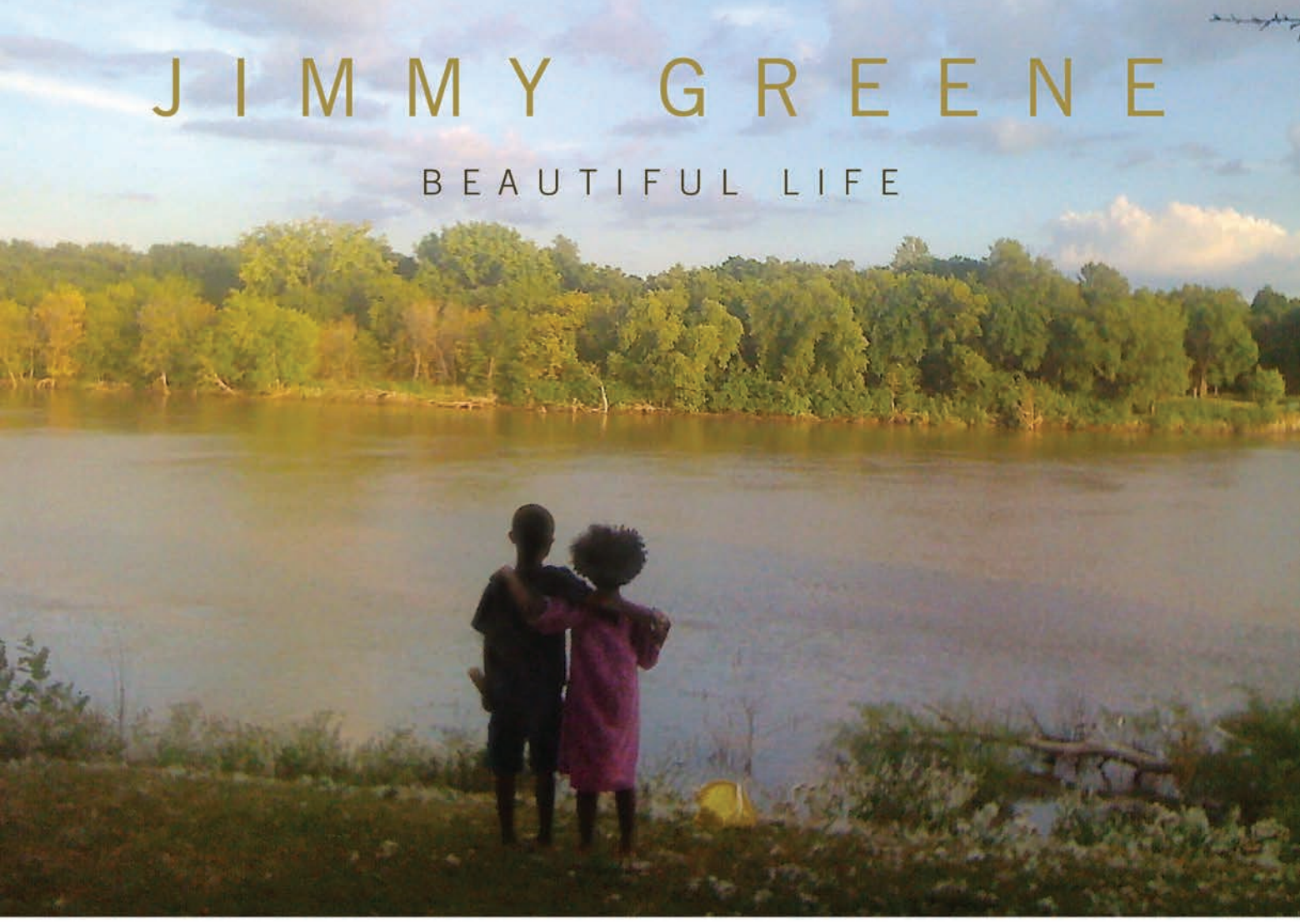
Again with scholarship help, Zenón moved to New York in 1998 to pursue a graduate degree at Manhattan School of Music, studying with Dick Oatts, who became an important mentor. "I wanted to be in New York to take advantage of being around artists I admired," he says. "At Manhattan, I got to know musicians and even some of my heroes. It was a good springboard in terms of meeting a lot of people and teachers who helped me get connected to the scene. I never went into jazz to be a leader or to have a career, and I wasn't sure if I'd go back to Puerto Rico, where I knew some musicians who could play jazz."

However, his jazz ties kept him in the States. "In Boston I was able to connect with Danilo Pérez, one of my idols and heroes, who took me under his wing," he says. "I'd go to his house every week and play. He helped me in many ways—as a musician but also as a person, as a Latin American musician who played jazz. Through Danilo, I met David Sánchez, who hired me for his band. Those two guys made a big difference in my life. I saw them as examples of what you can achieve if you worked hard. That's when things really started happening. I started playing more and I began to write."

While Zenón's earlier albums revealed him to be a strong saxophone talent, his voice didn't begin to fully develop until he made the commitment to reacquaint himself with the music of Puerto Rico. "To try to find my own voice, I had to look into my roots," he says. "When I lived in Puerto Rico, I was hearing a lot of music, but I wasn't listening

JIMMY GREENE

BEAUTIFUL LIFE



My daughter Ana was born on a Tuesday morning in early April 2006. Her life was ended in her first grade classroom on a Friday morning in mid-December—six years, eight months and ten days later. Despite the efforts of many to identify and debate the issues surrounding the Sandy Hook School shooting, an awful reality remains—there has been a proliferation of heinous, senseless acts of violence in America—acts that have ravaged my family and the families of so many others across our country. Much attention has been paid to the way in which my precious Ana died, but this album attempts to paint the picture of how she lived—lovingly, faithfully and joyfully. In a way, this recording also represents a reaction. Not a reaction to the discourse sparked by the events of December 14, 2012, but rather the reaction of a father after having witnessed a miracle—the miracle of his daughter's beautiful life.

Love wins,
Jimmy Greene
Newtown, CT

F E A T U R I N G

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Making a Cultural Investment

In 2008, Miguel Zenón was given two prestigious, lucrative honors—a Guggenheim Foundation Fellowship for music composition (the average grant that year was for $43,000) and a no-strings-attached MacArthur Foundation Fellowship (at the time, $500,000 dispersed over four years).

Such funding can fuel artistic freedom. "I applied for the Guggenheim to be able to write," he says, "and I used that money to do the *plena* music project, which financed some of the recording [for 2009's *Esta Plena*]. The MacArthur came out of the blue. The day they called, the first thing I thought about was a project I had been thinking about for many years: sharing with the people in Puerto Rico how much I love jazz and why it's so great."

Zenón's dream was inspired by *Heima*, a documentary film about the Icelandic rock group Sigur Rós, which toured its homeland in 2006 performing free and unannounced concerts. "They were thanking the public for support by playing in schools or a field, really anyplace," he says. "I could have used the grant to stay at home and practice or go out and record a big band album, but I wanted to make a cultural investment."

So Zenón began the three-year process of launching Caravana Cultural, a program that presents free concerts in rural areas of Puerto Rico. The concerts, which started in February 2011, focus on historical figures in jazz, such as Charlie Parker and Duke Ellington. "I remember when I first started playing music, and it wasn't a job," Zenón says. "I basically fell in love with the feeling of creating music. I thought it would be great to go back to that—to share the music and not think about ticket sales, etcetera."

The plan, he says, was ambitious: go to a town and in collaboration with the residents there, introduce jazz to new audiences via free concerts in theaters and cultural spaces. "We paid for everything," he says. "I paid for musicians to fly in or I used people from the island. I contacted a local music teacher to assemble a group of students to participate. For the Joe Henderson concert we just did, three months beforehand I sent the charts and an MP3 of 'Isotope.' I gave a preconcert talk, giving the audience an idea about jazz, its history and improvisation, and then talked about the music they were going to hear. I figure about 50 percent of the people who attended had never been to a jazz concert."

Zenón had questioned the longevity of Caravana Cultural because of its expenses. But SFJAZZ board member Robert Mailer Anderson held a benefit at his house in October 2013 and raised enough money for the saxophonist to continue the program for the next five years. "You've just got to find a way," Zenón says. *—Dan Ouellette*

Zenón's new album explores issues of cultural identity.

JIMMY & DENA KATZ

to it from the point of view of a musician, and I never analyzed it like I did with jazz. I had to basically learn the music of my homeland from zero. I didn't want to get stuck musically, so that became my road. As I got more into it, the more I was convinced that this is the truth. The truth is in the music. I'm still learning so much. It's kind of like being a rookie."

As a newcomer to the legacy of his homeland, Zenón sought out people who intimately knew the various facets of the music. For example, his 2009 album, *Esta Plena* (Marsalis Music), arrived after he plunged into the festive and social commentary tradition of *plena*. "It was like research," he says, "like gathering information. The more I got into that vibe, the easier it was for me to have that music come out of me naturally."

The search continues with the dynamic *Identities Are Changeable*, a celebratory and poignant dive into understanding the bicultural identity of New Yorkers of Puerto Rican descent. It is an album of highly charged and personal music that at its heart showcases storytelling with passion.

Puerto Rico's relationship with the United States has evolved quite a bit since the former

Spanish island colony became a U.S. protectorate as part of the spoils from the Spanish-American War in 1898 (the Philippines and Guam were also ceded). In 1917, residents were granted U.S. citizenship. In 1952, Puerto Rico was officially recognized as a U.S. territorial commonwealth. As citizens of the United States, Puerto Ricans were afforded the right to freely travel to the mainland—not as immigrants—settling in cities such as Boston, Chicago and especially New York, where today 1.2 million Nuyoricans live (the largest Puerto Rican community outside of the island).

"Becoming citizens made us different from anyone else," Zenón says. "Anyone could come here. My mom and all her family lived here for years, then moved back to Puerto Rico. In this generation, 75 percent of Puerto Ricans spend time in New York. They've developed relationships with the country and city. This has been going on for 100 years."

Writing in the liner notes of *Identities Are Changeable*, Zenón says, "Having been born and raised in Puerto Rico, I've always been curious about the causes and development for this mass migration … ." He notes that even second- and third-generation Puerto Ricans born in New York "were as connected to the traditions of their parents and grandparents and as proud to be Puerto Ricans as the people I knew back home."

This inspired Zenón to find out why. He interviewed seven Puerto Rican New Yorkers, including his sister Patricia Zenón, actress Sonia Manzano, jazz bassist Luques Curtis, Nuyorican poet Bonafide Rojas and percussionist Camilo Molina (who performs with Eddie Palmieri).

He also interviewed Juan Flores, a professor of social and cultural analysis at New York University who wrote *The Diaspora Strikes Back: Caribeño Tales of Learning and Turning* (Routledge). For his book, Flores interviewed 22 people and converted their compelling reflections on circular migration into short stories (including the tale of a 15-year-old girl from the South Bronx whose parents decide to return to Puerto Rico, where she first discovers prejudice and ostracism, then hero status for bringing her "unique style" learned on "the streets of Nueva York" to her "enchanted island homeland").

Flores' book sparked Zenón to put his own spin on the theme of identity. "I found it so interesting how varied the experience could be depending on the person and the situations they encountered," he says. "So I wanted to follow through from a musical standpoint. But I had never done anything like that: Compose the music, include the interviews, work with a larger ensemble—everything about the project was new to me."

Zenón had performed a *plena* project for Montclair State, and the university asked him to return to "do something, anything," he says. Once he got the commission, he started to conduct the interviews by asking the same series of questions to each person—where did their sense of pride in being Puerto Rican come from, what did they consider their first language, what was their "home" and what are the elements that help shape their national identity. At first, Zenón considered writing a piece about each individual, as Flores had done in his book. But he changed course as he began to identify certain subjects people talked about. "That was something else that was new to me," says Zenón, who came up with six themes, including "My Home," "Second Generation Lullaby," "First Language" and "Through Culture And Tradition."

Identities Are Changeable opens and closes with the charged piece "¿De Dónde Vienes?" which is translated as "Where Do You Come From?" It features an introduction to the interviewees, who weigh in on the question while Zenón and company weave together musical motifs from every tune on the album. The title track focuses on the project's central theme: how identities change and are molded through a lifetime. The musical setting features soaring and swinging alto lines and horn harmonies. "My Home" centers on the idea of where home is. "It's a common thing," says Zenón, who delivers clear-toned, melodic alto sax gusto on the track. "A lot of people say New York is my home, while Camilo, who was born in New York, says that Puerto Rico is his home and that when he gets older maybe he'll move there and have a family."

The idea behind the slow-tempo "Second Generation Lullaby" came from Zenón interviewing his sister, whose child was born in New York. "She grew up in a tight Puerto Rican environment and speaks perfect Spanish and English," he says. "But she wonders about her child and how the tradition will be passed on. When I was writing these pieces, my wife was pregnant, so that was going through my mind, too."

"Same Fight," which features John Ellis soloing with brio on tenor sax,

Zenón leads his big band in a multimedia presentation of his *Identities Are Changeable* project at Zankel Hall in New York City on Dec. 7, 2013.

JACK VARTOOGIAN/FRONTROWPHOTOS

explores the common thread between the Puerto Rican and African American communities, where both groups "find themselves in the same places with the same struggles," Zenón says. "We adapted a lot of the same things, like South Side hip-hop, dressing and talking alike and liking the same kind of music. There's just too much in common not to pay attention to."

In "Through Culture And Tradition," one interviewee says, "Music was a starting point," which Zenón and company accentuate with *bomba*, *plena* and salsa flavors in the mix. "Even if you're not born in Puerto Rico, there's a connection through the music," he says. "It's very powerful to me. In the interviews, everyone expressed this in one way or another."

With the thematic road map developed, Zenón faced the challenge of composing the music. "When I write, it's not coming from a total abstract space," he says. "I like having a concrete idea, which is what I did with the *Alma Adentro: The Puerto Rican Songbook* album, where I carried through with the compositions because there was a musical idea that brought it all together. In this case, though, it was harder."

The key to unlocking the music for Zenón was to use various rhythmic ideas. "I started thinking in terms of playing three beats against two beats, for example, so that the rhythms rub against each other to create a counterpoint," he says. "So you find that all over the place in all the compositions." He also uses the five-beats to seven-beats pattern on a couple of tunes, while two others move with five-beat and six-beat rhythms being played at the same time. "When I was writing, I started with the rhythmic motifs, which made it easier for the melodies to be built on," he says. "And excerpts of the interviews work as an extra layer."

He road-tested the new pieces with his longtime quartet (formed in September 2000 at the C-Note in the East Village), which currently includes pianist Luis Perdomo, bassist Hans Glawischnig and drummer Henry Cole (who came aboard in 2005 when Antonio Sanchez left to join the Pat Metheny Trio). It was a workout. Perdomo, a native of Venezuela—where he grew up fed by his culture's rhythmic folkloric tradition—praises Zenón for always writing "fresh" music. But he admits that the compositions are difficult to play: "Miguel's music is challenging, technically and musically. I like a challenge. But I needed to go back into the practice room for a few days. He's always writing. I remember at one soundcheck, he came up with a sketch that ended up being the tune 'My Home.' We could see what he was working on to get the different rhythms rubbing together."

Glawischnig, born in Austria and respected for his connections to the Latin community of jazz musicians playing in bands led by Ray Barretto and David Sánchez, adds, "Miguel's music is very specific and hard, but it's worth it. We played this music for a year to get it under our fingers, to get a vibe on it. Once we recorded, we knew the music so well that it only took one or two takes in the studio."

Cole, a fellow Puerto Rican who has done his share of transiting between his homeland and New York, says that he's fascinated by the different layers of rhythms Zenón wrote. "But it's hardest music I've ever played," he adds. "It required a lot of focus. He likes to change rhythms. But what he's done is very special and very creative. I can relate to the story."

Once Zenón got the basics for the compositions, he had to learn how to write for the larger group. He used his experience with SFJAZZ ("The collective has been my musical godfather," he says) and his work with Guillermo Klein, as well as sideman duties with the Vanguard Jazz Orchestra, Maria Schneider, John Hollenbeck and the Mingus Big Band, to chart a path. "All those sounds put a lot of ideas into my head," he says. "After working on the pieces with the quartet, I orchestrated what we were already playing, so that the big band is the quartet amplified. I was paying attention to the arranging of Duke Ellington and Count Basie, too. So, I began thinking about layers of orchestration."

Zenón plans to take the project on the road, mostly with the quartet but also a few dates with the big band. "Right now, I'm pushing this, doing everything on my own," he says. "I'm working on the marketing and publicity, and I did crowdfunding with Kickstarter." He's also releasing the album on his own label, Miel Music, with a co-production credit to Up Cal Entertainment, run by novelist/screenwriter and SFJAZZ board member Robert Mailer Anderson, who helped to finance the recording. "Everything came together, but I've been very, very lucky. It's been a lot of work, but I love to work."

Beyond his annual Caravana Cultural free concerts, Zenón does not have any plans to return to Puerto Rico at the moment. He lives in New York's Washington Heights neighborhood with his wife and his two-and-a-half-year-old daughter. And his career continues on an upward trajectory. There's still so much more he wants to do and explore. He needed to come to the mainland from his modest little island (just over 100 miles long and 40 miles wide) to steep himself in jazz, but now his goal is bigger. "Of course, I consider myself a jazz musician who plays clubs and festivals," he says. "But in most of the places I've played, people have never heard Puerto Rican music before. So, it's on me to put the word out, to expose people to this great music."

Does he see himself as a cultural ambassador? Zenón laughs, then says, "I've been getting interested in so much Puerto Rican music over the last decade, so even though I wouldn't use that term, I'm interested in that concept. I am set on pushing that music forward." **DB**

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Find the Music in You

‘The Way I Play Is the Way I Play’

By Aaron Cohen

HALL OF FAME & BLUES ARTIST
B.B. KING

One afternoon about nine years ago, B.B. King spent an hour speaking over the phone about his music, his career and a few of his colleagues. By that point, King had already received a wealth of accolades. Around that time, his hometown of Indianola, Mississippi, began construction of the B.B. King Museum and Delta Interpretive Center. And this was after the blues icon had become a Kennedy Center honoree, regular visitor to the White House and recipient of numerous international awards. Now, he can claim another lifetime achievement prize as the most recent inductee into the DownBeat Hall of Fame.

King, 89, did not come to these honors easily. Born into a family of Delta sharecroppers, King has seen countless changes in the American social fabric. His music has influenced different idioms for generations while he has fronted orchestras and enthralled audiences with just his guitar (“Lucille,” she’s called) and voice. Still, as cheerfully loquacious as King is during a conversation, he’d be the last one to explain why he has become the most famous name in a genre that spans more than a century.

“I heard once that you can take the boy out of the country, but you can’t take the country out of the boy,” King said in 2005. “So here I am, 79 years old, and I’m still country. But good taste is good taste.”

That could sum up King’s longevity and his winning formula: Think up an indelible sound, stick with it, work hard and remain cheerful. But there’s much more to his enduring music and how he has refined it ever since he was growing up in the South. He looked for whatever ideas he could find from whatever environment he found himself in—whether in the rural churches that surrounded him while he was growing up, the “juke joints” of Indianola that he sneaked into as a kid, the jazz big bands he encountered on the touring circuit or legions of rock musicians who idolized him. He has considered each of these influences, seen what works and what doesn’t for himself, and continues to pass these lessons on to younger students.

A wealth of narratives have chronicled King's life, such as Charles Sawyer's 1980 biography, *The Arrival of B.B. King*, and Jon Brewer's recent documentary, *B.B. King: The Life of Riley* (MVD Visual). His early years in the Sanctified church left a considerable impression—not only because that's where he received his first guitar lessons from pastor Archie Fair, but gospel elements such as call-and-response vocals and pushing a congregation toward an emotional catharsis have always been a part of his music, even if his lyrics are not so overtly devout. A 2005 collection of memorabilia, *The B.B. King Treasures* (Bullfinch), includes a 1948 photo of the guitarist with his first group, the Famous St. John Gospel Singers. While King's affinity for such jazz and blues guitarists as Charlie Christian, Lonnie Johnson and T-Bone Walker has been mentioned in numerous bios, his influences also include horn players and bandleaders dating back to the swing era.

"Benny Goodman should be praised a lot more than he is," King said. "He was one of the first to integrate his band, and one of the first to play good dance and swing music. They didn't say it wrong when they said swing, because he could sure do it."

When King moved to Memphis in 1947, he became even more open-minded. In addition to meeting up with his cousin Bukka White, King dove into work at radio stations, especially the influential WDIA, which served as a crucial voice for African Americans across the region. He played whatever he saw fit but eventually became identified with one particular idiom that earned him the nickname "Blue Boy" King. He started recording in the late 1940s, but the 2003 compilation *The Chronological B.B. King: 1949–1952* (Classics) shows that financial success was not immediate. Despite an unmistakably crisp guitar attack, surprisingly mature singing voice and a few musicians (notably Ike Turner) advocating on his behalf, it took until 1952 for King to hit it big with "3 O'Clock Blues."

That song made King an r&b star and emphasized his skills at writing succinct tunes that showed off his facility at bringing together blues and more popular idioms. But these early and mid-'50s records also established the guitar technique that he's kept up through today. His forearm stretches the strings to create a vibrato while his fingers effortlessly run through single-note lines. "I never tried to advance on [the technique]," King said. "I try to advance on progressions and stuff like that, but I never try to advance on the vibrato. It's like breathing. It comes natural. I do it whether I want to do it or not."

King has always had the sense to absorb from a community of talent. In 1950s Memphis, he hung out, and occasionally performed with, such legends as Bobby "Blue" Bland and Junior Parker (Elvis Presley may have been their biggest fan). But to hear the self-effacing King tell it in *The Life of Riley*, he always felt he had to look up to the artists he encountered in this musical city.

"I came to Memphis and heard those other guys play," King said in the documentary. "I felt I was nothing, not much. I'm still like that today."

A few years later, when King began singing such big band tunes as "Everyday I Have The Blues," he enlisted members of the Count Basie Orchestra. King also worked with the brilliant, if unheralded, arranger Maxwell Davis to make his own small group swing with the force of the big bands he admired. Those late-'50s recordings are available on the disc *B.B. King Wails* (Ace, 2003). But in describing their work together, King emphasizes that simplicity made it all succeed.

"Maxwell Davis was a guy—he didn't need a piano or guitar to write music in his head," King said. "He would just tell you to play the tonic note, 'You play C, you play G,' and so on and so forth. When you'd hear it, you wouldn't believe it, and he'd be writing it down just as fast as he'd be talking about it. He was one of a kind. Most people who write blues usually jazz it up or don't put enough in it, or too much in it. But Maxwell was a recipe; he was just right."


B.B. King at the Chicago Blues Festival on June 8, 2008

MICHAEL JACKSON

The records created with Davis, and King's constant touring, helped make him a hero in predominantly African American communities. One landmark study in ethnomusicology, Charles Keil's 1966 book *Urban Blues*, describes how King was perceived as the voice of these communities. An equally important document remains King's classic 1964 performance recording, *B.B. King Live At The Regal*. His spoken-word intervals and the way his voice leaps above his piercing guitar lines on "Sweet Little Angel" remain a marvel—though some credit is also due to his feisty drummer back then, Sonny Freeman.

Not far from where *Live At The Regal* was recorded, white blues musicians on Chicago's South Side—especially Paul Butterfield and Michael Bloomfield—included King in their pantheon of heroes. King's more devoted followers also included many of the British rock guitarists who emerged in the mid-1960s. Music historians have written frequently about how the support of popular British rockers helped older blues players like King cross over to a large white audience. King's response to this has always been interesting. While he's appreciated the support from these prominent artists, his own singing and guitar sound have stuck to his own elemental principles. At the same time, he also acknowledges the influence that these rockers have had on others working in the blues idiom.

"One of the things that helped the blues were the different progressions that people like John Mayall and Cream and all those groups brought from Europe," King said. "The way they were playing what they did—I never even thought you can use some of those progressions and make the blues sound good, but they did it and a lot of the guys, even Albert King, used those types of progressions in the latter parts of their career. I never used them, but they sound good."

King achieved his greatest commercial success by recording a version of Roy Hawkins' minor-key blues "The Thrill Is Gone" in 1969 with help from producer Bill Szymczyk, who suggested they add a string section (the song appears on King's album *Completely Well*). He recalls that this song's popular ascendancy resulted from his determination, open mind, group dynamic and timing.

"I had the lyrics for a long time because I heard it from the guy who wrote it, Roy Hawkins," King said. "When I rewrote it and changed the lyrics, I could still hear the sound, the tone, from him. I kept that song around in my pocket for three or four years. Every time I tried to record it, it didn't sound right. But that night in New York, I had Gerald Jemmott on bass, Paul Harris on keyboard, Hugh McCracken on guitar and Herbert Lovelle on drums. The minute we started, I knew it was it, then. We did that tune, several others, and finished at 4 in the morning. I told Bill that it really came out good. He said, 'Yes, it's nice, but so-and-so is better.' I said, 'I'm not going to argue with you, you're the producer, but I know it's a good record. I don't know how to make hits, but I do know how to make a good record and I know that this is a good record.' I was living in New York and I went to bed, and I got a call from Bill—he was a young guy—and said, 'B?' I said [*affects tired voice*], 'Yeah?' I didn't want to talk. He said, 'It is a good tune. If I put some strings on it, it'll go pop.' I said, 'What the hell is that?' He said, 'Well, do you mind if I put strings on?' Sure enough, he got a guy to write some parts. When he got ready to do it, I went down and it really did enhance the song. It was at the right time, and I was able to get the right people behind it. Music today is politics. If you can get them to play it across the board, you got a chance to make a hit or good-selling record. He was able to do it. He put that machine together and made it happen."

King has generally positioned himself to be

above any political or sectarian divisions (although he enthusiastically embraced Barack Obama's presidential candidacy onstage at the Chicago Blues Festival in 2008). So while America and other countries have experienced significant social turmoil since the late 1960s, King has remained beloved across a wide demographic. He sounded at home performing in prisons (recorded on his *Live In Cook County Jail* in 1971) but also became the go-to blues musician for television programs, from talk shows to *Sanford and Son*. Vintage interview clips included on *Life of Riley* reaffirm how King's knowledge and geniality made him the ideal spokesperson for the blues during the '70s and '80s. King toured the world so frequently that he still talks about being able to teach a course in geography. This included following in the footsteps of jazz ambassadors like Louis Armstrong and Dave Brubeck who brought America's music behind the Iron Curtain during the Cold War.

"I first thought when I went to the Soviet Union in 1979 that they would have great musicians in classical music, but I heard musicians playing jazz and one musician playing blues," King said. "I wish I could have brought him back with me, but that was a time when they wouldn't even let him get close to the airplane when we were getting on. I remember once we came through East Berlin and had a German guy who was a tour manager, and his brother was a musician in East Berlin, and the people in authority wouldn't even let him talk to his brother. I thought that was sad. That was the one thing I admire the United States for. We can't go to war without fighting some of our own people, meaning we've got people from all over the world here in the United States. And we live, we make it."

In more recent years, King's continued interactions with artists around the planet have not only kept his own profile elevated, but also lent him more avenues to examine, even while he retains the approach that has suited him for decades.

"Every one is playing something I wish I can play," King said. "They just come up with ideas that I wonder what was happening in my head. But it's a different world today. The things they sing about, a lot of them I guess are just things I never thought of. Not *guess*; I *know* it is. The world is different. I'm learning from them."

Part of what King has been learning is based in technology: "The computer is my tutor," he said. "There's a [software] company named Cakewalk. I read music, but I'm very slow. I also compose, but I'm not the best at it. The computer makes it easy for me. Whatever I pluck on my guitar, I plug it into my computer and it prints it out for me. Also, it helps with songwriting. Most of the things a general musician would try to do, the computer is a big help. Since I didn't finish high school, it's a big help. I don't use any gadgets on the guitar. I did one album, *Lucille Talks Back* [in 1975], which is the only one where I had a Cry Baby pedal type thing. I loved the sound of it, but it seemed to take away from what I was trying to do. It was too easy to make sounds of that kind, and I couldn't execute like I figured I should, so I never used another one."

While King's sound is identified with the Gibson he has played for years, he also insisted that a musician's instrument remains secondary when it comes to forming an artistic personality.

"Some people think it's the type of guitar I play," King said. "But it's not that. I could get yours, anybody else's, and still get the same sound. An old piano can sit in the corner, and if Elton John played it, he'd sound like himself. If Ray Charles played it, he'd sound like himself. Whoever played it would sound like themselves. Same thing with the guitar. The way I play is the way I play."

That was a lesson that King shared with young students during a workshop he visited during his return to Indianola in 2005. Afterwards, the blues legend mentioned that he appreciates when students look up to him, but he suggested that through education they can find their own voice and possibly have an easier path than his own.

"We got a lot of young people, especially young black people who like rap," King said. "I've got nothing against rap. Many [rappers] are very talented. But when they talk about women in a negative way, that's the part I don't like. What I'm trying to say in so many words is, there's no kind of music that I hear where I don't like some of it. I tell a lot of the musicians, especially when I'm doing workshops, that everybody has idols. I had, still have, and I've never been able to play like any of them. But if I were going to town and looking for musicians, I wouldn't want them to play like me, Eric Clapton, or whoever. I want them to play the music. If I wanted me, I'd get me. I like for them to play, be themselves, and that's what I like.

"And that's what they're doing at a lot of music schools. That's why I advise all musicians, 'Get yourself a teacher. If you can't afford to go to Berklee, get you a teacher.' Here's one thing: People who have done like I did, we made some popularity, we did pretty good, but we always had to do what I call trial and error. You try something, and if it doesn't sound right, you try something else. But it takes so long to do that. When a good teacher can tell you, it's like crossing a pond on a boat: You can go from A to B." **DB**

Onstage in Nice, France, in 1983, the year King released *Blues 'N' Jazz*

JOS L. KNAEPEN

Publicity photo from when King was signed to ABC/Dunhill Records

DOWNBEAT ARCHIVES


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By Allen Morrison
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'The Music Defies Words'

JAZZ ARTIST
CHICK COREA

"I have no plan for this evening. So welcome to my living room." That's how Armando "Chick" Corea opens a concert in Quebec, as heard in the opening moments of *Portraits* (Stretch Records/Concord Jazz), his recent two-CD collection of live solo performances.

Not to worry—he's got this.

He proceeds to unspool a program of favorite tunes by Thelonious Monk, Bill Evans, Stevie Wonder and Bud Powell; his improvisations on compositions by Scriabin and Bartók; several original tunes from his album *Children's Songs*; and spontaneous musical "portraits" of volunteers from the audience at shows in Poland, Morocco, Lithuania and the United States. Before each segment, Corea brings the audience into his confidence with disarming impressions of each composer and a few words about what they mean to him.

A star since he recorded his first solo album in 1966 at age 25, the NEA Jazz Master, DownBeat Hall of Fame member and 20-time Grammy winner remains one of the most versatile, productive and recorded pianist-composers in jazz. He is a restless, prolific writer whose output includes tunes considered to be jazz standards ("Spain," "La Fiesta," "Armando's Rhumba," "500 Miles High," "Crystal Silence" and "Windows" are among his most covered); chamber and symphonic music, including two piano concertos and his famous suite of children's songs; and the technically dazzling improvisations he has recorded. In that, he is a modern-day heir to the tradition of classical piano masters who dazzled audiences with spontaneous cadenzas.

Recorded in concert halls on three continents, *Portraits* constitutes just two-fifths of Corea's recorded output in 2014 (so far). *Trilogy* (Stretch/Concord), a three-CD live set released in September, documents two years of touring by Corea's elite trio with bassist Christian McBride and drummer Brian Blade. This piano trio rubs shoulders with some of the best ever, if judged by the inventiveness of its arrangements, the musical imagination and technical virtuosity of each member, its tightness around sharp corners and the intangible but all-important factor of group chemistry. The opening track, "You're My Everything," is representative of the album, boasting an ingenious reharmonization of the Harry Warren standard and sinewy, melodic soloing by all three musicians. Other selections include Irving Berlin's "How Deep Is The Ocean?" and Kurt Weill's "This Is New"; two Monk tunes; Corea favorites like "Armando's Rhumba" and "Spain" (recorded before an apparently ecstatic audience in Madrid); and ambitious new Corea originals: the flamenco-inspired "Homage" and a previously unreleased piano sonata called "The Moon."

These live albums are just two among Corea's many recent projects. In the past few years, he has toured and recorded with his current Latin-tinged electric band The Vigil; formed the Grammy-winning Five Peace Band with John McLaughlin; reunited with his supergroup Return to Forever and joined his RTF colleagues Stanley Clarke and Lenny White in an acoustic trio; recorded Grammy-winning duos with Gary Burton and Béla Fleck; and, in his spare time, written and recorded *The Continents: Concerto For Jazz Quintet And Chamber Orchestra.*

Even the musicians who are closest to him wonder how he does it. Blade said it's hard to separate the musician from the man. "It's the heart of the man—the way he embraces people … and exhorts, encourages and inspires them," he says. "And those qualities come out in his playing. That beautiful 'crystal silence,' the clarity with which he executes lines, and the way he invents and plays from his imagination. He's never resting on yesterday's explorations; he's always looking for another doorway."

McBride says, "Chick stays so prolific—it's beyond anything I've ever witnessed from anybody else."

Both colleagues praise his openness to their input.

"He embraces everyone's individuality—he never tries to put anyone in a box," McBride says.

Blade concurs: "Chick opens a place for you when you're with him."

DownBeat spoke to Corea via Skype about the two new live albums, his evolution as a pianist and his creative philosophy. We found him relaxing in his hotel room in Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada, prior to a show that night with The Vigil.

Your DownBeat Readers Poll win as top jazz artist is, among other things, confirmation that, 48 years after your debut as a solo artist, jazz fans and players still see you as relevant. To what do you attribute your enduring popularity?

I don't know—it's hard to say. I play a *lot*. I'm all over the place—U.S., Europe, Japan; we just finished South America … people see me. I'm always experimenting, and the audiences continually seem to accept my experiments, which encourages me to do more.

Part of the attraction to your live shows is that people come not knowing what you're going to do, and perhaps you don't, either.

That may be. I just finished reading the book *Coltrane on Coltrane,* a book of interviews with him. I was privileged to see Trane play a lot in New York clubs, from '59 to '67, but never spoke or played with him. He was quite articulate, intelligent and deep thinking, as I had assumed from his amazing musical output.

That's the artistic culture that I came from—improvisation, always trying to form something spontaneously and always trying new techniques. Reading that book validated all of that again for me.

How did you go about selecting the tracks for *Trilogy*?

We recorded every night on the three long tours we did. My first idea was to put out all three tours, like *complete* [*laughs*]. Over 100 concerts. But that was a little bit over the top for my partners. There was so much to choose from.

Although we played so many concerts, we didn't play a different repertoire every night. There were probably 20 to 30 pieces. Certain pieces we played often, so they developed, like playing a blues every night. So it became a matter of finding a take, and then balancing out the program. For instance, we'd open the show with a standard. I probably had 30 or 40 takes of "How Deep Is The Ocean?" And I started to listen to them. And I thought, my goodness, we should make a whole record of just "How Deep Is The Ocean"s.

That would be very interesting.

Yeah, because they're all so different. I didn't listen to all of them—I couldn't stand it! [*laughs*]. So instead, I might make a comment to Bernie [Kirsh, Corea's longtime audio engineer] after a show, like, "Gee, that was a good take tonight." I would have him mark it down for me, so we wouldn't forget. Then I'd review two or three [of those] takes. For example, there might be a take of "How Deep" that stated the melody at the beginning. Then there'd be one that never stated the melody at all. And one that was so abstract that you could never tell what song it was. … Ultimately, I would pick one, then try to balance [the album] with other pieces that have more or less melodic content.

