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JANUARY 2015

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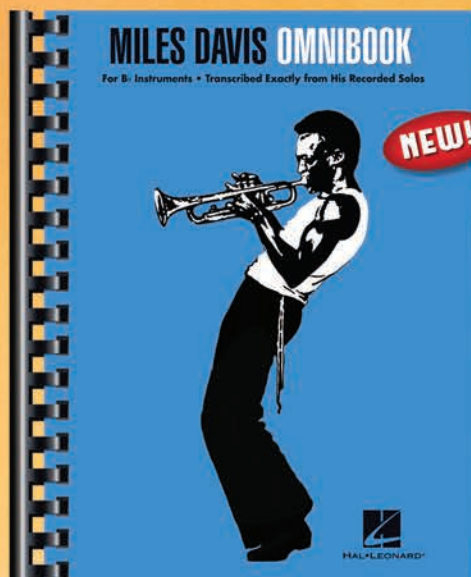
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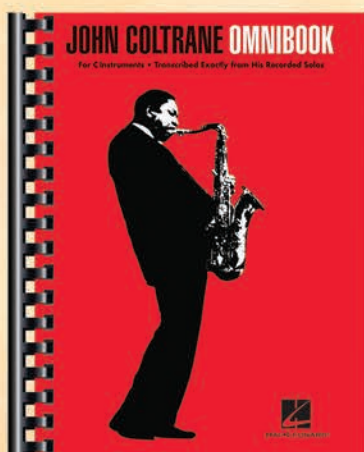
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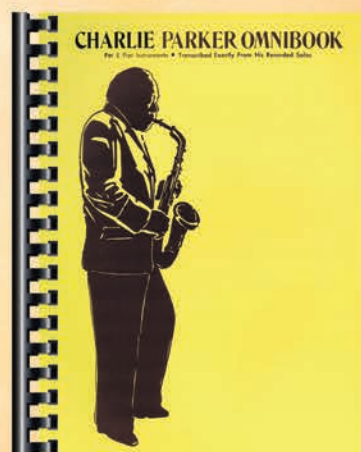
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First Take

BY MICHAEL BOURNE

Starstruck Teen

THELONIOUS MONK WAS SIGNING HIS NAME VERY SLOWLY, scripting each letter—painstakingly, exquisitely—like a master calligrapher. After several minutes, with a little shrug, he handed me the program.

I looked at the autograph. He'd only written "Thelonious" with a long loop at the end. I almost called out, "You didn't sign *Monk*," but as I watched him *dancing* away, I realized that "Thelonious" was awesomely enough.

That's my favorite memory of the first (and thus far only) DownBeat Jazz Festival, which occurred Aug. 13–15, 1965, at Chicago's Soldier Field. I had become obsessed with jazz only a couple years earlier. I was fascinated first by the Dave Brubeck Quartet, and soon I was spending all my money on jazz LPs.

Looking back at the pages of the official festival program, I'm amazed that I can remember so many details.

Most of that era's jazz titans are now gone, but some of the titans-to-be at the fest continue to play on: Curtis Fuller, Gary Bartz, Gary Burton, Steve Swallow, Kenny Barron, McCoy Tyner.

Seven groups performed on Friday evening. Gary McFarland fronted "The DownBeat Jazz Festival Orchestra." He'd have Dizzy and Monk with the band on other nights, and he spotlighted a quintet featuring Sadao Watanabe.

Miles Davis was listed in the program, but as DownBeat reported in its Sept. 23, 1965, issue, the trumpeter had recently broken his leg and couldn't attend. Playing instead were Art Blakey with the Jazz Messengers and a Milt Jackson quintet with Blakey. Stan Getz, then universally popular playing Jobim songs, performed ballads with his quartet, as well as "Corcovado" and "Balanco No Samba" with McFarland's orchestra. George Wein (one of the producers of the fest) performed with the Newport Jazz Festival All-Stars, including swing master Ruby Braff. Getz joined them for a blues, and Earl "Fatha" Hines followed with a trio.

To climax the first evening, out came the group that changed my life. The Dave Brubeck Quartet played "Take Five" and "Someday My Prince Will Come," and I clearly remember Joe Morello's drum solo on "Shim Wha."

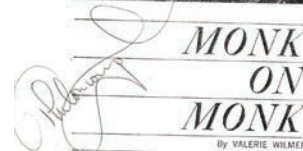
I got all four of the DBQ to sign the program. I was starstruck. I was amazed that I could talk with (and get autographs from) members of the jazz pantheon. Count Basie signed a full-page photo, and some of the cats in Basie's band signed, including "Freddie Green (Guitar)." James Moody doodled the *J* and *M* of his signature into smiley faces.

Moody played with Dizzy on Saturday evening—after they'd joined Al Grey as an impromptu horn section for Muddy Waters' band. As Otis Spann's piano whipped up the groove, Muddy sang "Got My Mojo Working." Dizzy and Grey played solos, and Moody played two choruses as the crowd cheered. That's the festival highlight I still talk about on the radio, 50 years later.

I also was enthralled by the John Coltrane Quartet on Sunday evening—joined by Archie Shepp. I'd not heard much "avant-garde" jazz, never heard anyone play so "out" as Shepp was playing. Some in the crowd were angry, but against all the boos, Shepp stood like a colossus and kept playing even *harder!* The next week I started buying all of Shepp's albums on Impulse.

At the time, I couldn't have imagined that I would ever play jazz on the radio or become a journalist and, in only a few years, actually be writing about this music for DownBeat (starting in 1969).

In 1965, I was already a subscriber. "I'm happy to meet the editor of DownBeat," I remember saying to Don DeMicheal. And, as he signed the program, he smiled and said, "I'm happy to meet a *reader* of DownBeat." **DB**



Thelonious Monk's autograph in the
DownBeat Jazz Festival program

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One Step Beyond

After reading the not-too-surprising reactions to DownBeat's November cover story on Tony Bennett and Lady Gaga (Chords & Discords, Dec.), I must say I appreciate those points of view, even if I don't completely agree. We should take note of the "Beyond" in "Jazz, Blues & Beyond." This opens the door for treatment of a wide range of musical genres, collaborations and interpretations. That's one of the reasons I choose DownBeat over other high-quality "jazz" publications: My musical tastes, while firmly entrenched in jazz and blues, extend to many other areas. I am particularly intrigued by such offbeat collaborations as the one between Bennett and Lady Gaga. Do I occasionally disagree with the viewpoints expressed in DownBeat's articles and reviews?



You *betcha!* But I expect and welcome that reaction because it helps me move "beyond" my current comfort zone and into a new one.

JOE FRANK
JDFRANK@VERIZON.NET

Great American Gaga

I can see the letters coming in, protesting the cover shot of Tony Bennett and Lady Gaga. But Michael Bourne's story of their collaboration, and especially the presentation of dual interviews with these two masters, is one of the best I've read. That cover story is about the transformational impact of jazz and their love for this beautifully American music.

PAUL WEIDEMAN
SANTA FE, NEW MEXICO

Beyond Words

The photo of Tony Bennett and Lady Gaga on the cover of DownBeat left me speechless! I can understand why many pop-rock stars might wish—for sound musical reasons—to jump on the jazz bandwagon. The problem is that the majority of them don't know how to "speak the language" and they ignore what swing and jazz harmony actually are. Generally, they lack the sense of timing that allows jazz singers to sing "across the bars." Consequently, the results sound pathetic to an educated ear. Despite my great respect for Mr. Benedetto, I'm sick and tired of all this commercial-oriented hype about this unnatural encounter and equally unnatural musical cocktail.

ADRIANO PATERI
MILAN, ITALY

OutBeat Coverage

I read with great interest Shaun Brady's review of the OutBeat Jazz Festival (The Beat, Dec.; downbeat.com). His opening paragraph, which mentions me, caught my eye: "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.'"

First of all, I am grateful to be mentioned again in a mainstream jazz publication. (It's been a while.) I am very thankful to the festival's producers for my inclusion. But narrowing the mention of my inclusion to a comment about my genitalia is very hurtful. I obviously have a sense of humor, and anyone who has heard me perform knows that the music comes first for me, but I always try to engage the audience. My attempt at humor was made in the spirit of defusing any possible discomfort. Anyone who has seen *I Stand Corrected* knows that the film has very little to do with surgery. Mentioning male to female sexual reassignment surgery might be good for click bait, but I would suggest that if you are going to write about the subject at all, then a glance at the GLAAD Media Reference Guide would be in order (www.glaad.org/reference/covering-trans-community).

JENNIFER LEITHAM
JENNIFER@JENNIFERLEITHAM.COM

Lounge Act?

With regard to the reviews of the album *Blue* by Mostly Other People Do the Killing (The Hot Box, November): Cover bands in other music genres have been performing classic records, solos and all, for decades. The difference is that they generally have the good sense to know that making a record duplicating the original would likely be a hollow, irrelevant effort. A note-for-note performance of *Kind Of Blue* belongs in two venues: a classroom or a hotel lounge.

JIM SNIDERO
NEW YORK CITY

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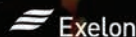


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Beat

Revamped Jazz Bistro Opens in Expanded St. Louis Venue

The Oct. 2 opening of the 20th concert season at Jazz at the Bistro, the performance space of the non-profit group Jazz St. Louis, was distinctly different from all previous opening nights at its location in the city's Grand Center arts and entertainment district.

Not only has the name of the venue changed to the Ferring Jazz Bistro, it's now part of an expanded space called the Harold and Dorothy Steward Center for Jazz—which also houses the Centene Jazz Education Center, the offices for the Jazz St. Louis staff and a 50-seat jazz lounge adjacent to the Bistro that features big-screen video of the live performances.

It's all the result of a \$10 million capital campaign that began well over a year ago. To date, the effort has raised nearly \$7 million toward that overall goal through private contributions, enabling Jazz St. Louis to purchase the Bistro performance space rather than lease it. The donations have also enabled Jazz St. Louis to buy an adjoining three-story building that's now the home for its offices (previously located in a building on an adjacent street), the jazz lounge and the greatly expanded education center.

In addition, the Bistro performance space has been completely remodeled to increase seating from 150 to more than 200. The stage area, originally located along the back wall, has been relocated to the east side of the original building and has been expanded. The new layout also features state-of-the-art sound and acoustics reconfigured by Sam Berkow, whose credits include sound design work at Jazz at Lincoln Center in New York and the SFJAZZ Center in San Francisco.

The benefits of the new sound system were apparent before the grand opening when area musicians took the stage during a jam session kicked off by pianist Phil Dunlap, director of education for Jazz St. Louis. As the musicians played, workers were putting the finishing touches on the Bistro—a process that would continue throughout the night and the next day in preparation for opening sets featuring Wynton Marsalis and the Jazz at Lincoln Center Orchestra (JLCO).

Before the first show, invited guests gathered in a tent outside the new venue to celebrate the grand opening and listen to speeches by Marsalis, Jazz St. Louis Executive Director Gene Dobbs Bradford, St. Louis Mayor Francis Slay and major donors such as David Steward and John Ferring IV.

Marsalis spoke about the legacy of St. Louis jazz, mentioning legends such as Miles Davis and Clark Terry.

"I remember when I was 16, Clark Terry came to our school," Marsalis said. "He took the time to come and teach kids like me. He told me to be serious about music. That's what I try to teach to kids now. And that's why we're here tonight. We've come together for a reason, and that's to make sure [this] music goes on and becomes a continuum."

Steward, chairman and co-founder of World Wide Technology Inc., explained why he wanted to name the center after his parents, Harold and Dorothy Steward. He recalled annual family trips to the Kansas City Jazz Festival from their home in nearby Clinton, Missouri.

"I remember that to this day," Steward said. "It was a uniting experience and a very, very special time for us. I want to preserve this art form I grew up on."

After the opening ceremonies, JLCO's sets—which were streamed on the Internet by the Higher Educational Channel—kicked off with saxophonist Sherman Irby's arrangement of Thelonious Monk's "We See" and showcased compositions from Duke Ellington, Dave Brubeck, Charles Mingus and Chick Corea as well as a gutbucket version of the Count Basie-Jimmy Rushing blues "I Left My Baby (Standing In The Back Door Crying)."

The following morning, on Oct. 3, Marsalis and JLCO musicians visited Normandy High School in north St. Louis County to work with jazz band director Bernard "Pops" Long Jr. and his students in a side-by-side session attended by other music students from throughout the metro area.

That evening, Marsalis and the band played two sold-out sets for enthusiastic public audiences, while other jazz fans in Grand Center watched broadcasts of the performances on giant video screens.

For Bradford, the reopening of the Bistro is the first step in what he called a "culture change" for jazz in St. Louis.

"We did a lot of planning to make sure that we've put together a club that delivers a world-class listening experience, and that we also have a world-class center for studying jazz," he said.

Marsalis was impressed by the new state-of-the-art center. "The acoustics are great, the decor is great, and there's a lot of room for rehearsing for students," he said. "But the question of a room is, What goes on in it? What makes a club is the people. That's what's going to be really important and definitive. Lincoln Center will do everything we can to collaborate and to help as partners. And we hope that other communities around the country are inspired by what the Stewards and others here have done."

—Terry Perkins





The Manhattan Transfer, from left: Cheryl Bentley, Tim Hauser, Janis Siegel and Alan Paul

In Memory: Tim Hauser, founder of the vocal jazz quartet The Manhattan Transfer, died in Sayre, Pennsylvania, on Oct. 16. The cause of death was cardiac arrest. He was 72. Hauser, who sang baritone, originally formed a group called The Manhattan Transfer in 1969. That incarnation recorded one album, *Jukin'*, for Capitol, and disbanded. In the early '70s, he put together a new lineup with Alan Paul, Janis Siegel and Laurel Massé, which released *The Manhattan Transfer* in 1975. (In 1979, Cheryl Bentley replaced Massé.) The Manhattan Transfer won eight Grammy awards between 1980 and 1991, including one for its 1985 album *Vocalese*. Hauser worked as a producer for other artists and released a 2007 solo album, *Love Stories*. The Manhattan Transfer will continue to perform on its current tour with veteran bass singer Trist Curless in place of Hauser. **More info:** manhattantransfer.net

Let it Flow: Gregory Porter has released the five-song digital EP *More Liquid Spirit – Features + Remixes*, now available through digital retailers and streaming services. The EP includes a duet with Laura Mvula on Porter's "Water Under Bridges," as well as Porter and Jamie Cullum's take on "Don't Let Me Be Misunderstood," from Cullum's forthcoming Blue Note album, *Interlude*. Also included is a cover of the Bill Withers classic "Grandma's Hands" featuring Ben L'Oncle Soul, as well as two remixes of tracks from *Liquid Spirit*: 20Syl's update of the title track and a reworking of "Musical Genocide" by Ludovic Navarre aka St Germain. **More info:** gregoryporter.com

Portland-Bound: Kurt Elling and the Art Abrams Big Band will perform in tribute to Frank Sinatra's 1960s collaborations with Count Basie and his orchestra at the 12th Annual Portland Jazz Festival, Feb. 18–March 1. A record number of 30 headline concerts featuring regional and international acts will take place at venues throughout the Portland, Oregon, metro area.