This is a gifted trio.

Each group has such unique synergy—you can't really compare them. For instance, I've played with Christian with other drummers, and that's a completely different thing. I've actually played with Brian a few times with other bass players, and *that's* a completely different thing. But when Christian, Brian and I play, there's a chemistry that I love.

On *Portraits,* we hear you telling an audience that this concert will be like having them in your living room. But how is the experience of playing solo onstage different from when you're alone?

In live performance, I'm trying to tell a story. ... At home, I'm just tinkering. I might spend hours on one page of a Schoenberg piano piece—even my beautiful wife, Gayle, who loves everything I do, has to leave the room!

How have your touch and tone evolved over the years?

It's important—it's your voice. Early on, I didn't think about tone too much. … I was just thinking about how to play a tune. And when I was gigging in New York in the '60s, there were not many well-prepared pianos. Around 1966, after about five years in New York, I became so frustrated with all the bad pianos. I'd come to the gig, and the other guys would bring a real shiny saxophone, or the trumpet player would be cleaning his trumpet and checking his valves. Everybody's caring for their own sound, and I've got this monster of untuned trash to try to play on. It would come to my solo, and I'd be embarrassed.

So there was a year when I gave it up and started playing drums. I gigged around NYC as a drummer for a year-and-a-half. This was '66, just before I got the gig with Stan Getz. He called me in '67. I had been planning to apply for my New York City hack license to supplement my income. Then, when Stan called me, I found myself playing prepared concert grands. And I thought, "Wow, this is nice."

My ideal of playing the piano is to try to play it like you see a great ballet dancer, like Baryshnikov, fly around the stage—it looks effortless. I know

when I feel my best, that's how it feels. I was trying to develop that lightness of touch—and I'm still trying to develop it. Art Tatum played with this incredible velvet touch—and he grew up on bad pianos. And Bill Evans brought an amazing piano sound into the jazz world—also Red Garland and Herbie [Hancock].

You have had an unusual trajectory for a jazz artist. Your early style was quite avant-garde, but you changed directions many times, moving more toward the melodic and lyrical. Do you see it that way?

After my group Circle [in the early '70s], I had a desire to widen my audience. I felt the need to put rhythm back into my music. And that led me to melodic content, and sound and groove, as well as to include Latin rhythms.

Wynton Marsalis likes to say that, to be called jazz, the music must have some elements of blues and swing. What's your take?

I have thought for years that to try to label the music *anything* has always been a restriction. I don't think of it that way. Jazz, classical ... they're just words. The music defies words. Words are symbols, whereas the music is the music; the emotion is the emotion; the groove is the groove. And it's different for everybody.

When I'm creating music, I love to see people experiencing pleasure or inspiration. And one of the great expressions of that is dancing—you move! You can sit back and totally love it, too—there's nothing wrong with that. I think we should dance. It's an expression [of music] through the body. We do use our bodies to groove when we play. So just stand up and use the rest of it.

You have often cited Bud Powell, Horace Silver and Bill Evans as major influences on your style. What did you learn from them?

That's a good basic list, but you gotta put Monk in there, and Art Tatum. Then you have to add Red Garland and Wynton Kelly, and McCoy [Tyner] and Herbie. They're all unique. Horace Silver inspired me to compose music—those were the first jazz records I ever got my hands on. My dad had Bird and Diz, and he had the Dizzy Gillespie Big Band. That music was fast moving, and for me as a youngster, daunting. I couldn't play it very well. But, when I was in grade school and high school, I could approach Horace's music. And I started transcribing it. The fact that his music was so orderly, and had such a great feel to it, got me wanting to write music.

Bill Evans inspired me to have a more delicate touch and a clarity of phrasing that I also learned from classical pianists. Mozart's music and Bach's takes a certain finger technique and clarity that I like to have. A lot of younger pianists have this … for instance, Gonzalo Rubalcaba has an amazing technical clarity in his renditions; so does Hiromi, the young Japanese pianist.

I saw Monk play many times as well. Isn't it interesting that Monk used to be considered as a "different" kind of player, with an unusual technique? Sometimes it's even expressed in derogatory terms—that he couldn't really play the piano that well. But it turns out that Monk's compositions are some of the most popular jazz tunes.

He had the courage to be his own man completely, which probably has a lot to do with why he's covered so much today. When you're the best Monk that you can be, or the best Chick you can be, then people have to come to you for that, because no one else is doing *that*.

Yeah, yeah, yeah! That's what you get from all of these greats: They demonstrate that being themselves, and allowing their own way of doing things to fully emerge, without any restraint—that's how you succeed. That's very inspiring.

What do you have planned for the next couple of years?

My manager and I are developing Internet workshops. We already did one. I find it very rewarding. I try to encourage people to keep doing what they love to do. They ask specific things, and I try to demonstrate *my* way of doing it. But letting them know that it's just my way; it's not dogma.

My band The Vigil will be a platform for my musical ideas and small group experiments. Next year, Herbie Hancock and I are going to do duet concerts around the world. I've also got a tour coming up in Germany with Bobby McFerrin, which is a duo I love. Bobby's very inspiring. And I have a list of requests to write chamber music for string quartets and other groups that I'd like to fill. I've got a third piano concerto in mind.

Gary Bartz, who is himself a jazz educator, recently said many jazz education programs are putting the cart before the horse—they're teaching students all the theory but the students don't know how to "hear" the music. Do you agree?

Education in music is important but extremely misunderstood. You can't teach someone to *know* or *appreciate* something, or to know what they like, no matter how much data you give them. You could read every book in the library and still not *know* anything; that's what I think. [Musicians] know what they like. But you have to encourage them to have the strength of their own conviction, to live the truth of what they like and don't like.

The word *like* may sound like a weak word, but that's how an artist makes a decision. How do you write a song or paint a painting? Well, you put something down that you "like," that you think works. No one can instruct you how to reach that decision. When you try, it invalidates their innate knowingness. So, "instruction" in music is very tricky. If it's done with an authoritarian stance—like, *this* is right and *this* is wrong—it could destroy a young artist. You *can* teach techniques, though. Even that is tricky, because each artist has to find the technique that he needs to develop what's inside him. I'd like to help more artists and encourage more artistic creation. We need more musicians to lift our spirits around the world. **DB**

Freedom Within Structure

By Phillip Lutz

PHOTO BY JIMMY KATZ

JAZZ ALBUM, JAZZ GROUP & GUITAR
PAT METHENY

What's in a name? Plenty, according to Pat Metheny.

When the guitarist changed the name of his latest project from the Unity Band to the Unity Group, he was sending a message: The Unity project, which had been focused largely on narrow quartet fare, would be broadening its charge, embracing lavishly produced works that recall in some manner or form ambitious efforts by the venerable Pat Metheny Group—one of the first jazz ensembles to use "group" in its moniker.

"It's a word that suggests something that's going to go beyond the boundaries of the general zone of our community," Metheny said.

That it has. On record—*Kin* (Nonesuch)—and now on an extended tour scheduled to wrap up at New York's Blue Note in December, Metheny has been pushing boundaries and winning plaudits, including three DownBeat Readers Poll victories (in the categories Jazz Album, Jazz Group and Guitar). He has done so with a back-to-the-future approach in which he maintains the integrity of the quartet, he said, while "trying to apply things that I had leaned on more in the regular band, on the orchestrion record or in *Secret Story*."

Since touring in 2010 with the title object of that year's *The Orchestrion Project* (Nonesuch)—a circuit-wired version of the orchestral simulators popular before the advent of recorded music—Metheny has been exploring the orchestrion's intricacies. But in *Kin*, his explorations, paired with the efforts of a flesh-and-blood multi-instrumentalist tasked solely with executing Metheny's scores, have reached a new level of refinement, yielding a soundscape that evokes the power of *Secret Story*.

If, in fact, a rough antecedent for *Kin* is to be found, it might actually be *Secret Story*. Though the 1992 album was populated by far more personnel—enlisting, among others, a Cambodian choir, members of the London Symphony Orchestra, harmonicist Toots Thielemans and an incarnation of the Pat Metheny Group—it established a template for what, in a recent conversation, Metheny said largely distinguishes the Unity Group from the work of its predecessor: "lush, long-form environments that also have a lot of written material sitting right next to improvised material."

Woodwind player Chris Potter explained that the recording sessions for *Kin* were different than any he had ever experienced. "There's a certain way [Metheny] works that's taken some getting used to," Potter said in a separate DownBeat interview. "Of course, I've listened to his playing since I was a kid. I know his records. It's interesting to see his process—especially on a project like this, which is more similar in structure and everything to the Pat Metheny Group. The way [*Kin*] was made was really interesting. I had always wondered how those records are made, and it turns out it's an unbelievable amount of work that nobody else would do … . Pat had the tunes. But he saw how things evolved in the studio, and adjusted accordingly. It was a process. We recorded every day for two weeks or something, all day … . He has the producing vision that, 'OK, it's going to be this other thing, bigger in scope than just a document of what it sounds like playing live.' That's one of Pat's huge strengths. So it's been interesting for me to watch that."

By all accounts, the environments Metheny has conjured for the Unity Group are, like those he created for *Secret Story* in their time, stirring up a storm.

Taking a breather after 118 shows with the Unity Group—Potter on reeds and flutes, Ben Williams on bass, Antonio Sanchez on drums and the new addition to the ensemble, instrumental jack-of-all-trades Giulio Carmassi—Metheny said he would soon be hitting the road again, for three dozen concerts that would take him through his customary end-of-tour stop in New York. At that point, he said, he'll catch another breath.

To say Metheny's life of late has been a breathtaking affair is a gross understatement. Not that it has been otherwise for some time. The Missouri farm boy who made good—*very* good—has, since forming his own band in the late 1970s, been racking up all manner of accolades, of which the latest, following his 2013 induction into DownBeat's Hall of Fame, are the Readers Poll victories. Apart from being "honored and humbled," Metheny admitted to being nonplussed by it all: "It's hard to even explain."

Having just reached the age of 60, Metheny perhaps felt under no great compulsion to try. For him, the roles of instrumentalist, bandleader, composer and compatriot appear, on one level, to be nearly indistinguishable, constituent parts of a holistic life in music he has been fashioning since his days as a teenage wunderkind in Kansas City.

For the moment, he said, he was having the time of his life, enjoying a period of sustained creative and personal fulfillment that started with the formation of the Unity Band three years ago and has continued apace with the expanded Unity Group, though pulling it all off has been no mean feat.

The expanded ensemble, first off, needed a structural framework, which meant finding a "utility player" who would be comfortable filling a complicated but ultimately limited role. After an audition, he found that person in Carmassi, who, as it turned out, had been eager to work with Metheny in very much the capacity for which he'd been hired.

"I knew I wanted to write a bunch of parts," Metheny said, "specific things that needed to get played in the form of orchestration. I had run across Giulio; he seemed like he would be a good candidate for something like that."

As the tour has bounced from continent to continent since February,

Pat Metheny Unity Group, from left: Chris Potter, Giulio Carmassi, Ben Williams, Antonio Sanchez and Metheny

Metheny said, Carmassi's performance has confirmed the accuracy of his first impression. He has moved with facility from his primary chair, the piano, to ancillary roles as a practitioner of woodwinds, brass and strings. All the while, Metheny said, he has hewed dutifully to the charts like the third trumpet player in a big band. But the process has involved a learning curve.

"It took him a while to get command of it all," Metheny said.

Keeping the orchestrion on track has proved similarly challenging. Though the orchestrion Metheny is using is less elaborate than the version he toured with four years ago—and though the current group, sans Carmassi, had an intimate encounter with the machine on "Signals," which was laid down on the self-titled Unity Band CD—its mysteries remain those of a bloodless hybrid, one that must be subdued or adapted to before it can be enjoyed. All of which must be coordinated onstage: The group carries its own monitor system, and at times its members rely on click tracks and lights for cues.

The equipment is put to good use. The chart for "On Day One," which opens *Kin*, runs more than 30 pages, and any resemblance to standard song form within those pages is fleeting. The piece unfolds in discrete sections, each twist and turn distinct in tone and temperament and separated only by interludes. Each soloist blows over a different part, facing his own set of challenges.

"I use the improvising sections to be almost part of the compositional form," Metheny said.

On the other end of the structural spectrum is "Born." Gospel-tinged, its chart is a single page, though its challenges are no less daunting.

The tune is, in a sense, a dramatic exercise, a "build," Metheny said, that depends on finely calibrated dynamics. "It's very simple, very sparse, but it grows very gradually. If you could imagine a graph where for the first two thirds almost nothing moves, then toward the end there's a ramp where this whole thing starts happening."

Whether the premium on any given tune is on simplicity or complexity, the subtext is Metheny's predilection for freedom within structure. "I don't mind at all if there are parameters to an improvising situation," he said. "In fact, I like it."

But operating within those parameters can be a formidable task, especially when they involve the tyranny of metronomic devices and phantom performers that do not feel the rigors of a long tour, driven as they are by solenoid switches and pneumatic pumps.

"There are so many things that have to go right, it's kind of mind-boggling," Sanchez said.

Sanchez, whom Metheny praised as a drummer with a "singular approach" who is in "his own category," said his parts are largely unwritten and he orchestrates them in different ways, adjusting his large kit as the situation warrants.

Among the biggest surprises, the drummer explained, has been the degree to which he has come to terms with the orchestrion. "It's pretty cool that I'm in the middle of the stage and I hear the marimba on one side, the accordion behind me, the glockenspiel on the other side, the cymbals—it's like playing with a little orchestra, except that it's unmanned and being triggered automatically by a computer. But the result is kind of the same. You can program dynamics into it and if you know how to play with it well, the possibilities are pretty amazing."

So are the pitfalls. With the piano and the orchestrion's multiple chordal possibilities competing for space, Sanchez said, the sound can become dense. Of course, denseness can be made to dissipate with a quick change of format, and Metheny has been known to make that happen, picking up his 42-string, four-necked guitar for a solo turn or joining Potter for a duo spot. Acutely attuned to the uses of contrast and color, Metheny has shaped the band to the point where its members are similarly attuned.

"There is a thing that happens once a band has a certain sound which then defines the recording they've made," Metheny said. "That recording gets known and people start to think of that group of musicians as a band. You get people who specifically come to hear that band and that sound.

"I've had bands over the years where we could play for 50,000 people or for 50 people. This has been that kind of band. There's a consistency in terms of the way this band communicates with audiences that was there from the beginning.

"Now that we have this new record out and it appears to be doing even better, people are really excited when we just show up. And we take it from there." **DB**

79TH READERS POLL JAZZ ALBUM OF THE YEAR

1. Pat Metheny Unity Group, *Kin* (NONESUCH) 632

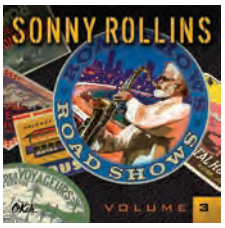
To his already superb Unity Band quartet with saxophonist Chris Potter, bassist Ben Williams and drummer Antonio Sanchez, guitarist Metheny adds multi-instrumentalist Giulio Carmassi, who brings churning keyboard undercurrents and swirling new textures. With this release, the Unity Band concept has coalesced into a unified whole.

2. Ambrose Akinmusire, *The Imagined Savior Is Far Easier To Paint* (BLUE NOTE) 512

Akinmusire's sophomore effort for Blue Note is even more daring than his 2011 label debut. Rather than knock you out with his muscularity, the trumpeter ensnares your attention with intriguing arrangements and captivating performances by guest vocalists Theo Bleckmann and Cold Specks.

3. Sonny Rollins, *Road Shows, Volume 3* (DOXY/OKEH) 448

The latest installment of concert performances by the tenor sax titan offers glimpses from his world tours between 2001 and 2012. It's an excellent collection of Rollins as a senior statesman of jazz—a confident, free and flowing improviser with an encyclopedic knowledge of music and his instrument.



4. Gregory Porter, *Liquid Spirit* (BLUE NOTE) 413

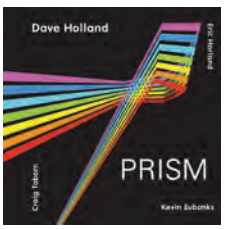
With a rich baritone that rings pure and true, Porter is a once-in-a-generation singer who delivers lyrics with honesty, truth and a rare mastery of phrasing. The only thing better than hearing him sing a standard is hearing him sing one of his own compositions. All are on full display on his Blue Note debut.

5. George Benson, *Inspiration (A Tribute To Nat King Cole)* (CONCORD) 381

The guitarist-vocalist superstar's dream of recording a Nat "King" Cole tribute has come to fruition with the help of the 42-piece Henry Mancini Institute Orchestra. Guest performances, like Wynton Marsalis' romantic trumpet playing on "Unforgettable," make this more than a straight imitation of the influential pianist-vocalist's classic recordings.

6. Dave Holland & Prism, *Prism* (DARE2) 381

For this electrified outing, Holland assembled a quartet of outstanding players and composers who are leaders in their own right: guitarist Kevin Eubanks, keyboardist Craig Taborn and drummer Eric Harland. Together, they created a unique and contemporary musical statement.



7. Chick Corea, *The Vigil* (STRETCH/CONCORD) 368

Corea presents a band of meticulous yet heated improvisers who scale his compositional heights with balletic grace. Drummer Marcus Gilmore, saxophonist Tim Garland, guitarist Charles Altura and bassist Hadrien Feraud frame the keyboardist-leader's muse in dense shades with precise degrees of tension and dynamics.

8. Tom Harrell, *Colors Of A Dream* (HIGHNOTE) 333

This is perhaps the most imaginative recording to date by the prolific trumpeter, flugelhornist, bandleader and composer. The scoring for the piano-less ensemble—which includes saxophonists Jaleel Shaw and Wayne Escoffery, bassist Ugonna Okegwo, bassist-vocalist Esperanza Spalding and drummer Johnathan Blake—is sui generis among Harrell's work.

9. The Bad Plus, *The Rite Of Spring* (SONY MASTERWORKS) 320

The Bad Plus takes on one of the most influential works of the 20th century, a complex score fraught with revolutionary experiments in rhythm and meter, tonality and dissonance. It's a remarkable feat that affirms the trio's preeminence as the one of the most adventurous and imaginative bands of the modern era.

10. The Ed Palmero Big Band, *Oh No! Not Jazz!!* (CUNEIFORM) 308

With his internal radar tuned into Frank Zappa's zany frequency, saxophonist Palermo and his dedicated band prove they've mastered the quirky complexities of the late master's intricate, demanding compositions. The eight original tunes on disc 2 are triumphs of serious-minded orchestral jazz, with occasional whiffs of comedy.

11. Brian Blade & The Fellowship Band, *Landmarks* (BLUE NOTE) 304

12. Cécile McLorin Salvant, *WomanChild* (MACK AVENUE) 288

13. Kenny Garrett, *Pushing The World Away* (MACK AVENUE) 277

14. Al Di Meola, *All Your Life* (VALIANA/SONGSURFER) 259

15. Christian McBride Trio, *Out Here* (MACK AVENUE) 259

16. Gordon Goodwin's Big Phat Band, *Life In The Bubble* (TELARC) 245

17. John McLaughlin & The 4th Dimension, *The Boston Record* (ABSTRACT TRUTH) 237

18. Trombone Shorty, *Say That To Say This* (VERVE) 229

19. Stanton Moore, *Conversations* (ROYAL POTATO FAMILY) 224

20. Dianne Reeves, *Beautiful Life* (CONCORD) 221

21. 3 Cohens, *Tightrope* (ANZIC) 216

22. George Duke, *DreamWeaver* (HEADS UP) 216

23. Dave Stryker, *Eight Track* (STRIKEZONE RECORDS) 200

24. Kenny Barron, *Kenny Barron & The Brazilian Knights* (SUNNYSIDE) 197

25. John Scofield, *Überjam Deux* (EMARCY/DECCA) 197

26. Eric Alexander, *Chicago Fire* (HIGHNOTE) 189

27. Clayton-Hamilton Jazz Orchestra, *The L.A. Treasures Project* (CAPRI) 189

28. Alan Broadbent, *Heart To Heart: Solo Piano* (CHILLY BIN) 176

29. Paquito D'Rivera & Trio Corrente, *Song For Maura* (PAQUITO RECORDS/SUNNYSIDE) 160

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79TH READERS POLL

HISTORICAL ALBUM OF THE YEAR

1. Miles Davis, *Miles At The Fillmore—Miles Davis 1970: The Bootleg Series Vol. 3* (COLUMBIA/LEGACY) 1,672

This four-CD set presents four nights of unedited performances by Miles Davis, Chick Corea, Keith Jarrett, Dave Holland, Jack DeJohnette, Airto Moreira and Steve Grossman at the legendary Fillmore East in New York. Featuring more than two hours of previously unissued music, it includes bonus tracks recorded at Fillmore West in San Francisco.

2. Art Blakey & The Jazz Messengers, *The Complete Jazz Messengers At The Café Bohemia* (PHOENIX RECORDS) 1,456

This recording of Art Blakey & the Jazz Messengers' performance at New York's Café Bohemia on Nov. 23, 1955, was originally released on three separate LPs. The complete program is presented here, along with bonus material from the album *Horace Silver Quintet, Vol. 2*, featuring the same personnel.

3. Louis Armstrong, *Columbia And RCA Victor Live Recordings Of Louis Armstrong And The All Stars* (MOSAIC) 1,292

Rich with new discoveries, this nine-CD Mosaic set spans Louis Armstrong's post-big band period from 1947 to 1958. It brings to light Pops' proficiency on the trumpet, the brilliance of his sound, the sensuality of his vocals, and how great he was at being the standard-bearer for his own music, as well as an interpreter of other people's songs.

4. John Coltrane, *Afro Blue Impressions* (PABLO) 1,149

Coltrane fronts a stellar quartet with McCoy Tyner, Jimmy Garrison and Elvin Jones on two 1963 European dates that were originally released as a double LP in 1977. In addition to the nine tunes that appeared on the original, three bonus tracks are included. Each song is a springboard for unpredictable improvisation and boundless creativity.

5. Wayne Shorter, *Speak No Evil* (BLUE NOTE) 1,048

In honor of its 75th anniversary, Blue Note Records has been rolling out high-quality vinyl pressings of remastered reissues from the label's deep catalog. For this classic title from 1965, Shorter wrote six original pieces and enlisted help from Herbie Hancock, Freddie Hubbard, Ron Carter and Elvin Jones. Hard-bop and modal sounds abound.

6. Herbie Hancock, *The Complete Columbia Album Collection 1972–1988* (COLUMBIA/LEGACY) 884

Hancock's catalog on Columbia and CBS/Sony Japan is a microcosm of musical development in the 1970s and '80s. This 34-disc deluxe set includes eight albums that previously had never been issued in the United States (or outside of Japan). Over the course of 16 years, Hancock reinvents himself time and time gain, on his own terms.

7. The Allman Brothers Band, *Play All Night: Live At The Beacon Theatre 1992* (EPIC/LEGACY) 688

This two-disc collection highlights the Rock & Roll Hall of Famers' first-ever extended run (10 nights) at the venerable New York City venue, an annual residency that has since become a certifiable rock 'n' roll tradition. Highlights include a number of classic blues covers and a three-song acoustic set.

8. Thelonious Monk, *Paris 1969* (BLUE NOTE) 685

This fascinating and important late-career document—available as a black-and-white film on DVD and in CD and vinyl formats—presents the legendary pianist and composer in performance with his quartet at the Salle Pleyel concert hall in Paris on Dec. 15, 1969. The concert featured a surprise guest appearance from Philly Joe Jones.

9. Stan Getz, *Live At Montreux 1972* (EAGLE ROCK) 637

This DVD and companion audio CD present Getz making his Montreux Jazz Festival debut with Chick Corea, Stanley Clarke and Tony Williams—the same band (minus Airto Moreira) that had recorded *Captain Marvel* earlier that year. Their performance is issued here in its entirety for the first time in the States.

10. Miles Davis, *The Original Mono Recordings* (COLUMBIA/LEGACY) 525

Fans of Davis will be able to hear his early music in mono format—the way it was originally recorded and mixed. This neat nine-disc package presents a fascinating portrait of the trumpeter's evolution as a bandleader and as a composer graduating from hard-bop to modal creations.

11. Woody Shaw, *The Complete Muse Sessions* (MOSAIC) 520

12. Jaco Pastorius, *Modern American Music ... Period! The Criteria Sessions* (OMNIVORE) 508

13. Oscar Peterson/Ben Webster, *During This Time* (ART OF GROOVE) 404

14. Jimmy Giuffre 3 & 4, *New York Concerts* (ELEMENTAL MUSIC) 365

15. Lester Young, *Boston 1950* (UPTOWN) 360

16. Sly & The Family Stone, *Higher!* (EPIC/LEGACY) 344

17. Chick Webb/Ella Fitzgerald, *The Complete Chick Webb & Ella Fitzgerald Decca Sessions (1934–1941)* (MOSAIC) 332

18. Roy Haynes with Phineas Newborn & Paul Chambers, *We Three* (PRESTIGE) 320

19. Modern Jazz Quartet, *Germany 1956–1958: Lost Tapes* (JAZZHAUS) 292

20. Art Pepper, *Unreleased Art Vol. VIII: Live At The Winery* (WIDOW'S TASTE) 272

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jazz at lincoln center orchestra

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Music Director, Trumpet

RYAN KISOR
Trumpet

KENNY RAMPTON
Trumpet

MARCUS PRINTUP
Trumpet

VINCENT GARDNER
Trombone

CHRIS CRENSHAW
Trombone

ELLIOT MASON
Trombone

SHERMAN IRBY
Alto & Soprano Saxophones, Flute, Clarinet

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Tenor & Soprano Saxophones, B-flat & Bass Clarinets

WALTER BLANDING
Tenor & Soprano Saxophones, Clarinet

JOE TEMPERLEY
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jazz

Flexible Thinking

By Jennifer Odell

PHOTO BY MICHAEL JACKSON

TROMBONE
TROMBONE SHORTY

There's thinking outside the box—and then there's thinking outside the realm of boundaries altogether.

Troy "Trombone Shorty" Andrews occupies the latter category. At 28, he has established his own genre of music, refusing to accept categorizations beyond the *supafunkrock* term he coined to describe it. He approaches his art from different perspectives, prioritizing the potential of new ideas above the security of what has worked in the past.

Andrews is also committed to keeping an open mind about his musicianship, something he encourages students to do as well through his leadership of the new Trombone Shorty Music Academy, an after-school music education and mentoring program housed at Tulane University in New Orleans.

Trombone Shorty at Metropolis during the 2013 Montreal Jazz Festival


Trombone Shorty at the Gathering of the Vibes festival in Bridgeport, Connecticut, on Aug. 1

ADAM MCCULLOUGH

When DownBeat caught up with Andrews between tour stops in September to discuss his Readers Poll win as Trombonist of the Year, he emphasized the importance of flexible thinking with regard to his instruments, which include trombone, trumpet and voice but frequently extend to jams behind the drum kit—a proclivity that echoes in his rhythmic way with a horn.

What changes have you noticed with regard to your trombone playing since the first Orleans Avenue record came out in 2005?

I think by me playing trumpet as much as trombone, my mind is always thinking in two different directions. When I'm playing trombone I know there's certain sounds that I can get. But I'm also thinking as if I'm playing a trumpet, so I'm always trying to do things that seem to be a bit impossible—playing faster or trying different lines or phrases that might work. It depends on what's going on underneath me as far as where the rhythm section is going … but I have a few different personalities on the horn.

What advice would you give to younger players who hope to navigate a variety of genres?

As musicians, we should be able to listen [to] and at least attempt to play all styles of music. You have some people going into a different genre, but when you put them in a funk setting, they don't fare well even though they can play well. Or there are some jazz players who can play about a million notes, but you put them on something that's really simple and stripped down, it doesn't work out well for them sometimes. I can't get up onstage with Lenny Kravitz and play a million notes over a funk-rock groove.

How do the trombone and trumpet factor into the way you write new music?

It can be easier to write on the trombone because I'm able to listen to one tone at one time and not think about or create multiple sounds at once. Sometimes I'll get one horn riff or bass line, and I'll play that and I'll have the band double that up on all the instruments, and that'll become the main focus. And then I'll create another melody on top of the bass line. When I write on the trombone it comes out really funky and gritty.

Are there any horn solos that have influenced you over the years, whether it was something you transcribed from a recording or heard live?

I've never transcribed anything. In New Orleans and Treme, it's very important that we all have our own voice. Like, in Treme, I played alongside of my brother [James Andrews]. Whatever he played, I would naturally catch on to and imitate that after hearing him play it so many times. Other than that, the way I grew up, nobody ever transcribed anybody's solo.

But I've been listening to the Zac Brown Band

> ‘The way I grew up, nobody ever transcribed anybody’s solo.’

a lot, and they get into some really fast country—like, fiddle solo and banjo solo. That’s been really interesting to me: how fast it is, the notes that they choose, the intervals. It’s just a different concept. I’m always trying to take my approach to solos into a different area that I wouldn’t normally think about.

How does that notion of finding one’s own voice play into the Trombone Shorty Music Academy’s curriculum?

Well, the whole thing is about giving them the education and the tools to be able to create their own voice. They have a great teacher with Donald Harrison Jr.; he’s bringing the curriculum into the Mardi Gras Indian sound. And we’ve had Zigaboo [Modeliste] from the Meters come in to teach.

[The academy] is just strictly for help—there’s no extra grade they get at their regular high school or anything. Just to have those kids show up shows me that they’re really into music and serious about it. It feels great to be able to have that type of impact and see all the kids learning and playing and hopefully keeping the heritage of New Orleans music alive.

Your foundation director, Bill Taylor, mentioned that brass band music, and specifically the Rebirth Brass Band’s music, would have a bigger focus this year.

Yeah, brass band music in general. We’re starting in the late 1800s, early 1900s—groups like the Eureka Brass Band—and we’ll bring them up [through history] to show them how Rebirth got to sound the way they sound. Because most of the kids, they haven’t even heard of some of these bands like the Onward Brass Band and all those traditional bands.

We just want to take them through a timeline to understand how Rebirth changed the music to be so influential. And then, hopefully, they can take what Rebirth did and they can go to another level. The reason why we have the brass band culture focused on a little bit more is because most of these kids are coming from brass bands that they created and they’re already playing little birthday parties and stuff like that. They just want take their education to another level.

You were on the road with Galactic this summer, which gave you more opportunities to play with Corey Henry. How do you explain that fire you two spark in one another?

Well, he’s a few years older than me, but we basically played together in the Treme together our whole lives. We come from the same tree, you know? I was just able to go to NOCCA [New Orleans Center for Creative Arts] and learn formally, and he has big ears. We always try to step each other’s game up. He’s one of the best trombone players in the city, and when we get a chance to play together, there’s always a little friendly competition. But it’s all love. And we push each other a lot. We’re both teaching each other something.

If you could pick any other trombonist to play with in a setting like you have with Corey, who would it be and why?

I’ve done that already—it was Fred Wesley from JB’s [James Brown] band. I’ve had a chance to play with Fred a few times and record with him. I like his tone, I like his phrasing, he’s smooth, he can play. He knows how to differentiate funk and jazz. You can hear him play some heavy jazz, and then you can hear him get into funk, and he knows how to crack and really make it pop the way it should be. He’s the godfather. **DB**

No Hiding

By Ted Panken

PHOTO BY JOS L. KNAEPEN

TENOR SAXOPHONE CHRIS POTTER

Two decades ago, after the death of trumpeter Red Rodney—in whose quintet he played alto, soprano and tenor saxophones for five years—Chris Potter started to hone in on the lower horn.

"I was a better alto player, but I thought I might have something more original to say on tenor," Potter recalled of his mindset. "I always imagined a sound in my head, and at a certain threshold it became recognizable as me, but I don't know what that would have been or how that happened. It's a work in progress, continuing to think about and work on music. There's no way around the fact that it takes a lot of work."

At the moment, the 43-year-old winner of the Tenor Saxophone category in the 2014 DownBeat Readers Poll—the first person not named Sonny Rollins, Joe Lovano or Joshua Redman to earn the honor since 1995—was applying that principle to fixing up his just-purchased home in Brooklyn's Park Slope neighborhood. "I've been digging out the basement," Potter said. It was noon, and he sat at a large table in the rear half of the ground floor. Upstairs, a plumber was working on newly discovered complexities with the bathroom pipes.

"We bought the place while I was touring with Pat Metheny," Potter explained. "I found it online and said, 'Oh, that looks good.' My wife came and we decided to go for it. I didn't even see it until after I'd signed the contract. Fortunately, I like it."

In a few hours, Potter would pick up his 6-year-old daughter from school and head for Manhattan to rendezvous with his wife before teaching the third of the seven jazz ensemble classes that he is responsible for this semester at New York University. He planned to complete that obligation during the first week of December while performing with Metheny's Unity Group at the Blue Note, concluding a two-month circuit of Asia and North America that would constitute the fourth and final leg of a global sojourn that began in February.

"This tour is on a different scale than anything I've done," Potter said. "I actually thought I would have a harder time. It helps that the music is good, and I like everyone. Since the tune order and what we do is similar every night, it's almost like being in a play. For each tune, I have a role that makes sense, and I find different little things to do. Of course, I'm improvising in that context, but certain things tend to work better. After 10 gigs you get bored with that approach and try to find something else. It's fun."

During downtime on the road, Potter had been preparing a 2015 itinerary privileging his own projects, among them prospective autumn engagements with a to-be-named-later trio and a summer all-star tour with Lionel Loueke, Dave Holland and Eric Harland. Primarily, though, he was booking the quartet (guitarist Adam Rogers, electric bassist Fima Ephron and drummer Nate Smith) with which, in 2013, he road-refined the repertoire that would constitute his January 2015 release, *Imaginary Cities* (ECM). That November he performed it at a Jazz at Lincoln Center concert with the 11-piece ensemble that plays on the recording (the quartet plus Craig Taborn on piano and keyboards, Scott Colley on bass, Steve Nelson on vibraphone and a string quartet with violinists Mark Feldman and Joyce Hamman, violist Lois Martin and cellist David Eggar).

Potter recruited Rogers and Smith in 2004, when, looking for routes "to connect jazz to the dance rhythms of the day without sacrificing substance," he transitioned from his acoustic quartet of five years' standing (Colley, pianist-keyboardist Kevin Hays and drummer Bill Stewart) to a plugged-in unit, called Underground, with Taborn on Fender Rhodes. He eschewed the bass, writing scaled-down, open-ended pieces tailored to Taborn's ambidextrously executed odd-metered bass lines juxtaposed to a layered comp of streaming melody, harmonic markers and textured sonics that punctuate the flow. Smith's funk refractions propelled free-wheeling investigations of vamps, written forms and free sections with raw materials drawn from African, Balkan, electronica, ambient and 20th century European art music, '90s hip-hop and hardcore jazz. Taborn and Rogers regularly tossed off solos that matched the leader's customary levels of creativity and technical prowess, built on a distillation of saxophone dialects spanning Johnny Hodges and Bird to Michael Brecker and Joe Lovano. Experimental and fully improvisational in intention, Underground released three recordings (*Underground*, *Follow The Red Line* and *Ultrahang*) that broadened Potter's audience among jazz-aware Millennials, who responded viscerally to the 21st-century pop gestures and dance rhythms.