More info: portlandjazzfestival.org

Final Bar: British clarinetist Acker Bilk, who scored an international pop hit with his 1961 instrumental recording "Stranger On The Shore," died on Nov. 2 in Bath, England. He was 85. "Stranger On The Shore" was on the British charts for more than a year after its release. It also topped the U.S. charts, making him the first U.K. artist to do so in the 1960s, prior to rock's British Invasion.

All-Star Septet, Chris Botti Entertain at Sea

Caught >

ON THE PENULTIMATE DAY OF THE EXCEED-ingly luxurious Signature Jazz Cruise, which crisscrossed the Mediterranean with 400-plus guests for 10 days aboard the sleek Seabourn Sojourn, Jeff Hamilton was doing a stage chat on the pool patio when the bar phone rang.

"If that's Diana Krall, tell her I'm being interviewed and I'll call her back," cracked the Los Angeles drummer.

The crowd laughed, but somewhat uneasily. The Signature jaunt had sold out three weeks in advance of its Sept. 30 departure from Monte Carlo, and guests had paid \$12,000 or more for the privilege of coming along. But a week later, Krall, the advertised headliner, had suddenly cancelled due to a case of pneumonia.

"Obviously, this wasn't the way we planned it," explained Michael Lazaroff, executive director of Entertainment Cruise Productions. "Nobody was terribly happy."

Within 48 hours, Lazaroff had found a substitute headliner in chart-topping trumpeter Chris Botti (and offered cruisers a 15 percent discount). Still, a few folks were understandably angry. Lazaroff said he managed to "talk them off the ledge" and no one cancelled. By the time the guests debarked in Barcelona on Oct. 10, satisfied smiles were the norm.

That's largely because this cruise was about luxury first and jazz second. The price included fastidious gourmet fare and bottomless wine glasses in four dining rooms and various bars, cooking demonstrations, a fitness center, poolside cocktails, 24-hour room service, artist interviews and shore excursions that included, for one cruiser, a prow through San Remo's hillside byways; a rosé tasting in sunny Mallorca; and a two-hour bouillabaisse lunch in Marseille. The Sojourn sailed at a calm, genteel pace, appealing to a well-heeled clientele (83 percent of whom were American.)

There were two main concerts each day, a 6 p.m. show in an intimate cocktail lounge called The Club and a more formal 10 p.m. presentation in a tiered, 480-seat theater, The Grand Salon. (There were also cocktail and after-hours sets.)

For the first five days, a latter-day Jazz at the Philharmonic septet kept the music fresh, mixing and matching and organizing shows around themes, including a jubilant tribute to Louis Armstrong and an evening of salutes to influences. Night after night, the stunningly swinging trumpeter Randy Brecker never played an unmusical note or unshapely phrase. Wycliffe Gordon ripped, sputtered, stuttered and wailed, manipulating his trombone like a toy, an impression magnified by his slide trumpet. Anat Cohen fashioned architectural sound temples on clarinet and

tenor saxophone, as Jeff Hamilton waxed melodic on brushes, kicking it every chance he could, and bassist John Clayton—who broke his foot during a walk through Porto Venere and wound up playing in a cast—held down the fort with artful aplomb.

Though vocalist Karrin Allyson did not always appear comfortable in this virtuoso jam, she offered some lovely changes of pace with a brace of Brazilian tunes and piquant singer-songwriter material at the piano. Pianist Shelly Berg

Trumpeter Randy Brecker was one of the all-stars who performed frequently during the 10-day Signature Jazz Cruise



(who is the dean of the Frost School of Music at the University of Miami) was the gleeful glue that held the group together, and also an encyclopedic soloist who sprinkled in allusions to Fats Waller and Errol Garner.

Botti, who played the last four nights, divided the crowd. One purist commented, "No soul, no swing, no improvisation," while others found the golden-toned trumpeter's charm and emotional accessibility something of a revelation. His crackerjack band featured, among others, pianist Geoffrey Keezer, drummer Billy Kilson and the fetching violinist Lucia Micarelli, who portrayed a street musician on the TV series *Treme*. But the program was a packaged revue wrapped in cellophane, complete with fog machine and a drowning pool of reverb, a sort of middlebrow translation of Andrea Bocelli. Even when Botti briefly essayed '70s jazz-rock or straight-ahead jazz, his episodic solos consisted of melodramatic trills, stabs at high notes and predictable licks. Some guests walked out. Others remained to proffer standing ovations.

Clearly, this all would have been more fun with Krall. But it's a good bet the next Signature Jazz Cruise, scheduled on the Seabourn Sojourn on the same dates in 2015, will probably sell out—no matter who's playing.

—Paul de Barros

Gismonti Comes Home to Brazil at MIMO Festival

Caught >

THE PORTUGUESE WORD MIMO MEANS A LITTLE TREAT OR GIFT given to someone you like. Brazil's MIMO Festival of music and film has become a rather large gift to the people of Brazil from some of the country's major corporations. This festival is a remarkable example of government support for the arts, on a scale unknown and, politically, almost inconceivable in the United States.

Started in the historic city of Olinda in 2004 by music impresario and record producer Lu Araújo, MIMO (the name also stands for "Mostra Internacional Musica Olinda") has now expanded to four cities: Olinda, Ouro Preto, Paraty and Tiradentes, all Brazilian colonial heritage sites. Each city hosts a three- or four-day festival; the Paraty and Tiradentes festivals took place on consecutive weekends in October. All the concerts, films, lectures, workshops and master classes are free to the public. This year's program included a broad spectrum of Brazilian instrumental styles, jazz, classical, folk and pop music. An associated film festival was devoted to documentaries about music and musicians.

The Paraty shows included clarinetist-alto saxophonist Paquito D'Rivera paired with the Brazilian jazz group Trio Corrente; the Scottish folk trio Lau; Brazilian 10-string mandolin master Hamilton de Holanda, partnered with composer-singer Diogo Nogueira; and Brazil's master percussionist, Naná Vasconcelos, paired with Rio-born singer-cel- list-composer Lui Coimbra.

No performer was more spectacular than Egberto Gismonti. A virtuoso on guitar and piano, his compositions over the past 40 years stand at the cross-

roads of Brazilian folk and classical traditions, much like his major influence, the iconic Brazilian composer Heitor Villa-Lobos (1887-1959). Gismonti is in demand worldwide but rarely performs in his native country, so the Paraty event had the air of a homecoming. His concert filled the town's majestic Igreja da Matriz to the rafters. Dressed in a white tunic and his customary skullcap, Gismonti tamed the audience into rapt attention with his guitar pyrotechnics. After 45 minutes, he moved to a concert grand piano, displaying similarly explosive technique. The program consisted almost entirely of Gismonti compositions, with the exception of "Dança (Miudinho)," a piano work by Villa-Lobos.



Egberto Gismonti at the MIMO Festival in Paraty, Brazil, on Oct. 11

COURTESY MIMO FESTIVAL

In the show's first half, Gismonti's "Alegrinho & Saudações" combined elements of Spanish guitar with highly imaginative, modern harmonic flights, eventually developing into something more suggestive of samba. A world of Brazilian folk traditions and rhythms danced and sometimes exploded off his fingers. His idiosyncratic, two-handed fingerpicking technique, on both 10- and 12-string guitars, incorporated custom tunings, left-hand hammer-ons and right-handed percussion on the guitar's body. Barely pausing to catch his breath, Gismonti moved to the

piano and began an equally impressive program that included his famous, fast-paced "Dança das Cabeças," the hypnotic "Maracatu" and his lyrical "Palhaço." The romantic and the rhapsodic gave way to sections of frenetic dissonance, and vice versa. On both instruments his technique was blazing, but always in the service of an orchestral vision.

—Allen Morrison

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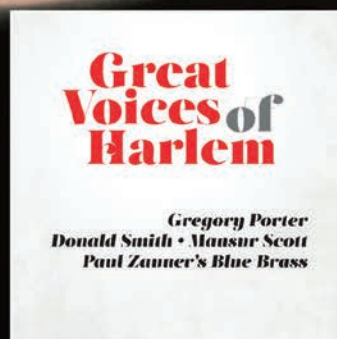
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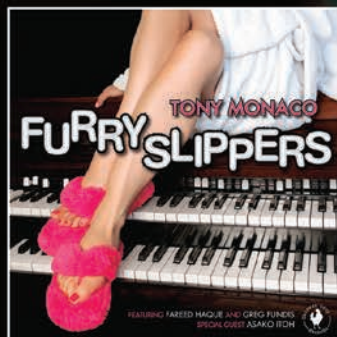
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European Scene / BY PETER MARGASAK

Hawkins Thrives as Outsider

British pianist Alexander Hawkins includes a version of the ubiquitous Billy Strayhorn standard "Take The 'A' Train" on his debut solo album, *Song Singular* (Babel), surrounding the indelible theme with abstract yet flowing original pieces deeply rooted in a contemporary aesthetic that draws from a wide array of sources, both from within and outside of jazz history.

Hawkins is one of a growing number of musicians who erase generational divides, boldly pushing the music forward without forsaking its past. "I adore the entire history of the music," Hawkins said, recalling the frequent presence of jazz in the household where he grew up. "I learned my jazz chronologically ... I listened to Jelly Roll Morton and then on to [Art] Tatum—alongside Ellington my greatest hero—[Earl "Fatha"] Hines, [Teddy] Wilson, and then to [Bud] Powell, [Thelonious] Monk, [Elmo] Hope, [Herbie] Nichols."

At the same time, the Oxford native is not revisiting the past through the lens of nostalgia: "I've generally got no interest in playing the tradition as it was played back in the day. I love it too much for that." In a country where his jazz peers sometimes eschew discussing American influences, Hawkins insists on their importance.

Another thing that sets him apart was his decision to forgo a formal jazz education. He reasoned that his heroes learned on the bandstand, so why shouldn't he? Indeed, he's worked with some strong individuals like Joe McPhee, Evan Parker, Marshall Allen and especially the South African drummer Louis Moholo-Moholo (of Blue Notes fame), and he credits them all with allowing him to forge his own path.

"In all the years I've been playing with Louis, he has never once told me what to play or suggested what to play," Hawkins said. "Feeling valued in this way by such an awe-inspiring musician is important to me in realizing that what I'm doing may be OK, since it's true that as musicians many of us have our moments of self-doubt."

The pianist is much more confident today than he once was. He admits that in the early days in the trans-Atlantic group Convergence Quartet (with fellow Brit Dominic Lash on bass and Americans Taylor Ho Bynum on cornet and Harris Eisenstadt on drums), he was playing a bit of catch-up, but that's certainly no longer the case. Over the last few years Hawkins has emerged as one of England's most exciting players, a musician with a deep curiosity.

In a country where so many young players are affiliated with loose collectives, Hawkins has remained a kind of free agent. "I'm very happy to be an outlier to all of this," he said. "I think being an outsider almost by default increases one's chances

Alexander Hawkins



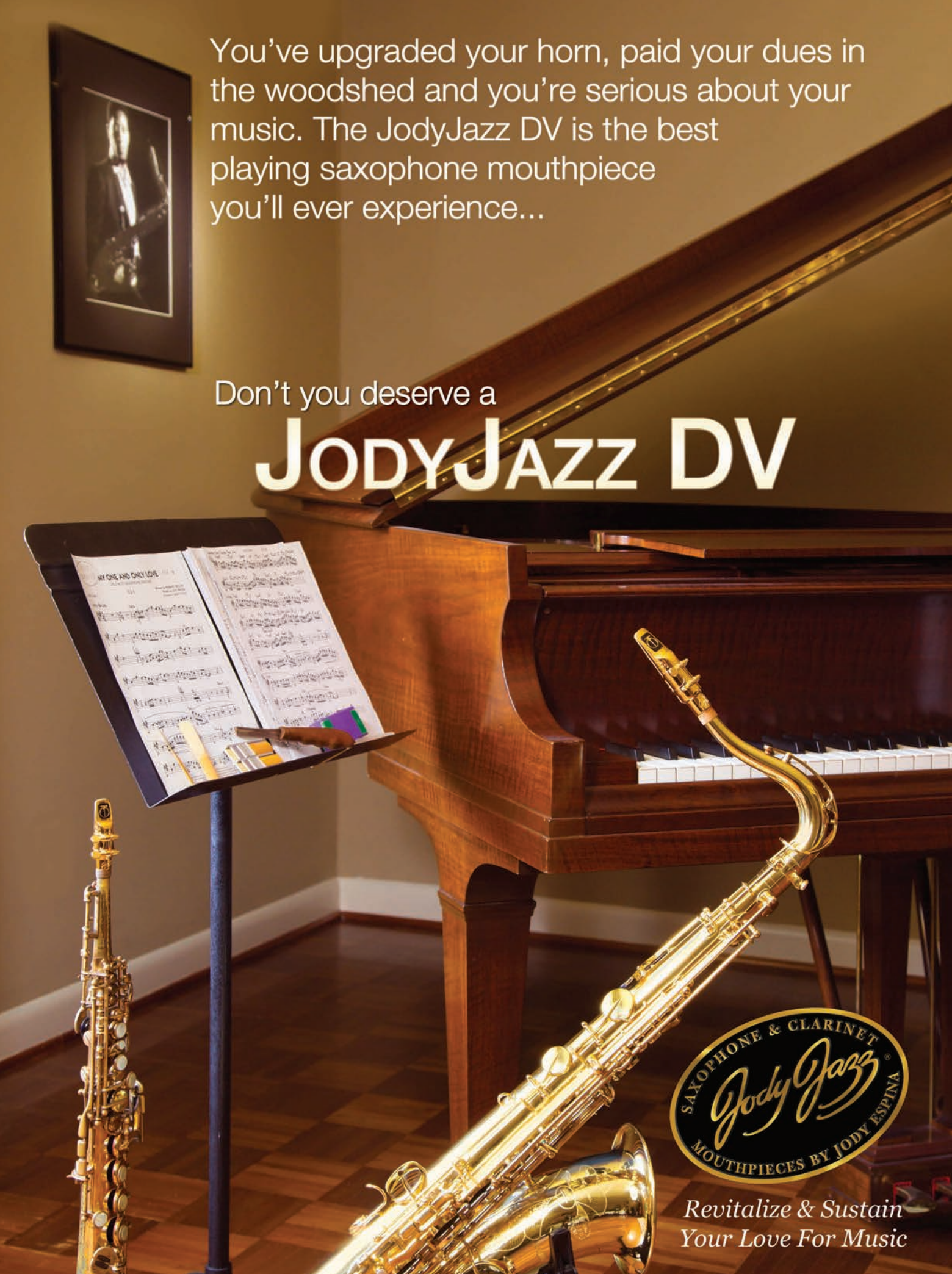
EMILIE HOLBA

of creating unusual and distinctive music." Judging by his recent outpouring of quality music, he's correct.

He has developed a strong relationship with Moholo-Moholo, recording a knockout duo album in 2012 titled *Keep Your Heart Straight* and more recently turning up on the drummer's quartet album *4 Blokes* (both on Ogun). Hawkins has played with Ethiopian great Mulatu Astatke as a member of the Sun Ra-inspired instrumental band The Heliocentrics. He's member of the forward-looking organ trio Decoy (with bassist John Edwards and drummer Steve Noble), a context where he translates his early classical training on a Hammond. And, most impressively, he's forged his own improv-heavy approach leading the Alexander Hawkins Ensemble.

The group's most recent album, *Step Wide, Step Deep* (Babel), reflects his dense web of ideas and influences. It's an alternately swinging and free sextet (violinist Dylan Bates, bassist Neil Charles, guitarist Otto Fischer, reedist Shabaka Hutchings and drummer Tom Skinner) that ravenously eats up the leader's loose compositional ideas. "One of the reasons I'm proud of developing the ensemble is that I feel I'm able to express myself more fully, and at the same time, provide a platform to show what it is about the other players I love so much." There's no doubt that fans will be getting more interesting ideas from Hawkins, who was recently tapped to write a new book of arrangements for London's Dedication Orchestra. The first recording of his trio with Charles and Skinner is due out in the spring.

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Eick Excels at Jarasum

Caught >

SOMETHING VERY RIGHT IS HAPPENING AT THE JARASUM FEST IN South Korea, which has secured its place as a hot spot on the gradually expanding Asian jazz festival scene.

Moving smoothly into its second decade running, the Jarasum International Jazz Festival made a strong and balanced impression Oct. 3–5 during its 11th annual edition, which drew thousands of attendees to the rustic, outdoor setting of Jarasum, a camping area and island on the gentle Bukhangang River, northwest of Seoul and adjacent to the town of Gapyeong.

Founded by director Jae-Jin In, the Jarasum International Jazz Festival blends crowd-pleasing and artful elements into a three-day program with music on multiple stages. Via the “international” appellation, the festival touches on jazz from America, Europe and other parts of the globe—and, not incidentally, the rich talent pool of Korean jazz artists.

Two of the festival’s three days were sold out this year, and the crowds were models of attentiveness. Whether on the vast lawn of the Festival Lounge stage by day or at the Jazz Island stage at night, the teeming throngs seemed as interested in the pop-party vibes of Maceo Parker, the sumptuous gospelized grooves of Yellowjackets and the powerhouse fretwork of fusion guitar hero Allan Holdsworth (closing the festival) as the subtler stuff of Swedish pianist Jan Lundgren’s trio with guest harmonicist Grégoire Maret or Polish trumpeter Maciej Fortuna’s impressive and often introspective trio.

As veteran German pianist Joachim Kühn told the wowed crowd after his cerebral and fiery solo piano set on the festival’s opening day, “Thank you for your energy. You make an old man very happy.”

Norwegian jazz was in the spotlight this year. Melancholic melodicism

and lyricism were delivered by pianist Tord Gustavsen and his quartet, as well as an understated duo with two seasoned Nordic musicians—pianist Ketil Bjørnstad and guitarist Terje Rypdal, the latter serving as a soaring, singing lead voice, leaving his jazz-rock persona at home. Another notable Norwegian, Arild Andersen, made a bold and more varied musical statement with his trio featuring firebrand Scottish saxophonist Tommy Smith and drummer Paolo Vinaccia.

One standout of the Norwegian contingent was trumpeter Mathias Eick and his quintet with two drummers, bass and keyboards—a band that manages to mix aesthetic vision and accessible, crowd-soothing qualities. Eick’s conception is personalized and multidirectional; he’s unafraid to bask in glowing melodic themes while also extending tastefully into lighter shades of ambient grooves, as heard in darker form by another famed Norwegian trumpeter, Nils Petter Molvaer.

In the wide-open expanse of the festival’s Jazz Island venue, Eick’s music took on a special meditative majesty. He led his band from dirge mode to the rhythmic heft of “Oslo” and the subdued propulsive seductiveness of “Ravensburg” to close, replete with an audience singalong moment.

Eick demonstrates that playing to the

crowd doesn’t have to exclude also being mindful of the more serious musical muse.

Of the Korean artists on the roster, the Charlie Jung Band dished up hot and fluent blues-rock of the post-Stevie Ray Vaughan stripe, and the Jae Cheol Oh Large Ensemble put forth a taut big band sound. —Josef Woodard



Mathias Eick at the Jarasum International Jazz Festival in South Korea

Wilson Celebrates 50th in Style

AFTER HIS AMBITIOUS FOUR-NIGHT 50TH BIRTHDAY CELEBRATION at Dizzy’s Club Coca-Cola in New York City on Oct. 2–5, drummer Matt Wilson quoted French painter-sculptor-writer Marcel Duchamp: “It’s not about the art,” he said. “It’s the artists.”

Wilson was referring to the jazz community at large and specifically in the Big Apple, where he corralled some of his favorite co-conspirators and boasted fresh confections, pooling the talents of 14 musicians (plus six guests) under the respective banners of Arts and Crafts, Topsy Turvy, Open House and Gratitude Trio.

Wilson has faced the most challenging year of his life with the recent passing of his wife, Felicia, leaving him to handle the parenting of their four children amid the demands of a hectic career. The four kids were among the attendees on Oct. 4 to witness Open House, a nonpareil quintet uniting saxophonist Joe Lovano, vibraphonist Stefon Harris, bassist Peter Washington and guitarist Mary Halvorson. The Open House concert began audaciously, with an intense group improvisation on a sketch Wilson drolly dubbed “House Warming.” Before introducing the composition “Open House,” Wilson described his one-off quintet as something of a potluck, with every musician bringing a covered dish and cutlery.

Ever allying reverence with play, Wilson refers to the bandstand as a sonic sandbox. After the third tune in, “Sonic Garden,” he breezily announced, “We planted it, and it grew.”

Wilson’s most recent quartet album, *Gathering Call* (Palmetto), underscores his long-held beliefs—inspired by indefatigable mentor J.C. Combs from Wichita State University—about the importance of community and communication. However, despite Wilson’s gregarious inclusiveness, there was little compromise in the music parlayed by Open House, which includ-

ed his original “No Outerwear” (wryly based on the changes to “Out Of Nowhere”), Ornette Coleman’s “Good Life” and Sonny Sharrock’s “Promises Kept.” An emotional peak occurred during “Flowers For Felicia,” beautifully set up by Harris and movingly interpreted by Lovano.

Another first occurred the following night, Oct. 5, when Wilson convened his Gratitude Trio with pianist Geri Allen and bassist Buster Williams. After Allen’s arrangement of Mal Waldron’s “Soul Eyes” and a cameo from tenor saxophonist Jeff Lederer on Charlie Rouse’s “Pumpkin’s Delight,” the group’s second set was slow to build. It began with John Coltrane’s “Syeeda’s Song Flute,” then Paul Motian’s “Mesmer,” during which Wilson’s drums took an entirely different tack from the skittery snare strategy of the opener.

Nodding to another illustrious associate, Wilson mentioned his involvement with Jazz at Lincoln Center Orchestra saxophonist Ted Nash’s Henry Mancini project, introducing Mancini’s seldom played “Lujon.”

The final performance of Wilson’s testimonial run was a deep listening experience, with Allen capping the last set with her thorny, change-running original “Dolphy’s Dance.”

Wilson’s Arts and Crafts quartet with trumpeter Terrell Stafford featured guest singer Duchess on Oct. 2, and his septet Topsy Turvy included trombonist Ray Anderson on Oct. 3.

The drummer recapped the events with a spirit of gratitude. “All of the musicians I presented are my heroes,” Wilson said. “It was so much fun, I could do another 10 nights.”

He later wrote in an email: “With all that we have gone through with Felicia’s illness and passing, I strive to remain grateful.” —Michael Jackson



Matt Wilson at Dizzy’s Club Coca-Cola in New York City on Oct. 5

Bassist Jack Bruce Dies at 71

JACK BRUCE—SINGER, KEYBOARDIST, BASSIST, HARMONICA player, guitarist and composer—died of liver disease at his home in Suffolk, England, on Oct. 25. He was 71.

A significant influence on generations of electric bass players, he attained rock-star renown as a member of the 1960s band Cream with guitarist Eric Clapton and drummer Ginger Baker. In a long solo career away from the glaring lights of pop music, Bruce found his true calling as an adventurer in jazz and its creative offshoots.

Born on May 14, 1943, in Glasgow, Scotland, John Symon Asher Bruce was first exposed to music by his father, who played Fats Waller-style jazz piano at home, and by his mother's folk-song singing. A gifted classical cellist, he studied composition as a youth.

Bruce took an interest in the string bass at age 14, and by his late teens, he was working in jazz combos at U.S. Air Force bases in Italy. "Once a week there was a jazz evening when people would play records," he told DownBeat in a February 2009 article. "They had an amazing record library, and me being a bass player, one of the guys said, 'You've got to hear this guy!' There it was: Charles Mingus. That changed the direction of my thinking because he became the person that I wanted to emulate. Before that it was a player like Scott LaFaro, but Mingus was a composer, which was what I wanted to be."

After moving to London, Bruce joined other up-and-coming musicians in jazz groups that absorbed the bebop and free-jazz emanating from the States. Encouraged by saxophonist Dick Heckstall-Smith, Bruce brought his Mingus-like jazz sensibilities to guitarist Alexis Korner's Blues Incorporated band, whose drummer in 1962 was a fresh-faced Baker. When Blues Incorporated's singer-organist-alto saxophonist Graham Bond quit to form his own jazz-rock band, the Graham Bond Organisation, he took Bruce and Baker with him and soon added guitarist John McLaughlin.

In 1966 Bruce and Baker joined heavily hyped guitar deity Eric Clapton, fresh out of John Mayall's Bluesbreakers, in the blues-rock power trio Cream, which ascended to global popularity before its wild two-year run ended

in 1968. Lengthy flights of improvisations on songs like "Crossroads" and "Spoonful" were a band hallmark, as were well-crafted, quick-witted songs composed by Bruce with Beat poet and lyricist Pete Brown.

Bruce's infallible musicianship and his relentless curiosity and ardor for jazz, blues and probing rock placed him in good stead for solo projects from the late 1960s to his last days. His acclaimed jazz album *Things We Like* was recorded before Cream disbanded but released in 1970.

The rock masterpieces *Songs For A Tailor* (1969) and *Harmony Row* (1971) further illustrated Bruce's boundless musical imagination, combining elements of hard-bop, blues, folk, Bach, Messiaen and the British music hall tradition.

Bruce sang on keyboardist-composer Carla Bley and wordsmith Paul Haines' jazz-opera LP *Escalator Over The Hill* (1971), and he employed Bley for one of his 1970s bands. Bruce worked with saxophonist-keyboardist John Surman and drummer Jon Hiseman in a little-known free-jazz trio, and he also recorded with Frank Zappa. The bassist was a member of Tony Williams' 1970s band Lifetime. In the 2000s, Bruce saluted Lifetime with concerts in Japan. He joined drummer Cindy Blackman Santana, guitarist Vernon Reid and keyboardist John Medeski in the Lifetime tribute band Spectrum Road, which released an album on the Palmetto label in 2012.

In early 2014, Bruce released the last of about 20 albums, *Silver Rails*.

"Jack was a real character and a fine musician," said McLaughlin, "and I'll miss him."
—Frank-John Hadley

Jack Bruce (1943–2014)



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KEN THOMSON

Feeling the Payoff

IVAN SINGER

Being part of a collective can be valuable for musical development, but often it does very little for an individual player's name recognition.

That's what Brooklyn-based saxophonist-clarinetist Ken Thomson has come to realize after more than a decade as a member of the successful punk-jazz outfit Gutbucket. Its 15th anniversary activities included recording a live album at the Stone in New York City, to be released on Cuneiform in 2015. So although Gutbucket is still going strong, Thomson felt a few years ago that the time had come to venture on his own and give free rein to other musical ideas.

As a result, the reedist assembled his own quintet of top-notch musicians: trumpeter Russ Johnson, guitarist Nir Felder, Australian bass player Adam Armstrong and drummer Fred Kennedy. The band is called Ken Thomson and Slow/Fast, and its debut was 2010's *It Would Be Easier If* (Intuition).

"I was identified as someone who makes somewhat punky, fast, loud, distorted music," Thomson said a few hours before performing at Sugar Maple in Milwaukee as part of a tour in support of the group's sophomore recording, *Settle* (NCM East). "It is a departure from Gutbucket, which is more fast than slow. I wanted a wider pal-

ette that we could use."

Because the members of Slow/Fast all have busy schedules, it can be difficult for them to all get together to play. To make matters worse, Johnson left New York for Milwaukee in 2011. The leader finds comfort in knowing that these musicians are ready to invest their time in his compositions.

So, what motivates them to play Thomson's music? "The challenge," said Johnson. "The music is physically and mentally very demanding to play, but you feel the payoff at the end. When you practice it, you only see the challenge, but once you are on the bandstand, the beauty actually comes out and you realize all these extremely intricate events have their meaning."

The most striking aspect of a Slow/Fast performance is how intently the band members look at the scores. However, as Johnson suggests, Thomson's compositions do not have the dry or cerebral quality that mars too many similar exercises.

Thomson's knack for high-level intricacies and attention to detail are likely due to his keeping one foot in the New Music world. Until 2006, he ran the composer collective Bang On A Can's imprint Cantaloupe Music. Since he left that position, his ties with the organization actually have been tightening. He leads the highly physical,

12-piece Asphalt Orchestra, whose album *Plays The Pixies: Surfer Rosa* (Cantaloupe) features interpretations of the alt-rock band's compositions. Additionally, Thomson is a member of the Bang On A Can All-Stars, and in 2013 Cantaloupe released *Thaw*, a collection of his string quartet works performed by the Jack Quartet.

The bustling, hectic pace of life in New York City is another challenge for Thomson. He seizes any opportunity he has away from the city to write or flesh out his compositions. "I wake up in the morning and, unfortunately, the first thing in my mind is not writing music," he said. "The sad part is that our lives are 80 percent logistics and figuring things out [but only] 20 percent music. For me it's helpful to separate myself from the digital world."

Settle finally gives Thomson the opportunity to devote more time to the bass clarinet, an instrument he picked up well after he became proficient on the alto saxophone. (He also plays bass clarinet on the *Thaw* track "Perpetual.")

"I feel that the instrument is underutilized," he said. "It has a four-octave range that offers incredible possibilities. What I've realized with this band is that I can play unison or above the trumpet, and at the same time play down with the bass."

—Alain Drouot

Players >

YELENA ECKEMOFF

New Principles

Pianist and composer Yelena Eckemoff, who lives in Greensboro, North Carolina, recently completed a whirlwind tour of New York's jazz haunts. One night it was the Mingus Orchestra at the Jazz Standard, the next it was Tom Harrell's quintet with Mark Turner at the Village Vanguard. Turner played on Eckemoff's latest album, *A Touch Of Radiance* (L&H Production), so she wanted to check him out. But she was also in New York at the urging of another collaborator on that same album, drummer Billy Hart.

"Billy said to me, 'What are you doing in North Carolina? You have to come to New York more often and mingle with musicians!'" she said. "So that's what I'm doing. I've been trying to catch up with what I've been missing."

It's been a long trip for the Soviet-born Eckemoff, who came to the United States from Moscow (invited by a family in Greensboro) with her husband in 1991. Their three young sons would follow the next year.

"I don't know how we did it," said Eckemoff, laughing. "At this point, it seems like we were crazy."