In 2013, Taborn's own ECM release and burgeoning web of commitments necessitated a replacement. "I didn't hear another keyboard player," Potter said. Initially, he gave music written with Taborn in mind to the new edition of Underground. For 2015, though, looking to "push the quartet in its own new direction," he has generated various bespoke compositions for them to play along with scaled-down *Imaginary Cities* charts.

Shortly after completing *Imaginary Cities* in 2013, Potter described it as a vehicle "to broaden Underground's stylistic and emotional range, especially along the more quiet and acoustic end of the spectrum." Like its ECM predecessor, *Sirens*—which drew inspiration from episodes of *The Odyssey* and the endless peregrinations of Odysseus, which Potter's travel-for-a-living lifestyle mirrors—it's a programmatic piece, conceived around the notion of "how to construct cities in ways that are good for people."

In putting together the four-movement title track and four other pieces, Potter piggybacked from recent works for mid-sized ensembles. The best known is 2007's *Song For Anyone* (Sunnyside), a 10-piece suite for a tentet consisting of woodwinds, strings and rhythm section, on which Potter, as he put it that year, "had a chance to experiment overtly with influences that might be less obvious in a jazz context—creating a fugue, employing 12-tone writing, developing themes—and figuring out where to use them." Potter deployed similar strategies on the brass-oriented *Transatlantic*, an impressionistic program he recorded with the Danish Radio Big Band in 2011, and a symphonic piece entitled "Dream Tree," for strings, brass and woodwinds, which he performed that year in Brazil. Both works are strong and cohesive, but less conceptually ambitious than *Imaginary Cities*, on which the string writing is varied and complex, and the parts individualized to the tonal personalities of his personnel.

Chris Potter onstage in Brussels in June

"When I thought of writing a new piece, in unfamiliar terrain, I wanted people whose playing I knew well," Potter said. "The strings do some improvising, though their parts were more written. But I wanted everyone else to play written parts that they'd sound good doing, that I could imagine them improvising and bringing their own thing to in a cool way.

"Playing with Pat has forced me to reassess the role of structure versus freedom in music. I can imagine in the future wanting to go in a direction that might involve a little more structure, hopefully balanced with non-structured things."

The structure-freedom binary is an interesting way to consider the respective gestations of *Sirens* and *Imaginary Cities*, which, by Potter's account, "couldn't be more opposite." He composed the *Sirens* material in proximity to the final illness and passing of Paul Motian (1931–2011), a frequent employer and mentor starting in 1993; the music contains no small number of explicit refractions of Motian's language, his melodic orientation and use of space. "I wrote the pieces quickly, and played them during a week at the Vanguard," he recalls. "Sarah Humphries from ECM came by and said, 'Maybe we can record this.' I've found that having some kind of programmatic frame helps me focus on putting a project together."

In preparing *Imaginary Cities*, on the other hand, Potter, in Rogers' words, "asked himself difficult questions without easy answers."

Potter says he formulated his solutions with "a lot of diving in, studying scores and talking to people. It was learning as you go. I wrote some of it on the road, and some when we were living in a small apartment before we bought this place. I didn't have my piano with me, all these things were up in the air, but somehow I got the work done. My family left for the summer, and I stayed here for a week. Every day I went to NYU to work, like 12 hours a day."

Perhaps, as Rogers suggests, a decade of "figuring out how to fit the saxophone into Underground's gnarly sonic environment with electric guitar and Fender Rhodes fostered another kind of evolution for Chris."

Taborn reads the *Imaginary Cities* pieces as "hyper-extended Underground—tunes Chris wrote or would have done for Underground, but with arrangements and orchestrations containing written material that fleshed out areas where Underground probably would have improvised.

"What really got me is how studied the orchestration is—though I wouldn't want to imply academic or dry," Taborn continued. "He did it in a jazz way; he really checked out Bartók, Richard Strauss, Debussy and everything else. Usually a person does something the first time, and then gets better. What's impressive is that Chris never threw down ideas with the hope of figuring out later how the strings would manage it. The craft is complete."

After exhaustive touring in support of the 2012 album *Unity Band* and last year's acclaimed *Kin* (both on Nonesuch) on which Potter performed, Metheny himself offers similarly enthusiastic plaudits. "I've heard Chris do almost everything," Metheny told DownBeat in a separate interview, praising Potter's ability to interpret an enormous range of material, from intricately complex passages to straightforward melodies. "The guy is probably one of the three or four most complete musicians I've ever seen or that I know of."

Potter views his recent compositional explorations as "very closely connected to my efforts to make better decisions as an improviser—to be able to see the whole piece of music, and not just my own part; how to gauge when to hit the pedal hard and when to lay off a bit; how much time should go by; how long a solo should be. These things really do make a difference.

"All along I've been striving to balance the saxophone as a strong solo voice with having the whole group play coherently. In a way, I imagined


Potter in Indianapolis in 2013
MARK SHELDON

all these things when I was 20; now, after so many experiences, I have more resources to make them happen."

In composing for larger ensembles, Potter can draw on working knowledge of many of the instruments in play. He showcased his command of an array of reeds and woodwinds on his first two Concord recordings, *Concentric Circles* and *Pure*. Metheny takes full advantage of that attribute on *Kin*, deploying Potter on clarinet, bass clarinet, alto flute and bass flute in addition to the tenor and soprano. Potter plays these and, as he described it, "strums some guitar" on the road.

Even early on, Potter's keyboard skills were sufficiently impressive that Red Rodney not infrequently assigned him to play piano during club sets. His equivalent panache on bass and drums is evident from drummer Billy Hart's recollection that, after hearing a tape that Potter sent him with the music for the 1996 Concord date *Moving In*, he asked Potter why he didn't use the drummer who played on it. "Chris looked at me like I was nuts," Hart recalled. "Later Larry Grenadier, who played bass on the date, told me that Chris had played the drum, piano and bass parts."

By Potter's mid-teens, when Marian McPartland heard him in Columbia, South Carolina, his hometown, and proclaimed him ready for the big time, his prodigious instrumental and conceptual tools were known to cognoscenti. His development has been amply documented: *Imaginary Cities* is Potter's 16th leader CD, augmenting a voluminous sideman work that includes multiple recordings with eminent bandleaders like Holland, Motian, Dave Douglas, Steve Swallow, Jim Hall and David Binney; a long tenure with the Mingus Band; recent sax-for-hire runs on Herbie Hancock's *Imagine Project* tour and McCoy Tyner's Johnny Hartman project; and numerous performances and recordings with long-standing friends and colleagues like Colley, Rogers, trumpeter Alex Sipiagin and drummer Antonio Sanchez.

Potter absorbed Motian's determination "to try to invent everything anew every time he played the drums," Holland's "methodical development and evolution of a body of work," Douglas' fluent use of "improvisation and the talents of musicians as a compositional tool" and Binney's insistence on "stretching but not avoiding things that sound good for complexity's sake." Rodney, he added,

"helped to encourage and cement my deep reverence for bebop and, more specifically, Charlie Parker. I spent ages 11 to 17 completely devoting myself to figuring out how Bird made his sounds, and I always come from that language. It's hard to imagine a world without Lester Young, Wayne Shorter, Ornette Coleman and Sonny Rollins. But for sheer perfection, I always go back to Bird, and Red was a direct link to that world."

It may be that channeling Parker on a nightly basis pushed Potter toward the tenor. "I love the alto, but whenever I play it I only hear Bird," he said. "Coltrane said the same thing in interviews. I could hear that tenor was where I'd spend my energy. On a nuts-and-bolts level, if you can deal with the tenor's altissimo, then you get basically the same range as the alto, plus a few notes in the bottom, and it's a little thicker. Also, alto was my first instrument, and I wanted to get away from it and develop something else, especially in my mid-twenties. I achieved a fairly high level pretty young. It can be hard to escape from that. Maybe I had to take a step back."

From Potter's labors emerged a soulful, sophisticated voice that retains tonal consistency while incorporating different sounds and textures throughout the tenor's extremities, with a story always in mind. Rogers noted that Potter's piano background imparts exhaustive knowledge of harmonic motion and voice leading that informs inflamed declamations—consider "Firefly" and "Sky" from *Imaginary Cities*—whose operatic passion seems at odds with Potter's unprepossessing demeanor.

"Chris listens to tons of music, and is deeply marinated in the tradition," Rogers said. "He's assimilated so many things from bebop and the elders before bebop who knew how to deliver a melody with little artifice and incredible expressiveness. But there's also a strong desire to discover something heretofore unknown, based on his real creativity and incredible ability as an instrumentalist. When he plays, I frequently hear things happen for which I've heard almost no reference point before. Tremendous amounts of technique can lead to certain places you may not really want to go. There's something in the struggle—the vulnerability and maybe having to break through something—that might facilitate discovery more. For Chris to possess that level of natural talent and always strive to reach the absolute precipice of his improvisational abilities is something that I respect tremendously."

Asked about the source of his low-maintenance attitude, Potter responded: "The music itself. It's highly unforgiving. There's no hiding. There's no pretending. For me, figuring out how to live and figuring out how to play were intertwined since I started playing at 10 years old. I had a fairly bad stuttering problem. I knew I needed to communicate something, and music seemed like the way to get that out. I still carry that idea about getting the stuff out. It's very little about impressing people. I do feel happy if people want to come and listen, though another part of me almost isn't comfortable with it. But if you're a musician, your personality ultimately is what people are connecting with. Being so focused on the *music* for so long has helped, but I'm coming to understand that, at a certain point, you don't want to hide behind that either. Hopefully, the energy of stretching for what I want to convey overrides whatever admiration there is for what I can do technically.

"For me, fatherhood really brought home that I am definitely not the center of the universe. I have a very important job that I need to do, which involves taking care of people in my life who I care about. Those little things that used to matter, don't really matter as much any more."

With much of 2015 booked, Potter was beginning to consider how, in his 2016 itinerary, he might effectively fulfill his own artistic imperatives while addressing the realities of a hefty mortgage and family responsibilities. Would he accept another 10-month tour?

His response was pragmatic. "I'll know by my gut reaction," Potter said. "Next year will be the first devoted almost entirely to my own projects. But I'm sure reality will intrude. Having a chance to play with great musicians still interests me. I've been careful this far to set things up so that I can say no if there's something I really don't want to do. I hope that continues to be true." **DB**

Still Dreaming

By Ken Micallef

PHOTO BY BRYAN ADAMS

FEMALE VOCALIST
DIANA KRALL

Diana Krall has kept her winning streak alive. She now has topped the Female Vocalist category in the DownBeat Readers Poll eight consecutive times. Her album *Wallflower* (Verve)—featuring interpretations of '60s and '70s pop songs—originally was scheduled for release on Oct. 21, but has now been pushed back to Feb. 3 due to Krall's health complications related to a case of pneumonia. The singer-pianist had planned to launch an extensive tour this fall, but that's been delayed, too. (See Riffs, page 14.)

On the September afternoon that DownBeat caught up with Krall, she had been fighting a cold and dreaming of jazz giants.

"I was dreaming about Jimmy Rowles last night," Krall said. "I dreamt that he was singing and playing the piano for me. It was like a black-and-white film. Jimmy was my biggest influence as a pianist and a singer. He was deeply emotional in the way he sang. There was a reason I went knocking on his door when I was 19. Ray Brown and Alan Broadbent told me, 'Oh, I don't know if you should do that. You're a young girl going to Jimmy Rowles' house? He's pretty tough.' And I could handle that. I wanted to be around someone who had played with Billie Holiday and Ben Webster, who could tell me directly what that experience was like. I used to drive Jimmy around to sessions. When he died, it was traumatic for me."

Wallflower's menu, which includes versions of pop hits like Jim Croce's "Operator," 10cc's "I'm Not In Love" and Crowded House's "Don't Dream It's Over," is a thousand miles away from the serious swing of Jimmy Rowles (1918–'96), not to mention the 15 million in jazz album sales that made Krall a superstar.

"I sang [these songs] at a lot of piano bars," Krall said, laughing. "And don't forget, if I was playing six hours a night in piano bars where I was trying to get away with jazz, I had to throw in other things, too. I wanted to do pop songs that I liked. These songs are part of my culture. It's not like, 'Oh, now all of a sudden I've discovered pop songs at 49.' These are songs that I played all the time. It wasn't only jazz. I did lots of things.

"I was playing gigs in my Laura Ashley dress and calling John Clayton to see if he would play with me," Krall continued. "Playing for no money at the Irvine Hotel in L.A. so I could hire the best players. I wasn't yet 20 when I went to L.A. to study with Ray Brown. Those musicians are few and far between now. I remember standing in line at Bradley's in New York, hoping we could get in without a cover charge. I was so broke."

Surrounded by subtle strings and the occasional bossa nova groove, Krall delights in David Foster's production and piano playing on *Wallflower*, sounding very relaxed in forthright renditions that honor the originals while focusing light on her husky alto, now a purveyor of golden pop goodness.

"This isn't a new jazz standards record or jazz versions of pop songs," Krall said. "It has jazz elements in it, and different harmonies, but it was really nice to focus on my vocals and not really think about it too much. David wanted me to play piano on 'Operator,' and I said, 'I am *not* playing piano on this. It's too hard. You can play 'Operator'! That's one of my favorite songs. We went into playing in the cracks, [finding] perfect keys for me. It was nice to play the music without putting any label on it. But it's definitely a pop record. It's not a jazz record."

Paul McCartney's "If I Take You Home Tonight" is one of *Wallflower's* highlights. Originally recorded by McCartney for his *Kisses On The Bottom* album, of which Krall was pianist and musical director, the song went unreleased until now. Did working with McCartney influence her vocal approach?

"I listened to him sing that song so many times when we recorded it, so, yeah," she replied. "Working with Paul was probably the greatest experience of my whole life. He makes you feel so comfortable. He comes in and sings with everyone; he's a band member. It's not like he's outside, over there singing with you in the other room. He's not that kind of artist. He's right there."

In a mood to reminisce, Krall recalled listening to her dad's collection of 78s and wax cylinders and old radio shows, and his original Louis Armstrong and Duke Ellington vinyl records.

"I just made a playlist where I transferred a bunch of 78s for my shows and I found all sorts of amazing things," she said. "My father would go to the record store on his lunch hour from work and buy pop records. So he came home with all these different things. I did *Glad Rag Doll* [2012] because those were the songs I listened to as a kid, and singers like Annette Hanshaw, Ruth Etting and Bing Crosby. I knew all the songs, but they were very obscure."

While dipping her vocal toes into the pure pop water of *Wallflower* (and mostly without her own hard-swinging piano playing), Krall still aspires to be like her jazz heroes, past and present.

"When I started out, I wanted to sing like Ernestine Anderson and play piano like Monty Alexander," Krall recalled. "That hasn't changed much, but you settle into accepting what you do. I don't have a voice like Cassandra [Wilson] or Dianne Reeves or Stacey Kent or June Christy—people I admire, who are stylistically really jazz vocalists and you can hear where they are coming from. I'm a character actor rather than a great jazz vocalist like Dee Dee Bridgewater, someone who has an instrument and uses it as a jazz instrument. Here I am botching up my whole Readers Poll win!"

Before stepping away to look after her cold and her and husband Elvis Costello's two children, Krall made one thing clear. It don't mean a thing …

"To win the DownBeat Readers Poll is a big deal for me," Krall explained. "My commitment to jazz has not in any way stopped. I am still dreaming about Jimmy Rowles. If jazz is in your heart and you have the gift to swing in this world where people are afraid to swing—that's what feels best to me. That's a pretty good place to be." **DB**

COMPLETE RESULTS

This year's poll had 27,504 voters. See page 46 for Jazz Album results, and see page 48 for Historical Album results.

HALL OF FAME

B.B. KING	1,040
Hank Mobley	869
Bob Brookmeyer	744
Wynton Marsalis	688
Marian McPartland	688
Jack DeJohnette	597
Phil Woods	557
Benny Golson	528
Les Paul	525
Tito Puente	472
Lee Konitz	461
Toots Thielemans	437
John McLaughlin	429
Mel Tormé	424
George Benson	388
James Moody	376
Jimmy Heath	368
Bobby McFerrin	368
Kenny Burrell	357
Carmen McRae	357
Muddy Waters	357
Yusef Lateef	334
Jimmy Giuffre	329
Billy Higgins	328
Al Di Meola	325

JAZZ ARTIST

CHICK COREA	888
Pat Metheny	880
Wayne Shorter	765
Wynton Marsalis	741
John McLaughlin	568
Ambrose Akinmusire	565
George Duke	549
Diana Krall	536
Gregory Porter	485
Christian McBride	464
Brad Mehldau	456
Esperanza Spalding	445
Kurt Elling	424
Keith Jarrett	416
Wycliffe Gordon	389
Trombone Shorty	368
Dave Hollan	344
Chris Potter	328
Bill Frisell	317
Maria Schneider	317
Ahmad Jamal	312
Cécile McLorin Salvant	309

JAZZ GROUP

PAT METHENY UNITY GROUP	1,016
Snarky Puppy	765
Wayne Shorter Quartet	584
Wynton Marsalis Quintet	568
The Bad Plus	480
Keith Jarrett Standards Trio	429
Brian Blade & the Fellowship Band	416
Trombone Shorty & Orleans Avenue	376
Sonny Rollins Quintet	368
Charles Lloyd Quartet	357
Brad Mehldau Trio	357
Ambrose Akinmusire Quintet	352
Yellowjackets	328
Branford Marsalis Quartet	317
Return To Forever IV	317
Chick Corea and Gary Burton	309
Tom Harrell Quintet	304
Stanley Clarke Band	296
Ryan Truesdell's Gil Evans Centennial Project	296
Ahmad Jamal Trio	293

BIG BAND

JAZZ AT LINCOLN CENTER ORCHESTRA	1,677
Darcy James Argue's Secret Society	1,280
Maria Schneider Orchestra	1,261
Count Basie Big Band	1,096
Mingus Big Band	720
Dizzy Gillespie All-Star Big Band	704
Clayton-Hamilton Jazz Orchestra	685
SF JAZZ Collective	632
Gordon Goodwin Big Phat Band	549
Christian McBride Big Band	541
Dave Holland Big Band	533
Village Vanguard Orchestra	493
Roy Hargrove Big Band	485
Arturo O'Farrill & the Afro-Latin Jazz Orchestra	464
Chicago Jazz Orchestra	397
Frankfurt Radio Big Band	397
Sun Ra Arkestra	381
Bob Mintzer Big Band	352
Brussels Jazz Orchestra	336
Carla Bley Big Band	325

TRUMPET

WYNTON MARSALIS	1,693
Ambrose Akinmusire	1,469
Tom Harrell	1,088
Roy Hargrove	1,056
Terence Blanchard	752
Arturo Sandoval	741
Dave Douglas	661
Randy Brecker	645
Chris Botti	624
Ingrid Jensen	452
Christian Scott aTunde Adjuah	448
Terell Stafford	436
Sean Jones	394
Avishai Cohen	389
Jim Rotondi	381
Nicholas Payton	344
Brian Lynch	240
Jon Faddis	220
Paolo Fresu	212
Jeremy Pelt	212
Kermit Ruffins	212

TROMBONE

TROMBONE SHORTY	1,912
Wycliffe Gordon	1,580
Steve Turre	928
Robin Eubanks	880
Curtis Fuller	712
Conrad Herwig	584
Steve Davis	496
Slide Hampton	468
Nils Landgren	404
Ryan Keberle	392
Delfeayo Marsalis	384
Micheal Deese	365
Alan Ferber	344
Roswell Rudd	312
Ray Anderson	280
Sarah Morrow	261
Andy Martin	248
Vincent Gardner	240
Marshall Gilkes	237
Natalie Cressman	228
Jim Pugh	228

SOPRANO SAXOPHONE

WAYNE SHORTER	2,800
Branford Marsalis	1,936
Dave Liebman	1,292
Chris Potter	813
Joshua Redman	797
Kenny Garrett	704
Anat Cohen	605
Joe Lovano	581
Ravi Coltrane	549
Jane Ira Bloom	528
Jan Garbarek	477
Steve Wilson	432
Lee Konitz	352
Ted Nash	317
Evan Parker	317
James Carter	296
Jane Bunnett	280
Tia Fuller	256
Sam Newsome	240
Jimmy Greene	208

ALTO SAXOPHONE

KENNY GARRETT	1,552
Phil Woods	1,101
Ornette Coleman	861
Miguel Zenón	813
David Sanborn	784
Lee Konitz	768
Grace Kelly	688
Paquito D'Rivera	672
Rudresh Mahanthappa	541
Dick Oatts	469
David Binney	397
Donald Harrison	397
John Zorn	364
Steve Wilson	336
Jim Snidero	317

Jaleel Shaw 285
Gary Bartz 272
Ted Nash 272
Tia Fuller 261
Wess "Warmdaddy" Anderson ... 256

TENOR SAXOPHONE

CHRIS POTTER 1,272

Wayne Shorter 1,072
Joe Lovano 893
Joshua Redman 872
Branford Marsalis 808
Eric Alexander 573
Yusef Lateef 509
Charles Lloyd 504
Sonny Rollins 402
Scott Robinson 365
Mark Turner 333
Donny McCaslin 320
Walter Smith III 293
Ernie Watts 293
Frank Wess 293
Kirk Whalum 269
Jimmy Heath 264
Houston Person 261
Jerry Bergonzi 248
Noah Preminger 237

BARITONE SAXOPHONE

GARY SMULYAN 2,132

James Carter 1,760
Scott Robinson 980
Ronnie Cuber 797
Joe Temperley 632
Stephen "Doc" Kupka 564
Hamiet Bluiett 541
John Surman 488
Claire Daly 456
Ken Vandermark 416
Tim Berne 381
Denis DiBlasio 357
Mats Gustafsson 352
Chris Cheek 320
Lisa Parrott 304
Howard Johnson 285
Brian Landrus 240
Fred Ho 237
Jason Marshall 237
Adam Schroeder 237

CLARINET

ANAT COHEN 3,028

Paquito D'Rivera 2,396
Eddie Daniels 1,013
Don Byron 997
Victor Goines 824
Buddy DeFranco 813
Ken Peplowski 813
Ben Goldberg 368
Chris Speed 320
Evan Christopher 245
Michael Moore 232
Oscar Noriega 229
Louis Sclavis 224
Jeff Lederer 213
Aurora Nealand 205
Marty Ehrlich 192
Ken Vandermark 179
Todd Marcus 173
Gianluigi Trovesi 173
Dan Block 157

FLUTE

HUBERT LAWS 1,501

Frank Wess 1,445
Charles Lloyd 1,120

PIANO

HERBIE HANCOCK 1,216

Chick Corea 1,208
Keith Jarrett 1,117
Brad Mehldau 920
Kenny Barron 528
Fred Hersch 517
McCoy Tyner 485
Ahmad Jamal 464
Vijay Iyer 421
Mulgrew Miller 408
Hiromi 357
Geri Allen 333
Craig Taborn 328
Gerald Clayton 309
Robert Glasper 285
Monty Alexander 280
Danilo Pérez 280


Gregory Porter
SHAWN PETERS

Nicole Mitchell 949
Dave Liebman 640
Lew Tabackin 640
Ted Nash 560
Henry Threadgill 557
Dave Valentin 536
Holly Hofmann 520
Steve Wilson 400
Tia Fuller 365
Jane Bunnett 333
Jamie Baum 328
Erica von Kleist 312
Ali Ryerson 272
Anne Drummond 240
Roscoe Mitchell 237
Ira Sullivan 237
James Spalding 229
Jason Moran 261
Aaron Parks 253
Bill Charlap 248

KEYBOARD

HERBIE HANCOCK 2,533

Chick Corea 2,488
George Duke 1,368
Robert Glasper 1,048
Craig Taborn 799
John Medeski 685
Larry Goldings 573
Hiromi 424
Booker T. Jones 400
Lyle Mays 400
Eddie Palmieri 357
Jason Lindner 336
Gary Versace 333
Marc Cary 320
Uri Caine 296
Geoffrey Keezer 253
Dave Kikoski 197
Matthew Shipp 184
Henry Butler 176
George Colligan 176

ORGAN

JOEY DEFRANCESCO 3,477

Dr. Lonnie Smith 1,941
Larry Goldings 1,464
Booker T. Jones 1,008
John Medeski 773
Gary Versace 709
Carla Bley 541
Mike LeDonne 464
Brian Auger 440
Ron Oswanski 413
Craig Taborn 389
Sam Yahel 381
Barbara Dennerlein 320
Jared Gold 253
Rhoda Scott 240
Tony Monaco 237
Amina Claudine Myers 229
Pat Bianchi 224
Chester Thompson 177
Brian Charette 168

GUITAR

PAT METHENY 1,861

Jim Hall 1,533
Bill Frisell 1,152
John Scofield 741
John McLaughlin 693
Kurt Rosenwinkel 637
Peter Bernstein 549
Russell Malone 472
Julian Lage 461
John Pizzarelli 432
Lionel Loueke 389
Al Di Meola 383
Bucky Pizzarelli 360
Pat Martino 352
John Abercrombie 344
Marc Ribot 341
Dave Stryker 320
Mike Stern 312
Anthony Wilson 304
Mary Halvorson 301

BASS

CHARLIE HADEN 1,853

Christian McBride 1,800
Ron Carter 1,232
Dave Holland 1,069

Stanley Clarke 957
Esperanza Spalding 957
John Patitucci 672
John Clayton 432
Rufus Reid 389
Linda Oh 357
Victor Wooten 344
Larry Grenadier 336
Avishai Cohen 277
William Parker 253
Ben Williams 232
Gary Peacock 200
George Mraz 197
Peter Washington 192
Dwayne Burno 176
Scott Colley 168

ELECTRIC BASS

STANLEY CLARKE 1,712

Victor Wooten 1,168
Marcus Miller 1,133
Esperanza Spalding 1,125
Steve Swallow 1,096
Christian McBride 1,072
John Patitucci 752
Tim Lefebvre 416
Meshell Ndegeocello 408
Richard Bona 357
Tal Wilkenfeld 349
Jack Bruce 349
Tony Levin 325
Bob Cranshaw 320
Derrick Hodge 285
Thundercat 285
Felix Pastorius 248
Linda Oh 248
Jimmy Haslip 240
Pino Palladino 232

VIOLIN

REGINA CARTER 3,672

Jean-Luc Ponty 2,408
Jenny Scheinman 824
Mark Feldman 656
Zach Brock 645
Sarah Caswell 613
Mark O'Connor 549
John Blake 413
Jerry Goodman 376
Didier Lockwood 352
Mat Maneri 320
Susie Hansen 245
Christian Howes 224
Michal Urbaniak 221
Eyvind Kang 213
Aaron Weinstein 213
Svend Asmussen 208
Jason Kao Hwang 200
Florin Niculescu 192
Diane Monroe 189

DRUMS

JACK DEJOHNETTE 1,224

Brian Blade 832
Steve Gadd 757
Jeff Hamilton 581
Billy Cobham 557
Roy Haynes 552
Eric Harland 533
Matt Wilson 493
Lewis Nash 464
Antonio Sanchez 453
Terri Lyne Carrington 413
Billy Hart 408
Jeff "Tain" Watts 405
Peter Erskine 344
Dave Weckl 341
Stanton More 333
Vinnie Colaiuta 264
Lenny White 256
Mark Guiliana 248
Herlin Riley 232

VIBRAPHONE

GARY BURTON 3,192

Bobby Hutcherson 1,821
Stefon Harris 1,805
Joe Locke 1,056
Warren Wolf 920
Steve Nelson 616
Jason Marsalis 605
Mike Mainieri 461
Jason Adasiewicz 429
Terry Gibbs 421
Mike Dillon 317
Dave Samuels 317
Cecilia Smith 253
Matt Moran 205
Chris Dingman 192
Joseph Doubleday 189
Mark Sherman 184
Kenny Wollesen 165
Mulatu Astatke 149
Khan Jamal 144

PERCUSSION

PONCHO SANCHEZ 1,872

Zakir Hussain 965
Airto Moreira 901
Trilok Gurtu 669
Dan Weiss 557
Pedrito Martinez 549
Bobby Sanabria 525
Cyro Baptista 453
Giovanni Hidalgo 424
Marilyn Mazur 397


Wynton Marsalis


Poncho Sanchez
DEVIN DEHAVEN


Kenny Garrett
KEITH MAJOR

Pete Escovedo 357
Mino Cinelu 344
Hamid Drake 336
Manolo Badrena 317
Naná Vasconcelos 317
Susie Ibarra 304
Jerry Gonzalez 301
Han Bennink 261
Kahil El'Zabar 240
Rogério Boccato 189

MISCELLANEOUS INSTRUMENT

BÉLA FLECK (BANJO) 1,464

Pat Metheny (orchestrion) 1,280
Chris Potter (bass clarinet) 696
Wycliffe Gordon (tuba) 536
Scott Robinson (bass saxophone) 512
James Carter (bass saxophone) 429
David Murray (bass clarinet) 424
Steve Turre (shells) 408
Gary Versace (accordion) 408
Grégoire Maret (harmonica) 405
Richard Galliano (accordion) 365
Joe Lovano (aulochrome) 357
Howard Johnson (tuba) 309
Rabih Abou-Khalil (oud) 293
Erik Friedlander (cello) 285
Chris Thile (mandolin) 285
Howard Levy (harmonica) 277


Pat Metheny

JIMMY KATZ ©2013 PAT METHENY TOURS

Dino Saluzzi (bandoneón) 269
Edmar Castaneda (Colombian harp) 264
Andy Narell (steel pans) 245

FEMALE VOCALIST

DIANA KRALL	**1,760**
Dianne Reeves	1,309
Esperanza Spalding	1,292
Cécile McLorin Salvant	1,245
Cassandra Wilson	989
Gretchen Parlato	789
Dee Dee Bridgewater	672
Roberta Gambarini	421
Madeleine Peyroux	416
Tierney Sutton	408
Cyrille Aimée	374
Dee Alexander	374
Luciana Souza	341
Diane Schuur	325
Karrin Allyson	317
Melody Gardot	317
Sheila Jordan	280
Stacey Kent	277
Lizz Wright	264
Catherine Russell	240

MALE VOCALIST

GREGORY PORTER	**2,552**
Kurt Elling	2,024
Tony Bennett	1,772
Bobby McFerrin	1,613


Anat Cohen

JIMMY KATZ

Michael Bublé 1,296
Theo Bleckmann 709
John Pizzarelli 604
Mose Allison 485
Andy Bey 429
Mark Murphy 384
Kevin Mahogany 368
Jon Hendricks 349
Freddy Cole 328
Jimmy Scott 304
José James 288
Jamie Cullum 240
Kenny Washington 208
Bob Dorough 205
John Boutté 181
Dhafer Youssef 181

COMPOSER

MARIA SCHNEIDER	**1,149**
Pat Metheny	1,125
Chick Corea	941
Wayne Shorter	896
Wynton Marsalis	742
Darcy James Argue	533
Benny Golson	525
Terence Blanchard	485
Tom Harrell	456
Jim McNeely	448
Dave Holland	389
John Zorn	381
Bill Frisell	352
Carla Bley	341
Robert Glasper	320
Jimmy Heath	285
Christian McBride	285
Vijay Iyer	245
Vince Mendoza	232
Gerald Wilson	228

ARRANGER

MARIA SCHNEIDER	**1,573**
Wynton Marsalis	1,205
Dave Holland	621
Esperanza Spalding	608
Jim McNeely	544
Darcy James Argue	520
Gordon Goodwin	520
Bob Mintzer	501
Christian McBride	424
Vince Mendoza	421
Gil Goldstein	397
John Clayton	392
Bill Holman	389
Carla Bley	381
Allen Toussaint	373
John Zorn	261
John Hollenbeck	240
Arturo O'Farrill	204
Laurence Hobgood	193
Ryan Truesdell	193

RECORD LABEL

BLUE NOTE	**3,189**
ECM	1,720
Concord	573
Mack Avenue	568
Mosaic	517
Verve	461
Nonesuch	440
Motéma	373
Criss Cross Jazz	344
ACT	301
Smalls Live	296
Sunnyside	264
Origin	261
HighNote	240
Capri	229
Greenleaf Music	221
The Royal Potato Family	216
ArtistShare	213
Marsalis Music	205
Delmark	197

BLUES ARTIST OR GROUP

B.B. KING	**2,253**
Buddy Guy	1,376
Eric Clapton	1,296
Johnny Winter	1,005
Joe Bonamassa	741
Keb' Mo'	696
Taj Mahal	672
Gary Clark Jr.	568

Robert Cray 552
James Blood Ulmer 421
Bettye LaVette 333
Charlie Musselwhite 293
Shemekia Copeland 280
Otis Taylor 256
Marcia Ball 245
Lucky Peterson 240
North Mississippi Allstars 192
James Cotton 189
Jonny Lang 181
Duke Robillard 181

BLUES ALBUM

BUDDY GUY, *RHYTHM & BLUES* (RCA/SILVERTONE) 1,592

Joe Bonamassa, *Tour De Force: Live In London* (J&R Adventures) 936
The Robert Cray Band, *In My Soul* (Provogue) 789
Keb' Mo', *Bluesamericana* (Kind of Blue) 709
Robben Ford, *Day In Nashville* (Mascot) 485
Layla Zoe, *The Lily* (Cable Car) ...392
Gov't Mule, *Shout!* (Blue Note) ..376
Hugh Laurie, *Didn't It Rain* (Warner Bros.) 344
Mel Brown B-3 Organ Group, *More Today Than Yesterday* (Self-Release) 333
John Hammond, *Timeless* (Palmetto) 296
Eric Bibb, *Jericho Road* (Stony Plain Music) 205
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Cyril Neville, Magic Honey (Ruf Records) 176
Roomful Of Blues, *45 Live* (Alligator) 165
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Joe Louis Walker, *Hornet's Nest* (Alligator) 165
Rory Block, Avalon: *A Tribute To Mississippi John Hurt* (Stony Plain) 152
Jonny Lang, *Fight For My Soul* (Concord) 152
Leslie West, *Still Climbing* (Mascot) 132
Tommy Castro & The Pain Killers, *The Devil You Know* (Alligator) ...128

BEYOND ARTIST OR GROUP

ROBERT GLASPER EXPERIMENT 1,032

Jeff Beck 861
Tedeschi Trucks Band 571
Norah Jones 552
Zappa Plays Zappa 493
The Roots 480
Donald Fagen 469
Dr. John 381
Radiohead 368
Sharon Jones & The Dap Kings ...320
Aretha Franklin 317
Paul McCartney 312
Prince 309
Allen Toussaint 293
Tom Waits 293
Peter Gabriel 280
Bob Dylan 256
Dave Matthews Band 253
Erykah Badu 237
Alabama Shakes 232
Ry Cooder 232

BEYOND ALBUM

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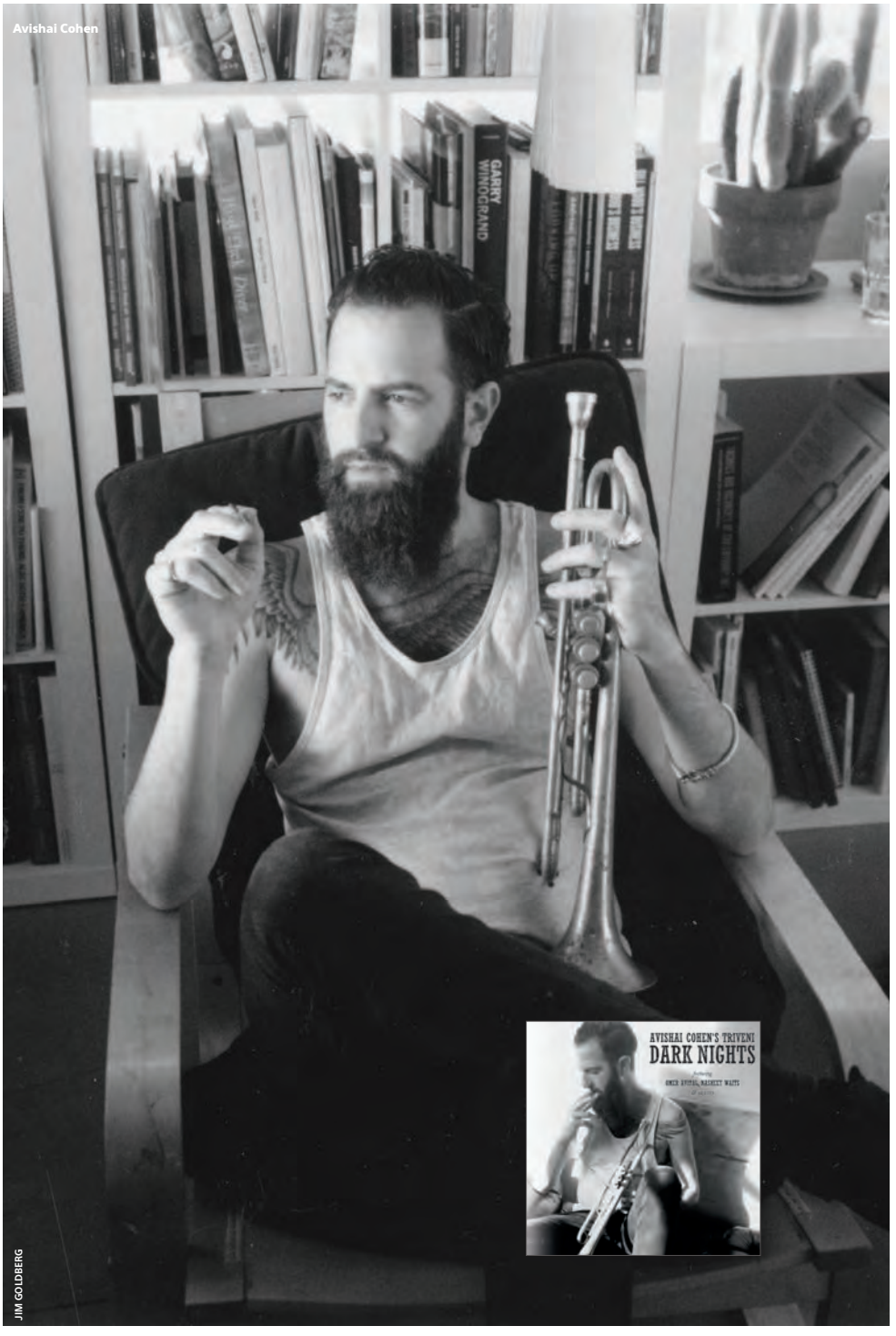


Avishai Cohen's Triveni
Dark Nights

ANZIC 0045

★★★★½

This is a honey of a record. It's got everything you could want from a devastating young band: complete command, interaction dynamics, a sense of play and adventure, and a wonderfully surprising track list. Add to it Avishai Cohen's penetrating voice on trumpet, and you need nothing more. It's a complete package.