Eckemoff was conservatory-trained, first at the Gnessin Academy of Music for gifted students, then at the Moscow State Conservatory. She was a classical pianist and teacher, someone whose interest in jazz was of a piece with a curiosity about all styles of music. That curiosity led her to hang out with jazz and rock musicians, and play with them. She also checked out touring American jazz artists like Dave Brubeck.

"I was mostly interested in applying new principles—principles of improvisation—to my own compositions," she said. Her composing, which she began at the age of 4, followed her moods. "If I was in a good mood, I composed, if I was in a bad mood, I composed. If a boy didn't like me and I

liked him, I sat and played the piano."

In the States, she was immersed in raising a family—with three boys under the age of 10. As the kids grew up, she gave lessons and began experimenting with electronics in her home studio, and released a string of solo albums with everything from original classical pieces to Russian folk songs. She jammed with local musicians but grew frustrated with the level of musicianship. On the Internet, she found the veteran Danish bass player Mads Vinding as well as drummer Peter Erskine, both of whom were willing to dub parts onto one of her piano recordings. "When I listened to that recording," she said, "I was crying, because I said, 'That's it! That's where I want to go!'"

After a few trio albums including players like Vinding, Erskine and the bassist Arild Andersen, where Eckemoff wanted to go reached a new realization with *A Touch Of Radiance*. Informed by her classical training, Eckemoff writes in open-ended, elusive structures that are closer to sonata form than standard 16- or 32-bar verse-chorus arrangements. But working with Turner, Hart, vibraphonist Joe Locke and bassist George Mraz, she has created exploratory, lyrical pieces that combine melodies and orchestrations that sound at once clearly directed and freely improvised.

"Jazz has its own rules," said Eckemoff, "and you cannot bring just anything to jazz musicians and say, 'Let's play.'"

Forthcoming from Eckemoff is *Lions*, featuring her trio with Hart and bassist Andersen. Like her previous albums, it's all originals, no standards. "That's not because I don't like them," Eckemoff explained, "but because there are so many recordings of jazz standards by great musicians—I don't think I can add anything." She laughed. "Also, I have so much music that I've composed. I'm busy making sure I leave something behind me that is mine." —Jon Garelick



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BECCA STEVENS

The Creative Side



When jazz-pop vocalist Becca Stevens made her debut at the Monterey Jazz Festival in September, she starred in three different settings.

She soared through two songs in Billy Childs' Laura Nyro project on the main Arena stage (she sang "The Confession" on the pianist's album *Map To The Treasure: Reimagining Laura Nyro*). Then she joined Ambrose Akinmusire for a sublime rendition of their co-write "Our Basement (Ed)" from his album *The Imagined Savior Is Far Easier To Paint* during the trumpeter's set at the Night Club.

The previous day, the luminous, confident vocalist performed with her own Becca Stevens Band at Dizzy's Den, playing intimate, ruminative, jagged-edged originals with jouncy time signatures, rich with harmony and melody, from her 2011 album, *Weightless*, and her new album, *Perfect Animal*, which includes covers of songs by Usher, Frank Ocean and Steve Winwood, due to be released in February. She ended her set with a terrific, jazz-undertones take on the 1974 hit "Help Me" by one of her musical heroes, Joni Mitchell ("She's royalty, the king and queen of my world," Stevens said later).

"This is my first time in Monterey," she said after her appearance with Akinmusire. "It's like an amusement park. I've been running all around because I have a group of friends here all together. I was supposed to leave yesterday, but I wanted to stay to play with Ambrose." (Stevens is also on course for another multidimensional experience in February at the Portland Jazz Festival, where she will perform again with Childs as well as in pianist Taylor Eigsti's trio and with her own group.)

A classical guitar major at North Carolina School of the Arts, Stevens comes from a background of the folk and Appalachian music tradi-

tion, but fully gravitated to jazz when she attended the New School for Jazz and Contemporary Music in New York. "At New School, jazz opened my voice," she said. "It broadened my palette and opened up the creative side of my brain."

But before moving to New York, Stevens took a year off after high school to explore performing in Winston-Salem, North Carolina. She went to sessions and gigs after learning a select number of tunes from the songbooks of Billie Holiday, Ella Fitzgerald, Sarah Vaughan and Nancy Wilson and became passionate about singing with local jazz musicians. "Jazz was my rebellion from the classical repertoire," she said. "It was my precious little thing. It was like a fort or a tree house where I could get away and be safe." She taught at a day care center and performed at night in various bands, including one that played jazz, soul and rock and another that slammed with straight-up rock.

"I had a strong sense that I needed a quieter environment to let my own music come out and get the confidence to really develop," Stevens said. "I could play the guitar, but I knew studying voice would be nurturing."

Stevens offered advice to anyone considering coming to music school in New York: "Avoid spending a lot of time in practice rooms, and instead get out and work on collaborating with others." She threw herself into a variety of different bands, saying yes to everyone who asked her to play, which opened a lot of doors.

Stevens became the vocalist for Travis Sullivan's Björkestra—an 18-piece ensemble that interprets the music of pop artist Björk—and contributed to its 2008 album *Enjoy!* She also recorded and toured with Eigsti (on his 2010 album *Daylight At Midnight*), who at Monterey was playing with Eric Harland's Voyager band. When asked about Stevens, Eigsti said, "Becca is secret-

ly one of my favorite choral writers. Every time she played with us, she was always the best person in the band." Akinmusire commented backstage, "Becca is a lot of people's muse. She's easily my favorite artist in this genre. She's so connected, and she's all core—100 percent and no bullshit. She puts you into her orbit."

Stevens has impressed others as well, including Kurt Elling who has said she "lights up like a firefly in performance," and Esperanza Spalding, who invited her to sing background vocals on her 2012 album *Radio Music Society*. Likewise José James, a New School friend, enlisted her to write and sing the song "Dragon" on his 2014 album, *While You Were Sleeping*. "Becca is one of the best musicians I know," he said. "She's a great songwriter, and she has a special talent. She's a musician's musician. She's not caught up in the commercial aspect of the music. Her vocals are straight and clean yet also have a modern vibe, like listening to Stereolab. She's destined for greatness."

Perfect Animal, produced by pop-savvy Scott Solter, includes brilliant, catchy originals such as "Be Still" (a West African vibe propelled by an odd meter on guitar) and "Imperfect Animal" (about fighting the impulse to be perfect in all walks of life).

It's not a jazz recording per se, but that doesn't concern Stevens. "I indulged myself on this album, and I'm really proud of it," she said. "I don't see this record as a departure from who I've been, but a continuation. When I left jazz school, I began writing in a different direction, but I proudly claim those roots. You can't have a tree without roots. So you can hear the jazz influences: the harmonies, the intricate rhythms. Some people tell me to get away from jazz, but I say, why not embrace it? I love standards and collaborating with jazz musicians, but I just don't want to be pigeonholed as a jazz vocalist."

—Dan Ouellette

Players >

ANTHONY BRANKER

Pointing Toward Hope

In 1999, Anthony Branker was forced to stop playing trumpet due to a medical condition. Where many musicians would have felt silenced losing their ability to play, Branker shifted his energy to composing and assembled two collectives, Word Play and Ascent, to bring his music to life.

Word Play is the band on his most recent release, *The Forward (Towards Equality) Suite* (Origin), a wide-ranging and powerful rumination on America's winding, flawed, still-in-progress journey toward a fuller realization of its founding principles. The project germinated in Europe while Branker was on sabbatical from Princeton University watching the 2012 presidential election unfold from abroad. Rather than delving into polemics, the suite is focused on the composer's optimism for the future of the nation, beginning with a preamble outlining Branker's concept of what America stands for and ending with a piece called "Hope." Halfway between is a song called "Our Dreams," which features the voices of 10-year-old music students in Branker's hometown of Piscataway, New Jersey, reading their own dreams for the future of the world.

"A lot of people have assumed that we did that at an urban school," Branker said, "but it's not. It's a suburban place. They're saying things with innocence. They're 10-year-olds really believing that things can get better."

Branker's use of words in the suite ranges from the very direct to the abstract. On "We The People (Part 1)," he has Alison Crockett singing the title phrase in ethereal, draping melody, then jump-cuts to her reading "If We Must Die," poet Claude McKay's visceral response to the 1919 race riots that erupted in American cities and towns, over a hard funk beat. The juxtaposition is important: It presents more than one angle on Branker's themes, and it also lends the suite a sweeping sense of momentum.

"I was trying to keep it diverse, because I thought that the music was speaking to the diverse influences that have shaped our society and the

citizens of this country, and the multiplicity of cultures that come together to make this up," Branker said. "If I step back and ask myself, 'What are you as a composer?' the first thing that comes to mind is that I'm influenced by a lot of different kinds of music and ways of organizing it. I'm going to give you a little bit of everything, because if it's part of me, then I want to share that part of me."

The musicians in Branker's band respect his commitment to his concept and sense of balance and flow. "I think what Tony does so expertly and beautifully in this opus is combining words with vocal and instrumental music in such soulful and sophisticated ways," said pianist Jim Ridl, who gets plenty of room to stretch out on the new album.

Indeed, one of the remarkable things about Branker's music is that, though he is no longer a player himself, his albums feature a wealth of excellent musicianship, from expressive ensemble playing to incisive solos. The wide stylistic and textural range he offers his musicians as a composer, arranger and director seems to give them a lot to chew on, and it's hard for things to go stale when there's so much variety.

This approach carries over to his career as director of jazz studies at Princeton. "I teach a lot of classes, including the improvising ensemble, which is open to everyone on campus," Branker explained. "I've had students involved in orchestra, choir, world music, r&b, funk, hip-hop ... It's aimed at opening up their thinking so they can go back to the places they live in, musically speaking, with another way of thinking about being creative."

Whether he's discussing his students, his work or American culture, Branker's sense of optimism shines through, even when he's offering criticism. *The Forward (Towards Equality) Suite* may be harrowing and intense at times, but it's all pointing toward hope. "It may be naive," he says, "but I think we've made tremendous progress. In time, from generation to generation it'll be a little better. And that's all we can ask for."

—Joe Tangari

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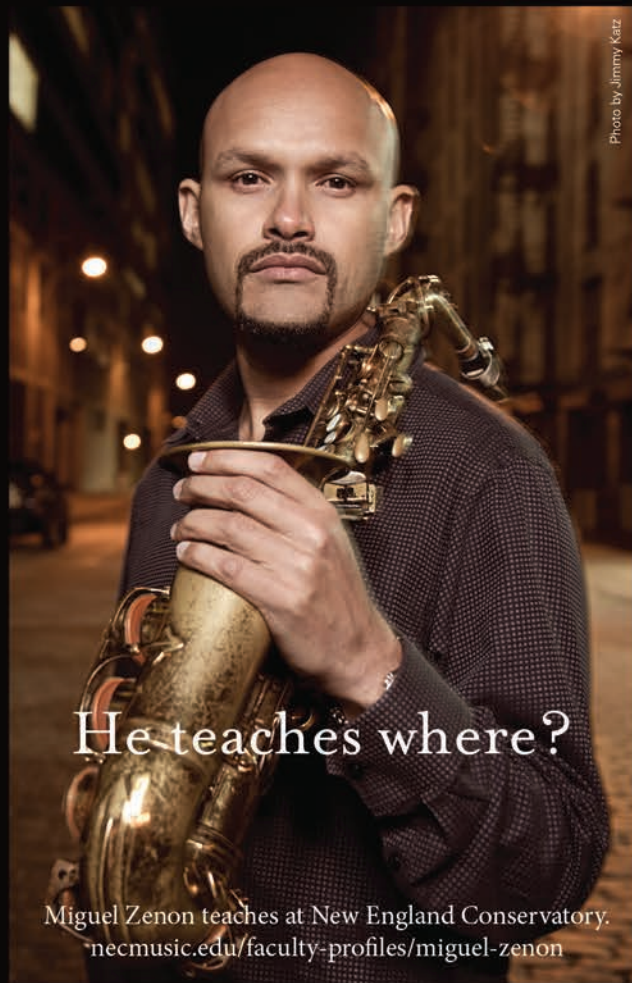
CHRISTIAN McBRIDE

JAZZ WITHOUT PRETENSE

The bassist and bandleader thrives in his role as an ambassador for jazz

By Phillip Lutz | Photo by Jimmy & Dena Katz

The Carla Bossi Comelli Studio at the Manhattan School of Music was filled to overflowing when the star of the show, Christian McBride, arrived. Nattily dressed and smiling broadly, the bassist, bandleader, composer and commentator—just a partial list of jobs he holds—had committed to cramming a 90-minute master class into his late-October schedule before heading to the theater and then home to pack for a tour of Europe with his trio.



The tour, which would take the group to seven countries in less than three weeks, promised to be an intense one. But at the master class, he did not disappoint. As the student instrumentalists ran through renditions of “All The Things You Are” and “September In The Rain” that revealed talent but no excess of inspiration, McBride listened, joked and cajoled. He also offered a hard truth in measured tones.

“If you ain’t got none of this,” he said, tapping his fist over his heart, “it don’t matter.”

It’s a message that the 42-year-old McBride is delivering around the world these days—on the bandstand, whether he is leading his trio, quintet or big band; on the radio, whether he is hosting his new NPR show or his old Sirius XM show; and in personal conversation, whether he is speaking to students in a classroom or an interviewer at a cafe in his adopted hometown of Montclair, New Jersey, where he sat a few days before the Manhattan School master class and offered a vision of jazz presented without pretense.

“If more jazz musicians would just give a modicum of acknowledgement to learning how to play for an audience,” he said between sips of a tall green health drink, “then we wouldn’t have conversations like, ‘Is jazz dying, is jazz suffering?’”

“Too many times, people in jazz have accepted this notion that showbiz or entertainment value is a bad thing, that it somehow automatically dilutes the music,” he added. “If that were the case, we’d never enjoy any music from before the mid-’50s, or somehow Dizzy Gillespie’s music was not as great as it could have been had he not been a showman, which is complete B.S.”

The message is one that McBride, who was described by Newport Jazz Festival founder George Wein as “a born leader of people,” is communicating musically—most frequently with his trio. Along with pianist Christian Sands, 25, and drummer Ulysses Owens Jr., 32, McBride is re-creating a classic format for a younger generation, building a unit short on irony and steeped in the straightahead aesthetic that attracted so many of that generation’s parents and their parents’ parents to trio performances.

“Our biggest thing,” Sands said, “is that we’re coming out of good-feeling music.”

To be sure, listeners intent on learned analysis will have more than enough to scrutinize in the trio’s deeply reflective interpretations. And those craving pyrotechnic display will find no lack of virtuosity, judiciously deployed. But for those who simply want to tap their feet, there is pocket—and plenty of it. All of which is drawing listeners to the group’s Grammy-nominated, 2013 album, *Out Here* (Mack Avenue), and its live shows. Its profile on the rise in Europe and Japan, the group will be extending its reach in America in the new year.

Contrary to the group members’ original expectations, the trio has begun to eclipse McBride’s other bands in booking dates. Yet the trio almost didn’t happen. Despite—or, more accurately, because of—McBride’s identification with Ray Brown, a famous fixture in trios led by Oscar Peterson and a prominent purveyor of the bass-led trio in his own right, McBride

Christian McBride in Detroit on Aug. 30



demurred for years.