The third outing from Cohen's Triveni, *Dark Nights* has one feature that might normally put me off. On several cuts, post facto, he added an extra track of electronics-saturated trumpet, which sounds for all the world like a guitar. It works like a charm, adding an evil layer to the softer, darker trumpet. On "Betray," Avishai's clarinetist sister Anat joins him, the combination of searing clarinet, trumpet and phased-out treatment slashing through the leader's grinding theme, which recalls Julius Hemphill's classic "The Hard Blues."

The band's cover of Frank Foster's "Shiny Stockings" gets a nice, open-ended reading, with lots of sexy stopping and slurring; a version of "Goodbye Pork Pie Hat" is tender and bittersweet, Cohen's phrasing a thrill a second. The electronics-less pieces are spacious and transparent, drummer Nasheet Waits playing so laid-back and ultra-understated that it aches. He and bassist Omer Avital round the isosceles triangle perfectly—complete egalitarianism and trust. They swing loosely on the appropriately free-bopping "The OC," for Ornette Coleman, and kick back on the chilled-out funk of "Old Soul," with Anat adding a bluesy wail. The haunting finale invites singer Keren Ann, sans rhythm, with Gerald Clayton on piano, playing a breathy version of "I Fall In Love Too Easily," Cohen emotive with harmon mute, tip of the cap to Chet Baker. —*John Corbett*

Dark Nights: Dark Nights, Darker Days; You In All Directions; Betray; Pablo; Goodbye Pork Pie Hat; The OC; Shiny Stockings; Lush Life; Old Soul; I Fall In Love Too Easily. (53:25)

Personnel: Avishai Cohen, trumpet, electronics; Omer Avital, bass; Nasheet Waits, drums; Anat Cohen, clarinet (3, 9); Gerald Clayton, electric piano (9), piano (10); Keren Ann, vocals (10).

Ordering info: anzicrecords.com

Kenny Werner
Coalition
HALF NOTE 4558
★★★½

I had actually been hanging around Kenny Werner's impressive *Lawn Chair Society* for a few days when this assignment to review the esteemed pianist's new aggregation hit the inbox. That 2007 Blue Note date is an odd jewel, full of twists and turns that feel impromptu while still obeying the insightful designs the leader concocts for his (mostly) acoustic quintet. The purposefully varied interests of *Coalition* have some antecedents there, but the lingo of this new outfit (also five members) is more overtly rhythmic—time and again it percolates with enough Afro-Caribbean counterpoint and syncopation gambits to hint at a social music vibe. It's head music, but pleasure abounds.

That said, intricacy has a front-row seat, as you might suspect with any date that boasts guitarist Lionel Loueke and saxophonist Miguel Zenón. In the last decade, both virtuosos have become expert at delivering tricky maneuvers with enough aplomb to have them feel buoyant and natural. In his notes, Werner explains how he wanted to get with these two collaborators specifically, and how, by the time the recording was done, it was no longer his band, but a collective. Drummer Ferenc Nemeth and reed player Benjamin Koppel round out the crew, and when they're truly cooking, their interaction is a web of singular ideas repeatedly coalescing. There's frenzy afoot, but the music always keeps one toe on the ground.

That position lets this outfit deliver a lot of details. This is an album that's deeply scripted—parts of it come off like a puzzle—but goes out of its way to stress nuance. From Loueke's hopped-up vocal-guitar prelude on "Flying" to the group minutia that gathers and ultimately defines "Swan Song," an architectural vibe bubbles up. The excitement comes in the way the band splashes around while harking to the kaleidoscopic funk lines. Wish it was June—I can see this outfit getting a huge reaction from summer festival audiences. *—Jim Macnie*

Coalition: Phonetics #2 (Folk Dance); April Blue; Flying; Swan Song; Tune 4; Wishful Dreaming. (57:57)
Personnel: Kenny Werner, piano, electric piano; Miguel Zenón, alto saxophone; Benjamin Koppel, alto, mezzo-soprano, baritone saxophones; Lionel Loueke, guitar, bass, vocals; Ferenc Nemeth, drums, percussion.
Ordering info: halfnote.net

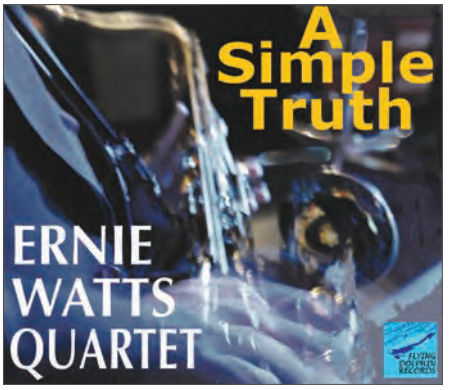
Ernie Watts Quartet
A Simple Truth
FLYING DOLPHIN RECORDS 1009
★★★½

Jaguar sleek and just as fast, Ernie Watts has worked with his European Quartet, featured on this fine album, for 15 years. They sound as comfortable as family and deliver a rich, warm, often heartbreakingly beautiful album structured on the conceit of living through a "jazz day."

While *A Simple Truth* shimmers with conviction, Watts' elegant technical facility makes the music feel less compelling. The prayerful title cut is a good example: At the last minute, a naked statement gets dressed up with a synthesizer it doesn't need. That feels like an impulse born of too many hours in the studio, making things pretty.

The album opens and closes with Ron Feuer's synthesizer in the mix, which nicely conjures a dewy, hopeful morning and a starry night, with some splintery sounds on the latter that blend particularly well with Watts' burly sound and wide vibrato. Also compelling is Watts' take on Keith Jarrett's "No Lonely Nights," during which the quartet stealthily slides from 4/4 to 3/4 time. The nod to Coltrane's "A Love Supreme" at the end is a nice touch.

Watts develops his solo with bright logic from a three-note theme on drummer Heinrich Koebberling's driving but stately "The Road We're On," as pianist Christof Saenger gets off some flowing, beautifully executed lines. Ditto for the dark, quickened vamp of Watts' "Acceptance,"



where Saenger burrows into a knottily syncopated figure. After a breakneck edition of Dizzy Gillespie's "Bebop," which bristles with good humor and 10,000 notes, the album hits its operatic peak on a ballad by Billy Childs, "Hope In The Face of Despair," to which bassist Rudi Engel contributes one of several lovely solos with a big, beefy, acoustic sound.

So there you have it—an album that is "merely" gorgeous and finely wrought—a necklace, not a diamond in the rough. You can't have everything, and Watts gives plenty. *—Paul de Barros*

A Simple Truth: The Sound: Morning; No Lonely Nights; The Road We're On; Acceptance; Bebop; Hope In The Face Of Despair; A Simple Truth; The Sound: Evening. (55:11)
Personnel: Ernie Watts, tenor saxophone; Christof Saenger, piano; Rudi Engel, bass, Heinrich Koebberling, drums; Ron Feuer, synthesizer (1, 7, 8).
Ordering info: erniewatts.com

The Vanguard Jazz Orchestra
OverTime/Music Of Bob Brookmeyer
PLANET ARTS 1012413
★★★★

Bob Brookmeyer sat in the trombone section of the original Thad Jones-Mel Lewis band some 48 years ago. H would leave the band after a couple of years, then return for another two years as musical director in 1979. In the years prior to his death 2011, he still contributed prickly and challenging charts to what had become by then the Vanguard Jazz Orchestra. Several of those later pieces are also heard in this memorial to a long partnership.

Brookmeyer's writing embraced many influences and was not always as easy to cozy up to. But it quickly found a place in the early Jones-Lewis book. The current Vanguard band, led by pianist Jim McNeely, is still the kind of crack crew that thrives on fresh problems to solve.

The CD opens with "The Big Time," a wall-to-wall ensemble piece Brookmeyer did 30 years ago in which the section components interlock and overlap in a complex map of contrasting Stravinsky-ish dynamics, unbroken by a single solo. "XYZ" is a long 12-tone blues of flitting tempos and textures that fly past like a darting processional of non-sequiturs.

But three pieces offer the most direct appeal. "Oatts" springs to life from the first silken swish of John Riley's brushes. Altoist Dick Oatts tangles first with Brookmeyer's cubist rhythms, then with McNeely in a brittle nest of deranged dissonance that is sheer charm. Brookmeyer's one standard, "Skylark," is oblique and impressionistic at first. McNeely plays the tune a tone off, as if reflected on a slightly rippling pond. Oatts takes the piece through several sections. Finally, "On The Corner Of Ralph And Gary" is an easy, medium-tempo romp in which baritone saxophonist Gary Smulyan and tenor saxophonist Ralph Lalama converse in a stylish rapport, then slide effortlessly over the most distinctive Brookmeyer tune in the package. *—John McDonough*

OverTime/Music Of Bob Brookmeyer: The Big Time; Suite For Three: Oatts, Scott, Rich; XYZ; Skylark; At The Corner Of Ralph And Gary; Sad Song. (66:25)
Personnel: Nick Marchione, Tanya Darby; Terell Stafford, Scott Wendholt, trumpets; John Mosca, Luis Bonilla, Jason Jackson, Douglas Purviance, trombones; David Peel, French horn (1, 5, 6, 8); Dick Oatts, Billy Drewes, Rich Perry, Ralph Lalama, Gary Smulyan, reeds; Frank Basile, bass clarinet (3, 5, 8); Jim McNeely, piano; Davis Wong, bass; Jack Riley, drums; Mike Truesdell, percussion (1, 5, 8).
Ordering info: vanguardjazzorchestra.com

The Hot Box

Critics	John McDonough	John Corbett	Jim Macnie	Paul de Barros
Avishai Cohen's Triveni *Dark Nights*	★★★	★★★★½	★★★★	★★★
Kenny Werner *Coalition*	★★★½	★★★½	★★★½	★★½
Ernie Watts Quartet *A Simple Truth*	★★★	★★★	★★★	★★★½
The Vanguard Jazz Orchestra *OverTime*	★★★★	★★★★	★★★★	★★★★

Critics' Comments

Avishai Cohen's Triveni, *Dark Nights*

Pleasant, laid-back, often romantically lyrical, but just a little empty, despite Cohen's fluent sound and sharp sense of detail and control. Anat guests on a tongue-in-cheek jam and a genial "Old Soul" that jells nicely as an ensemble. *—John McDonough*

Impressive, no doubt. With Cohen's increasingly eloquent horn at the center, this program makes a somewhat cinematic statement that veers into modern noir. Dusky, pensive, forlorn. *—Jim Macnie*

I wish everything on this spare, often dark (as billed) album came across with the emotional conviction of Keren Ann's closing vocal on "I Fall In Love Too Easily." But despite Cohen's consummate clarity as a trumpeter, most of the cuts feel a bit cold. Excerpt from that assessment the active "You In All Directions," the finger-popping "Shiny Stockings" and Cohen's chattering solo on "The OC." *—Paul de Barros*

Kenny Werner, *Coalition*

I'd love to hear this rhythmically driven Kenny Werner-Miguel Zenón-Lionel Loueke world-jazz combination once they've gotten relaxed and comfortable enough to let in a little air, because this debut is jumbled and muddy. They hit their stride on the Caribbean-tinged "Tune 4," but the rest of Indian, African and other influences are eager, but unfocused, and the recording lacks separation and clarity. *—Paul de Barros*

Subtract Loueke's occasional vocals and you have a now-and-then memorable chamber ensemble warming up some home-cooked originals. "Tune 4" stands out strongly. It glides with a jaunty lift and persistent rhythmic roll. Cut the first two-and-a-half minutes of "Wishful Dreaming" and enjoy the lovely two-reed teamwork at the heart of the group. *—John McDonough*

A real meeting of the minds, bright and inventive compositions (count "Tune 4" for me, dare you!), sensitive playing all around. Great setting for Zenón, cool sonorities with Koppel's baritone. Could have done without Loueke's chorused vocal introduction on "Flying"; prefer the gauzy voice/guitar tandem on the closer. But there's clear-cut chemistry here. *—John Corbett*

Ernie Watts Quartet, *A Simple Truth*

You can tell his signature tenor sound a hundred miles away, and from the storm he generates on the Gillespie nugget to the woo he pitches on the Jarrett prayer, expression is paramount. Hats off, too, for the way he builds these eight tracks into a suite of sorts. *—Jim Macnie*

This CD started on such an unpleasant note that I dreaded listening further, but the duet with Ron Feuer was a momentary lapse, same as the finale. The rest of the disc is as solid as you'd expect from the stalwart saxophonist. Not as inspiring a setting as Quartet West, but Watts' German group dishes out a fine straightahead program. *—John Corbett*

There is no groove Watts' clean sound can't cut. This one navigates a pear-shaped route that is pensive, moody and coda-like top and bottom, with a trio of expansive sprints in the mid-section. None more so than "Bebop," whose strict, haiku-like twists of form and tempo incite a taut ingenuity lacking in the more free-range originals. *—John McDonough*

The Vanguard Jazz Orchestra, *OverTime/Music Of Bob Brookmeyer*

If you're going to play music this tough, and nail it this hard, you have to be this good. VJO sounds spectacular, brassy as a late-night showband, sophisticated as a working symphonic ensemble, with Brookmeyer's emotionally oblique compositions for the soloists to chew on. Who to single out? The band. *—John Corbett*

The much-missed Brookmeyer's thick, brassy dissonances, swirling counterlines and long-range ideas are tailor-made for the Vanguard band. Scott Wendholt's flugel on "Suite For Three" is gorgeous; the Satie-like rework of "Skylark" makes Hoagy's haunting melody even sadder and more mysterious, and Dick Oatts' keening alto solo on that one and his shakuhachi-like flute on "Sad Song" shine. *—Paul de Barros*

Brookmeyer's vision was extraordinary, and these knotty pieces get some major TLC by dudes who worked with the master, especially Dick Oatts. There's a grand scale at work here, but the band makes sure all of the details are taken care of. *—Jim Macnie*


Rotem Sivan Trio

JENNIE BARST

Guitar Generations

Greg Cohen: *Golden State* (Relative Pitch 1020; 45:30 ★★★★½) Bassist Cohen, the only musician ever to have logged significant bandstand time with John Zorn, Woody Allen and Ornette Coleman, joins forces with guitarist and kindred spirit Bill Frisell on these engaging duets that sound like an updating of the classic Jim Hall-Ron Carter duets (1972's *Alone Together* and 1984's *Telephone*). Their rapport is evident from the opener, Cohen's loping "Old Gravenstein" (name of a road in Sonoma Country where he grew up), which introduces the deeply resonant sound of the upright bass as well as the two partners' easy back-and-forth chemistry. Their conversation is easy and swinging on Illinois Jacquet's "Robbin's Nest," relaxed and empathetic on a faithful rendition of Gene Autry's 1939 hit "South Of The Border." An inspired and intimate duet between two brilliant musicians whose listening skills are highly refined.

Ordering info: relativepitchrecords.com

Paul Bollenback: *Portraits In Space And Time* (Mayimba, 78:14 ★★★★) Few from Bollenback's generation are his equal in terms of flying up and down the fretboard. This trio outing, his eighth as a leader, shows his gentler side. Recorded in the studio with bassist Joseph LePore and drummer Roberio Boccato as if on a gig, going from tune to tune with improvised segues in between ("Calling The Spirits," "Collective," "Jungle" and others), it highlights the uncanny interplay of this threesome. Bollenback deals in more lyrical terrain on lovely originals like "3 Days" and the mellow acoustic guitar numbers "Sunset," "Little Island," "Dance Delicious" and "Bird In The Sky." And lest anyone think that Bollenback has gone soft in his "old age" (he's 55 now), he pulls out his Wes Montgomery/George Benson/Pat Martino-inspired chops on "Open Hand" and "Swingin' At Capone's" and goes for the burn, to killing effect.

Ordering info: mayimbamusic.com

Rotem Sivan Trio: *For Emotional Use Only* (Fresh Sound New Talent 451; 47:16 ★★★★½) The Jerusalem-born guitarist now living in New York stakes out his own spot in the jazz guitar world with his second recording as a leader. Accompanied by bassist Haggai Cohen Milo and drummer Mark McLean, the gifted guitarist combines energy, ideas and undeniable chops in a compelling program of originals and two well-chosen covers. From the lilting, odd-metered "Spirals" to an engaging swing through the nostalgic Disney song "A Dream Is A Wish Your Heart Makes" (from 1950's *Cinderella*) to the poignant title track, Sivan plays conversationally with his gifted trio partners while also generously giving them plenty of solo room. A remarkable talent and a welcome new voice on the scene.

Ordering info: freshsoundrecords.com

Richard Leo Johnson: *Celeste* (Soft Science 0011; 40:47 ★★★★½) The unorthodox, self-taught acoustic guitar virtuoso has built up a singular body of work since his brilliant Blue Note recordings of the late '90s that recalls aspects of Leo Kottke, John Fahey, Michael Hedges, Ralph Towner and John McLaughlin, with Johnson's own idiosyncratic personality guiding the mix. Following a series of three similarly adventurous releases on Cuneiform, the Savannah-based savant takes it to a new level of "outness," as in outer space, on this stirring, mad-genius outing for the small, regional independent Soft Science label. Playing a custom Martin guitar with a theremin built into the body, the fingerstyle guitarist is able to sound at once pastoral and otherworldly on numbers like "Jovian Cluster Ice Palace, "Love Light Star Angel" and "Celestial Roundup."

Ordering info: sotsciencerecords.com

Anthony Pirog: *Palo Colorado Dream* (Cuneiform Rune 398; 40:25 ★★★½) Bill Frisell opened the door on guitar looping nearly 30 years ago, and a generation of adventurous players walked through. Pirog is the latest to follow in his wake while incorporating personal six-string and electronics touches of his own on this provocative debut. Accompanied by the exceptional rhythm tandem of bassist Michael Formanek and drummer Ches Smith, the D.C.-based guitarist creates swirling sonic textures while also unleashing distortion-laced fusillades, as on the power trio numbers "The Great Northern" and "Song In 5." Three free interludes between songs—"Minimalist," "Threshold" and "Goodnight Green"—find the threesome in maximum search mode. **DB**

Ordering info: cuneiformrecords.com

Charlie Haden/Jim Hall
Charlie Haden-Jim Hall

IMPULSE! B002176502

★★★★½

They're brilliant instrumentalists. That's a given. But the *sound* alone is priceless. Wedding two of the most gorgeous-toned players in jazz is an aural gift. Fortunately, this July 2, 1990, live date from the Montreal Jazz Festival captures that glorious sound faithfully. In these relaxed, swinging performances, guitarist Jim Hall and bassist Charlie Haden radiate warm camaraderie. This superb date, their first full-length recording together, is even more resonant now due to Hall's passing in December 2013 and Haden's seven months later.

Hall's previous duo albums with bassists include *Jim Hall And Red Mitchell* (1978) and his classic outing with Ron Carter, *Alone Together* (1972). But Haden's appearance on two tracks of Hall's multiple-guest duets album, *Jim Hall And Basses* (2001), foreshadowed something different to come. And it's arrived.

Haden is, at core, an earthy and generous player who frequently opens the portals of freedom for others while holding ground. He consistently brings out the honest essence in others and inspires apex performances. And he does the same with Hall. In a mix of standards and their own compositions, the two find an ideal balance between tradition and freedom.

Kicking off with "Bemsha Swing," Haden and Hall approach from the sunny side. Haden's own "First Song" settles things down with gravitas, offering one of the finest renditions of his sublime ballad. On the Latin-tinged waltz "Down From Antigua," Hall states the warm, folklorish melody, then surprises with an unaccompanied excursion sparked by rhythmic, flamenco-like strums pyramiding into layers of increasing dissonance. "Body And Soul" elegantly unfolds into a pensive canvas for Haden's yearning improvisations. And Hall's gem intro on "Skylark" is a breathtaking example of his harmonic genius. Once Haden enters, the duo caresses the lovely number in the most grounded, restrained playing of the set. It will make you truly miss them. *—Jeff Potter*

Charlie Haden-Jim Hall: Bemsha Swing; First Song; Turnaround; Body And Soul; Down From Antigua; Skylark; Big Blues; In The Moment. (76:17)
Personnel: Charlie Haden, bass; Jim Hall, guitar.
Ordering info: impulse-label.com

Jorrit Dijkstra
Music For Reeds And Electronics: Oakland

DRIFF RECORDS 1403

★★★★

Recent work by the Chicago Reed Quartet and Travis Laplante's Battle Trance heralds a reassessment of the saxophone quartet as a format, but Jorrit Dijkstra is here to up the ante. He'll raise you one double-reed player, and he'll double on electronics for good measure. Dijkstra, who grew up in Holland and currently calls Massachusetts home, also conceived of this five-piece ensemble as a way to concentrate the geo-personal energies of relationships he has nurtured in Chicago, Amsterdam and Oakland; to a man, these musicians have used their woodwinds as vehicles to cross the boundaries between genres and methods, and those experiences prime them well for this quintet's mix of chamber music, old-school electronic music and outward-bound jazz.

All of the electronics on this record are analog, and Dijkstra uses them to introduce the sounds of voltage and a vibe of space-age retro-futurism. Both the intricacy of his writing and the relish with which he foregrounds the assembled saxophones' potential to pop, growl and whinny likewise indicates that he has noted the ways that Roscoe Mitchell and countless ensembles from the Dutch jazz scene have mixed puckish humor with compositional rigor. What's most impressive, though, is the balance of sounds that these players achieve. They blend tones and articulate harmonies like they've been doing it together for years. *—Bill Meyer*

Music For Reeds And Electronics: Oakland: Veg Prelude; Feuilles Vertes; Easel; Blend-Bland; Headlands; Fourteen Squares; The Shed; Lope; Bucket; Veg. (44:08)
Personnel: Jorrit Dijkstra, alto saxophone, lyricon, analog electronics; Phillip Greenlief, alto and tenor saxophones, clarinet; Kyle Bruckmann, oboe, English horn, analog electronics; Frank Gratkowski, clarinet, alto saxophone; Jon Raskin, sopranino, alto and baritone saxophones, analog electronics.
Ordering info: driffrecords.com

Tony Malaby Tamarindo
Somos Agua

CLEAN FEED 304

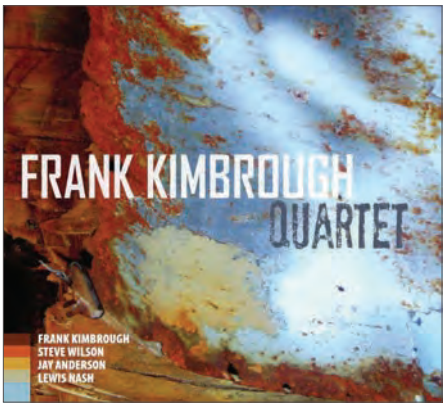
★★★★

Like a classic glasspack muffler on a muscle car, Tony Malaby's tenor sax burbles with marginally restrained power; it is never quite unleashed, yet you are aware it could go there in a heartbeat. It is a potent instrument, particularly when combined with the resonant foundation of William Parker's bass and the lithe movement of drummer Nasheet Waits.

On six original compositions and one collective improvisation, the trio constantly shifts the focus between them—a meaty bass-drums hookup leading a stuttering march on "Mule Skinner," Malaby's dark, vibrating tenor implying melodic development on an impossibly slow "Bitter Dream" and Parker's slippery arco attack building tension on "Loretto." And then, it all changes again. Compositions like "Can't Find You …"—a beguiling, 13-minute piece that moves from spare introduction to aggressive romp—have enough open ground for each of the musicians to introduce and develop several modes of expression.

The only constant is Malaby's voice, probing at corners and trying various approaches, whether in a husky whisper or straining at the upper reaches of his tenor. On "*matik-matik*," he worries a riff, reworking it a half-dozen times like an r&b honker, while on "Can't Find You …" he briefly explores a speech-like phrase on soprano, so sprightly that it sounds like something from Aaron Copland's Appalachian Spring. *—James Hale*

Somos Agua: Mule Skinner; Loretto; *matik-matik*; Can't Find You ...; Bitter Dream; Little Head; Somos Agua. (55:11)
Personnel: Tony Malaby, soprano, tenor saxophone; William Parker, bass; Nasheet Waits, drums.
Ordering info: cleanfeed-records.com



Frank Kimbrough
Quartet

PALMETTO

★★★½

As a leader, pianist Frank Kimbrough has recorded most often in the trio format, with a series of albums for Palmetto teaming him with various kindred-spirit rhythm sections. (The lovely *Air*, featuring him solo, being an exception.) *Quartet* finds Kimbrough joined by alto and soprano saxophonist Steve Wilson, bassist Jay Anderson and drummer Lewis Nash; while each has links with the pianist, all four performed together recently in Ryan Truesdell's Gil Evans Project.

Kimbrough has always been attuned to the poetic, with Paul Motian one of his key inspirations. The pianist also has a feel for the blues as part of his North Carolina birthright, as well as an attraction to the funky in the likes of Herbie Nichols. He has an ear for the outside, too, being influenced by Andrew Hill and Paul Bley. With *Quartet*, the air can be buoyant and even sweetly—perhaps too sweetly—pastoral, as with the opener "The Call." There is a more alluring, autumnal shade to "November," one of the pianist's most affecting compositions. He previously recorded it in an especially doleful version on tenor saxophonist Noah Preminger's *Before The Rain*. On *Quartet*, the performance suggests a hurt recollected at more of a distance.

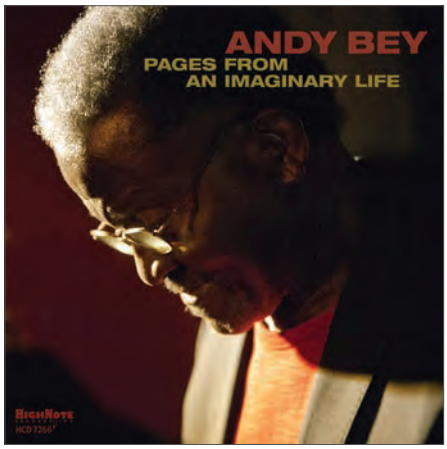
The pianist reprises "Ode" from his trio disc *Lullabluebye*. There, it sounded delightfully off-kilter, as if Kimbrough were composing the piece as he went; it's less searching here, as Wilson's pure-toned manner seems to naturally smooth things out. Yet in the excellent arrangement of Kurt Weill's "Trouble Man," Wilson's way with the darker turn of certain phrase endings feels ideal. The pianist imbues John Lewis' "Afternoon In Paris" with a more gamboling, Monk-like vibe, and the album closes with "It Never Entered My Mind" as Kimbrough and company find fresh soul in an old song.

— Bradley Bambarger

Quartet: The Call; Blue Smoke; November; Kudzu; Trouble Man; Herbivore; Ode; Beginning; Afternoon In Paris; It Never Entered My Mind. (57:13)

Personnel: Frank Kimbrough, piano; Steve Wilson, alto and soprano saxophones; Jay Anderson, bass; Lewis Nash, drums.

Ordering info: palmetto-records.com



Andy Bey
Pages From An Imaginary Life

HIGHNOTE 7266

★★★★

In a better world, veteran singer-pianist Andy Bey would be a household name for his singularly rich bass-baritone and penetrating interpretations of Great American Songbook and jazz standards.

Singers who accompany themselves as well as Bey does are rare. The great ones—like Nat "King" Cole or João Gilberto—pour their entire body and essence into the music: voice, hands and soul. Bey, while utterly different from those two, is also unforgettable. He widened his audience last year with his Grammy-nominated album *The World According To Andy Bey*. On this follow-up set, he applies his burnished tone and understated, bebop-informed piano to 11 classics, including some rarities, and four originals.

Starting with slow tempos, he lives in the rubato zone. On such ballads as "My Foolish Heart" and "Everything I Have Is Yours," he interjects chords impressionistically—a little dab here, a little dab there—between measured, gospel-inflected phrases that squeeze out every last bit of emotion from the lyrics. The set, recorded in a single day, has the character of a private, late-night meditation. Other highlights are an unusual and entirely persuasive reading of "Love For Sale" and a haunting recital of the rarely heard lyric to Billy Strayhorn's "Lotus Blossom," called "All Roads Lead Back To You."

You won't have any problem identifying the Andy Bey originals on this album. Sermonizing lyrics like "We all must learn to separate the real from the unreal" and "We never know how lucky we are compared to other folks" are set against dissonant harmonies and ambling melodies that sound a bit like recitative from a modernist opera. It's perplexing that, given his championing of great melodies and lyrics, Bey doesn't seem interested in emulating them more in his own writing.

—Allen Morrison

Pages From An Imaginary Life: My Foolish Heart; How Long Has This Been Going On; Jealousy; I've Got A Right To Sing The Blues; Love For Sale; Worried Life Blues; Bad Luck May Be Good Luck; Lover Come Back To Me; Good Morning, Heartache; Dog Eat Dog; Humor Keeps Us Alive; Take The 'A' Train; Everything I Have Is Yours; All That Glitter's Not Gold; All Roads Lead Back To You. (66:37)

Personnel: Andy Bey, piano and vocals.

Ordering info: jazzdepot.com

Brice Winston
Child's Play

CRISS CROSS 1374

★★★½

Since 1998, tenor saxophonist Brice Winston has steadily transformed the concept of "sideman" to that of "right-hand man" in Terence Blanchard's ensembles, contributing reliably strong compositions, evocative solos and a general musical agility within the trumpeter's evolving sound constructs. The pair's long-running symbiosis may be to blame, in part, for the fact that Winston has only stepped into the studio twice as a leader during his tenure with Blanchard. *Child's Play* is well worth the wait.

Juxtapositions of build-up and release, power and romance keep textures rich and fluid from the first of five originals through two Wayne Shorter tunes and one standard. On the title track, Winston's rounded phrasing and sailing take on the melody softens splintered riffs on the theme, letting the tune breathe supple grooves and more astringent edges. "Beauty Within" kicks off with more warmth courtesy of Winston's long, rasp-tinged tones before melodic drama begins to unfold, deepened by vocalizations over Joe Sanders' bass solo and propelled by drummer Marcus Gilmore's forward-moving fills.

The Shorter pieces add another wallop of moving contrasts, with Winston alternating between lyrical articulation and intense bouts of fleet fingering punctuated by lung-emptying yawps. Hopefully, it won't be another four years before Winston's next studio outing. *—Jennifer Odell*

Child's Play: Child's Play; The Beauty Within; Juju; Harold's View; Fall; Spur Of The Moment; I Thought About You; Pangaea. (65:24)
Personnel: Brice Winston, tenor saxophone; Mike Moreno, guitar; David Virelles, piano; Joe Sanders, bass; Marcus Gilmore, drums.
Ordering info: crisscrossjazz.com

The Hot Sardines
The Hot Sardines

DECCA B0021596

★★★★

One of the most delightfully energetic bands on New York's burgeoning "hot" music scene is this swinging ensemble fronted by the charismatic singer "Miz Elizabeth" Bougerol and featuring the happy feet of resident tap dancer "Fast Eddy" Francisco. Led by the talented old soul pianist Evan "Bibs" Palazzo, this charming retro octet tackles such tunes from yesteryear as the Andrew Sisters' "Bei Mir Bist Du Schoen" and Fats Waller's "Honeysuckle Rose" with great gusto and panache.

Bougerol renders Billie Holiday's signature tune "What A Little Moonlight Can Do" with requisite pizzaz as the band throws an infectious calypso groove underneath her. She sings Sidney Bechet's haunting "Petite Fleur," which features a striking clarinet solo by Nick Myers, and the vibrant swinger "Sweet Sue" (dubbed "Zazou" here) in her native French. And she also penned the lush ballad "Wake Up In Paris." "I Don't Stand A Ghost Of A Chance (With You)" finds Bougerol in particularly Holiday-inspired voice while trumpeter Prover delivers an Armstrong-inspired solo. And their version of the standard "I Can't Give You Anything But Love" transports the listener back to the Hot Club of France, circa 1934. *—Bill Milkowski*

The Hot Sardines: Bei Mir Bist Du Schoen; Goin' Crazy With the Blues; Wake Up In Paris; Zazou (Sweet Sue); I Can't Give You Anything But Love; Your Feet's Too Big; Honeysuckle Rose; Petite Fleur; What A Little Moonlight Can Do; Let's Go; I Don't Stand A Ghost Of A Chance (With You). (48:49)
Personnel: "Miz Elizabeth" Bougerol, vocals, washboard, tambourine; Evan "Bibs" Palazzo, piano, accordian, vocals; Jason Prover, trumpet; Nick Myers, tenor sax, clarinet, flute; Joe McDonough, trombone; Alex Raderman, drums, percussion; Evan "Sugar" Crane, bass, sousaphone; Sam "Fez" Raderman, guitar, banjo; "Fast Eddy" Francisco, tap dancing.
Ordering info: universalmusicclassics.com


Gary Clark Jr.