"I never wanted a trio," he said. "I always thought that, to a certain extent, I couldn't get out of the shadow of Ray Brown. No matter what I did, I was always known as the Ray Brown protégé."

Between the time Brown met McBride (in 1991) and died (in 2002), the two formed a relationship that arguably transformed itself into a partnership of musical equals, with both bassists appearing on McBride's debut CD, 1995's *Gettin' To It* (Verve), as well as 1997's *SuperBass* and 2001's *SuperBass 2* (both on Telarc), live albums on which the two were joined by a third bass voice, John Clayton.

"Of course, I'm proud of that," McBride said. "But I remember seeing an obscure review of the Sting album"—a reference to 2003's *Sacred Love* (A&M), on which he appeared—"and it said, 'Christian McBride brings the Ray Brown influence to Sting's album.' I thought if I were to start a trio, I'd never be called by my own name again. It would always be 'Ray Brown protégé Christian McBride.' But one day I decided that to not start a trio because of what a critic might say is not a good reason."

Events also conspired to advance the formation of a McBride trio. Saxophonist Steve Wilson and vibraphonist Warren Wolf, stalwarts of McBride's quintet, Inside Straight, were unable to appear at some of that group's gigs, and he decided to perform with simply a piano and drums. The threesome, with Owens and Peter Martin on piano, clicked. When Sands replaced Martin in the trio, the personnel were set.

"After two or three gigs," McBride said, "I thought, 'I might have something here.'"

While Owens had already been a mainstay of McBride's bands, the addition of Sands was by no means assured. When the trio slot opened up, Sands was at a point in his development where he might not have fit comfortably in a small, straightforward group. As a student at the Manhattan School, he had strayed a bit from the precepts propounded by his mentor, Billy Taylor, coming under the sway of practitioners given more to abstraction, like Jason Moran and Vijay Iyer. That influence was clear in May 2010, when McBride, filling in for Marian McPartland as host on her NPR show, *Piano Jazz*, first met Sands, who was the show's guest.

"When I came into the studio," McBride recalled, "Christian was warming up. He was playing all this 'out' stuff. I thought, 'That doesn't sound like Dr. Taylor to me.'"

But gradually, McBride said, Sands began to reveal other dimensions to his playing, at one point digging into an impressive stride that might have been produced by James P. Johnson. "I thought, 'He's got Jason Moran and Vijay Iyer on this side and Dr. Taylor and Hank Jones, who he also spent time studying with, on this other side.' He's got the whole thing."

Sands began filling in for McBride's various ensembles and, in June 2011, not long after graduating from the Manhattan School, he found himself in Tel Aviv, Israel, a newly minted member of the trio. For Sands, that meant reacquainting himself with the recordings of pianists he hadn't concentrated on since high school—unabashed swingers like Oscar Peterson, Monty Alexander, Ray Bryant and Les McCann. And it meant connecting on a deeper level.

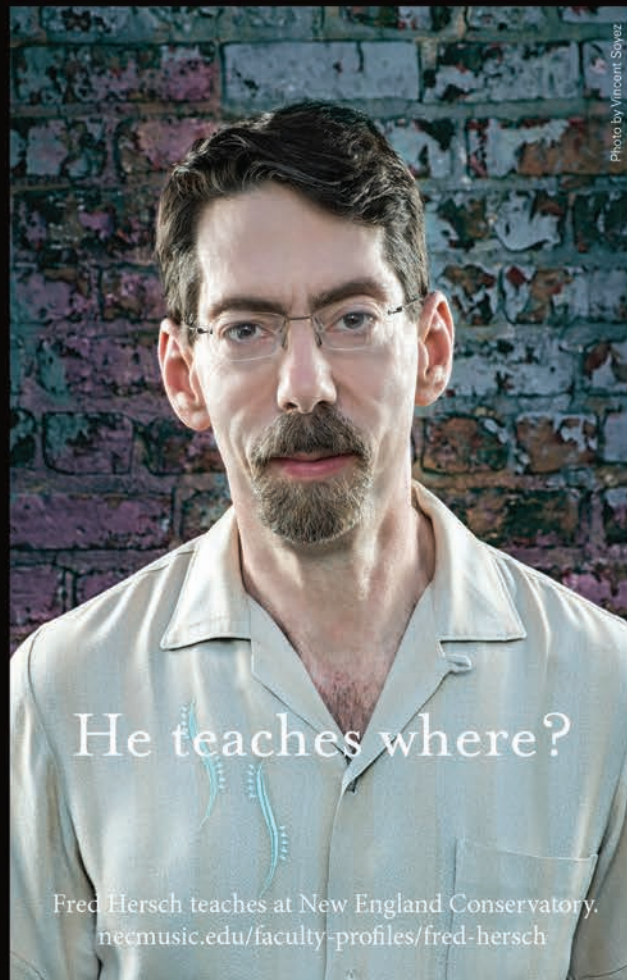
"It meant really paying attention," Sands explained. "Saying, 'OK, this is what that is; that is the essence of what he is getting at.'"

Sands has learned his lessons well, earning high praise from seasoned observers like Wein. "He's the closest thing we have to Oscar Peterson today," Wein said.

Joining the trio also obliged Sands to listen more closely to lyrics, a practice that McBride said he had adopted 15 or 20 years ago. "I didn't start paying attention to lyrics until I got around people like Benny Green," he said, referring to the pianist with whom he played in a Ray Brown tribute band. "Ray Brown, Hank Jones, all the grand masters always urged you to hear the lyrics to the ballads you're playing. And Sinatra—once I got into Sinatra, I fell hard."

The attention to narrative drives the trio's performances and has to some extent inspired its choice, as well as treatment, of material. McBride, for example, said he was taken with "I Have Dreamed," the ballad from the 1951 Rodgers and Hammerstein musical *The King And I*, after hearing Sinatra perform on Nelson Riddle's arrangement.

"There's not really a lot you have to do to a song like that," McBride said. "You just want to try to relay the feeling of the story through your arrangement. It tugs on your heartstrings. 'In my dreams I've loved you so,

A portrait of Fred Hersch, a man with glasses and a goatee, wearing a light-colored button-down shirt. He is standing in front of a textured, colorful wall. The photo is credited to Vincent Sotey.

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Christian Sands (from left), McBride and Ulysses Owens Jr. at the 2014 Detroit Jazz Festival



that by now I think I know what it's like to be loved by you.' Come on—you're going to turn that into an uptempo swinger?"

The trio's arrangement centers on McBride's potent bow, which hews to the melody with little attempt at ornament. He forgoes the bow when Sands moves to the fore, caressing the keys with delicately stacked chords and single-note lines that float above Owens' brush strokes. But he returns to it for a closing rubato, his bass articulating a climax to the story as authentic as the one achieved by Sinatra's voice.

"This is one of the most organic groups I've been part of," Owens said.

Other tunes in the trio's book are approached with a similar deference to, and reverence for, precedent. "Cherokee" barrels forward at a blistering pace until the trio hits the bridge, where it abruptly shifts to a medium-tempo waltz à la Ahmad Jamal circa 1958. "Who's Making Love" harks back to a period a decade after Jamal hit the scene, its groove recalling Johnnie Taylor's funky telling of a cautionary tale.

Providing some contrast, "My Favorite

Things" offers barely a nod to John Coltrane's classic version. It does, however, engage the audience. In an arrangement that McBride said evolved on the bandstand, the trio slides from a 5/4 head to a free section in which Sands dives into the piano's soundboard, strumming its strings and, in

swinging, free, funky, ballad, rock, whatever the case may be—if you think the listener will tune in, then go for it."

That spirit carries over to the quintet and big band. "He likes for you to bring everything you have," Wilson, who plays in both groups, said of

McBride. "It's all within the context of having fun. In present-day jazz culture, there's this emphasis on intellectualism in the music, which is great—that's a big part of what we do—but we tend to forget that this is a folk music, a people music. You can get to a point where you take yourself too seriously. And the audience can feed off that. What Christian likes to do, and what we like to do, is to bring the audience in to what we're doing."

With the big band, McBride said he puts into play "all of my loves and passions—writing, arranging, showmanship, swinging, getting funky."

Though the financial demands of maintaining a large ensemble are formidable, McBride, the jazz advisor at the New Jersey Performing Arts Center (NJPAC), has been able to call on that institution's resources. Among the more productive big-band dates have been those that combine jazz and soul,

"People in jazz have accepted this notion that showbiz is a bad thing, that it automatically dilutes the music."

one memorable moment recounted by McBride, placing his cell phone deeply and mysteriously in the piano's bowels.

Laughing about the moment, McBride noted that, while he thrives on groove, he isn't categorical about it. "Whatever particular mode of expression you think is best for a particular song—be it



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which McBride, who occasionally spins discs as DJ Brother Mister at Spike Hill in Brooklyn, called his “two biggest loves in life.”

Presenting vocalists who, he said, “sing jazz with a soul tinge”—McBride recalled Jeffrey Osborne, of LTD and “On The Wings Of Love” fame, offering an eminently listenable account of “Teach Me Tonight”—he has drawn enthusiastic audiences and expects to continue the soul-jazz mix in the new year.

Also in the new year, McBride hopes to bring to NJPAC a program he presented last August at the Hollywood Bowl, “Get On Up: A James Brown Celebration.” McBride, who was close to Brown—

producing a late-career concert at the Hollywood Bowl in which the Godfather of Soul, who died on Christmas Day in 2006, performed Oliver Nelson arrangements—said that alumni of Brown’s band would be part of the package. Danny Ray, Brown’s “cape man,” is already a regular at McBride’s big band gigs.

On some occasions, McBride’s multi-genre programming at NJPAC extends to jazz and classical performers, the plan being for him to cross over and share the stage with performers like banjoist Béla Fleck and Brooklyn Rider, a string quartet. At other times, his NJPAC programs limit themselves to jazz artists, especially those



McBride hosts the radio show *Jazz Night in America*.

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based in New Jersey who play under the umbrella of the James Moody Democracy of Jazz Festival. That festival has become an annual event at the concert hall, which is located in Newark, where the saxophonist, who died in 2010, was raised.

McBride uses NJPAC donor parties as opportunities to employ rising stars, like trombonist Coleman Hughes and trumpeter Wallace Roney Jr. Both have come through Jazz House Kids, an educational concern based in Montclair that is run by his wife, singer Melissa Walker. McBride contributes his time and talents to that institution as well.

Some of McBride’s NJPAC programming is less conventional. Last January, for example, he presented Jazz Meets Sports, in which former baseball player (and current recording artist) Bernie Williams played guitar and former basketball player Kareem Abdul-Jabbar recited poems. McBride interviewed both athletes, and the combination of performance and talk mirrored the format of his acclaimed Sirius XM radio program, *The Lowdown: Conversations With Christian*.

Not all of his best words are uttered in conversation. His most ambitious composition, *The Movement, Revisited*, incorporates McBride’s music and lyrics with the words of four civil rights figures—Rosa Parks, Malcolm X, Muhammad Ali and Martin Luther King Jr. The piece began as a four-movement suite commissioned by the Portland Arts Society for Black History Month in 1998. It was first performed in a four-concert series in New England in 1998 that featured a gospel choir and jazz combo.

Most recently, the piece was staged in expanded form at the 2010 Detroit Jazz Festival, where it employed a 17-piece band and beefed-up movements on King and Ali, which McBride said were originally “underdeveloped.” The piece also included a fifth movement that drew on President Obama’s words.

In focusing on a limited number of figures, McBride said he hoped “to collectively capture the

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movement as a whole.”

“For each person I tried to write each particular section as I imagined their personalities to be,” he said. Thus, “Sister Rosa,” for Parks, is gently swinging; “Rumble In The Jungle,” for Ali, is brash but light on its feet; “A View From The Mountaintop,” for King, is starkly majestic.

For its part, “Apotheosis: November 4, 2008” is by turns brassy and bright, reflecting the drama and optimism of the date on which the United States elected its first black president. The intent, McBride emphasized, was “not to write a fifth movement about Obama but to write a fifth

movement about the election of Obama.”

McBride was equally quick to stress that the movement for Malcolm X, “Brother Malcolm,” was inspired by the man who, having traveled to Mecca in the last year of his life, had moved toward an “inclusive, worldly view.” He ventured that it might surprise people who viewed the subject as a divisive figure.

“It might not be what people are thinking in terms of the musical image of Malcolm X,” he said. The movement, a minor-key rumination conspicuously devoid of rant, matches form and content, an exercise in structural freedom in

keeping with an incantation authored by McBride and assigned to a female voice: “Brother Malcolm fought for freedom for us all.”

An album has been recorded, but its release date has not yet been determined, partially due to permissions issues related to some of the spoken-word excerpts. McBride, however, noted that he was not wedded to the use of any specific text. Having expanded the piece, he said he remained open to further modification.

“Maybe one day, I would include different figures from the movement,” he said. Among the possible subjects he cited were Stokely Carmichael, Eldridge Cleaver and Angela Davis, whose activism inspired many a song in her day, including Herbie Hancock’s “Ostinato (Suite For Angela)” on 1971’s *Mwandishi* (Warner Brothers).

“I’m hearing something quite conflicting that resolves to something victorious,” he said of a potential score, noting the arc of Davis’ life from prisoner to professor. “Not victorious in the sense of ‘hoorah,’ jumping up and down with streamers coming out of the sky, but a moral victory.” The music, he said, might move from a minor to major key and from odd to even meter.

Musing at the Montclair cafe, McBride added Harry Belafonte’s name to the list of possible subjects. As it happened, McBride said he would be leaving the cafe for an unrelated meeting called by Belafonte, who had been involved as a participant, not a subject, in a production of *The Movement* at the University of Maryland. Like Belafonte, McBride has spoken publicly about civil rights, dating back to 1997, when he took part in then-President Bill Clinton’s town hall meeting “Racism In The Performing Arts.”

At this point, civil rights per se is not on the agenda for McBride’s new NPR program, *Jazz Night in America*. While the show draws broadly on events in the jazz world, the subjects have a strictly cultural cast to them: Wynton Marsalis’ “Ochas,” a new suite for big band and Afro-Cuban percussion; trumpeter Wallace Roney’s performance of previously “lost” compositions Wayne Shorter wrote for Miles Davis; Dave Brubeck’s oeuvre; alto saxophonist Miguel Zenón’s *Identities Are Changeable*, a project that explores notions of cultural identity; and the American Pianists Association’s Jazz Fellowship Awards competition, in which Sands, as a finalist, has been invited to Indianapolis for a series of performances.

McBride’s contributions to the radio show, which is taped at the WBGO studios in Newark and heard on air and online, have consisted of thoughtfully interpolated comments, each a pointed example of how he walks the walk—or, in this instance, literally talks the talk—of an ambassador keen on bringing jazz, shorn of pretense, to the public.

“I want to be able to bring people into the jazz world without turning them off and being too dogmatic,” McBride said. “In almost any other style of music, you either like it or you don’t. People present it to you the best they can and say, ‘Do you like this music?’ But with jazz there’s always this preface, ‘OK, this is what you listen for.’

“Don’t tell people that. Just let them hear what they hear.”

DB



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RANDY WESTON

TRUTH IN HISTORY

By Ted Panken | Photo by Len Katz





Randy Weston at the
2014 Detroit Jazz Festival

In 1969, two years after relocating from Brooklyn to Tangier, Morocco, Randy Weston, then 43, attended a Lila—a Gnawa spiritual ceremony of music and dance—that transformed his consciousness and changed his life. In a remarkable chapter of his 2010 autobiography, *African Rhythms* (Duke University Press), Weston recounted that although Gnawan elders, concerned for a non-initiate's well-being, were reluctant to allow him to attend the all-night affair, he persisted, telling them that "perhaps the spirits [were] directing me to do this." As has often happened during the iconic pianist-composer's long career, he charmed them into seeing things his way.

Gnawa cosmology applies a different color—and a different rhythm and song—to each deity, and at a certain point during the proceedings, the musicians played dark blue for "the sky spirit with all that the sky represents—greatness, beauty, ambiguity, etc." Weston's "mind had been blown." Invited back the following night "to experience the color black," he declined. Later, Gnawas with knowledge of these things told Weston that he had found his color.

"I'm not an ethnomusicologist or a spiritualist, but when you're with these people long enough you don't laugh at this stuff," Weston wrote. How else to explain why Weston entered a two-week trance? "I was physically moving and otherwise going through my normal life, but I was in another dimension because this music was so powerful," he continued. "Imagine hearing the black church, jazz, and the blues all at the same time."

Twenty-five years later, Weston wore an indigo suit at a Paris concert with a Gnawa ensemble and bluesman Johnny Copeland, supporting his 1993 release *Volcano Blues*. In attendance was a young Senegalese woman named Fatoumata Mbengue, an accounting graduate who had opened a shop containing a potpourri of *objets* and clothing from across the African continent. She noticed Weston's attire and 6-foot 7-inch frame, thought he looked like a god and resolved to meet him. Three months later, Weston stopped in and made some purchases. After a few more visits, he asked that her tailor prepare bespoke clothing in his size. She complied. Soon thereafter, she invited him to her home for dinner. Weston titled his next (1995) album *Saga*, after the store. Six years later, they traveled to Egypt to be married in a Nubian ceremony.

"I'm not sure I saw colors, but I felt them," Weston recently recalled of his Tangier experience. He sat on a sofa in the ground floor office of his house in Brooklyn's Clinton Hill neighborhood, where his father ran a restaurant from 1946 until the 1970s. He faced a large-screen TV, sound off, tuned to MSNBC. It was the only part of that wall and the one behind him not covered with an array of photographs, posters, prints, honoraria and other memorabilia from Weston's 70 years as a working musician. An image of his parents hung over a large radiator near the front window, where patrons paid up after eating his father's soul food and Caribbean fare. Weston's wife sat at a large desk toward the rear, where the kitchen had been, taking care of correspondence, phone calls and other business.

"Blue was also Ellington's color," Weston said. "His piano was painted blue. I played on it."

Duke Ellington is Weston's lodestar, and the connection is tangible—he was romantically involved for more than a decade with Ruth Ellington, who lived in her big brother's Upper West Side apartment. While he was visiting Ruth one evening, the maestro called, and she played him Weston's recording "Blue Moses," composed in response to his Gnawa experience. Ellington dug it, brought 20 of Weston's compositions into his publishing company, Tempo Music, and signed him to Piano Records, his short-lived label.

The impact of Ellington—and Thelonious Monk—on Weston's orchestral approach to the 88 keys is evident any time he performs. "I heard ancient Africa in Duke and Monk, Count Basie and Nat Cole, and earlier guys like Willie 'The Lion' Smith and Eubie Blake," Weston said. "They approached piano from an African perspective—polyrhythm, call-and-response." He splayed his fingers down, indicating a percussive attack. "They held their hands this way. You're not supposed to play piano like that." He switched to straight wrists and curved fingers. "You're supposed to play like this."

Weston was still a teenager when he heard Monk on 52nd Street in a combo led by Coleman Hawkins, his earliest idol. "I was looking for something on the piano, anyhow," he recalled, citing expeditions to downtown Brooklyn's Atlantic Avenue, then a home to a sizable Arab-American community, with Sudanese-descended bassist Ahmed Abdul-Malik, who would later play in Monk's ensembles. "We heard instruments from North Africa and the Middle East on which you could play between the notes. I'd try to play like that on piano, but Monk was already doing it. Monk brought mystery—a way of saying, 'You can play beautiful music by going this way.' Music became universal."

Ellington and Monk also shaped the aesthetic that served as the bedrock of Weston's sizable corpus of compositions, depicting individuals, places and rituals with memorable melodies built on stark intervals and evocative timbres. "They set the foundation that you've got to tell the story," Weston said. "In particular, the story about African-American life. This was before the Civil Rights movement. Serious segregation. 'African people contribute nothing.' Both Monk and Duke wrote about their families, which I thought of in the '50s when I wrote 'Little Niles' and 'Pam's Waltz' about my children, or later with 'Portrait Of Frank Edward Weston' and 'Portrait Of Vivian' about my parents. And both were masters of the blues, which is a simple structure, but to create, you have to give yourself to it. Whether Ellington wrote for the Queen of England, or the Eurasian suite [*The Afro-Eurasian Eclipse*] or *Liberian Suite*—whatever he did—the blues was always there."

Weston paused, perhaps considering that he himself has composed 43 blues numbers, the import of which hit home after a visit to Mississippi with his wife. "It's one thing to see a cotton field in the movies. But when you see it in person, you say, 'My God—how did those people survive that to produce a Randy Weston?'"

Shy and awkward as a youngster because of his height, Weston immersed himself in music. He learned the fundamentals from a strict female teacher, who rapped his knuckles and said he'd amount to nothing. He began to flourish when a male teacher gave him popular songs that facilitated self-expression. By 17, he was playing local calypso dances and Greenwich Village gigs with guitarist Huey Long, who had recently left Earl Hines, and tenor saxophonist Stafford "Pazuza" Simon, a stalwart with Louis Jordan and Lucky Millinder. After completing an eventful tour of duty in the Army, where he attained the rank of staff sergeant, Weston took over his father's

first restaurant, on Sumner Avenue in Bedford-Stuyvesant, whose bop-to-Stravinsky jukebox made it an attractive hang for musicians.

Weston did not transition to music as a full-time profession until the early '50s, when he took employment as a breakfast chef at the Music Inn, a culture-oriented Berkshires resort where he could practice at night. Soon, Weston met the pioneering jazz historian Marshall Stearns, whose history-of-jazz lectures and colloquia, which delineated the threads that connect traditional African music to jazz, offered a university-level education on Afro-diasporic culture. This "African cat," as Weston calls him, asked the young pianist

to accompany his presentations, and eventually to deliver them, an experience that Weston continues to draw upon when addressing audiences. Through Stearns, he encountered such avatars as the Sierra Leonean choreographer-musician Asadata Dafora, whose ability to incorporate traditional African drumming and dance in Western settings influenced, among others, Katherine Dunham; the calypso singer Macbeth, who introduced Weston to the notion of swinging in 3/4 time; ethnomusicologist Willis James, who specialized in field hollers; Harlem Renaissance poet Langston Hughes; and drummers Babatunde Olatunji, from Nigeria, and Candido, from Cuba.

Three weeks before his conversation with DownBeat, the 88-year-old Weston gave two concerts at the Detroit Jazz Festival—one with a septet edition of African Rhythms, the other in duo with Harper, supporting their 2013 recital *The Roots Of The Blues* (Sunnyside). At the latter event, on "Blues To Africa"—conceived to the image of an elephant's polyrhythmic strut—Weston made that elephant stomp and romp with dark, stabbing left-hand phrases that complemented right-hand clusters, concluding with a taste of Ellington's "Fleurette Africaine." He opened "Hi-Fly" with extemporaneous variations and comped a rolling bass line for Harper's solo, feeding the chords from many angles, then referencing "C-Jam Blues" as the tenorist ended. He launched his own declamation with a stride chorus, foreshadowing an extended, free-associative meditation that postulated a succession of clearly articulated, authoritatively executed ideas, some in tempo, some rubato, entering atonal areas on a final exchange before summing up with a rumbling cadenza.

On the previous day, after rehearsing horn parts for a concert by Weston's African Rhythms Septet in music director T.K. Blue's room at the Marriott, Harper described the challenges and pleasures of their ongoing association, first documented on *Tanjah*, a Melba Liston-arranged 1973 big band session, and on *Carnival*, a live quartet date the following year. "I never know what Randy is going to play or how he'll play it," Harper said of the duo. "He's creating a whole composition, even if we're playing the head. In the middle of something, we suddenly shift into a whole different thing, not the way the larger group has played it, or that I've ever played it. I just have to follow."

"I think Randy's personal development leads the music. It's about him feeling a certain thing. Not necessarily 'I want to play this feeling with the music,' but 'I'm feeling this now, and this is what the music says.' To me, he represents the spirit of truth in history. It's a story about what happened to the music, what happened to the people, from all the way back to the present—depending on where he is at a particular moment in truth and in time. One moment he might be in the era of Duke Ellington, at another in the era of Thelonious Monk, or at the beginning in Africa, or in the middle of Manhattan or Bedford-Stuyvesant. He's different than any other musician I've played with."

T.K. Blue, who has been aligned with Weston since the early '80s, elaborated. "Randy never tells you what to play, but he'll paint a picture," Blue said. "He'll say, 'This tune is Tangier Bay; the sun is coming up,' not, 'Play F-sharp or C-sharp.' When

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he plays the tune, I'll ask him to hold his hands in place, to get a sense of what he's doing harmonically and arrange it for the band. He's no longer thinking in technical terms. For him, it's a sound."

Weston concurred with Blue's observation. "All our earlier African-American greats had their own sound," he said. "I loved how Coleman Hawkins' sound changed from Fletcher to Dizzy and Monk. Once Monk put his whole hand on the piano, like *brrrrmmm*, and I asked why he did it. He said, 'That's the sound I wanted.' Eubie Blake lived near here, and I'd visit him after we met at Music Inn—he'd get a certain sound."

At listening sessions with George Russell (then recuperating from tuberculosis at the Brooklyn apartment of his friend Max Roach), Weston assimilated the sounds of Schoenberg, Stravinsky and Alban Berg. "It took me to another level," he said. "What Schoenberg did—'Pierrot Lunaire'—was interesting but kind of cold, but I fell in love with Berg's 'Violin Concerto,' when I heard how he used the whole tonal scale but had more emotion, more feeling than Schoenberg."

"But I can't explain how my sound happened. It's a combination of playing rhythm-and-blues and calypso dances, listening to African traditional music, falling in love when Dizzy brought in Chano Pozo. You absorb it all. People told me, 'If you truly love your ancestors, they will feed you, they will guide you.'"

In the memoir, Weston credits Liston with organizing his sound on recordings by ensembles of various sizes between 1958 (*Little Niles*) and 1998 (*Khepera*). They include *Highlife*, from 1963, inspired by Weston's two eventful sojourns to Nigeria; *The Spirits Of Our Ancestors*, from 1991, on which Harper, Dewey Redman and Pharoah Sanders play tenor saxophone and Gillespie performs "African Sunrise"; and *Volcano Blues*, from 1993. "I could play her a particular melody, explain the story, say which instrument I wanted to feature, then she'd write something that sounded just like I wrote it," he said. "She could get inside what I wanted to do, very original, very fresh." He expressed pleasure that Universal would imminently reissue their first big band collaboration, *Uhuru Afrika*, from 1960.

Interestingly, Weston has not researched the location of his ancestral home. "I took the easy way out," he said. "To do a genealogy, you've got to check your mother's roots, your father's roots—the full story. I ask what preceded West Africa, what was the original civilization of the planet as we know it. I claim the whole continent as mine. Each area's music is different, but you find a certain pulse from northern Africa all the way to the south. There are no boundaries."

Weston's current investigation of source origins is a program interpreting music contemporaneous to pioneering composer-bandleader James Reese Europe (1881–1919). "We'll use banjo and tuba in trying to capture that period of 1910–'13," he said. "People need to understand that this is advanced music, that there's no such thing as modern music." Along those lines, within the next year he plans to record *An African Nubian Suite*, which he performed with African Rhythms at NYU's Skirball Center in 2012. It includes a poem by the late Jayne Cortez and narration by Wayne

Chandler, author of *Ancient Future: The Teachings and Prophetic Wisdom of the Seven Hermetic Laws of Ancient Egypt*. One piece celebrates Ardi, as paleontologists nicknamed the 4.5 million-year-old female hominid skeleton (*Ardipithecus ramidus*) unearthed in Ethiopia in 1994.

"Our story is that this lady is the oldest grandmother of the human race," Weston said. "She walked upright, and after my little introduction, I have Howard Johnson imagine how she walked, all alone on tuba. The larger idea is: What happened when the first African picked up a tuba? What happened when the first African touched a piano? Our ancestors created this music. How?

We have that cultural memory in us, which we don't realize. It's an amazing story."

So is the story of Weston's life, as related to his co-author, Willard Jenkins. A French translation of *African Rhythms* recently came out, and Duke University Press has informed Weston that it will release a paperback edition in January.

"It's like reading about somebody else," Weston said. "It signifies the power of music and where music has taken me—a miracle. All this stuff is a big surprise to me. I'm a dude from Bed-Stuy. I speak like a Westerner. I went to a Western school. I wear clothes like a Westerner. But if you only think the Western way, it's limited." **DB**

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MICHAEL MANTLER

THE JAZZ COMPOSER'S ORCHESTRA UPDATE

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Cynthia Liao viola
Asja Valcic dello

Robin Williamson Trusting In The Rising Light

Robin Williamson vocals, Celtic harp, guitar,
Hardanger fiddle, whistles
Mat Maneri viola
Ches Smith vibraphone, drums, gongs

Lumen Drones

Nils Økland fiddles
Per Steinar Lie guitars
Ørjan Haaland drums

JIMMY GREENE

FAITH IN ACTION

By Ken Micallef | Photo by Steven Sussman

Saxophonist Jimmy Greene knows a pain that no person should have to endure. Shortly after 9:30 a.m. on Dec. 14, 2012, a gunman shot his way through a glass panel next to the locked entrance doors of Sandy Hook Elementary School in Newtown, Connecticut. He killed 20 children and six adult staff members. Among the dead were 6-and-a-half-year-old Ana Grace Márquez-Greene, the daughter of Greene and his wife, Nelba Márquez-Greene.

At the time of the shooting, Greene was at Western Connecticut State University at Danbury, where he is an assistant professor of music and assistant coordinator of jazz studies.

"I was at my office writing music when my wife called," Greene said. "We went to the Sandy Hook Volunteer Firehouse, which it is at the bottom of a long driveway that leads to the school. They had the driveway blocked off and had us all wait in the firehouse for further news."

Media coverage was extensive. As the victims were identified, news about Ana spread very quickly within the jazz community. Greene has found multiple ways to honor her.