FRANK MADDOCKS

Going Down Slow

Ruthie Foster: *Promise Of A Brand New Day* (Blue Corn Music 1403; 44:18 ★★★★) Ruthie Foster's latest release, expertly produced by Meshell Ndegeocello, is one of the few stellar blues albums of the year. Her voice, with its deft modulations of emotion, encompasses everything from gospel urgency and singer-songwriter folk introspection to Bobby Bland-like soul-blues suavity and blues grit. It's as clear as crystal that Foster likes nothing better than bestowing conviction to original lyrics, especially those of her stunning ballad "Complicated Love" and of guest folk-blues luminary Toshi Reagon's "New."

Ordering info: bluecornmusic.com

Elvin Bishop: *Can't Even Do Wrong Right* (Alligator 4963; 39:46 ★★★½) Given his many solo records since 1969, you might figure Elvin Bishop was now running on empty with his fun approach to the blues and blues-rock. Certainly not. His humor is as enduring as ever—"Old Stock," a highlight, addresses his senior citizen status—and he knows the high entertainment value of Louisiana music. For decades, Bishop has been one of the top guitarists in blues, plenty of proof found here. Guest Mickey Thomas' singing is a drag, but harmonica player Charles Musselwhite, like Bishop, is an ageless wonder.

Ordering info: alligator.com

Dave Ray: *Legacy* (Red House 276; 69:12/71:38/70:12 ★★★½) Though underappreciated, the late singer and guitarist Dave "Snaker" Ray was a key figure in the 1960s blues performed by young white followers of the masters. This triple-disc set, intended for his fans but welcoming to novitiates, presents rare, unreleased solo and duet recordings that he made between 1962 and 2002. (His fairly famous recordings with harp player Tony Glover and guitarist Spider John Koerner are outside the scope of this chronologically ordered set of 55 tracks.) Ray had no trouble digging down to his core singing and playing guitar, whether interpreting Leadbelly, Bill Broonzy and Tommy Johnson songs or offering three of his own. His personality really shines from the early 1990s on (almost all of CDs 2 and 3).

Ordering info: redhouserecords.com

Gary Clark Jr.: *Live!* (Warner Bros. 544681; 48:13/48:34 ★★★★) Onstage, Gary Clark Jr. blasts out raucous, scalding riffs and other sonic incinerations like the boisterous young master of modern blues-rock that he has become. Unlike others, his superabundant technique, with ideas streaming daringly, doesn't traffic in slovenly excess. Clark likes to dance on the lip of the volcano, as on the Hendrixian "Catfish Blues," for starters, but he also lowers the heat for Lowell Fulson's "3 O'Clock Blues" and others. The Texan attains ecstasy through both aggressive and mild rigor. And, boy, can he sing.

Ordering info: store.warnermusic.com

Markey Blue: *Hey Hey* (Soul O Sound 101; 44:00 ★★★) Here's an above-average blues band in Nashville with a new, serious case of Stax soul fever. It's a blessing. Markey, a confident singer who used to be a Las Vegas showgirl and comedienne, brings the force of live-wire excitement to the feel-good or lovelorn lyrics of original material modeled, sometimes too reverentially, on Memphis soul blues classics. Her vocalizing comes from her heart, though in a few places shrillness trivializes her sense of drama.

Ordering info: markeyblue.com

Eric Clapton & Friends: *The Breeze* (Bushbranch/Surfdog 55408; 51:36 ★★★½) Embarking on his solo career around 1970, Eric Clapton was introduced by Delaney Bramlett to the somnolent bluesy rock of J.J. Cale. The guitarist took to the Tulsa-reared mystery man's whispery singing and slurred guitar playing like a comfortable old shoe, hitting it big with his versions of Cale's "After Midnight" and "Cocaine" and the Cale-inspired album *461 Ocean Boulevard*. Now a year after his colleague's death, Clapton approaches 16 Cale songs with an assured familiarity that can run into a stealthy intimacy. He truly excels on guitar. Thoughtful and gracious, Clapton employs seven of Cale's old sidekicks for this tribute, along with crowd-pleasers Mark Knopfler, John Mayer, Willie Nelson and Tom Petty. Featured singers Mayer and Petty, however, induce boredom as Cale imitators. **DB**

Ordering info: surfdog.com

Hush Point
Blues And Reds

SUNNYSIDE 1397

★★★★½

On its second superb album, this New York quartet continues to invoke its moniker—although new drummer Anthony Pinciotti, who replaces Vinnie Sperrazza here, brings a heightened tension and increased volume—delving into deeply interactive improvisation that doesn't need to shout to be heard.

The piano-less lineup references a number of classic antecedents—early work of the Ornette Coleman Quartet, the West Coast cool of Chet Baker, and various Tristano school practitioners—but reducing Hush Point's sound to historical hybrids misses the point. Veteran trumpeter John McNeil has forged a deep connection with alto saxophonist Jeremy Udden (who on his own has developed a wonderfully original mixture of post-bop and Americana forms), and it's their imperturbable connection that gives this quartet its subtle power and lyric dynamism.

McNeil and Udden trace the winding themes in their own compositions, as well as the pithy "Scuffle" by the group's warm-toned, agile bassist Aryeh Kobrinsky, in effortless-sounding unison, and when they start improvising, often in tandem, it becomes difficult to tell when a composed theme switches to twined soloing. The trumpeter's "Grounds For Divorce" is a multipartite marvel—juggling tonalities, moving from composed to freely improvised sections and even injecting a touch of serialism—while Udden's "Dreams" packs a bounty of flowing, swerving ideas into its extended theme, with the hornmen working off those generous shapes in extended improvisations. There's a remarkable tenderness and melodic generosity to "Petit Moineau," a McNeil piece composed for Edith Piaf, while the brisk, hard-swinging "HDMN" (which wittily stands for "Highly Derivative Minor Blues"—these guys don't take themselves too seriously) includes an interlude Udden constructed from an old Bob Brookmeyer solo. *—Peter Margasak*

Blues And Reds: Live In Stockholm; Grounds For Divorce; We Wei; Petit Moineau; HDMB; Blues And Reds; Scuffle; Dreams; Moments Of Truth; Four And More. (51:26)

Personnel: Jeremy Udden, alto saxophone; John McNeil, trumpet; Aryeh Kobrinsky, bass; Anthony Pinciotti, drums.

Ordering info: sunnyside.com

Tom Harrell
Trip

HIGHNOTE 7261

★★★★½

Writers are wisely warned to never include themselves in a story unless it serves the subject. I work part-time at New York City's only all-jazz record store, and on the day I played Tom Harrell's *Trip,* every customer asked, "What is that record?" with a pleased and quizzical look on their face. This is extremely unusual, and speaks well of not only "the man on the street," but the singular talent of Harrell and his exceptional quintet.

Harrell's current quintet—together since 2006—operates within a highly conversational framework that, while not actually "free," draws upon components of the best free-jazz, where everyone solos, everyone's voice is given equal strength and the bonds of unity truly shine through. The members of Harrell's quintet—Mark Turner, Ugonna Okegwo and Adam Cruz—have never sounded better, and the trumpeter plays in his consummately soulful and sublime style. This is special music.

Each track on *Trip* traces a graceful, poetic arc, and with the omission of piano and guitar the individual musicians relish the open space. *Trip* is essentially a deep conversation between four friends, each sharing the lead, trading comments and listening intently. This concept culminates in the album's centerpiece, "Adventures Of A Quixotic Character," a six-part suite that illustrates a beautiful tale, an epic journey of sound, solace, joy and not a little mystery.

—Ken Micallef

Trip: Sunday; Cycle; Adventures Of A Quixotic Character Suite: The Ingenious Gentleman, The Duke And The Duchess, Enchanted, Sancho And Rocinante, The Princess, Windmills; Coming Home; Coastline; After The Game Is Over; There. (61:00)
Personnel: Tom Harrell, trumpet, flugelhorn; Mark Turner, tenor saxophone; Ugonna Okegwo, bass; Adam Cruz, drums.
Ordering info: jazzdepot.com

Sylvain Rifflet/ Jon Irabagon
Perpetual Motion: A Celebration Of Moondog

JAZZ VILLAGE SP 9570047

★★★★

His influence snaked its way into jazz and minimalism during his lifetime, but 15 years after his death, Moondog's legacy is probably more widely appreciated than it was when he was alive. His inventive sense of rhythm, playful counterpoint and instrumental onomatopoeia offer other musicians a lot to chew on, and he's been the subject of tributes since the '60s. *Perpetual Motion*, recorded live at the 2013 Banlieues Blues Festival, offers a lively and openly interpretive take on The Viking of 6th Avenue.

Led by the twin saxophones of Sylvain Rifflet and Jon Irabagon, musicians whose own sense of humor and irreverence makes them a fine match for Moondog's oddball music, the band plays its way across the spectrum of the composer's pieces, touching on concise rhythmic experiments and sprawling explorations of texture alike. Their take on the ultra-rhythmic "Lament I (Bird's Lament)" is wild and sprinkles a dash of New Orleans over a composition written to reflect New York City traffic.

A children's choir enlivens a few tunes, and electronics and street recordings give the performance a *musique concrete* edge, but none of it would work if it wasn't invested with a great deal of musicality and energy. This music sounds as fresh and inventive as ever.

—Joe Tangari

Perpetual Motion: A Celebration Of Moondog: Oasis; Heat On The Heather; Bird's Lament; Black Hole; From One To Nine; Round Paris; Aska Me; Fleur de Lis; Maybe; Nero's Expedition; My Tiny Butterfly; From The Jazz Book No. 2; From The Jazz Book Extended; Santa Fé. (56:39)
Personnel: Sylvain Rifflet, tenor saxophone, clarinet, electronics; Jon Irabagon, alto and tenor saxophone; Joce Mienniel, flutes, Korg MS-20 synthesizer; Eve Risser, piano, electric harpsichord; Phil Gordiani, guitar; Benjamin Flament, percussion, treated metal.
Ordering info: jazzvillagemusic.com

Auction Project
Slink

MUSIC BIX 2014-1

★★★½

The winning grace of Auction Project's jazz-meets-Celtic (and sometimes Afro-Cuban) sound is its naturalness and intimacy. The ensemble sound centers on the talented married couple of alto saxophonist-composer David Bixler and classical violinist/Irish fiddler Heather Martin Bixler.

This is David Bixler's second outing spearheading Auction Project. As an alumnus of Arturo O'Farrill's Afro Latin Jazz Orchestra, he's no stranger to pan-world experiments. For this sophomore outing, he has once again recruited the superlative support of pianist O'Farrill, drummer Vince Cherico (a longtime member of O'Farrill's orchestra) and bassist Carlo De Rosa.

"Bear Island Reel" opens the disc with a folk dance layered over funk. Heather Martin Bixler energetically bows the reel while David Bixler weaves counter lines. When they meet in unison, the vibrant sound lends the band a distinct voice. David Bixler complements the fiddle in an almost string-like approach, catching every nuance.

The title track is a highlight, showcasing David Bixler's arranging strengths in a mini-epic that escalates with a dramatic, big heart. Guest guitarist Mike Stern spins his usual magic here with a solo climaxing into dizzying jazz-rock shredding. "Marquis Of Huntley" embraces Scottish music with a traditional dance called a strathspray. The rhythm section lays into a sly medium-tempo funk, creating a bit of highland-meets-urban lowland attitude.

"Heron's Egg" is the album's most mashed-up excursion. Expanding on a lilting fiddle intro featuring traditional jigs, Cherico subtly juxtaposes Afro-Cuban rhythms. The full ensemble eventually builds a driving, joyous jig-a-jazz waltz à la Caribbean. Natural as can be. "Workmanship (Air)" is a lovely folk ballad with a hint of hymn. Appropriately, the album concludes with this restrained number, which echoes with the definitively Irish sound of uilleann pipes. *—Jeff Potter*

Slink: Bear Island Reef; Cleveland; Slink; Richie Dwyer's Reel; The Wind That Shakes The Barley; Heron's Egg; Marquis Of Huntley; Angry White Man; Workmanship (Air). (72:58)
Personnel: David Bixler, alto saxophone; Heather Martin Bixler, violin; Arturo O'Farrill, piano; Carlo De Rosa, acoustic and electric bass; Vince Cherico, drums, cymbals; Mike Stern, guitar (3, 9); Isaac Alderson, uilleann pipes (9).
Ordering info: davidbixler.com

David Virelles
Mbókò

ECM 0021717

★★★★½

On his ECM debut, *Mbókò–Sacred Music For Piano, Two Basses, Drum Set And Biankoméko Abakuá*, the wildly original New York-based Cuban pianist David Virelles deploys folkloric sacred music from his homeland in a dynamic conversation with percussionist Román Díaz, fueled by improvisation. The percussionist plays *biankoméko*, a four-drum hand-percussion array used in *Abakuá*—a secret, fraternal religious society rooted in African culture. Díaz was a key presence on the pianist's previous album, *Continuum*, where his throaty chants were as important as his percussion, but here the focus is primarily instrumental. The participation of kit drummer Marcus Gilmore and double bassists Thomas Morgan and Robert Hurst is intricately woven into the music's fabric, but the heart of the music pulses within the interactions of Virelles and Díaz.

The album opens quietly. Low-end piano rumbling and sparse hand percussion build into a delicate, hushed conversation using the keyboard's middle range. The bassists add serious depth as the album moves forward, usually playing droning notes in tightly clustered patterns. By the time "Antillais (A Quintín Bandera)" rolls around, the music has achieved a processional gravity, and Virelles splits it open with a driving theme followed by a magnificent solo, while on

"Seven, Through The Divination Horn," a matrix of heavy polyrhythms buffet and support a solo that ricochets between buoyant chords, stacked runs and probing lines. Boundaries between jazz, classical and Afro-Cuban music seem irrelevant for Virelles, and he has noted an embrace of the art's social function, whether sacred or profane. *—Peter Margasak*

Mbókò–Sacred Music For Piano, Two Basses, Drum Set And Biankoméko Abakuá: Wind Rose (Antrogofoko mokoirén); The Scribe (Tratado de Mpegó); Biankoméko; Antillais (A Quintín Bandera); Aberiñán y Aberisún; Seven, Through The Divination Horn; Stories Waiting To Be Told; Transmission; The Highest One; Èfé (A María Teresa Vera). (59:06)
Personnel: David Virelles, piano; Thomas Morgan, bass; Robert Hurst, bass; Marcus Gilmore, drums; Román Díaz, biankoméko, vocals.
Ordering info: ecmrecords.com

Grand Fatilla
Global Shuffle

GRAND FATILLA RECORDS

★★★★

Grand Fatilla's debut album makes the case that much of the world's folk music can be played together and still make sense. The tunes here share a gypsy element to them as they move from Spanish guitar songs to Argentinian tangos to Italian tarentellas to Eastern European dance music, and they all sound of a kind. There are no clashing juxtapositions of tunes nor experiments that fail. The record is aptly named, as it is global in its reach, and each song is like picking from a deck of shuffled playing cards.

Certain songs have a languid, late-night air as the single-note lines of the accordion work over the light percussion and supple bass. One of the great soft songs, "Milonga para Lucia," shares melodic fragments with the 1970s jazz standard "Crystal Silence." They are balanced by quick dance music that moves toward frenzy on accordionist Roberto Cassan's "Domenie" or sultry Latin tinge such as composer Astor Piazzolla's "Francanapa" while remaining precisely played. Aside from the faster numbers, the music comes over slowly.

For only four musicians, there is a lot of music here and, paradoxically, a lot of space. The musicians come at the songs from an honest place close to their hearts. The band also delves into the work of Brazilian musician and composer Hermeto Pascoal. Their take on Pascoal's "Bebe" sounds like James Bond music gone gypsy with its ominous fading into playful accordion melody moving into a long, slow build. They also do one of his most famous compositions, "Little Church," which has all the promise and beauty that it did when Miles Davis performed it on *Live-Evil*. *Global Shuffle* projects a fun and unserious attitude but with the music performed seriously. Grand Fatilla plays the music of small clubs, buskers and coffee shops the world over, and does with dedication and aplomb. *—David Kunian*

Global Shuffle: Cigansko Oro; Five Of Swords; Domenie; Alla Carpinese; Bebe; Sandansko Oro; Milonga para Lucia; Kasha; Fracanapa; Corrente; Southern Italian Medley; Little Church. (61:59)
Personnel: Roberto Cassan, accordion; Matt Glover, electric mandolin; Fabio Pirozzolo, percussion, voice; Mike Rivard, bass, sintir; Claudio Ragazzi, acoustic guitar, 12-string guitar, cuatro puertorriqueno (5, 7, 9); Christian Cassan, additional percussion (1, 2, 3, 4, 9, 11).
Ordering info: grandfatilla.com


Wayne Wallace Latin Jazz Quintet

MICHAELA. ACZON

Latin Pulses by the Bay

Two strong new albums on the Patois label feed off the energy of the multitasking Wayne Wallace, formidable trombonist, bandleader, producer, and the situation-making man behind the continuing adventure that is Patois. Not incidentally, these new titles also celebrate the depth, fiery spirit and historical legacy of salsa and Latin jazz in San Francisco and the Bay Area, once removed.

Wallace appears as a special guest on Ritmos Unidos' fine and tight, eponymously titled second album, ***Ritmos Unidos*** **(Patois 017; 50:43 ★★★½),** while Wallace's Latin Jazz Quintet represents one of the "now" elements on ***Salsa de la Bahia, Vol. 2, Hoy Y Ayer*** **(Patois 018; 44:56/47:16 ★★★★)**, an important and revealing collection of Bay Area Latin tracks from the 1980s through last year.

Ritmos Unidos is led by percussionist Michael Spiro, long a part of the Bay Area scene until he moved to Bloomington, Indiana, to teach in 2011. Spiro still maintains links to the West Coast, though, including collaboration with Wallace. Fittingly, the pair co-wrote the bold title track, undulating with its *timba*-fired rhythmic drive and serpentine unison lines to the finish. Central to the project and its central theme of combining Latin traditions and embracing "united rhythms" is the Yoruban-geared "Ochun Suite," with folkloric outer movements and a simmering salsa middle section bringing together NYC and Nigerian ideas, in a harmonious synthesis.

Latinizing arrangements of jazz tunes—Wes Montgomery's "Road Song" (with impressive guitar work by Joel Turner) and Wayne Shorter's enigmatic beauty "Water Babies," shifting from swing to Latin rhythmic quarters and back—lead into the upbeat, bright Trinidadian flair of "Pan Rising" to close. *Ritmos Unidos* succeeds in deepening the band's resolve to unite idioms, cultures and ideas in a fresh way, while paying respects to its myriad sources, in Latin music and beyond.

Volume 2 of the Bay Area salsa/Latin jazz compilation project *Salsa de la Bahia* sets a stage and/or contextual frame around what is manifested in hybrid endeavors such as Ritmos Unidos. Volume 1, released to rightful acclaim in 2012, was the handiwork of Wallace and Dr. Rita Hargrove, as a companion to a documentary film in its final stages, *The Last Mambo*, chronicling the rich tradition of salsa and Latin music in the Bay Area from 2000 to 2010. Although Hargrove's film has yet to see the light of screens, the first set of music begat a worthwhile follow-up and fleshing-out, which rears back to the '80s and also takes a modern pulse of the scene.

Hoy Y Ayer ("today and yesterday") supplies plenty of variety and dance-inducing energies over the course of its two discs, moving from solid examples of the genre to newer twists and groups making the scene. That "today" factor includes the impressive 19-piece Pacific Mambo Orchestra, vocalist Rico Pabón (on the idealistic "Imagínate") and vocalist Kat Parra, working her unique Jewish-Latin meld on "Dame La Llave."

Among the veterans culled are Pete Escovedo—the patriarchal musician's 1983 track "Muito Obrigado"—and Los Kimbos 90's leader Orestes Vilató, via "Que Viva Chango." Wallace himself counts as both veteran and present-tense thriving artist, who layers trombone tracks thick and juicy on his jazz-fueled "¡Estamos Aqui!" with his Latin Jazz Quintet, and as composer and key player in rootsier powerhouse salsa band Estrellas de la Bahia's two tracks on the album.

Other notable tracks include Ritmo y Candela's "San Francisco Tiene Su Propio Son," from a 1995 all-star session featuring percussionists Vilató, Patato Valdes and José Luis "Changuito" Quintana (and a striking piano solo by Rebecca Santana Mauleón), and the multi-marimba warmth and bustle of Roger Glenn's "Angola."

To close the second disc on a poignant note, the late Carlos Federico's "Operation Mambo" is a track from a recording he made in 1984 with the hopes of finally putting out a record under his own name, but released only after his death. Federico was one of the many Bay Area Latin musicians not known enough for his efforts in the world beyond the Bay, and whose memory is well-served by its window of public musical record. **DB**

Ordering info: patoisrecords.com

Richard Galliano
Sentimentale

RESONANCE 1021

★★½

Richard Galliano has been the pacesetter on accordion the mid-1970s. And while he did not start leading his own record dates until the early 1990s, he has made up for lost time since then, heading at least 30 CDs during the past quarter-century.

Now 64, Galliano is at the peak of his powers. For *Sentimentale*, he teams up with pianist Tamir Hendelman, guitarist Anthony Wilson, Cuban bassist Carlitos Del Puerto and Brazilian drummer Mauricio Zottarelli for a melodic and easy-listening set of music.

The performances throughout *Sentimentale* are charming and relaxed. Everything is tasteful, impeccably played and safe. But that is the main problem, because it never sounds as if any of the musicians ever push themselves.

On the brighter side, *Sentimentale* gives listeners rare opportunities to hear the accordion in the lead on such unlikely material as Chick Corea's "Armando's Rumba" and John Coltrane's "Naima." Galliano displays his classical technique on the cinematic Dave Grusin-Lee Ritenour piece "Canto Inviemo" and occasionally breaks into double-time runs on the ballads.

But with such potentially stimulating players as Hendelman and Wilson in the group, one would expect some fiery and exciting moments. Instead, the emphasis is on slower tempos, relatively brief solos and soothing moods. The playing rarely rises above the level of high-quality background music, making the overall results a bit disappointing. —*Scott Yanow*

Sentimentale: Armando's Rumba; Canto Invierno; In A Sentimental Mood; The Jody Grind; Ballade Pour Marion; The Island; Plus Fort Que Nous; Why Did I Choose You; Verbos Do Amor; Naima; Mantiqueira; Lili. (66:21)

Personnel: Richard Galliano, accordion; Tamir Hendelman, piano; Anthony Wilson, guitar; Carlitos Del Puerto, bass; Mauricio Zottarelli, drums.

Ordering info: resonancerecords.org

The Stanley Clarke Band
Up

MACK AVENUE 1083

★★½

This over-the-top meditation on Clarke's impressive career features 30 musicians. Many are drawn from the youthful well of Los Angeles up-and-comers, but there are also plenty of Clarke's contemporaries making cameos. The first few tracks suffer from a funk that could only be categorized as "'80s sitcom theme." The flash and intricacy of Clarke's arranging is present, but so is the overwhelming production and lack of vulnerability. Clarke's command of the upright bass finally takes control of the album five tracks in. He takes two solo snippets billed as "Bass Folk Song #13: Mingus" and "Bass Folk Song #14: Dance Of The Giant Hummingbird/Bass Folk Song #15: Eleuthera Island" that are a beautiful glimpse to another, more appealing record. Clarke returns to a few catalogue hits, too, including "Brazilian Love Affair" (dedicated to the late George Duke) and the perennial crowd-pleaser "School Days." Chick Corea and Clarke close the album with a duo performance of "La Cancion de Sofia" that is as welcome as the solo bass tracks. —*Sean J. O'Connell*

Up: Pop Virgil; Last Train To Sanity; Up; Brazilian Love Affair; Bass Folk Song #13: Mingus; I Have Something To Tell You Tonight; Trust; Bass Folk Song #7: Tradition; Gotham City; Bass Folk Song #14: Dance Of The Giant Hummingbird/Bass Folk Song #15: Eleuthera Island; School Days; La Canción de Sofia. (44:38)

Personnel: Stanley Clarke, Alembic electric bass guitar, Alembic tenor bass guitar, acoustic bass, synth bass, vocal; Chick Corea, Beka Gochiashvili, piano; Phil Davis, synthesizers; Greg Phillinganes, keyboard; Ruslan Sirota, piano, Fender Rhodes, synthesizers; Jimmy Herring, Paul Jackson Jr., Mike Stern, Joe Walsh, guitar; Gary Grant, trumpet; Dan Higgins, Kamasi Washington, Doug Webb, saxophones; Andy Martin, trombone; Ilmar Gavilan, Melissa White, violin; Jaime Amador, viola; Matthew Zalkind, cello; Gerry Brown, Ronald Bruner Jr., Stewart Copeland, Mike Mitchell, John Robinson, drums; Nick Mancini, marimba; Lenny Castro, percussion; Natasha Agrama, Mariela Arrendondo, Patrice Quinn, Jessica Vautor, vocals.

Ordering info: mackavenue.com

City Boys Allstars
Blinded By The Night
CITY BOYS MIKE PRODUCTIONS 03
★★★★

The Allstars include 13 city boys from New York, all of them in-demand session musicians and sidepersons. Their blend of jazz, r&b, blues, soul and rock harks back to the horn-driven bands that once ruled the city's nightlife with three vocalists, tough, punchy arrangements and a solid repertoire of standards and original material.

This set, recorded live at The Cutting Room, opens with Robbie Robertson's "Testimony." Despite the presence of U2 on the original, Robertson's rendition was dry and restrained. The Allstars add plenty of sweat and soul to their take, with hints of Memphis in Mike Merola's guitar accents, a blazing sax solo by Lou Marini and the sanctified singing of Bil Kurz, who adds some Howlin' Wolf-like cries to the end of his vocal lines. Horace Scott II takes lead vocal duties on "God Bless The Child," sliding between a soaring, passionate tenor and a growling baritone with the band's subtle horn accents helping to carry the song's emotional weight. The album's sole instrumental, "Funky Peaches," was written by former Country Joe and The Fish keyboard player David Cohen, has a funky New Orleans groove and gives the players some time to lay out with Lew Soloff's trumpet and Merola's extended closing guitar solo on the coda particularly tasty. *—j. poet*

Blinded By The Night: Testimony; Funky Peaches; Where Have You Been?; God Bless The Child; Strung Out; The Vow; More Where That Came From; When You Needed Me; City Boy Blues. (48:54)
Personnel: Mike Merola, guitars; Al MacDowell, bass; Rob Clores, keyboards; Nick Saya, drums, percussion; Daniel Sadownick, percussion; Bil Kurz, Angel Rissoff, Horace Scott II, vocals; Tiny Kadlack, Lew Soloff, trumpet; Andy Snitzer, "Blue Lou" Marini, saxophone; Tom "Bones" Malone, trombone, saxophone.
Ordering info: cityboysmike.com

Ulf Wakenius
Momento Magico
ACT 9565
★★★½

Swedish guitarist Ulf Wakenius is a chopsmeister of the highest order who put in substantial bandstand time during the '90s in groups led by Oscar Peterson and Ray Brown. For this solo outing, he puts aside his electric ax and eschews his swinging impulses in favor of something far more intimate, along the lines of Pat Metheny's solo acoustic album from 2003, *One Quiet Night*. But unlike Metheny, Wakenius overdubs a second guitar on most of these tracks to good effect.

He opens on a gentle note with "Ballad For E.," written by Mangus Ostrom for the late pianist Esbjorn Svensson. The title track is a double-tracked exercise in picking discipline that might recall some of Robert Fripp's League of Crafty Guitarists excursions. For the striking "Hindustan Blues," he overdubs some slashing slide guitar work, and on his "Mali On My Mind" he digs into an earthy bluesy bag. He demonstrates some aggressive comping and picking on "The Dragon." "Preludio" is a classical-sounding etude dedicated to Keith Jarrett, while "Notes For OP And Wes" is an upt-empo burner that strings together several familiar Wes Montgomery themes.

Elsewhere on this highly personal project, Wakenius performs a moving "Requiem For A Lost Son," his tribute to the memory of John Scofield's late son Evan. He concludes this adventurous solo outing with a spacious and hauntingly beautiful interpretation of the Charles Trenet *chanson* classic "La Mer" (known Stateside as "Beyond The Sea"). *—Bill Milkowski*

Momento Magico: Ballad For E.; Momento Magico; Liberetto; Hindustan Blues; Requiem For A Lost Son; Mali On My Mind; Gnossienne; The Dragon; Esperanto; Preludio; Notes For OP And Wes; Sugar Man; La Mer. (39:38)
Personnel: Ulf Wakenius, steel string and nylon acoustic guitars, acoustic bass guitar.
Ordering info: allegro-music.com

Maverick Visionary


Charles Lloyd

When 1960s avant-garde jazz is discussed, tenor saxophonist and bandleader Charles Lloyd is seldom mentioned. He never caught the ear of the critics who lauded Coltrane, Coleman, Taylor, Ayler, Dolphy, Shepp, Cherry, et al., despite working in many of the same places and collaborating with some of them. Two important new issues shed much-needed light on Lloyd's contributions to that turbulent decade and his continuing trajectory as an artist. ***Charles Lloyd: Arrows Into Infinity*** **(ECM 5052 3780649; 113:00 ★★★★★)** is a warm, engaging documentary DVD about a maverick who always played it the way he heard it, regardless of the prevailing consensus. The two-CD set ***Manhattan Stories*** **(Resonance 2016; 42:35/42:13 ★★★★★)** documents a short-lived yet vital Lloyd band of 1965 with guitarist Gabor Szabo, bassist Ron Carter and drummer Pete LaRoca. Both are reminders that despite commercial successes and periodic retreats from public life, Lloyd has always been a seeker and an original voice on the tenor and flute.

Los Angeles reed sage Buddy Collette referred Lloyd to Chico Hamilton after Eric Dolphy vacated the saxophone chair of the drummer's band. Lloyd quickly became its music director and stocked the Hamilton Quintet with his favored players: Hungarian refugee Szabo, and bass wunderkind Albert Stinson. That under-sung group made some fine inside/outside albums before Lloyd left for a cup of coffee with Cannonball Adderley and later assembled his own outfits.

His first quartet retained Szabo and Stinson, and added LaRoca. Stinson's muscular and pliant bass locked in beautifully with LaRoca's backbeat pulse. Szabo was free to harmonize with the tenor and spin his single-note lines across the beat (Lloyd introduced him to the music of Ravi Shankar), and the saxophonist was free to go anywhere he wanted: play the changes, spin new melodies, engage the rhythm or play free. Stinson's erratic personal life took him out of the band, and somehow Ron Carter found time away from Miles Davis to step in. *Manhattan Stories* catches that edition of the Lloyd Quartet at New York's Judson Hall (disc one) and the gritty Lower East Side bar Slugs' (disc two).

A converted tenor player (he switched from alto at Hamilton's request), Lloyd has always had a dimensional sound: large and roomy in the lower register, and light and airy on the top. His lyrical invention and across-the-bar flights made him one of the few Lester Young emissaries to the '60s generation—which didn't endear him to critics used to the torrential New York players.

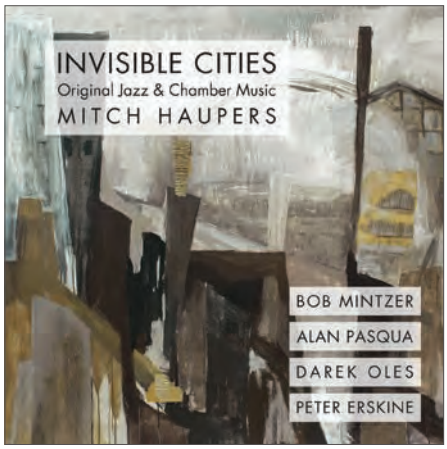
The band could swing subtly or hard—Carter and LaRoca made a formidable pair on tunes like "Lady Gabor" and "Slugs' Blues." They could play pretty and introspective, as on "How Can I Tell You." "Dream Weaver" makes its earliest appearance here with Lloyd the rhythmic master on display. The sound is cleaner on the Judson material, and appropriately rougher on the Slug's, but it's all quite rewarding.

Water is a recurring motif in the narrative of *Arrows to Infinity*. The archival footage from the early '60s to the present indicates that a component of Lloyd's sound has always been a liquid phrasing and fluid lyricism. Dorothy Darr (Mrs. Lloyd) directed this film with an insider's eye and ear to a gentle but deep soul.

Geri Allen, Jason Moran, Stanley Crouch, Phil Schapp, Jack DeJohnette, John Densmore and Jim Keltner are among the many contributors. Lloyd speaks not a word about his groundbreaking quartet of the late '60s with Keith Jarrett, Cecil McBee and DeJohnette, leaving it to film clips and DeJohnette. That group won favor with the rock audiences and gave FM radio a jazz component. Cuscuna notes that Lloyd didn't pander to the crowd in the least. Among its fans was Manfred Eicher, who has recorded Lloyd with great sensitivity, and later on, pianist Jason Moran.

When Lloyd pulled back to soul-search in Big Sur, pianist Michel Petrucciani brought him out of hiding for beautiful instrumental summits. Later on, drummer Billy Higgins engaged the reclusive Lloyd for another round of great collaborations (they'd played in the late '50s). Tabla master Zakir Hussein, Allen, Moran and others let us know that Lloyd isn't finished with his explorations. **DB**

Ordering info: ecmrecords.com; resonancerecords.org



Mitch Haupers
Invisible Cities

LIQUID HARMONY MUSIC

★★★

It is a truism that musicians will strut as much stuff as they can on their debut recordings. So, it should come as no surprise that longtime Berklee School of Music professor Mitch Haupers has a whole lot to say on *Invisible Cities*, his first solo recording at age 55. Rounding up a first-rate crew of collaborators, including Yellowjackets members Jimmy Haslip, Russell Ferrante and Bob Mintzer, as well as pianist Alan Pasqua and drummer Peter Erskine, Haupers sets out to showcase the breadth of his compositional approach. It is wide and varied, which makes for a somewhat uneven listening experience, albeit one with no shortage of high points.

One obvious standout is the level of musicianship; the core quintet of Haupers, Mintzer, Pasqua, Erskine and bassist Darek "Oles" Oleszkiewicz sounds exceptionally tight. Haupers' tart tone on electric guitar is an ideal match for Mintzer's reeds, and Erskine is his nuanced, urbane self, no matter what he is called on to do.

Where things really get shaken up is on Haupers' four-part centerpiece suite, which brings in elements of chamber music, opera and big band swing. Employing musicians from Berklee's faculty and the Boston Pops Orchestra, Haupers contrasts solo instruments against variations of horns and strings. The most ear-catching is "(In Came) Love, So Silent," primarily for the addition of the full-throated wordless vocals of opera soprano Brooke deRosa.