"In her short life, Ana strengthened us with her loving, generous, joyful spirit," Greene wrote when founding the Ana Márquez-Greene Music Scholarship Fund at Western Connecticut State University. "She routinely committed selfless acts of kindness: Every drawing or craft project she began was envisioned not for her own enjoyment, but as a gift for another. She often left sweet notes that read, 'I love you Mom and Dad,' under our bedroom pillow—not on special occasions, but, rather, on ordinary days.

"Ana's love for singing was evident before she was even able to talk," he continued. "In a musical family her gift for melody, pitch and rhythm stood out remarkably. And she never walked anywhere—her mode of transportation was dance. She danced from room to room and place to place. She danced to all the music she heard, whether in the air or in her head. Ana loved her God, loved to

read the Bible and loved to sing and dance as acts of worship."

On the New York City jazz scene, Greene is admired for his expressive compositions, consummate musicianship and pure, beautiful tone on tenor and soprano saxophones. A precocious musician at age 6, by the time he was 15, he was studying with Jackie McLean. Greene was already working with prominent jazz artists in high school, and by college he was practically a veteran of Manhattan's storied jazz clubs. Greene's nine solo recordings, including *Live At Smalls* (SmallsLive), *Mission Statement* (RazDaz/Sunnyside), *The Overcomer's Suite* (Nu Jazz), *True Life Stories* (Criss Cross Jazz) and *Introducing Jimmy Greene* (Criss Cross Jazz), are stellar examples of jazz with purpose. Never one to use his enormous technical gifts for show, Greene, who epitomizes the phrase "gentle giant," possesses a subtle, deeply melodious writing style, his skills honed on the bandstands of such leaders as Freddie Hubbard, Horace Silver, Tom Harrell and Harry Connick Jr. The saxophonist appears on more than 70 albums as a sideman.

When the news of the Sandy Hook shooting was broadcast over the airwaves the response by Greene's many friends in the music community was immediate.

"Goodness," Greene proclaimed, "there were so many musicians reaching out to me. Many of them knew Ana. When I left the firehouse where they had us waiting all afternoon, there was a row of news' cameras outside. Within moments my

image was flashed on CNN. Lewis Nash contacted me from Japan. Harry Connick texted me and said, 'Can I come over?' He's a good friend. Harry wrote a song for Ana called 'Love Wins,' which we recorded in 2013. Harry released it and donated all the proceeds to my family. A dozen more songs were written by friends of mine. Just beautiful, touching gestures.

"I got a phone message from Mulgrew Miller a few months after my daughter was killed," he continued. "In his message there was a lot of support and condolence and encouragement, but what sticks with me the most was that he said, 'Jimmy, we need you out here.' This was a month before he passed." Withdrawing into the world of family and friends for consolation and to mourn, Jimmy eventually found his way back to music, where he would ultimately honor his daughter.

"For the weeks and months after my daughter was killed," Greene reflected, "our house was full of family and friends who were there to support us. My dad said, 'Jimmy, your grief will be with you for a while. But in the midst of your grief I want you to remember that there is a lot of beauty surrounding you right now. Don't let your grief blind you to that.' That was very profound for me. What I took from that is my wife and my son are still here. And all these people are here that love me. Spin that forward, there's a lot of music left in me."

A month passed after the death of his daughter. Greene didn't think of music, didn't touch his tenor.



Jimmy Greene at the Litchfield Jazz Festival in Goshen, Connecticut, on Aug. 10

Jimmy Greene with
his daughter, Ana



COURTESY OF ARTIST

"I was just trying to function," he said. "I was just trying to stand up. But I needed to get back to feeling like I had some sort of routine. So I started to pick up the instrument again and started to write music again. These songs were in there. That led to this album, *Beautiful Life*."

A generous offer by Chesky Records label president and co-owner Norman Chesky set Greene on track. Chesky wanted to pay for all

recording, engineering, mixing, mastering and administrative costs so Greene could focus on creating an album of music to honor his daughter.

"At first I couldn't believe what he was offering—it was so generous," Greene said. "Norman was going to do whatever it took to get the record made. All the mixing and mastering for his label is done in-house. Nicholas Prout, their engineer, has a studio inside Chesky's offices. Norman was instrumental in so many areas—from financing, setting up correspondence with labels to partner with to using the label's internal people to work on the project—and Chesky's administrative staff made the calls and booked the studios and musicians."

A portion of the proceeds from *Beautiful Life* (Mack Avenue) will be donated to The Ana Grace Project, which works to promote a sense of community and to prevent violence; and to another charity, The Artists Collective, which provides children with training in the arts.

"Music has an amazing way of expressing things that words can't," Greene said. "My daughter had a lot of great music in her. She had a lot of life and joy and faith and hope in her. She had a beautiful singing voice, and for a 6-year-old, really good pitch. She can't sing here anymore. But I can, through my music. While I am here, until I can see her again, that is what I'll do."

Though *Beautiful Life* could have easily turned into a requiem, it's rather, a peaceful, joy-filled and tranquil recording that is a mixture of straightforward jazz, church hymns, contemporary Christian music, three original songs fram-

ing Greene's lyrics, and touching reminisces in the form of home recordings of Ana singing and her brother Isaiah playing piano. It is truly a celebration of the life of Ana Grace Márquez-Greene.

The collaborators on *Beautiful Life* include guitarist Pat Metheny; vocalists Kurt Elling, Javier Colon and Latanya Farrell; spoken word from Tony Award-winning actress Anika Noni Rose; a 13-piece string ensemble from the Hartford Symphony Orchestra; the superb rhythm section of Renee Rosnes on piano, Christian McBride on bass and Lewis Nash on drums, augmented by pianists Kenny Barron and Cyrus Chestnut; as well as a children's choir drawn from the Winnipeg grade school where Ana once attended classes.

Regarding her contribution, Rosnes noted, "Music has the power to heal, and it was a moving and cathartic experience to be a part of this special recording in tribute to Ana Grace. I think we were all there to honor Ana's life with truth and beauty. As a composer, Jimmy has a natural melodic gift and his music flows organically. I recall feeling very emotional when Kurt Elling began to sing the lyrics to 'Ana's Way.' The addition of the children's choir on that piece, further exalts the celebration of Ana's sweet spirit."

Did writing the music that became *Beautiful Life* help Jimmy to heal, if healing from such a tragedy is even possible?

"I will never be the same again," Greene said. "I will always have a hole in my heart and in my life and in my home, but I am thankful I am a musician because pouring your energy and effort and time into creating beauty and creating a con-

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SAXOPHONES

CLAIRE DALY
JIMMY GREENE
GARY SMULYAN

VOCALS

NICOLE ZURAITIS

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Photo by Dale Rothenberg



nection with people is a wonderful way to live your life. I am thankful I have that to do every day. It helps me. I couldn't imagine not being a musician and not having an outlet to express the things that words can't. I am thankful for that."

Beautiful Life opens with a home recording of Ana singing the traditional "Saludos" ("Greetings") at a family Christmas celebration in Puerto Rico a year before her death. Jimmy segues to a section in which he and guitarist Pat Metheny perform "Come Thou Almighty King," the song closing with another family recording of Ana singing the hymn to her brother Isaiah's piano accompaniment.

Here, and throughout *Beautiful Life*, Greene's tenor tone is round, pure and stately, but also mournful. His tenor cries in "Come Thou Almighty King" strike the gut, followed by Metheny's leanly plaintive solo.

The swinging "Last Summer" is performed by the quartet of Greene, Rosnes, McBride and Nash, followed by Greene's "When I Come Home," sung by his former Hartt classmate and NBC's *The Voice* winner and new Concord signing Javier Colon, who sings Greene's lyrics: "The day my life is through, my heart will search for you through the skies."

"Ana's Way," another Greene original, is performed by Elling with the Linden Christian School Early Years Choir, consisting of Ana's former Winnipeg classmates. "Jimmy is a highly respected craftsman with a beautiful sound," Elling said. "And then that happened. Jimmy's personal commitment to joy, to compassion, to emotional survival, and the example that he set with his family and his personal faith in God has been really remarkable. He's an exemplary person. Just watching him pick his family up and put them on his shoulders and keep on walking—it's beautiful and, man—it's really moving to me."

The quartet performs Greene's "Your Great Name" to a Brazilian rhythm; next is "Where Is Love," originally taught to Greene by Jackie McLean at his first lesson. A jazz waltz, "Seven Candles," was written around the time of what would have been Ana's 7th birthday.

The penultimate track of *Beautiful Life*, titled "Prayer," is Greene's arrangement of the text of the "Lord's Prayer." As Chestnut accompanies Greene's tenor saxophone the familiar Christian prayer is recited by Farrell, whose potent contralto delighted Ana as a toddler. Ana became a fan of Anika Noni Rose after hearing her perform the role of Tiana in the 2009 animated film *The Princess and the Frog*, which she loved.

"I hope this album gives listeners a sense of who my little girl was," Greene explained. "And I hope they get a sense of who I am. Ultimately, I hope they get a greater sense of who I know God to be. God has shown himself faithful like he does every time. Why? That's a big question I have. I will probably never get that answer here on earth. But I do know that He is able to sustain me and bring us through this. And I shudder to think where I would be if I didn't have that assurance. Literally all that allows me to get up in the morning is that assurance."

In addition to his quartet and teaching schedule at Western Connecticut State University,

Greene leads a band with Rosnes, bassist John Patitucci and drummer Jeff "Tain" Watts. He also plays in bands led by Nash, Rosnes and pianist Bill Charlap. Along with weeklong dates at the Jazz Standard in New York and the Mid-Atlantic Jazz Festival in D.C. to debut *Beautiful Life*, Greene is developing a band comprised of former students (including bassist Luke Sellick and drummer Jimmy Macbride). Greene's concern for young people doesn't stop there.

"My wife and I have been very adamant about our support for common-sense solutions to gun laws [developed] with people from all walks of life who want our kids and communities to be safe,"

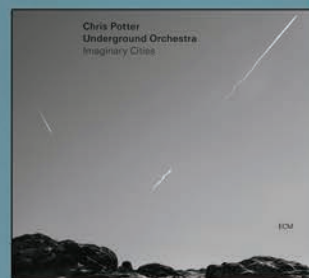
Greene said.

After speaking with Greene for a couple hours, it's impossible to not be moved, to feel deep respect for this man who is so poised, whose life was shattered, yet whose great faith and character provide an example for anyone who thinks they've seen hard times.

"As traumatized as my wife and I are," Greene said, "my son, Isaiah, was in the schoolhouse, he heard everything. And all his classmates did, too. Several of them lost their siblings. Considering all that he's been through, it's amazing how well our son is doing. That being said, it's going to be a day-to-day thing for us, and for the rest of our lives." **DB**

Chris Potter Underground Orchestra Imaginary Cities

Chris Potter tenor saxophone,
soprano saxophone, bass clarinet
Adam Rogers guitars
Craig Taborn piano
Steve Nelson vibraphone, marimba
Fima Ephron bass guitar
Scott Colley double bass
Nate Smith drums
Mark Feldman violin
Joyce Hammann violin
Lois Martin viola
David Eggar cello



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MACSAX.COM



**Saxophones
Mouthpieces
Accessories**

FIND YOUR VOICE!

OBJECTIVE

Tempt you to try out one of our mouthpieces (or a saxophone!). For many players, finding the right mouthpiece is a lifelong and very expensive quest. We are always happy when a player finds the depth, color, richness, or resonance they've been seeking in their sound.

PEOPLE

Our mouthpiece design and production team is led by Eric Falcon and Jerry Jackson. Both are musicians with a passion for making the best playing and sounding mouthpieces to be found anywhere. Eric is known as one of the best refacing specialists in the business. After refacing and playing thousands of mouthpieces, it is no surprise that Eric learned which designs work well. This experience and knowledge goes into every new mouthpiece design we produce. Jerry has extensive experience with 3D modeling, CAD/CAM systems, machine tools, and manufacturing.

PROCESS

Each mouthpiece design starts with an idea. Sometimes it's a crazy idea. Next step is sculpting the piece in our 3D modeling software and revising it continually until we are ready to produce a playing prototype - either as a 3D print or a fully CNC machined part. Perhaps the most important step in the process is the hand finishing and facing work done by Eric. We play test it and repeat the modeling/prototyping/testing process until we feel it is ready to pass around to our network of world class musicians for feedback.

TOOLS & MATERIALS

We own and operate our machine shop with the latest technology in 5-axis milling and 9-axis mill-turn machines. We use only the most premium materials sourced from around the globe. The 3D modeling, CNC lathe cut blanks, CNC milled mouthpieces, inspection, sanding, final handwork, polishing, and jewelry quality plating for the metal pieces is all completed in-house by the MACSAX team. These tools enable us to quickly transform an idea into a mouthpiece and provide a higher level of creative freedom not otherwise possible.

RESULTS

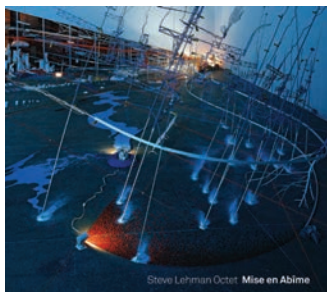
Our people, process, and tools allow MACSAX to bring you the most innovative, consistent, and musical sounding mouthpieces you'll find anywhere. Let us help you find your voice.

BEST ALBUMS OF

2014!



MASTERPIECES



STEVE LEHMAN OCTET

Mise En Abîme

Pi Aug.

As a bandleader and composer, alto saxophonist Lehman is a genuine inter-genre pioneer. Even if you know nothing about spectral composition or electroacoustic music, you'll sense that something is clearly different here, especially in the harmonic department. Required listening for the next generation.

CHRISTINE JENSEN JAZZ ORCHESTRA

Habitat

Justin Time Feb.

This is orchestral jazz on par with the textural-lyrical magic of Kenny Wheeler and Maria Schneider, though with an earthy dynamism more akin to Wayne Shorter and a sense of bittersweet melody all Jensen's own. This album feels of the moment yet timeless; big-band clichés are avoided, but beauty is paramount.

SONNY ROLLINS

Road Shows, Volume 3

Doxy/OKeh June

This third edition of tenor saxophonist Rollins' Road Shows series is the most successful presentation of his titanic skills so far. Whether he's milking a simple riff, reconfiguring a Noel Coward ballad or romping through the Caribbean, the blend of vision and spirit is astounding.

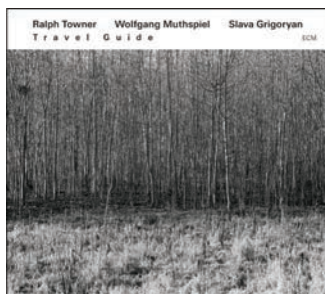


CATHERINE RUSSELL

Bring It Back

Jazz Village April

Former pop-rock backup singer Russell reinvigorates and retools vintage songs from the Jazz Age and the swing era with equal fervor, accompanied by a sparkling tentet that transforms the tunes from museum pieces into modern-sounding vehicles for jazz expression.



RALPH TOWNER/ WOLFGANG MUTHSPIEL/SLAVA GRIGORYAN

Travel Guide

ECM Feb.

Three guitarists from three different continents unite for this breathtakingly beautiful trio outing. American Towner brings his personalized fingerstyle approach to the table, Austrian Muthspiel adds his deft touch on electric and Kazakhstan-born Grigoryan provides a classical sensibility.