There is something for almost everyone; surprising turns, but nothing sonically that jars the senses. If Haupers records a follow-up, it will be intriguing to see where he heads. —*James Hale*

Invisible Cities: Veronica's Lake; Downtime; Isla Mujeres; Invisible Cities; Leoa; Four Minor Love Songs Suite: Take Comfort (In Rose's Garden, The Farmer And The Monarch, [In Came] Love, So Silent, Beacon Street); Waltz For Bill; P.S. Vita (Reprise). (55:12)

Personnel: Mitch Haupers, guitar, piano (6); Mike Miller, Brazilian guitar (4, 8); Bob Mintzer, woodwinds; Ann Bobo, flute (6); Sarah Brady, alto flute (6); Jan Halloran, clarinet (6); Barbara LaFitte, English horn (6); Brandon Fields, alto saxophone (6); Margaret Phillips, bassoon (6); Jay Mason, baritone saxophone (6); Dan Fornero, John Daversa, trumpets (6); Bobby McChesney, trombone (6); Alan Pasqua, piano; Russell Ferrante, piano (6); Rika Ikeda, violin (6); Drew Ricciardi, viola (6); Eugene Friesen, cello (6); Isabelle Olivier, harp (6); Darek Oleszkiewicz, bass; Tony D'Amico, bass (6); Jimmy Haslip, electric bass (6); Peter Erskine, drums; Brooke deRosa, vocals (6); Winnie Dahlgren, bells (6).

Ordering info: mitchhaupers.com

Uri Caine
Callithump

WINTER & WINTER 910 210

★★★★

Probably the only time that Uri Caine sits still is when he is on the piano bench. In September, he regrouped with bassist Christian McBride and Questlove for their funk-inspired jazz trio Philadelphia Experiment. He has also performed classical repertoire in a jazz-meets-strings-meets-DJ ensemble and traded barbs with the firebrand Dutch drummer Han Bennink—just some of his various recent outings.

For Caine's new solo disc, *Callithump*, he returns to the format of his *Solitaire* album on the same label 13 years ago. But he hardly repeats himself for this set of all original compositions. Caine sounds more outwardly aggressive here, even when that forcefulness comes in the form of quietly creating tension, like on "Sepharad." The album may be named from his percussive forays, especially on the title track. And while that piece features a cascade of lower-register rumblings, Caine is just as tricky with how he uses high staccato notes as pivot points on such tracks as "Raindrop Prelude." On "Map Of The Heart," the core melody goes through surprising shifts in direction, but an internal logic is clear. He also builds his improvisations as much from a stream of arpeggios as from chord changes on "Bow Bridge."

Caine concludes *Callithump* with a poignant ballad, but it's hardly lilting. After the first few lines of "Dotted Eyes," he combines silence, uncertainty and some feedback with just a few notes. Even when Caine says goodbye, he does not let listeners off too easily. *—Aaron Cohen*

Callithump: Callithump; Sepharad; Map Of The Heart; Greasy; The Magic Of Her Nearness; Chanson De Johnson; Bow Bridge; Everything Is Bullshit; Raindrop Prelude; Perving Berlin; Dotted Eyes. (54:00)
Personnel: Uri Caine, piano.
Ordering info: winterandwinter.com

Tony Dagradi
Gemini Rising

ASTRAL MUSIC 2014001

★★★★

On first listen, Tony Dagradi's *Gemini Rising* sounds simply like a New Orleans ensemble hitting its stride with equal parts grace, grit and gumbo. But wait a minute—this is a horns-and-drums band only. Master saxophonist Dagradi performs on soprano, alto, tenor and baritone, layering his horns (up to 10 in a tune) with the accompaniment of three New Orleans drummers: Herlin Riley, Johnny Vidacovich and Troy Davis. It's amazing that essentially two musicians (per track) and technology can create such a vibrant, joyous recording.

A traditional soprano-alto-tenor-baritone saxophone quartet is used on some songs, but most use a more atypical instrumentation of alto, two tenors and baritone. Perhaps this accounts for the unique textures Dagradi achieves on "Sweet Remembrance," "Monk's Mood" and "Sweet Faced Lie." Dagradi also credits his friend Bobby McFerrin as inspiration in his multi-layering of horn parts. Any way you slice it, *Gemini Rising* is an irresistible album.

Baritone toots kick off "The Wheel," joined by aromatic tenors that swirl a snake charmer-like spell. A Caribbean groove informs "Mandela"; a triumphal if forlorn mood fills "Sohana Sha Kirpal." The title track is pure James Brown-worthy funk with Indian tabla adding an otherworldly edge. "Monk's Mood" uses four solo horns as an emotional compass, recalling '60s-era Henry Mancini. Throughout *Gemini Rising*, Dagradi creates a seamless, full-bodied sound, each song emotional, riveting and joyful. *—Ken Micallef*

Gemini Rising: The Wheel; Sweet Faced Lie; Mandela; Sohana Sha Kirpal; Gemini Rising; Monk's Mood; Spherical; Sweet Remembrance; Cannonball; Tango; Glory. (47:55)
Personnel: Tony Dagradi: soprano, alto, tenor and baritone saxophones; Herlin Riley, Johnny Vidacovich, Troy Davis, drums.
Ordering info: tonydagradi.com

Jason Adasiewicz's Sun Rooms
From The Region

DELMARK 5017

★★★½

Chicago vibraphone mainstay Jason Adasiewicz's third Sun Rooms album is a luminous, engaging outing, an hour-long record that covers unusual territory. The songs are largely lovely, occasionally knotty and, in one case, a tad watery. If this were rock, it would be called "alternative." The longest tracks, particularly the fitful, ultimately compelling "The Song," present an astonishing variety of texture, and even though all these tunes feel experimental, they're also accessible and sound spontaneous.

Drummer Mike Reed and bassist Ingebrigt Håker-Flaten, who replaced original Roomsmate Nate McBride, collaborate with Adasiewicz in a way that brings to mind "clanguor," a coinage combining "clatter" and "languor." Clanguor describes Adasiewicz's range, as well as his determination to keep the vibraphone percussive and assertive, yet tender when occasion demands. The dynamic emphasis varies by type of tune. There are character studies such as "Mae Flower" and conversational tunes like the metrically tricky "The Song I Wrote For Tonight" and "Just Talkin' To Myself."

Besides expanding his instrument's vocabulary, this record suggests an expansion of the trio format itself. Adasiewicz, a man of Monkish wit, composes tunes that often start with an orthodox structure, but then devolve into free playing. This is inclusive music, its melodies as memorable as its rhythms are unpredictable.

—Carlo Wolff

From The Region: Leeza; Classic Route; The Song I Wrote For Tonight; Mae Flowers; Mr. PB; Two Comes One; Old Sparky; I Forgot The Words; Cubane; Just Talkin' To Myself; Is A Bell A Rose. (57:17)
Personnel: Jason Adasiewicz, vibes; Ingebrigt Håker-Flaten, bass; Mike Reed, drums.
Ordering info: delmark.com

Mark Meadows
Somethin' Good

SELF-RELEASE

★★★

Washington, D.C.-based pianist and singer Mark Meadows showed glimmers of pianistic talent soloing on standards for his debut release six years ago; on his new CD, *Somethin' Good*, he proves his compositional skill and sounds more fully formed.

Meadows' instrumental version of the Beatles classic "Come Together" is read with a blues bounce; the song is a hard separation from whatever smooth-jazz leanings spread through his first record. Swinging the beloved bass line and making the whole tune a bit more funky, Meadows breaks out a blues-influenced, percussive solo, showing a more accomplished improvisational direction. The pianist's articulation is aggressive and forthright—this is not the tender-touch pianist of years ago.

Meadows digs deeper into the pop mold by singing the late-'70s Michael Jackson hit "Rock With You." The tune is given a smooth, easy feel; the strong backbeat on the bridge and chorus is gone, and the anthemic song leans more toward background music.

Aside from a stop-time version of "Groovin' High," complete with thrilling time-signature changes, the rest of the record is all Meadows originals. Compositionally, Meadows gravitates toward interesting, twisting melody lines, played ably and with deftness by alto saxophonist Brent Birckhead.

Though he's still evolving as an artist, *Somethin' Good* is a strong leap forward for Meadows.

—Jon Ross

Somethin' Good: Come Together; Just Imagine; Rock With You; Somethin' Good; Once Upon A Purple Night; Less Catchy; Way Up Here; For You; Groovin' High; Get Lost; Lush Life. (68:18)
Personnel: Mark Meadows, piano, vocals; Paul Bollenback, guitar; Warren Wolf, vibes; Brent Birckhead, alto saxophone; Christie Dashiell, Lena Seikaly, vocals; Eric Wheeler, bass; Eric Kennedy, drums.
Ordering info: markgmeadows.com

Various Artists
Creative Music Studio Archive Selections, Vol. 1

INNOVA 805

★★★★

Founded in 1971 by Ornette Coleman, Karl Berger and Ingrid Sertso, and based in Woodstock, New York, the Creative Music Studio brought jazz and classical musicians together with students for workshops, concerts and jam sessions until 1984.

Recently the CMS has been digitizing its archive of performances and interviews. This is the first release of the recordings made there. The three-disc set is divided up into one CD of small groups, one CD of larger ensembles and the final CD of world music.

The "Small Groups" CD features duo and trios. In their duo from 1980, Ed Blackwell and Charles Brackeen are their usual responsive selves with Blackwell's drums adding melody to Brackeen's pretty, lyrical lines or dictating rhythms to go with Brackeen's lower-register phrases. David Izenzon's trio reminds us what a great bass sound he had. It matches well against the breathy, ethereal vocals of Ingrid Sertso, who slides between pitches but never lands on the notes in a definitive manner, reflecting the avant-garde style of that time.

Discs 2 and 3 are where this compilation really gets going. Disc 2 pairs Olu Dara, Oliver Lake and Roscoe Mitchell with the CMS Orchestra. Dara's cuts exhibit a loose and fun attitude, whether stomping an off-kilter big band blues under harmonica or rising in drone harmonies underneath his trumpet. Lake's music with the orchestra works off the big band riffing, as he plays high-register notes and squeals. On "CMS Scene 2," he plays long melancholy lines over a grounded bass and long notes from the band. The one tune with Mitchell has a slow buildup with stark lines over a soft orchestra passage that was a trait of his work with the Art Ensemble. By the end, it has a herky-jerky melody played by the orchestra with great energy.

The same energy carries over to Disc 3, which leads off with several cuts from Turkish horn and windman Ismet Siral. These combine the reedy sound of Middle Eastern and Moroccan horns with a loping, repeating percussion that possesses a frenzied, ecstatic tone that Coleman and the Master Musicians of Joujouka have perfected. Siral's other tunes here are less loud, but never lack in intensity. Nana Vasconcelos comes next with two songs that are mainly percussion followed by kora player Foday Suso, whose compositions have the West African feel of his native Ghana, complete with the driving percussion of a young Adam Rudolph and Hamid Drake.

There is a lot to take in on these three varied CDs, but what is consistent throughout is the relaxed yet committed exchange between the musicians and between the musicians and the students. It's very different from tense studio situations where the clock is ticking or a nightclub gig where a player might be trying to entertain paying patrons. *—David Kunian*

Creative Music Studio Archive Selections, Vol. 1: Disc 1: Untitled 1; Untitled 2; Untitled 3; Untitled 4; May Day; Child Of The Night; I Am A Leaf For Today; 7inC; Ashiata; Okidanokh. (58:53) Disc 2: Untitled 1; Untitled 2; Untitled 3; CMS Scene 1; CMS Scene 2; CMS Scene 3; Two By Two; Untitled. (59:54) Disc 3: Oy; Untitled; Merdevin; Call And Response; Berimbau Solo; Kuumba Sora; Demba Tenkeren; Disco Gate. (58:55)

Personnel: Disc 1: Ed Blackwell, drums (1–4); Charles Brackeen, soprano, tenor saxophones (1–4); David Izenson, bass (5–7); Ingrid Setso, vocals (5–7); Karl Berger (5–7), Frederic Rzewski (8), Ursula Oppens (8), piano; Leroy Jenkins, violin (9–10); James Emery, guitar (9–10). Disc 2: Olu Dara, trumpet, harmonica (1–3); Oliver Lake, alto sax, flute (4–7); Michael Gregory, guitar (4–7); James Harvey (4–7), Garrett List (8), trombone; Roscoe Mitchell, saxophones (8); CMS Orchestra (1–8). Disc 3: Ismet Siral, ney, flugelhorn, soprano saxophone (1–3); Steve Gorn, bansuri flutes (1–3); Nana Vasconcelos, vocals, berimbau (4–5); Foday Suso, kora (6–8); Adam Rudolph, Hamid Drake, percussion (6–8); John Marsh, e-bass (6–8).

Ordering info: innova.mu


Joe Wilder

EDWARD BERGER

A Man for All Sessions

There are two ways to shatter racial ceilings in America: brute stardom and patient persistence. Joe Wilder was never a star, but he was persistent. And he lived long enough to see it pay off handsomely. In ***Joe Wilder and the Breaking of Barriers in American Music*** **(Temple University Press)**, Edward Berger atones for what he sees as America's failure to fully recognize the trumpeter's talents with a full-scale biography of the kind we don't often get—that of an unfamous person. It reminds us that fame comes with long odds attached, but that the music profession offers many midlevel tiers in which a great player can sustain a rewarding career for decades without dealing with autograph hounds.

The fact that such opportunities exist today for African American players, Berger argues, is due in no small measure to the quite tenacity of Wilder, whose modesty never short-changed a sense of his own worth or the fair treatment to which it was entitled. Wilder had trained early for a classical career. Perhaps its formalities and disciplines shaped something of his character. But when he began his career in 1940–'41, classical opportunities were few to none. Black musicians played with black bands, period. So he spent his early years with Les Hite, Lionel Hampton and Jimmie Lunceford. More than once, he explains how he would use classical techniques to fake his way through jazz solos.

Berger interviewed his subject at great length, permitting Wilder to tell much of his own story. His candidness is refreshing. Of Benny Goodman, with whom he toured Russia in 1962, he says, "He treated me like dirt." Wilder became the first musician to bring Goodman up on charges before the union. He enjoyed hustling for solo space next to Joe Newman in the Basie brass section, but he was never sentimental where money was concerned. He turned down his idol Duke Ellington in 1948 because Duke couldn't meet his salary with Lucky Millinder.

This is not just another jazz biography, though. Wilder's man-for-all-sessions professionalism and civility would help break ground for black musicians in such broader and less-traveled venues as network radio work, television, Broadway musicals and even the classical scene. These are Berger's main story lines. He sketches in much useful context, starting with Wilder's three years in the Marines, when composer Bobby Troup got him transferred into the band at Camp Lejeune.

But it was when Wilder decided he wanted to leave the road and settle in New York that the real story begins. Long before blind auditions became the norm, he was the second black player (after bassist Al Hall) to get consistent work in the Broadway pit, where he started with *Guys and Dolls* in 1950 and hopped from one hit to the next through 1957. It's a road paved with many anecdotes of small but inspiring decencies that Berger relates as he gives a full picture of the special talents, musical and political, that were required to navigate that often closed community.

Network staff work was even more delicate. Progressive pressures had pried open those doors for a few token players in the early '40s. But when the heat was off, the doors quietly closed and the black musicians largely disappeared. Wilder's self-effacing manner made him a passive pioneer. To him it was unseemly to play the activist, or even press overtly for gig. When he finally joined ABC in 1957, it was merit, not marketing, that did it.

After network staff work dried up in the '70s, Wilder played everything from society club dates to 10 years with the Symphony of the New World. But it was the jazz repertory movement that best served his classical instincts and jazz experience. To younger players like Wynton Marsalis, Warren Vache and Victor Goines, who brought him to the faculty of Juilliard at the age of 80, Wilder was a living summation of jazz history.

In a brief introduction, Marsalis writes of the "dignity and personal grandeur that he has as a man," suggesting that musical intelligence and personal character are one. It may not have made Wilder "famous." But when he died earlier this year at 92, he was one of the most admired musicians among his peers. In Berger's account, which also includes a discography, musicianship and character exist in an intimate symbiosis. **DB**

Ordering info: temple.edu/tempress

Chicago Jazz Philharmonic Chamber Ensemble
Sketches Of Spain Revisited

316 RECORDS 31607

★★★½

What distinguishes Orbert Davis' Chicago Jazz Philharmonic Chamber Ensemble's *Sketches Of Spain Revisited* from the original Miles Davis/Gil Evans recording isn't just the long title. What makes their treatment worthy of repeated listenings and not just a knock-off has to do with Davis' convincing immersion into that world.

On Joaquin Rodrigo's timeless "Concierto de Aranjuez," the piano (an instrument not present in the original) joins with trumpeter-conductor Davis in the quiet interlude where Miles played across flutes. It may be a minor substitution, but it suggests things to come as the music eventually moves beyond "Concierto de Aranjuez" into thematic material during the middle of the program similar to but clearly different from the original *Sketches Of Spain*. In fact, only one other selection from that recording is revisited in this program of five pieces: Evans' haunting swinger "Solea."

The makeup of the ensemble substitutes four brass in place of the original 13, and includes a string quartet as well as piano (no harp). This clear break in sound and form suggests more ease and a less catholic approach while maintaining the original feel and style of the original "Concierto."

"Solea" is played at a slightly slower pace at roughly the same length. A difficult piece to render, with its relatively open form and novel rhythmic structure, this version lacks the internal drive of the original, the unique drumming phrases somewhat distracting here even as Leandro Lopez Varady's piano voicings add a more jazzy counterpoint. And, with the addition of the main theme of the "Concierto" in a kind of recapitulation, the power of Evans' mysterious original loses a necessary steam. *—John Ephland*

Sketches Of Spain Revisited: Concierto de Aranjuez; Muerte del Matador; El Moreno; El Albaicin; Solea. (44:55)

Personnel: Orbert Davis, conductor, trumpet, flugelhorn; Kedgrick Pullums, flute, alto flute, piccolo; Steve Eisen, flute, alto flute, tenor saxophone (3); Somerlie DePasquale, oboe; Anna Najoom, clarinet; Michael Salter, bass clarinet; David Spencer, trumpet, flugelhorn; Jessica Pearce, French horn: Henry Salgado, trombone; Michael Hogg, tuba; Julia Pavia, Kate Carter, violin; Lynn LaPlante Allaway, viola; Ellen Frolichstein, cello; Leandre Lopez Varady, piano; Stewart Miller, bass; Ernie Adams, drums, cajon, doumbek, percussion; Suzanne Osman, doumbek, oud; Sarah Allen, timpani; Jonathan Reed, snare drum, triangle.

Ordering info: chijazzphil.org

Joe Morris Quartet
Balance

CLEAN FEED 306

★★★★

In his eloquent liner notes to *Balance*, guitarist Joe Morris recounts his motivations for forming a quartet with violist Mat Maneri—and his impulse for breaking up the band in 2000, after seven years. Morris admits resenting that people told him the parting was "a terrible idea." But his electric guitar and Maneri's amplified viola were not only a great sonic pairing; the final rhythm section of bassist Chris Lightcap and drummer Gerald Cleaver made the quartet especially strong. That incarnation produced *Underthru* (OmniTone, 1999), a marvel of free melody and noir-ish atmosphere; it remains the intrepid guitarist's most engaging release.

After burying the hatchet with Maneri and sensing a fertile path ahead, Morris reunited the quartet in Brooklyn to record the freely improvised *Balance*. It isn't as obviously tune-rich as *Underthru*, taking longer to grow on a listener. But given time, the six pieces take hold as if one undulating song.

Distinctively, Morris works from a tonal palette dry enough to make Jim Hall seem like Jimi Hendrix; his instrument can sound more akin to an Indian *sarod* than an electric guitar. Maneri's viola sings and saws through imaginative solos and commentaries, and it blends wonderfully with the guitarist's flinty single-note lines and harmonic shards, evoking whole worlds of music—not only shades of Ornette Coleman but abstractions of Africa, India and Appalachia. *—Bradley Bambarger*

Balance: Thought; Effort; Trust; Purpose; Substance; Meaning. (56:46)
Personnel: Joe Morris, guitar; Mat Maneri, viola; Chris Lightcap, bass; Gerald Cleaver, drums.
Ordering info: cleanfeed-records.com

Ryan Keberle & Catharsis
Into The Zone

GREENLEAF 1040

★★★★

Trombonist Ryan Keberle has described his group Catharsis as an opportunity to make music from the heart rather than the head, but the band's sophomore release demonstrates how harmoniously the two can work together. The pieces that Keberle pens for his pianoless quartet—here supplemented by saxophonist Scott Robinson and vocalist Camila Meza—are both accessible and thoughtful, lyrical and cerebral. Keberle and his bandmates (trumpeter Mike Rodriguez, bassist Jorge Roeder and drummer Eric Doob) weave their voices together with supple ease and understated grace to conjure a collective sound that embraces the listener while rewarding closer attention. Opener "Inevitable Blues" makes reference to Keberle's ongoing exploration of the music's roots with a bright horn melody over Doob's slippery rhythms. Meza makes her first appearance on the aptly named "Gallop," her fluid, wordless vocals flowing around the tune's candombe-inspired rhythms like river water around rocks smoothed by time. The album's two vocal standards are taken at languorous pace. Roeder's billowing bass sound cushions Meza's breathy lament on "Ballad Of The Sad Young Men," while on "Easy To Love," the surging solo section works more effectively than the crawling rubato verses. *—Shaun Brady*

Into The Zone: Inevitable Blues; Gallop; Ballad Of The Sad Young Men; Without A Thought; Simple Sermon; Cheryl; Easy To Love; Zone. (56:20)
Personnel: Ryan Keberle, trombone, melodica; Mike Rodriguez, trumpet; Jorge Roeder, bass, bass fx; Eric Doob, drums; Camila Meza, voice; Scott Robinson, tenor saxophone.
Ordering info: greenleafmusic.com

DownBeat's 2014 HOLIDAY GIFT GUIDE

Blue Note: Uncompromising Expression: 75 Years of the Finest in Jazz **(Chronicle Books) is a detailed history of the label, featuring vintage photographs and vibrant collages, such as this one depicting classic album covers.**

CELEBRATING BLUE NOTE

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Holiday Cheer

By Frank-John Hadley

Listeners again have the opportunity to bask in Yuletide's warm glow, their quilted stockings stuffed with new or reissued albums of holiday music. Some of these releases have real shots at becoming modern classics—or at least discs that you'll want to hear again next year. Time will tell.

World-class opera and classical soprano **Renée Fleming**, presenting her first holiday album, ***Christmas In New York*** **(Decca 0021104; 56:19 ★★★★)**, loosens up and captures some of the down-to-earth spirit of the jazz singer she used to be in her college years. Her interpretative skills are more than proficient applied to well-known Christmas songs and seldom-encountered choices (19th-century carol "In The Bleak Midwinter," Sandy Denny's "Who Knows Where The Time Goes"), even though she sings with over-enunciated affectation here and there. Fleming's duet with Broadway singer Kelli O'Hara, "Silver Bells," romanticizes the holiday beyond tolerance. Happily, Fleming holds her own in the presence of imposing guests Brad Mehldau, Kurt Elling, Gregory Porter, Chris Botti and Wynton Marsalis. She and her friends make beautiful music, negating thoughts about it being background sounds for shopping at big-ticket NYC boutiques.

Ordering info: decca.com

1005; 35:04 ★★★). The depth of Lang's devotion to the holiday is evidenced by the care and thought that went into his composing nine aural pleasantries of the season (he didn't write the title track). Four lead singers (best of all is sweet-voiced Annie Sellick) and a total of eight musicians, all based in Nashville, walk around the thin ice of mawkish sentimentality successfully. The backup singers aren't as fortunate.

Ordering info: ricklangmusic.com

For the third time, the Mack Avenue label takes measure of the holiday, this winter using a dozen tracks by nine roster artists to ornament the latest prime compilation, ***It's Christmas On Mack Avenue*** **(Mack Avenue 1090; 57:55 ★★★★)**. Singers Cécile McLorin Salvant and Sachal Vasandani, vibraphonist Warren Wolf, the Christian McBride


Joey DeFrancesco

TRACY KEARNEY


TriBeCaStan

Usually found in bluegrass and gospel communities, New England songwriter **Rick Lang** makes a successful transition into the milieu of conservative swinging jazz with his second holiday effort, ***That's What I Love About Christmas*** **(RLM Records** Trio and all the rest rejuvenate serious and fun favorites with crosscurrents of delight, tender feeling, inquisitiveness and irreverence. Most affecting of all is Salvant's breathtakingly wonderful appraisal of "Have Yourself A Merry Little Christmas." Excellent musicianship throughout the album combines with tradition in shaping today's jazz holiday sensibility.

Ordering info: mackavenue.com

Debuting on Santa's music scene, **Joey DeFrancesco** celebrates in grand style with ***Home For The Holidays*** **(JD Music 10282; 59:43/40:26 ★★★★)**—23 selections on two discs. The first is lighthearted ("The Party") as he uses his outstanding gifts as an organist (and occasional trumpeter and pianist) on freshly arranged perennials plus two enjoyable originals: the title track and "Christmas At 3 a.m." He shows a predilection for blues feeling in his playing and his two stabs at singing. Among his like-minded revelers is the honorable saxophone elder George Coleman. The second disc ("The Tradition") has him turning his attention to 10 famous carols, picking right up on the special singularities of


Renée Fleming

DECCA/ANDREW ECCLES

the season. He develops his ideas with vitality and consistency, in a combo or solo three times.

Ordering info: joeydefrancesco.com

DeFrancesco doesn't countenance triviality or candy cane-sweet emotion, and neither does tenorman **Pee Wee Ellis**, widely known for his work with James Brown and Van Morrison. Some of the pleasure of hearing his recorded-in-Germany jazz album ***The Spirit Of Christmas*** **(Minor Music 801143; 63:23 ★★★★)** comes from how confident and natural he is alongside his longtime funk-and-jazz colleague Fred Wesley (on trombone) and a coalition of sidemen from back home in the States, as well as players from Germany and England. New Orleans' Lillian Bouteé brings stirring wintry bonhomie to her vocals on the gospel-blues "In The Upper Room" and two more, while star British jazz singer Clare Teal's pleasing vocals on "Have Yourself A Merry Little Christmas" and "What Are You Doing New Year's Eve?" earn her an extra piece of minced pie at her holiday meal. But German singer Peter Fessler's appeal (on covers of Irving Berlin and George Michael tunes) is a mystery.

Ordering info: minormusic.de

Frank Sinatra's Christmas records, including collections, form a bewildering snow squall because they've gone in and out of print so often. One thing, however, is certain: His finest holiday album is 1957's *A Jolly Christmas From Frank Sinatra*, on Capitol. A

brand-new compilation, ***The Classic Christmas Album*** **(Columbia/Legacy 88883743612; 40:02 ★★★)**, strikes a passable balance between popular tunes and more reflective ones, all from the 1940s. The real curios are the African-American spirituals "I've Got A Home In That Rock" and "Jesus Is A Rock In The Weary Land." (There are also two previously unreleased tracks.) Young Sinatra is an appealing singer, but his vocal cords are more often than not coated with schmaltz. Backup singers are insipid.

Ordering info: legacyrecordings.com

Recording one last album, ***Transeamus*** **(ECM 0021555; 67:32 ★★★★)**, before calling it quits after a fine 40-year run, the English four-man **Hilliard Ensemble** weaves a gorgeous polyphonic patchwork of warm colors from countertenor, tenor and baritone voices on English carols and motets dating from the 15th century. Enchanting rather than narcotizing, the ancient choral music replenishes itself through the quartet's interpretative finesse. They sing in English and Latin.

Ordering info: ecmrecords.com

Brooking no compromise to tradition on its second holiday fling, ***Coal, Again*** **(Evergreene; 25:30 ★★★½)**, the New York-based motley crew **TriBeCaStan** merrily parodies holiday classics using many exotic world instruments in the contexts of ska, free-jazz, klezmer, early King Crimson and several trans-global hybrid mutations. One of the zaniest Christmassy efforts to appear since the bar was set in the 1950s by cartoon voice actor Mel Blanc's 78 "Yah Das Ist Ein Christmas Tree."

Ordering info: evergreene.com

Fans of roots music would do well to check out ***An Americana Christmas*** **(New West 6320; 56:20 ★★★½)**, a compilation of new and reissued Xmas songs by American roots musicians and a band based in the Netherlands, the Common Linnets. Guitarist Luther Dickinson, of the North Mississippi Allstars, is onto something different, splitting "Hark! The Herald Angels Sing!" into sections of conventional caroling and off-center steel guitar-and-r&b-horn instrumentation. Dwight Yoakam is almost as imaginative, taking "Run, Run Rudolph" to a honky-tonk. Bob Dylan and some boisterous friends, apparently enjoying their Apple Brandy Hot Toddies, transform "Must Be Santa" into an eccentric polka. Emmylou Harris' singing of "The First Noel" defines the word exquisite, and up-and-comer Nikki Lane brings her "high-class hillbilly" charm to an original tinsel tune titled "Falalaalove Ya." Warmhearted Neil and Pegi Young, serious-minded Johnny Cash and, among others, John Prine display their substantial expressive gifts singing in their comfort zones. However, the aforementioned Netherlanders get tangled in mawkish sentiment rendering "At Christmas Time," and the tiresome Old 97's band isn't any better doing their own "Here It Is Christmas Time."

Ordering info: newwestrecords.com

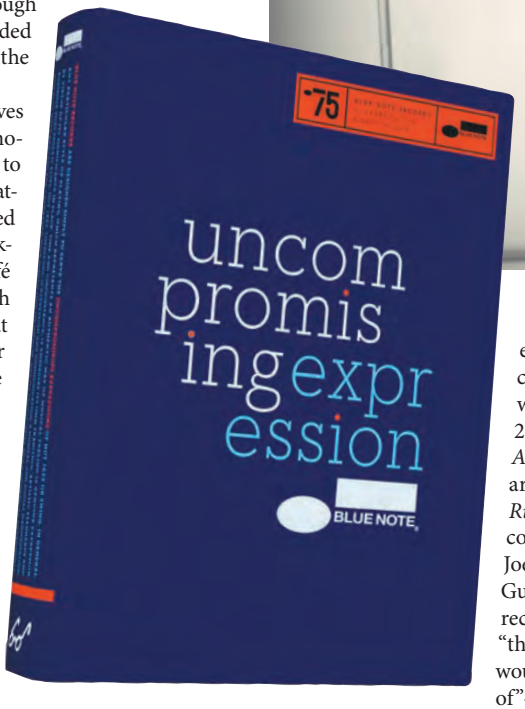
At press time, **Larry Carlton** was still recording his debut holiday offering, *Four Hands And A Heart Christmas* (335records.com), but DownBeat got to hear some tracks. Carlton decides to interpret famous carols like "Silent Night," "We Three Kings" and "Angels We Have Heard On High." Sure seems safe and uninspiring on paper, but the guitarist's virtuosic execution, his ample musical imagination and his unwavering conviction are such that he never errs on the side of boring familiarity. Pithy and relaxed, Carlton's guitar playing—his second pair of hands provides overdubs—conveys those attributes humbly, in service of the messages in the carols. **DB**

Evolution of the Brand

By Phillip Lutz

Blue Note Records had its start, in a sense, when a teenage Alfred Lion first embraced jazz in the Weimar Republic, that creatively vibrant but politically fragile interlude in Germany between the World Wars. As recounted in *Blue Note: Uncompromising Expression: 75 Years of the Finest in Jazz* (Chronicle Books)—a 400-page, lucidly written, lavishly illustrated history of the label being issued on its 75th anniversary—Lion's embrace of the music was a bold move in the face of Fascist forces that labeled jazz degenerate art. It proved the first in a series of such actions that would eventually yield a recording empire.

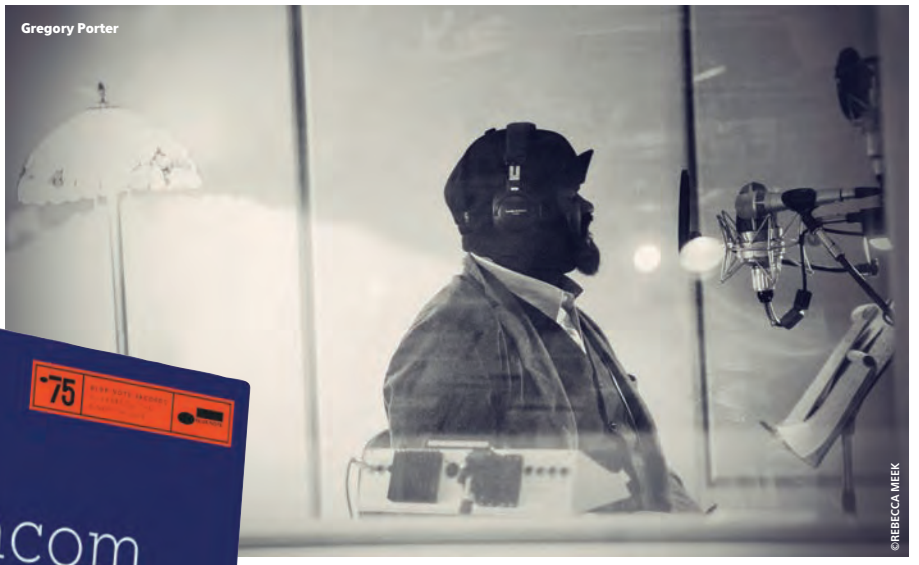
British writer Richard Havers' text tells the tale, accompanied by Blue Note's signature artwork, session notes, contact sheets and a host of photos, many by Lion's childhood friend Francis Wolff, who, with Lion, became an expatriate in New York and ended up running Blue Note. In seven chapters of prose laced with commentary on specific albums, the book weaves a story of jazz through the evolution of the Blue Note brand. And it does so in enough detail that even a jaded fan will acknowledge the pleasure of discovery.



The narrative moves from the racist atmosphere in Germany to the racially segregated clubs in the United States before evoking the milieu of Café Society, the Greenwich Village club that helped break the color line. That is where Lion heard boogie-woogie pianists Meade "Lux" Lewis and Albert Ammons, whom he recorded in 1939—a leap of faith, perhaps his boldest move and the one that got what would become the Blue Note label rolling.

The label, the book grants, was a little late to the game with bebop and its variants, but it came onboard big-time in the 1950s, when, according to Havers, "Blue Note found its style, its natural rhythm, and truly began to deliver on its founding principles"—namely, "uncompromising expressions by young musicians who were on the cutting edge of jazz." Documenting the innovations of Thelonious Monk (*Genius Of Modern Music*), Bud Powell (*The Amazing…*), Milt Jackson (*Wizard Of The Vibes*)—the list goes on—the book, like the label, hits its stride.

The book argues that, heading into the turbulent 1960s, the label was producing topflight albums, peaking mid-decade with classics like Wayne Shorter's *Speak No Evil*, Herbie Hancock's *Maiden Voyage* and Horace Silver's *Song For My Father* before rock and some elements of the avant-garde began eroding audiences for jazz. By the end of the '70s, the label had "lost the plot" and, during the first half of the '80s, it "lay dormant" in the States, surviving on reissues in Europe and Japan. But it was revived by new signings under a new leader, Bruce Lundvall.


Gregory Porter

©REBECCA MEEK

The label enjoyed enormous commercial success with Norah Jones' 2002 debut, *Come Away With Me*, and artistic triumphs like *Rush Hour*, the 1995 collaboration between Joe Lovano and Gunther Schuller—"a record," Havers writes, "that Lion and Wolff would be very proud of"—and a repeat of the pairing in 2006 on *Streams Of Expression*. On that effort, Schuller reworked material from Miles Davis' *Birth Of The Cool*, on which he also appeared. Though the book touches on Schuller's work on *Birth Of The Cool*, a Capitol album, it surprisingly fails to mention *Streams Of Expression*.

The book, on the other hand, offers valuable detail on scenes that few listeners think about and even fewer see, like engineer Rudy Van Gelder's groundbreaking studios in New Jersey. And the gossip is priceless, including anecdotes of Billie Holiday trying to crash a Sidney Bechet recording session and Lion locking himself in his office to avoid an overly solicitous Stanley Turrentine.

Mercifully for a coffee-table book, the author appears to have no real agenda. But his voice comes through at the volume's close, when he offers a lament that calls to mind the plight of jazzmen, from Bechet to Davis (another seminal Blue Note artist), who at one point or another sought refuge in Europe. Commenting on singer Gregory Porter's blues-infused 2013 album, *Liquid Spirit*—which won a Grammy for Best Jazz Vocal Album and should by all rights have had wide mainstream appeal—Havers writes: "What's staggering is that this album is not a bigger seller in America; it is European listeners who have taken Porter to their heart. Maybe it's just a case of the prophet being without honor in his own land, but if so, this needs rectifying."

The book also includes three forewords—two by Blue Note artists Shorter and Robert Glasper and another from the label's current president, Don Was.

A companion piece to the book is the *Uncompromising Expression* box set of five CDs containing 75 singles that span the 75-year history of the Blue Note label. The CDs were curated by Havers, and each one covers a specific era of the label's evolution.

The CDs proceed chronologically, with the first ("From Boogie to Bop") covering 14 years, beginning in 1939; the last ("Can You Dig It?") covering fully 45 years, ending in 2014; and the middle three ("Messengers, Preachers and Hard Bop," "Struttin', Moanin' and Somethin' Else" and "Bossa, Blues and Hits") covering only 12 years in total (1953 to 1965)—pointing to the impressive output during that fertile period. **DB**

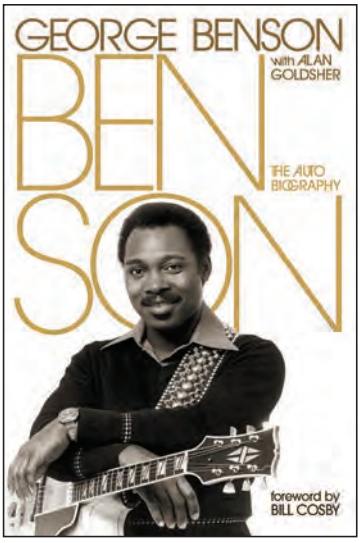
Ordering info: chroniclebooks.com; bluenote.com

Driving Music

By John Ephland

It's a breezy memoir. At 220 pages, *Benson: The Autobiography* (Da Capo Press) is loaded with George Benson's respectful commentary on practically everybody he has ever worked with, from former boss Brother Jack McDuff to Miles Davis to Frank Sinatra, all of whom had led, shall we say, colorful public lives. The prose presents a litany of Benson having something to do with one "sweet cat" after another. (He does, however, lay into Benny Goodman, leaving the familiar impression that working with the King of Swing could be a tad difficult.) More substantial than the anecdotes about icons is the convincing story of a struggling musician in postwar Pittsburgh coming up through the ranks to eventually live out his version of the good life.

In tandem with tales of playing the chitlin' circuit, learning the ropes with manager Jimmy Boyd, negotiating with record company execs, and playing with scores of musicians is the recurring theme of how Benson learned to balance various musical styles over the decades.



With assistance from journalist Alan Goldsher, Benson recounts the early days of his career and his commercial triumphs. The guitarist-vocalist—who began performing publicly as a tweener in the mid-'50s as "Little Georgie"—developed a philosophy succinctly conveyed on page 206: "I came to the conclusion that when you're making a record, the greatest thing you can do is come up with a great song." That "great song" would emerge big-time as Benson blew past his Columbia, Verve, A&M and CTI record days as a leader to sign with Warner Bros.

From the mid-'70s to the early '80s, he was a frequent presence on pop radio, with hits like "This Masquerade," "On Broadway" "Give Me The Night" and "Turn Your Love Around." Accessible versions of songs like "Breezin'" and "Nature Boy" helped turned this hard-working, tireless musician—who has rarely missed a gig and who turned down offers to join both Miles Davis *and* James Brown—into a superstar. And he has accomplished it all with an aesthetic centered around jazz, but also mixing in hearty doses of r&b, soul, funk, blues, doo-wop and pop.

Benson reflects on his work with producer Tommy LiPuma for the 1977 Warner Bros. album *In Flight*, when the pair were working on a follow-up to the No. 1 album *Breezin'*: "In terms of the material, we used the same basic *Breezin'* formula: some jazz stuff, some ballads, some pop stuff, and some vocal stuff." Stuff, indeed. As for *Give Me The Night*, his collaboration with Quincy Jones, Benson says the album "demonstrated all of my musical loves: r&b, soul, Latin, and bebop." Driving around Beverly Hills at night, playing this music, including the chart-topping title track, Benson couldn't help saying, "Now this is what I call drive-around music." (Three tracks on the album earned Benson Grammy awards in three different categories.)

Clearly, Benson the singer brought as much to the music as Benson the guitarist did, his vocals augmenting a guitar style influenced by Charlie Christian, Wes Montgomery and his stepfather, Tom Collier. As a *jazz* artist, Benson's career arc was from another galaxy, his album sales going from the hundreds to the hundreds of thousands and eventually to the millions. Not surprisingly, Gentleman George doesn't use his book to settle scores with jazz critics who slammed him for his ventures into pop and smooth-jazz territory.

But he does provide an insider's view of the recording process, and comments on the significant shifts that have altered the music business over the years. "When I first started going into studios," Benson writes, "we'd be lucky if we had two days … . There was an old joke that went like this: What's the difference between a Prestige record and a Blue Note record? Answer: One day of rehearsal." He recounts how Warner Bros. gave him time to focus on things like proper equalization and mixing, especially now that he had more charts, more musicians, more choices.

The book includes five "Interludes" that reveal aspects of Benson's influences and personality: "A Quick Tour of Pittsburgh," "Catching the Early Trane," "Miles Ahead and Miles Beyond," "Chops vs. Vibes" and "I Keep Going." In the fourth Interlude, Benson singles out Wynton Marsalis as an artist who "eventually found a perfect balance between chops and vibe." He adds, "If you want to know how to straddle technique and soul, buy yourself about 50 Gene Ammons records." In the same pithy essay, he addresses the problem of jazz's dwindling audience: "Since pop and rock became America's dominant forms of popular music in the late 1950s and early 1960s, jazz's biggest enemy has been its lack of exposure." He says the solution is simple: "Make people want to give jazz more exposure," with the "best jazz cats" presenting "an evening of heartfelt melodies delivered with a high level of technical proficiency."

The book has a friendly, conversational tone throughout, despite being very lean on Benson's personal life. But fans who want to learn more about the career of one of jazz's most popular artists will enjoy the ride. **DB**

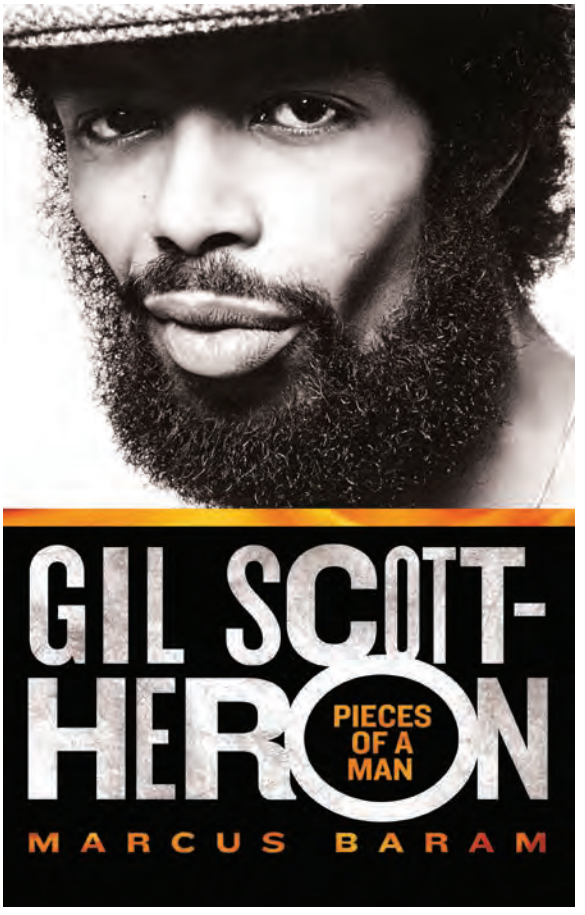
Ordering info: dacapopress.com

Examining the Pieces

By Joe Tangari

Pieces of a Man is at once the most predictable and the most appropriate title for a biography of Gil Scott-Heron. It was the title of his greatest album, but more to the point, any properly told story of Scott-Heron's life has as its main challenge figuring out how the pieces of the man fit together. There are enough contradictions in the man's biography that it's unlikely any writer could put together the puzzle and leave no gaps, but Marcus Baram comes close in this superb work, published by St. Martin's Press.

Prior to his death, Scott-Heron told his own story in a memoir, and though he cites it many times in his own narrative, Baram doesn't rely on it, and he often addresses the way Scott-Heron framed his own life directly. Unlike Scott-Heron, Baram doesn't gloss over his subject's often sad, sometimes harrowing later decades as a crack addict, telling the story through the lens of extensive interviews of Scott-Heron's friends, family and associates.



These chapters are made the more startling by the emphasis Baram places on Scott-Heron's own criticism of drug use during his college years and early career. Baram deals less deftly with the other major contradiction of Scott-Heron's life: His father left in his infancy, and Scott-Heron later had at least two children he failed completely to be a father to, as well as others he often wasn't there for. It's difficult to fault the book for devoting a low word count to matters that weren't at the center of Scott-Heron's creative life, but even as it tries to tell both sides of the story, the prose is sometimes startlingly unsympathetic to the mothers of his first two children.

While his framing of Scott-Heron's inconsistencies varies, Baram is always sharp discussing his subject's work, which the author has obviously lived inside of. Baram adroitly sorts out his subject's different creative impulses, which sometimes tore him in different directions, fleshing him out from the forerunner of rap many people know into a man whose restless creativity was startlingly multifaceted. Scott-Heron's music in particular gets as complete an airing as one could have hoped for, and Baram is adept at drawing the line between the singer-poet's personal life and the subject matter of his songs, some of which, such as "Pieces Of A Man" and "Home Is Where The Hatred Is," are often assumed to be autobiographical when they aren't.

Baram is also careful to situate Scott-Heron the artist within various black musical, poetic, rhetorical and literary traditions, rather than treating him as some sort of Big Bang as identified by the clunky "godfather of hip-hop" title some critics bestowed on him (and with which he never became fully comfortable). Even "The Revolution Will Not Be Televised," Scott-Heron's most iconic statement, is straightforwardly tied to its sources of inspiration, including a Last Poets song that strongly anticipated it. (If mainstream music fans have heard of Scott-Heron, it's because of "The Revolution Will Not Be Televised," which he performed on his 1970 live album *Small Talk At 125th And Lenox* and recorded it again for 1971's *Pieces Of A Man*.)

Scott-Heron was rightfully known and praised for the observational precision of his work. Baram's style is direct, unafraid to speculate on the basis of solid evidence, and always clear about the distinction between fact and opinion, be it the author's opinion or that of one of his interview subjects. Baram delivers the details that make sense out of Scott-Heron's work, and even a deep fan of the man's work will find things to learn here. The pieces of the man may not all fit together perfectly, but the way Baram puts them together, they still make a complete and satisfying picture. **DB**

Ordering info: stmartins.com

Light the Way

Casio has four new sampling keyboards designed for beginners with a passion for music. The Sound eFX line includes the CTK-2400, LK-170, LK-175 and LK-260, all of which can capture audio and play it back with a simple touch of the keyboard. **casiomusicgear.com**

Get a Grip

On-Stage's line of u-mount Snap-On back covers will secure your tablet to a variety of mounting systems, so it's easy to view during practice, on the gig or in the studio. With both the original mounting-post design and the quick-disconnect variations, releasing or securing the mounting bar is fast and easy, and securing it back in the mount is just as simple. Snap-On back covers are available with an elliptical u-mount clamp for gripping mic stands and other round surfaces, or a flat u-mount clamp for holding flat surfaces such as table edges. **onstagestands.com**

Padded Gig Bag

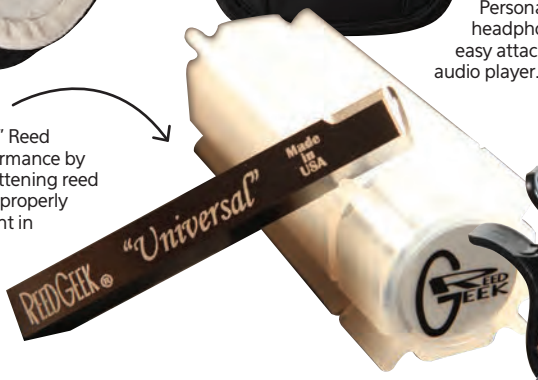
Your instrument travels with you wherever you go inside a Gator ProGo series gig bag like the G-PG Electric. Designed for electric guitars, the G-PG Electric features ultra-thick padded sidewalls, micro-fleece interior, protective rain cover, adjustable and removable backpack straps, an internal shock absorber, tablet pocket and a sheet music pocket. **gatorcases.com**

Silence is Golden

With Yamaha's new Silent Brass systems for trumpet, French horn, trombone and flugelhorn, players can practice while listening to hi-fidelity sound that's only audible to them. Designed for use with headphones, the systems' small pickup mutes offer outstanding sound reduction and provide a natural feel and stable pitch. Each mute features Brass Resonance Modeling, which delivers realistic brass instrument sound. The Personal Studio unit includes a headphone jack and allows for easy attachment to an external audio player. **usa.yamaha.com**

Geeking Out

The ReedGeek "Universal" Reed Tool enhances reed performance by rapidly and accurately flattening reed tables. Players who use it properly will notice an improvement in efficiency, sonic quality and responsiveness. Reeds will perform longer and more consistently, and players will get more "good" reeds out of every box. **reedgeek.com**



Ear for Music

The Music Gift Company's saxophone earrings are crafted from fine English pewter. They make a great stocking-stuffer for jewelry-loving musicians and jazz fans of all ages. **musicgiftsofengland.com**

Tuning Prowess for All

D'Addario's NS Micro Universal Tuner features a reversible, multi-color display and metronome in a small, compact design. The dual-swivel, clip-on mount allows for limitless viewing angles and quick application and removal on any instrument—not just guitars—while the extendable arm provides clear, unobstructed views of the screen. The NS Micro Universal Tuner offers quick note response and tuning accuracy and also features a wide calibration range of A=410–480. **planetwaves.com**

Starts Bright, Stays Bright

The Fermata from Lampcraft provides stable LED illumination on two pages of music by stopping light from dimming as your batteries age. It has three power levels: Low produces very good light for about 11 hours, medium is 50 percent brighter with a battery life of six hours, and high generates almost twice as much light as the low setting and has a battery life of four hours. A padded spring clip enables Fermata to attach easily to the top of either wire folding stands or solid-back stands. **lampcraft.com**

Sound & Comfort

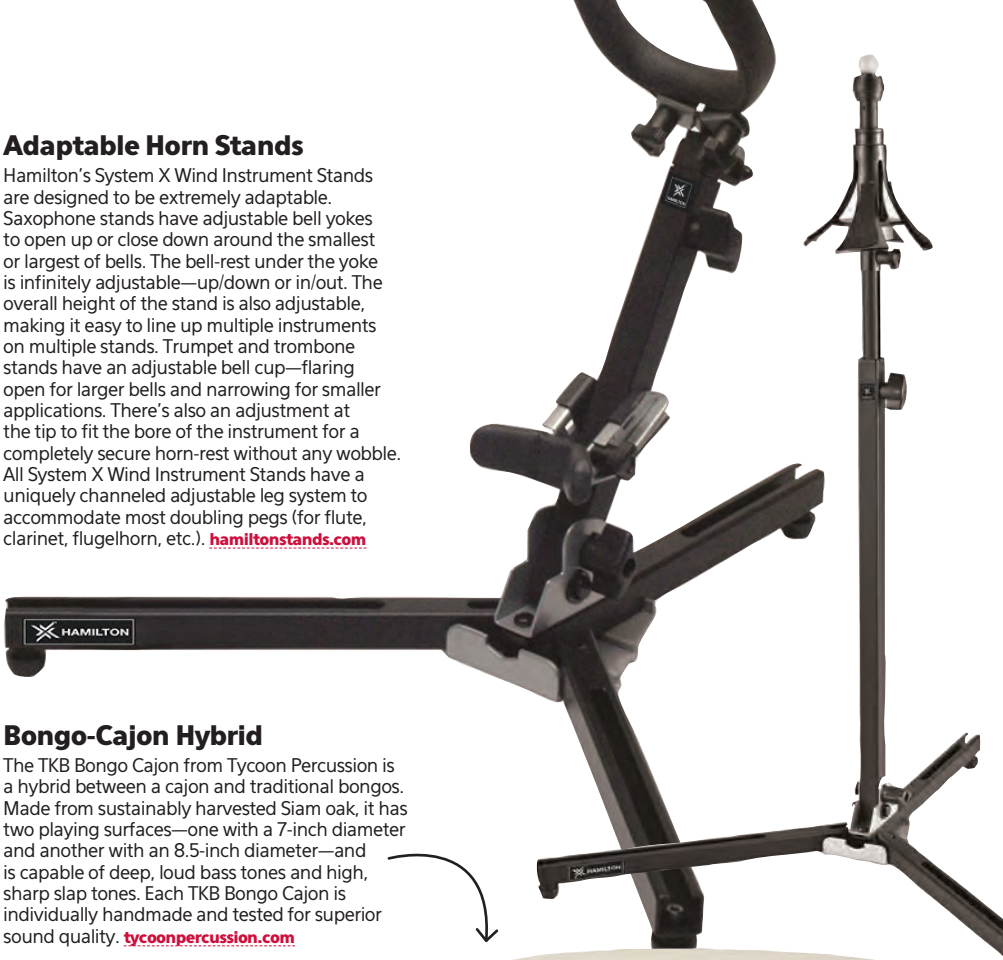
Shure's SRH1540 premium closed-back headphones feature an expansive soundstage for clear, extended high and warm bass. Developed with aluminum alloy and carbon fiber construction as well as Alcantara ear pads, the SRH1540 is built to withstand the rigors of everyday use while ensuring maximum sound isolation and comfort. **shure.com**

Pro Video

HERO3+ is a smaller and lighter version of the GoPro video recorder, adding new features such as wide-angle mode and low-light mode, plus a longer battery life and faster Wi-Fi. **gopro.com**

Adaptable Horn Stands

Hamilton's System X Wind Instrument Stands are designed to be extremely adaptable. Saxophone stands have adjustable bell yokes to open up or close down around the smallest or largest of bells. The bell-rest under the yoke is infinitely adjustable—up/down or in/out. The overall height of the stand is also adjustable, making it easy to line up multiple instruments on multiple stands. Trumpet and trombone stands have an adjustable bell cup—flaring open for larger bells and narrowing for smaller applications. There's also an adjustment at the tip to fit the bore of the instrument for a completely secure horn-rest without any wobble. All System X Wind Instrument Stands have a uniquely channeled adjustable leg system to accommodate most doubling pegs (for flute, clarinet, flugelhorn, etc.). **hamiltonstands.com**



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Talkin' Jazz

Being Here: Conversations on Creating Music by Radhika Philip is a captivating paperback compilation of interviews with extraordinary jazz and improvisational musicians talking about the values and practices that shape their art. The author asks them about composing, improvising, leading groups and the relationship between their art and the audience. Featured artists include Andy Bey, Ben Monder, Billy Hart, Bill Frisell, Brian Blade, Butch Morris, Chris Potter, Dafnis Prieto, David Binney, Dave Douglas, Grégoire Maret, Henry Threadgill, Jane Ira Bloom, Jason Moran, Kenny Wollesen, Maria Schneider, Mark Turner, Robert Glasper, Steve Coleman, Thomas Morgan, Vijay Iyer and William Parker. jazzbooks.com

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Developing the Arranger's Point of View

PEOPLE OCCASIONALLY ASK me how long it took me to write a particular big band piece. My answer is usually pretty vague, because in most cases it's difficult to say when the writing process actually began. While the final scoring process might involve several days, the original idea(s) of the piece may have been created months beforehand and lingered in my head and ears for a long time.

The late trombonist and composer-arranger Bob Brookmeyer talked about an arrangement having a "point of view." What am I trying to say with this song? Am I presenting the song more or less as originally written, or am I using it as a jumping-off point for a larger musical statement?

Developing a point of view involves getting in touch with my inner geek, someone whose idea of fun is sitting at a piano and reharmonizing a melody—*a lot*. I take a lot of time working out harmonic, rhythmic and orchestrational ideas. When Béla Bartók was harmonizing Hungarian folk melodies in the first decades of the 20th century, he observed:

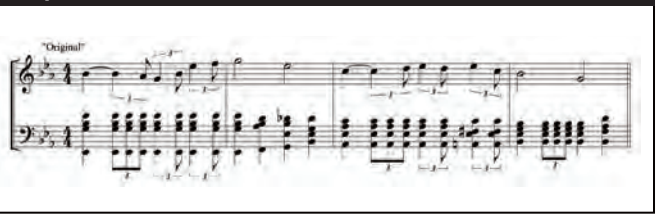
"The simpler the melody the more complex and strange may be the harmonization and accompaniment that go well with it …" (*Béla Bartók Essays*, ed. Benjamin Suchoff, St. Martin's Press).

'Nuf said! So I decided to work with the first two measures of the chorus of "The Battle Hymn Of The Republic" (Example 1). Why? Well, as I write this it's the Fourth of July weekend—Americana! More importantly, the song has a strong tonal, triadic character, something that would lend itself to "complex and strange" harmonization. First I changed the rhythm to four bars of a medium swing feel. Then I harmonized the melody in a variety of ways (see Examples 2a–2d for just a few of them). The movement of the bass is important here. I wanted to construct a bass voice with smooth motion and an interesting shape. Another important consideration is the resulting color of the melody with the new harmony. Bright, dark, bold, pale, pastel, vibrant—these are all words I use to describe harmonic color.

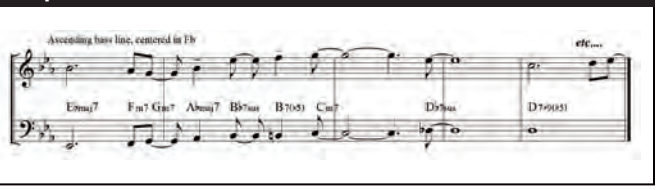
Then I did a lot of sketches for full big band—eight brass and five saxes (AATTB for the saxes; soprano lead would work well in some of the cases). I used many different kinds of voicings, with a variety of densities, weights and sizes. I also mixed in the saxes in a number of different ways. I brainstormed with myself. I just kept writing; whether any particular phrase was "better" or "worse" than any other wasn't my concern at this stage of the game. The important thing was to let my imagination flow and get the music on paper (yes, I still use paper and pencil for this kind of work, putting it into Finale

Jim McNeely

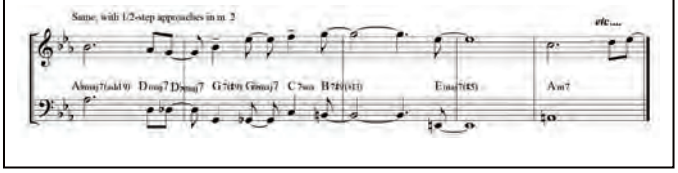
Example 1



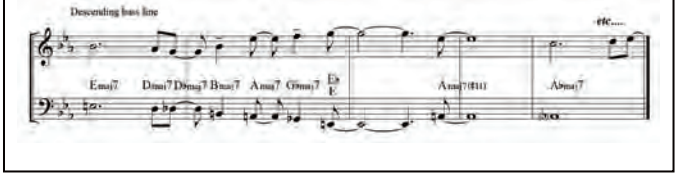
Example 2a



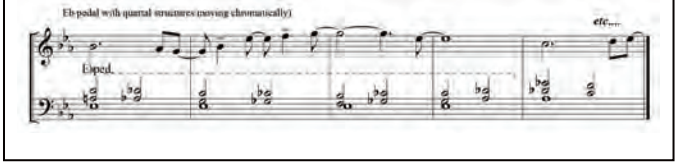
Example 2b



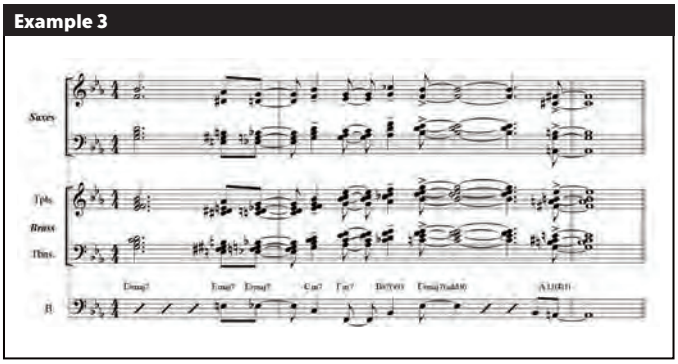
Example 2c



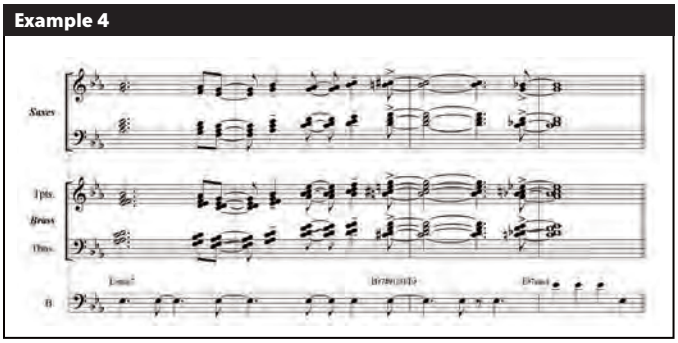
Example 2d



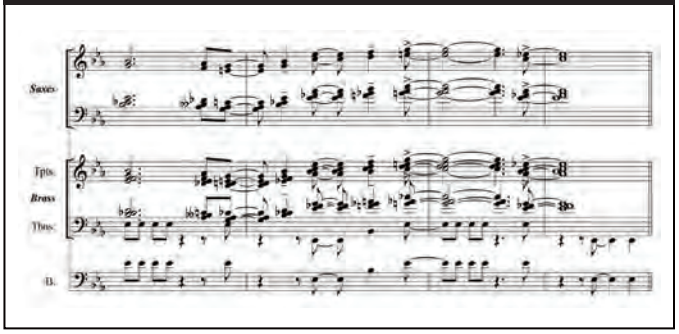
Example 3



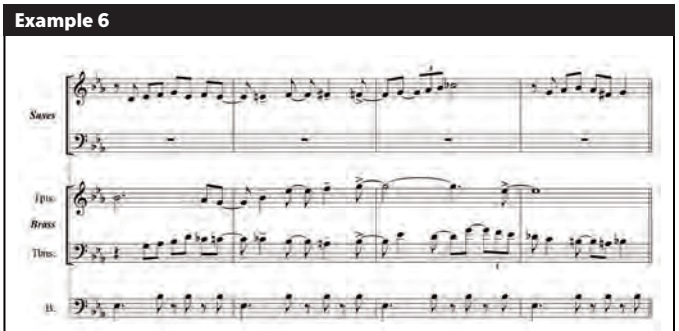
Example 4



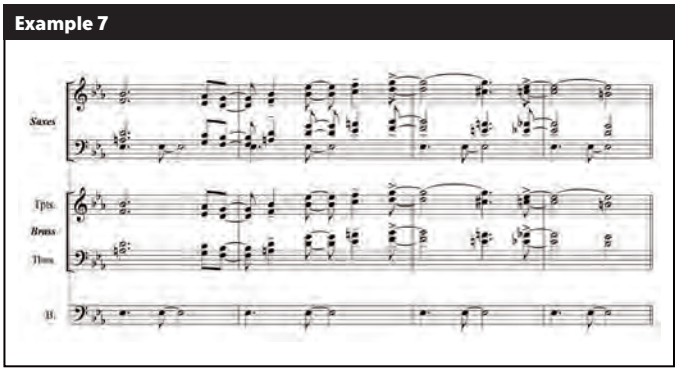
Example 5



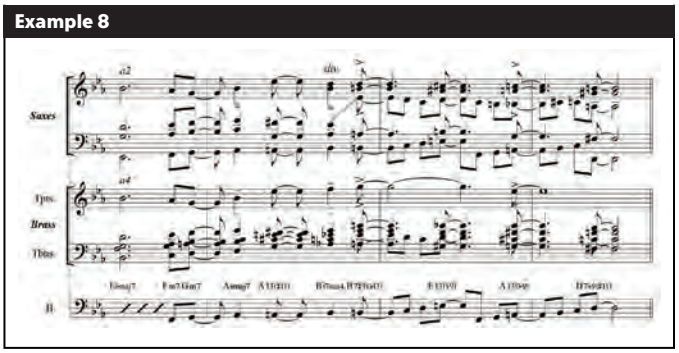
Example 6



Example 7



Example 8



after the fact). Here are a few of the results:

Example 3 is fairly straightforward. The Emaj7 in the first bar is a half-step embellishment of the overall E♭maj texture. The final chord, A13(#11), prepares the way for the A♭maj7 that would occur in the next measure. The trumpet structure forms a B7 chord, and the baritone drops down to anchor the root at the end of the phrase.

Example 4 uses very tight voicings, over an E♭ pedal. It's mostly diatonic to the E♭ major scale, until the "and" of 4 in the second bar, where the voicing is a very tight B♭7#9 voicing. Then it resolves to a voicing for E♭7sus 4, preparing the way for the A♭maj7 in the next bar. The lead alto doubles the lead trumpet for the first five-and-a-half beats. After that I drop the alto down into the voicing, because the intonation with the lead trumpet could be problematic.

Example 5 uses a "constant structure." It's a "thickened melody," with each musician playing the melody starting at a different pitch level. I'm using the bass trombone to reinforce the bass part. This technique, with a wide variety of structures, has been around at least since the mid-'30s, with Duke Ellington's arrangement of Juan Tizol's "Caravan."

Example 6 is contrapuntal: The melody is accompanied by two different lines. There are a number of ways to orchestrate this, using combinations of brass and reeds on each line.

Example 7 employs a technique out of the Gil Evans playbook. In the first two bars the voicing is essentially a drop-two (like a B♭maj7, with the A dropped an octave). It continues diatonically through the E♭ lydian scale until

the third bar, when the lower voices move down chromatically. There are two brass on each line (you might leave out the bass trombone, or use it to reinforce the E♭ pedal). The saxes double the brass; this would be a good place to use soprano sax as the lead saxophone voice. Be careful of the intonation here!

Example 8 is a more traditional harmonization, with an ascending bass line. All four trumpets are in unison on the melody. The two altos start in unison with the trumpets; as the melody ascends, they break off to provide harmonic support. There is also a moving bass line, doubled in the baritone sax, and another moving line in trombone 3 and tenor sax 1.

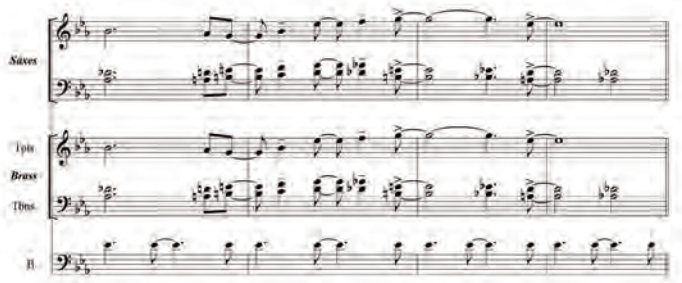
Example 9 uses a technique borrowed (OK, stolen) from Stravinsky (check out the first minute of *The Rite Of Spring*). I call it "roving fourths." The melody is accompanied by a quartal structure that moves chromatically underneath. It's best to avoid octave doublings between the melody and the quartal structure. George Gershwin, Gil Evans, Oliver Nelson and Bob Brookmeyer also number among the guilty parties who've borrowed this device.

Finally, Example 10 employs a technique inspired by the great trumpeter and composer-arranger Thad Jones. The melody is too low for a powerful ensemble statement, but taking it up an octave puts it too high. So take it up a fifth. It works about 98 percent of the time. Here I'm using a number of Thad's devices: trumpets voiced in upper-structure triads (second measure), fifth in the bass trombone (first measure) and a bass line with a great sense of direction and purpose.

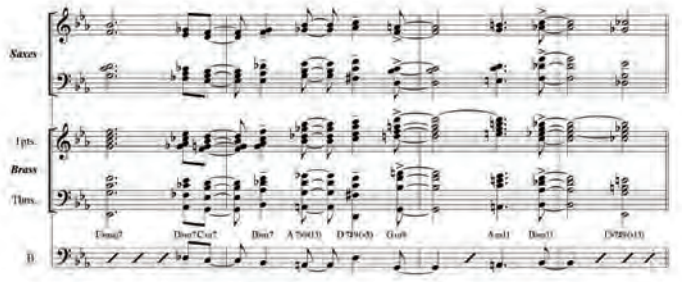
If you're interested is seeing some of the other treatments I developed (there are a lot), please check out my website at jim-mcneely.com. There are many ways to score a melody. You're only limited by your ear, knowledge and sense of adventure. **DB**

Pianist and nine-time Grammy nominee Jim McNeely is composer-in-residence with the Vanguard Jazz Orchestra and Chief Conductor of the Frankfurt Radio Big Band. He teaches jazz composition and arranging at Manhattan School of Music, William Paterson University, and is musical director of the BMI Jazz Composers Workshop.

Example 9



Example 10



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Relating Modes to Pentatonic Scales

IF YOU LEARNED MUSIC LIKE I DID, YOU STARTED OUT PLAYING pentatonic scales and later learned about modes—and they were taught to you as if they were completely new scales to learn. But there is an easy way to pick up six of the modes by relating them to pentatonics. Also, if you learned


Jimi Durso

to play modally, understanding the relationship to pentatonics can be a way to add soulfulness to your playing.

By definition, a pentatonic scale is five notes, and there is a major and a minor version. The modes are all seven-note scales, and by simply adding two notes to the pentatonics you get the major and minor modes (the only mode you're missing with this method is locrian). This is shown in Example 1. To elucidate: The major pentatonic contains the root (R), 2nd, 3rd, 5th and 6th of the major scale. The missing degrees are the 4th and 7th, which produce the major scale (or ionian mode) when added. If we used a ♭7th and 4th, we would get a mixolydian mode; by adding a #4th and 7th, it would be the lydian mode.

Example 2 shows how a similar method can be applied to the minor pentatonic, only it's variations of the 2nd and 7th that give us the minor modes (dorian, aeolian and phrygian).

So how do we apply this? Well, an easy way is to start adding these notes into your licks. In Example 3, we have a minor pentatonic lick. In the next three measures, we add in the notes that would make it into the three minor modes. Example 4 shows the same idea applied to major pentatonic.

You don't have to do it all at once, either. By taking the minor pentatonic and just adding in the 2nd, you create a sound that's more modal than just pentatonic, but isn't quite aeolian or dorian (Example 5). The 4th can be inserted into a major pentatonic scale to make it something between ionian and mixolydian (Example 6). By adding the ♭6th to a minor pentatonic scale, we get the scale tones common to aeolian and phrygian modes; putting the major 7th into the major pentatonic scale gives you something between ionian and lydian.

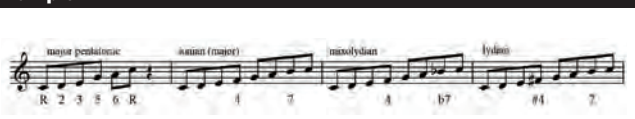
The way I suggest to students to gain familiarity with these elements is to first practice them separately. Do some improvisation just in the pentatonic scales. Get to know them in all keys all over your instrument. Then add in one of the modal notes (you pick which one) and improvise in that, likewise in all keys throughout your instrument's range. Then add in the second modal note and start playing the modes all over in all keys.

Something my students have found particularly helpful is to play the related modes one after the other (shown with the major modes in C in Example 7, this should also be done in all the other keys). This helps you not only physically know how these scales lie on your instrument, but also helps you to understand and hear the differences between them.

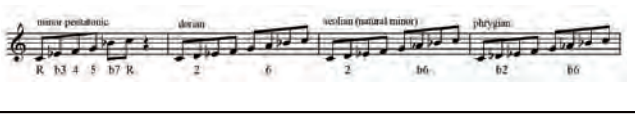
Also, for those of you looking to incorporate a more bluesy sound into your current modal playing, just do the opposite: From time to time, remove the two notes that separate the modes from the pentatonics. There comes a point where you fully see that every mode contains a pentatonic scale, and every pentatonic scale can be built into a mode. Then you can have fun shifting back and forth between these sounds. **DB**

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

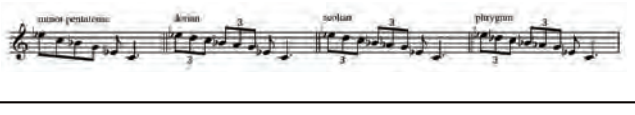
Example 1



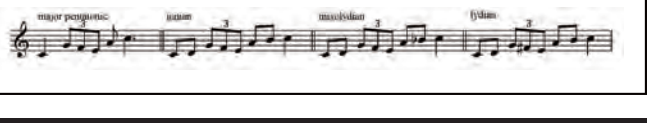
Example 2



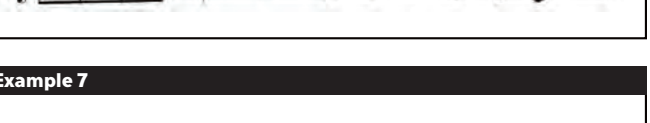
Example 4



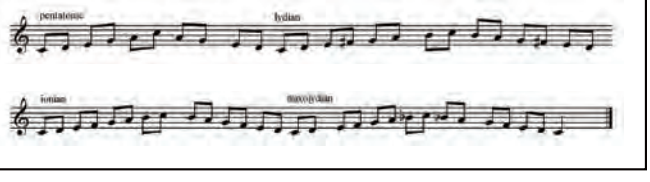
Example 4



Example 5 **Example 6**



Example 7



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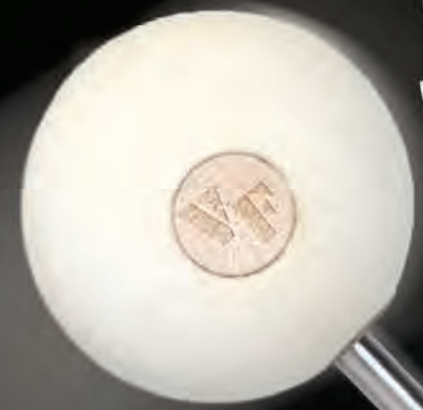

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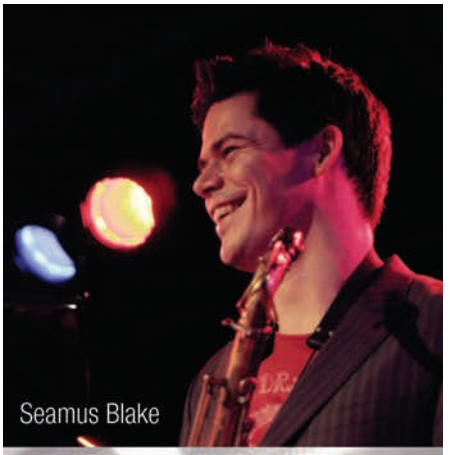


Mary Halvorson's Guitar Solo on 'Hemorrhaging Smiles'


MARY HALVORSON

PETER GANNUSHKIN/DOWNTOWNMUSIC.NET

FOR GUITARIST MARY Halvorson's energetic solo on "Hemorrhaging Smiles"—the second track from her 2012 album *Bending Bridges* (Firehouse 12)—she plays over a IV chord vamp. Accompanied by bass and drums, the horns play long tones for the first four measures of Halvorson's solo, and then return at bar 37, playing through to measure 45. This helps to create a very natural-sounding ebb and flow to this section.

Halvorson adds to this feeling in the way she sonically structures her improvisation. Starting with a clean sound and playing strings of single notes, often staccato, it's at measure 17 where she introduces both double-stops and pitch-bending via the Whammy pedal. But it's just a tease, and both of these techniques don't resurface until bars 29 and 30. In the very next bar, Halvorson takes it up another notch by adding distortion to her sound (and more legato phrasing), which remains on through the remainder of her solo, providing a burst of energy. Drummer Ches Smith's playing becomes increasingly frantic (and louder) as the improvisation progresses, which also adds to the energy.

The chord sequence is an interesting one to play over. The harmonies basically fit in C, but we have a Bm7 and a B♭maj7, one having a B and F# and the other a B♭ and F natural. An easy way out would be to use C major pentatonic, which contains neither a fourth nor a seventh (the tones in question). But Halvorson never uses this scale. Most of the time she plays arpeggios and chord fragments (such as the B♭maj7 arpeggio that appears in measures 4, 12 and 50) or scalar runs, often with chord tones on strong beats (as in the first two beats, where we hear C, B, F and E on the first strong eighth notes, spelling out a Cmaj7). This brings out the sound of the harmonies within her improvisation. What's intriguing is how she handles the non-common tones, especially the F.

We expect to hear F# on the Bm7 and F on the B♭maj7, being the fifths of these chords, though Halvorson does play the F on the Bm7 in bar 27, giving it a bluesy sound, and even some F#s on the B♭maj7 (measures 18, 20, 24 and 26), though these tend to come off as anticipations of the G/B. But Halvorson also makes a habit of using F# on the Cmaj7, making it sound lydian (whereas if she had used the F natural, it would have created the major scale that would make C sound more like the tonic of this chord progression). These occur in bars 1, 23, 27, 43, 45, 52, 55 and the pickup to bar 11. There isn't a single instance of F natural being used against the Cmaj7, which gives the sense that Halvorson is hearing the C as lydian, or approaching this section as if it is in G major.

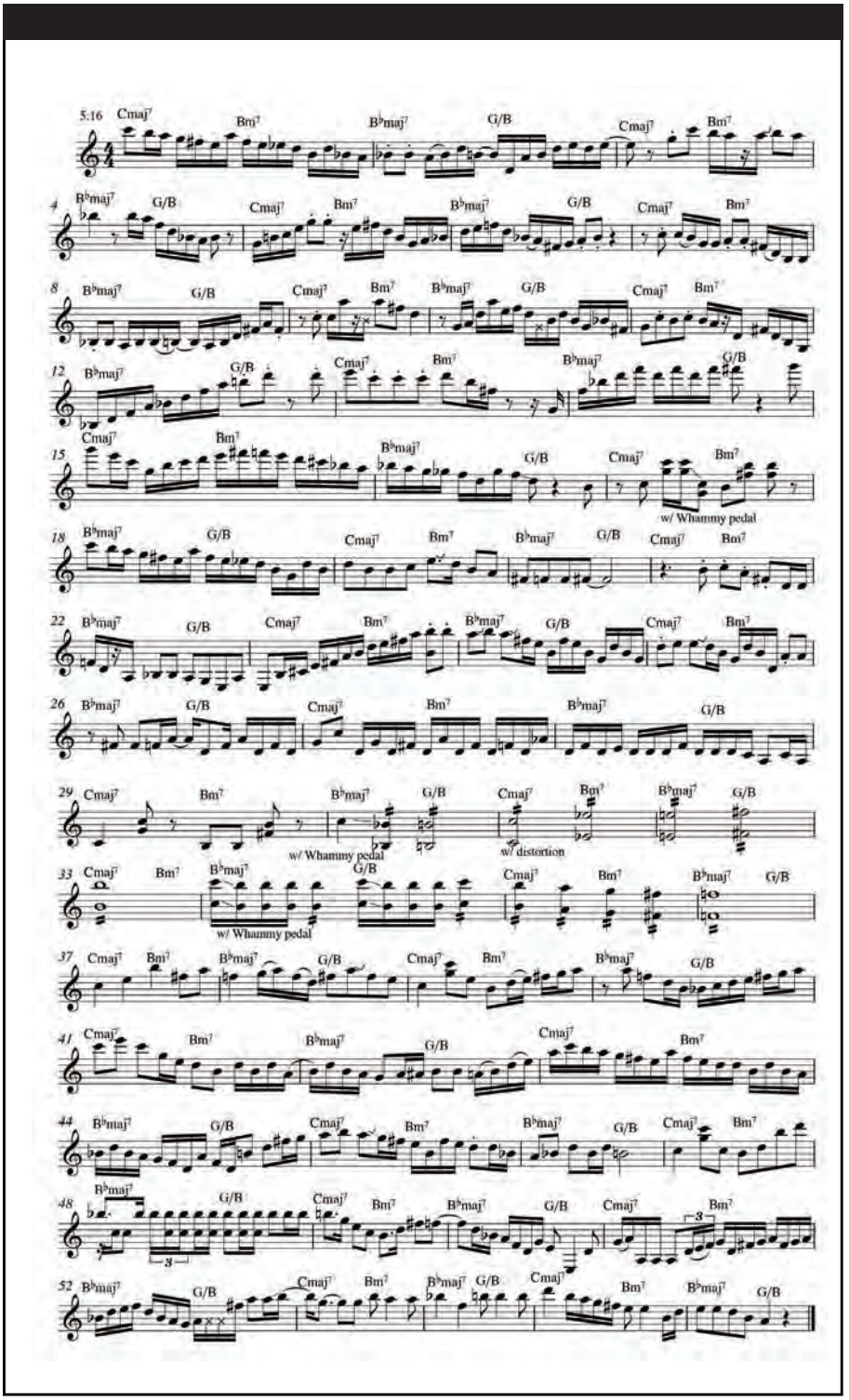
Likewise, by using the F# on the G/B chord, we'd get a G major scale (ionian) sound. And this is what we hear in bars 6, 8, 14, 32, 38, 40 and 44. But there are instances where Halvorson plays F natural on the G/B (4, 26, 36, 44 and the pickups in bars 10, 16 and 28), making it mixolydian (the related scale to C major). This ambiguity produces an intriguing sound that, while not dissonant, leaves the ear unsure of what key it's in.

Some definitive examples of how Halvorson incorporates this are in measures 10, 14, 20 and 44. In each of these she presents both the F and F#. In bar 10 it's subtle, with the F occurring right before

beat 3, so it could be a holdover from the B♭maj7, and the F# happens on the final 16th note, which could be heard as an anticipation of the C lydian sound in the next bar. So she's touched on both sounds but not in a way that defines the G as either major seventh or dominant. Measures 14 and 20 are a little more clear-cut. In these she makes a point of resolving the F on the B♭ chord to an F# on the G/B, making it sound like it's resolving to a major seventh. It's especially beautiful how in bar 20 she starts on the F#, but against the B♭, sounding like an "out" note that must be resolved down to the fifth, but then bringing it back up to the "wrong" note on the G/B, where it now sounds like a major seventh.

In bar 44 she goes back to being deceptive, starting out with a G7 arpeggio, but then putting in the F# toward the end of the measure. Is it a major seventh or an anticipation of the next bar? That uncertainty is one of the elements that makes this solo so wonderfully compelling. **DB**

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



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Deep, Resonant, Warm Tones

The newest incarnation of the DW Jazz Series shells are inspired by the American drum sounds of the late '70s and early '80s. They feature a thick gum core that can be combined with maple, mahogany or cherry inner and outer plies.

Anyone who has studied the art of shell construction to any degree has surely come across John Good of DW and his obvious affection for all things wood. There are a number of videos on YouTube of Good discussing his various concepts on wood type and wood-grain direction and their effects on timbre as you make adjustments to the woods and grain directions within different plies. It is definitely worth a bit of your time to seek out some of these online videos to further your understanding of how these concepts relate to DW's shell-creation process.

DW's Jazz Series is now offering shells in three different wood configurations. The inner three plies of gum are sandwiched between two outer layers consisting of two plies each. The two outer layers are where you choose your wood type. The seven-ply shells roughly alternate long/short when it comes to wood-grain direction.

Gum is a softer, porous wood that has a round, warm and punchy sound that can be combined with other woods to offer a shell that is complex yet pleasing, kind of like a fine wine. When combined with a hardwood such as maple, the gum offsets the resonant attack, and when combined with cherry or mahogany, the gum complements the musical qualities of these woods. Cherry has a darker sound that reacts with the gum, which is also a touch darker.

The Jazz Series shells have no reinforcement hoops, in contrast to some of DW's other lines, to create a more resonant sound that is well suited for acoustic situations.

For a previous review, I was able to check out a maple-gum Jazz Series snare. Once I heard there were mahogany and cherry versions on the horizon, I couldn't wait to hear those in person. For me personally, and for the type of music I play and listen to, I am always on the lookout for warmer, rounder, darker and understated.

The drum set that I play-tested was a Jazz Series cherry-gum shell with a lacquer custom finish that highlighted the grains of the cherry. Even before playing a note, the visuals were stunning, with the beautiful finish combined with the classy badge and the Camco-inspired lug casings. It's just a beautiful drum all around.

The kit had shells that were slightly larger than what I usually prefer: a 14- by 24-inch bass drum, a 9- by 13-inch mounted tom, a 16- by 16-inch floor tom and a 6½- by 14-inch snare. While I would have liked a kit centered around a 20-inch kick, I was mainly interested in checking out this wood combination, so I was happy to make any size shell work.

My favorite drum by far was the snare. I have grown fonder of deeper snare drums lately, and this drum, with its warm combination of woods and its deep profile, delivered an exceptionally full, rounded tone. On playback of some performances that I recorded in my home studio, this snare was very reminiscent of snares I have heard on some of my favorite recordings.

The first gig that I played with the kit was a last-minute big band call, and at the end of the night, a few people came out of the audience for an open blues jam. By the last two choruses of the jam, the brass and saxophones had started playing the chromatic descending line from "Two O'Clock Jump" and the whole band was wailing. On the last time through the form, I went to a call-and-response with the brass and winds by playing triplets in answer to their triplets before heading into a raucous Basie ending. Basically it was an all-out jam, and the drums felt and sounded great in that setting—really powerful yet not overpowering the band.

The entire kit had deep, resonant, warm tones and delivered an exceptional musical experience. While I wouldn't want to describe their sound as "vintage"—that word has positive and negative connotations, depending on whom you talk to—these drums did evoke a certain era of music to me, and personally, I loved it.

While the name of the series is obviously aimed at the jazz market, DW has stated that they are seeing some of their heavy rockers, like Dave Grohl, gravitate toward these wood combinations, also. If you are seeking warm, dark tones backed by the exceptional production values that DW offers, be sure to check these drums out.

I also got a chance to peek at some of the newer DW hardware, the most interesting being the 9399 tom/snare stand. DW says that more drummers than ever are using a separate tom stand, so the company has developed the 9399 to fill that need. Both the 5300 snare stand and the 9399 tom-snare stand have a removable, offset basket for easy positioning and quick snare changes. The tom-snare stand also offers increased resonance through Neoprene pads that act as a cushion between the basket's crutch tips and the drum's counter hoop. It's basically a soft cushion for the tom to rest in while being gripped tightly by the stand.

Another nice new feature was on DW's hi-hat stand. The Lateral Cymbal Seat is the little mechanism used to adjust how flat the bottom hi-hat cymbal lies on the stand itself. Traditionally, most of these mechanisms are perpendicular to the ground, so when reaching in and adjusting, they are not always easy to get to, especially when you are playing at the same time (which is usually when you notice that you need to adjust the cymbal). DW has addressed this by adding a wing nut (so it's easier to grip) and making the mechanism parallel to the floor (so it's easier to find). It's one of those details that seems minor, but once you use it you wonder why it wasn't done that way originally.

—Matt Kern

Ordering info: dwdrums.com

Casio Privia PX-5S

Powerful & Deep Stage Piano-Synth

Casio's prowess in musical instrument design continues to grow with the PX-5S. Offering more than many keyboards costing twice (or even three times) as much, this compact stage piano has a surprising amount of control, flexibility and depth.

Light is the first thing that comes to mind when unboxing—the PX-5S weighs only 24 lbs. (11.1 kg), which puts it at the very lightest end of the spectrum for 88-key stage pianos. You may think that this would compromise the keyboard feel, but it does not. The keyboard has good stiffness, and it feels like a much longer throw than the small chassis would seem to permit. The keys have a nicely textured surface, too—it does not feel like a synth keyboard at all. There are a few compromises to weight, though. The body is made entirely out of plastic, but it has very solid build quality. The other concession comes in the form of an external power supply, which always feels less than pro to me, but in this case it makes some sense. It would have added considerably to the weight and form factor to put one inside. On the upside, the Casio will also run on eight AAA batteries for a few hours.

The back panel has a pair of 1/4-inch outputs, as well as a pair of 1/4-inch inputs, and a 1/8-inch mini plug input, too. MIDI In, Out and Thru connections and a pair of pedal jacks are also included. The layout of the front panel is very clean, with a nice selection of controls. These include pitch and modulation wheels, four knobs, six sliders, volume control and a couple rows of buttons to navigate the patches. It has a small backlit display, and also a USB port that can be used for recording and playback.

The PX-5S uses a variety of sound technologies, and for the pianos (and electric pianos) it employs Casio's proprietary AIR system. This technology models the cabinet, string resonances and pedal noises in real time, resulting in some amazingly detailed instruments. The PX-5S piano is simply gorgeous. The sound has a consistent quality across the entire keyboard, and is deep and rich on the lows and sparkling on the highs, with a solid midrange that you can really dig into. I could not hear any sample loops at all. And although there are only four sampled velocity layers, Casio's morphing technology completely smoothed all transitions. The PX-5S's piano sounds alone compare favorably with instruments that cost much more, and there is nothing in this price range that competes with it, period. There is a good range of variations in tone, from classical to jazz, to rock and pop—plenty to represent any piano player. The electric pianos are also wonderful, and there are Rhodes, Wurli and DX models here with variations on each. The majority of the other sampled tones are standard PCM, and are very good also, if not groundbreaking.

What is definitely groundbreaking on the PX-5S is the synth engine. This is an incredibly deep synth for a stage piano, and it's not just simple envelope adjustments, either. You can access a ton of parameters for the sounds from the front panel, and thankfully there's an editor for your computer as well. Each single synth-generated sound, called a "tone," can be assigned to one of the PX-5S's four zones, which can be layered or split as needed. But it does not end there. The real magic comes when you start playing with HexLayers. These are sounds consisting of six independent synths, each with its own set of parameters. You can use all or some of these layers, and adjust parameters individually using only one zone—incredibly powerful.

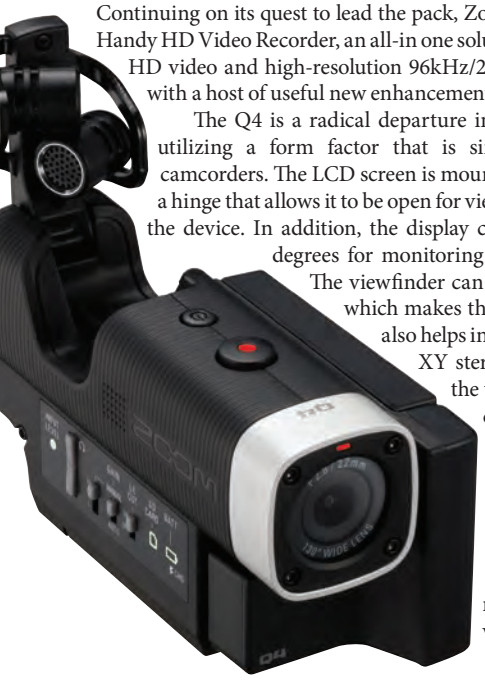
There is even more to go into here: the powerful arpeggiator and phrase sequencer (zone assignable), the wide variety of editable drum kits and the deep layers of MIDI controller integration. Overall, the PX-5S is so much more than a stage piano, the name almost does not fit—all for around $1,000. This is a triumph for Casio, and worth the attention of any player looking for a serious addition to their rig. *—Chris Neville*

Ordering info: casiomusicgear.com

Zoom Q4 Handy HD Video Recorder

Sounds as Good as it Looks

Zoom has come a long way since introducing its first portable video recorder, the Q3, in 2009. The company was one of the first to combine video capture and high-quality stereo recording into a single handheld unit. The Q3HD appeared a year later, and in 2012 it was replaced by the Q2HD, which added Zoom's Mid-Side stereo recording functionality. Continuing on its quest to lead the pack, Zoom recently introduced the Q4 Handy HD Video Recorder, an all-in one solution that offers crisp, full 1080p HD video and high-resolution 96kHz/24bit XY stereo recording along with a host of useful new enhancements.



The Q4 is a radical departure in design from its predecessors, utilizing a form factor that is similar to that of professional camcorders. The LCD screen is mounted on the side of the unit with a hinge that allows it to be open for viewing or closed for transporting the device. In addition, the display can be freely rotated a full 360 degrees for monitoring videos when filming yourself. The viewfinder can also be detached from the Q4, which makes the unit even more compact, and also helps increase battery life. High-quality XY stereo microphones mounted into the top swing out for operation and can be neatly tucked away when not in use. The Q4 provides a built-in tripod mount and is powered by a lithium-ion battery that charges via a standard USB cable and is capable of up to 3 hours of recording time, depending on video resolution.

The Q4 requires virtually no learning curve to use. The unit does provide some user-configurable options, but Zoom has been very careful not to overload the recorder with non-essential features that would detract from its user-friendly operation. Video is recorded onto standard SD/SDHC/SDXC cards with a maximum capacity of 128GB. The Q4 has wide-angle lens, perfect for capturing a full band on stage, but it also works great for close-up filming. The rear of the recorder contains the camera's connection ports, which include USB, a headphone jack, input for an external mic and HDMI output for viewing video on a HD TV screen.

Selecting video and audio and system options for the Q4 is accomplished via on-screen menus that are accessed via navigation buttons on the LCD panel. Video is captured in MOV format, and resolution is offered at a maximum 1080p at 30 frames per second with options at 720/60fps, 720/30fps and VGA at both 60 and 30fps. Audio can be captured in uncompressed WAV format at a stunning 96kHz/24-bit resolution with numerous options for lower WAV resolutions as well as several compressed AAC options. The side of the Q4 houses an additional control panel that offers headphone volume adjustment, an auto or manual audio gain selection switch, a battery charge indicator and a memory card indicator that flashes when your card is reaching maximum capacity.

The image quality of the Q4 is quite good overall, but as with any digital video recorder, lighting is everything and proper conditions have a drastic impact on the sharpness of the video footage. The Q4 has three lighting settings that can be set to Auto, Concert or Night, which can help improve quality when filming a band or when in a dark environment. The audio quality on the Q4 is extremely good, consistently capturing accurate detailed sound in every scenario from a single voice or instrument to a full big band. *—Keith Baumann*

Ordering info: zoom-na.com

Expanded Gain

The Seymour Duncan 805 Overdrive pedal is designed with an expanded gain range and an active three-band EQ that goes well beyond the simple low-pass filter tone knob found on most overdrives. It is versatile enough to use for a lyrical, bluesy overdrive one minute and a modern metal crunch the next. **More info:** seymourduncan.com

Universal Connectivity

IK Multimedia's iRig MIDI 2 is the first portable Lightning/USB MIDI interface for iPhone, iPad and iPod touch as well as Mac and PC. It comes equipped with three standard-sized female MIDI DIN sockets—In, Out and Thru—allowing for full MIDI functionality and connectivity with any MIDI-enabled device. The iRig MIDI 2 is ideal for interfacing keyboards, synthesizers, software sound modules, and drum pads with computers and mobile devices. **More info:** ikmultimedia.com

Recording Interface

The Apogee ONE is a studio-quality microphone and USB audio interface designed for creating professional-sounding recordings on an iPod touch, iPhone, iPad or Mac. ONE produces pristine music, podcast and voiceover recordings while delivering audiophile-quality sound to headphones. **More info:** apogeedigital.com

Gladstone Technique on DVD

Hudson Music has released *The Gladstone Technique* by Morris "Arnie" Lang, one of the few surviving students of New York drummer Billy Gladstone. The DVD is a historical document of Gladstone and his contribution to modern drum technique. Topics include principles of the Gladstone technique, parts of the stroke and body mechanics. An approach to rudiments is covered in detail, as well as accents, matched and traditional grips, and drum set applications. **More info:** hudsonmusic.com

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The University of Idaho Jazz Band I performs at the Lionel Hampton Jazz Festival.

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Hampton Fest Broadens

AT THE UNIVERSITY OF IDAHO, THE NEXT edition of the Lionel Hampton Jazz Festival will be a campus-wide affair. And it's not necessarily all about the music.

Executive Director Steve Remington, who puts on the annual event with the help of Artistic Director John Clayton, has been working for the past three years to transform the festival into an interdisciplinary experience. Now students who attend the festival as performers can take workshops that discuss math, physics and environmental applications through a jazz lens.

"It's been a real broadening of the idea of jazz," Remington explained.

The 48th annual Lionel Hampton Jazz Festival, to be held Feb. 25–28 in Moscow, Idaho, features Dianne Reeves, Stefon Harris, Holly Hofmann, Bria Skonberg, the Jensen Sisters and others. The artists play evening concerts after days filled with student ensemble and solo performances, and artist and faculty workshops.

Faculty from the school of music will participate. Jazz professors have always been highly visible during the fest, but now classical instrumental faculty will be out in full force to welcome students and their band directors to the university. This is part of the more holistic Lionel Hampton Jazz Festival approach. It's also a push to get potential students excited about studying all types of music at the university, according to Vanessa Sielert, associate professor of saxophone and jazz bands.

Sielert has worked with Remington to develop the broader intermingling of the festival and the school of music, but both of them realize the festival doesn't only appeal to potential music majors.

"We know that students aren't all coming to the university to be a part of the jazz festival because they want to go on in music," she said.

For the music students who are interested in jazz, they can add a jazz focus to the classical-based music degree. These students would integrate classes in improvisation and jazz history—and participation in the school's jazz ensembles—into their classical studies.

Remington works to educate the next wave of festival promoters by organizing a 10-person internship program. He also teaches a festival and event management class each fall.

Historically, the jazz festival had been a wide-ranging music showcase with a competitive program for students at the elementary through college levels. After the daily contests, a seemingly endless stream of guest artists would take the stage, sometimes only performing one or two tunes each. Before Lionel Hampton died in 2002, the goal of the festival seemed to be packing as many world-class artists into four days as possible.

This outlook shifted in 2007, when Clayton became the artistic director. He immediately set about altering the feel of the event, creating a more inclusive educational experience based on feedback, not competition. Clayton also transformed the nightly concerts by bringing fewer artists to the festival, but having them play longer sets.

Sielert, who graduated from the university in 1996, remembered those mid-'90s festivals as a dizzying array of top-notch musicians, many of whom returned to Moscow year after year.

"Having fewer artists can be more personal and inspirational because the students can really get inside of those particular artists and really look at what they're doing," she said.

Remington said the non-competitive nature of the fest is attracting new students to the university. Additionally, some band directors have returned to Moscow after long absences because the intensity of the competition had not been enjoyable for some students in the past.

This new direction, he said, is part of a national trend. Remington said larger festivals will continue to embrace the idea of performance for educational purposes, leaving smaller, invitational festivals to create cutthroat competitions.

"It's pretty clear, not just in jazz education but throughout the American education system, that young people … are more influenced by peer and student appreciation and support than they are by the competitive process," he said. "There's a place for competitiveness, but I don't think that's here." —*Jon Ross*

School Notes ⟩


U-M master's student Gil Scott Chapman performs on the newly restored Gershwin piano.

ROGER HART/MICHIGAN PHOTOGRAPHY

Gershwin Piano Restored: The University of Michigan School of Music, Theatre & Dance (SMTD) unveiled a fully restored 1933 Model A Steinway piano—previously owned and played by George Gershwin—during a free public concert at Hill Auditorium in Ann Arbor on Oct. 10. The piano was donated to the school in 2013 by Marc Gershwin, George's nephew, as a gesture of partnership between the Gershwin families and U-M during the creation of the U-M Gershwin Initiative. Announced last year, the Initiative provides U-M with complete access to the Gershwin archives to develop the George and Ira Gershwin Critical Edition as well as student performances, new courses and scholarly symposia of national reach and impact. The multi-disciplinary concert, performed by students and faculty, highlighted the rebuilt piano and reflected the many genres at which the Gershwins' excelled. The finale was a performance of SMTD's newly researched and edited score of *Rhapsody In Blue*, featuring piano soloist Gil Scott Chapman, a U-M master's student in improvisational studies. music.umich.edu

Wellness Leader Named: Berklee College of Music has appointed pianist-composer and alumnus Kenny Werner as artistic director of the Performance Wellness Institute (PWI), a new program that helps students develop and maintain healthy performances practices. Werner is known for his groundbreaking book *Effortless Mastery: Liberating the Master Musician Within*, a guide to distill the emotional, spiritual and psychological aspects of an artist's life. "The PWI will help students create wellness in how they approach their instruments and offer techniques on how to practice with complete focus and play with total freedom," said Werner. berklee.edu

SoundSchool Benefit: On Oct. 4, the Bob Moog Foundation hosted its inaugural Ignite Gala to benefit Dr. Bob's SoundSchool, a 10-week experiential curriculum teaching children about the science of sound through the magic of music. Held at film composer and session musician Michael Boddicker's residence in Encino, California, the fundraising event featured live performances, a display of vintage Moog instruments and exclusive previews of new inventions. moogfoundation.org

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Ron Carter


Ron Carter at the Detroit Jazz Festival on Sept. 1

LEN KATZ/DETROIT JAZZ FESTIVAL

On Labor Day, Ron Carter, 77, took a 6 a.m. flight to Detroit so he could do double-duty at the Detroit Jazz Festival—a well-attended public Blindfold Test at 12:15 p.m., then a 2:15 tribute to Jim Hall, his long-time partner, in duo with guitarist Peter Bernstein. After attending a reunion at the famous Detroit high school Cass Tech, his alma mater, the iconic bassist caught the last plane to New York City, whence he would debark—after a day at home—to Japan for a 10-day tour.

Sam Jones

"Sam's Things" (*Changes & Things*, Xanadu, 1977) Jones, bass; Barry Harris, piano; Louis Hayes, drums.

That's Sam Jones. Is the pianist Tommy Flanagan? Barry Harris? [*after*] There was no mistaking where Sam Jones thought the beat should be. In the way he soloed and played his lines, this track is like the next stage of the evolution of bass history from Jimmy Blanton and Oscar Pettiford—a very important recording from an historical viewpoint.

George Mraz

"She Walks In A Meadow" (*Morava*, Milestone, 2001) Mraz, bass; Zuzana Lapcíková, vocals; Emil Viklický, piano; Billy Hart, drums.

The bass player might be Avishai Cohen or Paulo Paulelli, who plays with Rosa Passos. I liked the sound that they got on the bassist, who played some great notes—I don't know who it is. It's a style everybody's investigating now. Whoever it is sure plays great. [*after*] I'm embarrassed, because I've known George since 1965, before he came to the States. He's one of the bassists who brought the European sound, I call it, to the instrument—a little less pointed, a little longer note-length.

Duke Ellington and Ray Brown

"Sophisticated Lady" (*This One's For Blanton!*, Original Jazz Classics, 1994, rec'd 1972) Brown, bass; Ellington, piano.

Ray Brown. I think it's the record he made with Duke Ellington. I never heard it, but Ray's sound is so distinctly Ray. People who only know him for playing with Oscar Peterson and haven't heard him play solo bass like on this introduction, should buy this recording to hear how complete his view of the bass' possibilities was. On those earlier records with Oscar and the JATP [Jazz at the Philharmonic], Ray was a time player—great quarter notes, with a definitive sound and great intonation. He was determined to make the band swing. He helped everyone develop their ideas through the time he played, the notes he picked, his determination to make the bass be a part of the sound, and not "Ray Brown."

Lewis Nash

"Flanagan's Shenanigans" (*Stompin' At The Savoy*, M&I Jazz, 2005) Nash, drums; Peter Washington, bass; Steve Nelson, vibraphone.

If the vibes player isn't Milt Jackson, clearly he's out of the Milt Jackson school. If the drummer isn't Lewis Nash, he's into the Lewis Nash school of thought. I can't tell you who the bass player is, but he plays great, and if I find him playing in New York I'll make a point to go hear him or her. [*after*] I'm embarrassed. I've known Peter for a long time, and I would have guessed his name because of the articulation of his triplets. His sound here is different than usually gets recorded, which threw me a curve.

Charlie Haden-Hank Jones

"Sometimes I Feel Like A Motherless Child" (*Steal Away*, Verve, 1995) Haden, bass; Jones, piano.

That's a view of Charlie that people didn't always hear. He was often in the lower part of the bass, and seldom in a position to play that kind of stark melody, which he plays very well. This recording reveals how complete a bass player he was. I know he made some duo records with Kenny Barron and Hank Jones. His sound is so almost overwhelming that you don't really hear the piano player's personality. That's OK, too, sometimes.

Chick Corea-Eddie Gomez-Paul Motian

"Puccini's Walk" (*Further Explorations*, Concord/Stretch, 2012) Corea, piano; Gomez, bass; Motian, drums.

I don't know who they are, but the first thing that caught my attention was the unison part between the pianist and bass player. Piano players always write parts like that—like they're playing them on the keyboard. I'm mostly concerned with how difficult it is for the bass player to make that successful, and this person did the job admirably. I would like to know how they describe this form.

When this style of music became popular, I didn't understand how the bass players heard these sounds. I would go hear Fred Hopkins or William Parker or Malachi Favors to see what kind of water they were drinking. We would discuss it. This is also part of the history of the bass, and these guys are major forces in that development.

Doug Watkins

"I Remember You" (*Soulnik*, Original Jazz Classics, 1994, rec'd 1960) Watkins, cello; Herman Wright, bass; Yusef Lateef, flute; Hugh Lawson, piano; Lex Humphries, drums.

[*flute enters*] That's Lateef. At first, I was guessing that the top instrument was Oscar Pettiford playing his version of the cello. Whoever it is, they really played well. [*after*] Doug actually was playing a cello-sized instrument tuned like a bass, which Oscar, Sam Jones, Eldee Young and Ray Brown played. Percy Heath had one that was more gamba-sized, but the same concept. It's interesting to me that people see that as playing the cello as opposed to playing the bass.

When Oscar Pettiford played it, he played the kind of notes that I wish I could find—it's just perfect. I missed him, so I'm trudging along, trying to find some more. And today at 2:15 I'll try again. **DB**


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