ANTHONY BRAXTON

Duo (Amherst) 2010

New Braxton House Aug.

This double-DVD comprises two episodic master-class excursions through the improvised space by Braxton (on four saxophones) and Taylor Ho Bynum (on six trumpets), operating with mutual intuition honed through a two-decade relationship that began as teacher-student and now is peer-to-peer.



THE BAD PLUS

The Rite Of Spring

Sony Masterworks May

The Bad Plus is the rare group with enough chops and chutzpah to take on the notorious Stravinsky/Nijinsky ballet, with its complex score fraught with experiments in rhythm and meter, tonality and dissonance. The trio's version is as earthy as it is ingenious.

WILLIAM PARKER

Wood Flute Songs: Anthology/Live 2006–2012

AUM Fidelity Feb.

This eight-CD box set encapsulates the protean spirit of Parker—bassist, composer-poet and leader of multiple bands on the New York scene. His music breathes the air of Ornette Coleman and Curtis Mayfield; it's free-jazz and medina wails, soul grooves and psychedelic lyricism.



ROMERO LUBAMBO

Só: Brazilian Essence

Sunnyside May

Alternately fiery and intimate, guitarist Lubambo plays Brazilian classics and his own compositions with tender phrasing, creative jazz voicings and intense percussive effects. He tosses melodies, bass lines and rhythms in the air like juggling clubs—not one falls to earth.

★★★★★ HISTORICAL

JOHN COLTRANE

Afro Blue Impressions

Pablo Feb.

BILL EVANS

Symbiosis

Edel:Kultur Nov.

CHARLES LLOYD

Arrows Into Infinity (DVD)

ECM Dec.

CHARLES LLOYD

Manhattan Stories

Resonance Dec.

OSCAR PETERSON

*Exclusively For My Friends:
My Favorite Instrument, Vol. 4*

Edel:Kultur Nov.

SUN RA

Atlantis

El Saturn/iTunes Sept.



★★★★½ NEW



JOHN ABERCROMBIE QUARTET

39 Steps
ECM Feb.

AFRO BOP ALLIANCE

Angel Eyes
Zoho Nov.

JD ALLEN

Bloom
Savant July

RODRIGO AMARANTE

Cavalo
Easy Sound June

AMM

Place Sub. V.
Matchless July

BOBBY AVEY

Authority Melts From Me
Whirlwind June

JEFF BALLARD TRIO

Time's Tales
OKeh April

PETER BERNSTEIN

Solo Guitar (Live At Smalls)
SmallsLive March

JOSHUA BREAKSTONE

With The Wind And The Rain
Capri March

JAKOB BRO

December Song
Loveland Feb.

ROSEANNE CASH

The River & The Thread

Blue Note Feb.

THE NELS CLINE SINGERS

Macroscopic
Mack Avenue June

JIMMY COBB

The Original Mob
Smoke Sessions Sept.

AVISHAI COHEN'S TRIVENI

Dark Nights
Anzic Dec.

GREG COHEN

Golden State
Relative Pitch Dec.

MARTY EHRLICH LARGE ENSEMBLE

A Trumpet In The Morning
New World Feb.

ORAN ETKIN

Gathering Light
Motéma June

LEE FIELDS & THE EXPRESSIONS

Emma Jean
Truth & Soul July

GORDON GOODWIN'S BIG PHAT BAND

Life In The Bubble
Telarc Aug.

TORD GUSTAVSEN QUARTET

Extended Circle
ECM March

DARRYL HARPER

The Need's Got To Be So Deep
Hipnotic Records Nov.

TOM HARRELL

Trip
HighNote Dec.

ELIAS HASLANGER

Live At The Gallery
Cherrywood July

HUSH POINT

Blues And Reds
Sunnyside Dec.

CHUCK ISRAELS JAZZ ORCHESTRA

*Second Wind: A Tribute To The
Music Of Bill Evans*
Soulpatch Jan.

ANNE METTE IVERSEN'S DOUBLE LIFE

So Many Roads
Brooklyn Jazz Underground Aug.

RICHARD LEO JOHNSON

Celeste
Soft Science Dec.

RUSS JOHNSON

Meeting Point
Relay Recordings Sept.

L.A. 6

Frame Of Mind
Jazzed Media May

AZAR LAWRENCE

The Seeker
Sunnyside Sept.

MANHATTAN SCHOOL OF MUSIC AFRO-CUBAN JAZZ ORCHESTRA WITH BOBBY SANABRIA

Qué Viva Harlem!
Jazzheads July

KAREN MANTLER

Business Is Bad
Xtrawatt Oct.

ELLIS MARSALIS TRIO

On The Second Occasion
ELM July

EMILIA MÅRTENSSON

Ana
Babel June

MIKE MCGINNIS +9

*Road*Trip*
RKM Music Jan.

THE PETE MCGUINNESS



JAZZ ORCHESTRA

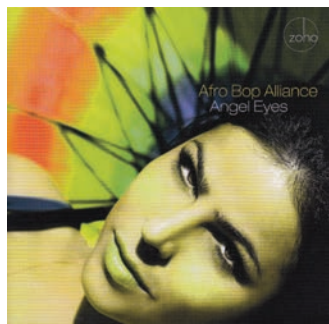
Strength In Numbers
Summit July

JOHN MCLAUGHLIN & THE 4TH DIMENSION

The Boston Record
Abstract Logix July

MOSTLY OTHER PEOPLE DO THE KILLING

Blue



Hot Cup Records Nov.

NICKEL CREEK

A Dotted Line

Nonesuch Aug.

LINA NYBERG

The Sirenades

Hoob

CHARLIE PAAR

Hollandale

Chaperone June

EVAN PARKER & JOE MCPHEE

What / If / They Both Could Fly

Rune Grammofon Feb.

GRETCHEN PARLATO

Live In NYC

Obliqsound Feb.

THE RALPH PETERSON FO'TET AUGMENTED

Alive At Firehouse 12 - Vol. 2:

Fo' N Mo'

NYC Productions Music Sept.

LENNY PICKETT WITH UMO JAZZ ORCHESTRA

June

The Prescription

Random Act Records Sept.

MICHELE ROSEWOMAN

New Yor-Uba: A Musical

Celebration Of Cuba In America
Advance Dance Disques Jan.

JEROME SABBAGH

The Turn

Sunnyside Nov.

EDWARD SIMON

Venezuelan Suite

Sunnyside March

ROTEM SIVAN TRIO

For Emotional Use Only

Fresh Sound New Talent Dec.

BOB STEWART

Connections: Mind The Gap

Sunnyside

TIERNEY SUTTON

After Blue

BFMJazz Jan.

YOSVANY TERRY

New Throned King

5 Passion Sept.

THUMBSCREW

Thumbscrew

Cuneiform April

DAVID VIRELLES

Mbókò

ECM Dec.

RANDY WESTON/ BILLY HARPER

The Roots Of The Blues

Sunnyside Feb.

★★★★½ HISTORICAL

LOUIS ARMSTRONG

Columbia And RCA Victor Live Recordings of Louis Armstrong And The All Stars

Mosaic Aug.

ALBERT AYLER

Lörrach, Paris 1966

Hatology April

JAMES BOOKER

Classified - Remixed And Expanded

Rounder Feb.

MILES DAVIS

Miles At The Fillmore - Miles Davis 1970: The Bootleg Series Vol. 3

Columbia/Legacy June

CHARLIE HADEN/ JIM HALL

Charlie Haden - Jim Hall

Impulse! Dec.

DONNY HATHAWAY

Never My Love: The Anthology

Rhino March

CHUBBY JACKSON

Ooh, What An Outfit! NYC 1949

Uptown Oct.

CLIFFORD JORDAN

The Complete Clifford Jordan

Strata-East Sessions

Mosaic March

THE MODERN JAZZ QUARTET



Germany 1956-1958: Lost Tapes

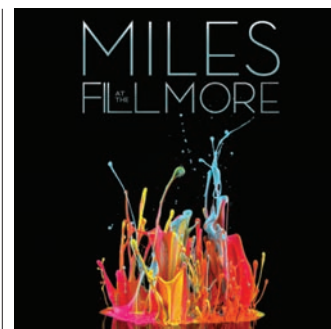
Jazzhaus Feb.

JOE PASS

Intercontinental

Edel:Kultur Nov.

OSCAR PETTIFORD



Modern Quintet

Bethlehem Jan.

SUN RA

Super-Sonic Jazz

El Saturn/iTunes Sept.

★★★★ NEW

3 COHENS

Tightrope

Anzic Feb.

ROYSTEN ABEL

The Manganiyar Seduction

Amarass Jan.

KRIS ADAMS

Longing

JazzBird Records Nov.

MELISSA ALDANA & CRASH TRIO

Melissa Aldana & Crash Trio

Concord Jazz Aug.

HOWARD ALDEN/ ANDY BROWN QUARTET

Heavy Artillery

Delmark Jan.

BEN ALLISON

The Stars Look Very

Different Today

Sonic Camera Feb.

FABIAN ALMAZAN

Rhizome

Blue Note/ArtistShare May

MATT ANDERSEN

Weightless

True North May

JACOB ANDERSKOV

Strings, Percussion & Piano

ILK April

ANGLES 9

In Our Midst

Clean Feed March

LAURIE ANTONIOLI

Songs Of Shadow, Songs Of Light

Origin Nov.

AUDIO ONE

An International Report

Audiographic Records Oct.

AUDIO ONE

The Midwest School

Audiographic Records Oct.

OMER AVITAL

New Song

Plus Loin/Motéma Oct.

LIAM BAILEY

Definitely

Flying Buddha/Sony Masterworks Sept.

DIEGO BARBER/CRAIG TABORN

Tales

Sunnyside June

THE BARMER BOYS

At Home

Amarass Jan.

MATT BAUDER AND DAY IN PICTURES

Nightshades

Clean Feed May

THE JAMIE BAUM SEPTET+

In This Life

Sunnyside Jan.

FRANÇOIS BAYLE

Les Couleurs de la Nuit

Sub Rosa April

ADAM BERENSON

Lumen: Chamber Works

Dream Play July

JERRY BERGONZI

Intersecting Lines

Savant July

TIM BERNE'S SNAKEOIL

Shadow Man

ECM Jan.

PETER BERNSTEIN WITH THE TILDEN WEBB TRIO
Live At Cory Weeds' Cellar Jazz Club
Cellar Live March

ANDY BEY
Pages From An Imaginary Life
HighNote Dec.

FRANK BEY & ANTHONY PAULE BAND
Soul For Your Blues
Blue Dot Jan.

DEBASHISH BHATTACHARYA
Beyond The Ragasphere
Riverboat Jan.

LED BIB
The Good Egg
Cuneiform Rune Oct.

LED BIB
The People In Your Neighbourhood
Cuneiform Rune Oct.

ANDY BISKIN'S IBID
Act Necessary
Strudelmedia Aug.

RAOUL BJÖRKENHEIM
Ecstasy
Cuneiform March

RUBÉN BLADES
Tangos
Sunnyside Aug.

LENA BLOCH
Feathery
Thirteenth Note May

JANE IRA BLOOM
Sixteen Sunsets
Outline March

STEFANO BOLLANI
Joy In Spite Of Everything
ECM Oct.

PAUL BOLLENBACK
Portraits In Space And Time
Mayimba Dec.

RAY BONNEVILLE
Easy Gone
Red House July

JANICE BORLA GROUP
Promises To Burn
Tall Grass June

ZSÓFIA BOROS
En Otra Parte
ECM Jan.

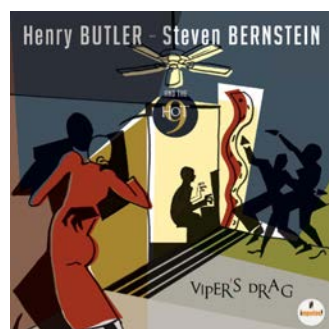
ANTHONY BRAXTON
Trio (New Haven) 2013
New Braxton House Aug.

JACK BRUCE
Silver Rails
Esoteric Antenna July

HENRY BUTLER, STEVEN BERNSTEIN AND THE HOT 9

Viper's Drag
Impulse! Aug.

URI CAINE
Callithump
Winter & Winter Dec.



MARCO CAPPELLI ACOUSTIC TRIO
Le Stagioni del Commissario Ricciardi
Tzadik Jan.

MICHAEL CARVIN EXPERIENCE
Flash Forward
Motéma Nov.

AMY CERVINI
Jazz Country
Anzic March

TOM CHANG
Tongue & Groove
Raw Toast Records July

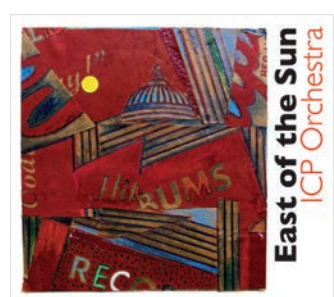
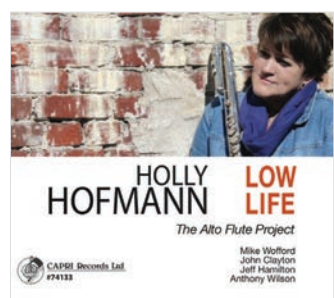
BRIAN CHARETTE
The Question That Drives Us
SteepleChase July

CLAIRE CHASE
Density
New Focus April

NENEH CHERRY
Blank Project
SmallTown Supersound May

CHICAGO UNDERGROUND DUO
Locus
Northern Spy May

TY CITERMAN
Bop Kabbalah
Tzadik Aug.



THE CITY BOYS ALLSTARS
Blinded By The Night
City Boys Mike Productions Dec.

GARY CLARK JR.
Live!
Warner Bros. Dec.

THE CLAUDIA QUINTET
September
Cuneiform Jan.

JOHN CLAYTON WITH GERALD CLAYTON
Parlor Series, Volume 1
ArtistShare June

MARK DE CLIVE-LOWE
Church
Mashibeats Nov.

CLOUDMAKERS TRIO
Abstract Forces
Whirlwind Recordings Nov.

GEORGE COLLIGAN
Ask Me Tomorrow
SteepleChase Oct.

THE COOKERS
Time And Time Again
Motéma Nov.

CORTEX
Live!
Clean Feed Nov.

TOMAS COTIK/TAO LIN
Astor Piazzolla: Tango Nuevo
Naxos Sept.

NATALIE CRESSMAN
Turn The Sea
Self-Release June

CONNIE CROTHERS QUARTET
Deep Friendship
New Artists Oct.

PAQUITO D'RIVERA
Jazz Meets The Classics
Paquito/Sunnyside Oct.

TONY DAGRADI
Gemini Rising
Astral Music Dec.

DAUNIELLE
Daunielle
Catfood July

DAVINA AND THE VAGABONDS
Sunshine
Roustabout Sept.

CHARLES DAVIS
For The Love Of Lori
Reade Street Records Oct.

JOEY DEFRANCESCO
Home For The Holidays
JD Music Dec.

JEFF DENSON/CLAUDIO PUNTIN
Two
PFMENTUM July

JEFF DENSON/JOSHUA WHITE
I'll Fly Away
PFMENTUM July



CONGRATULATIONS

TO ALL MOTEMA ARTISTS INCLUDED IN DOWNBEAT'S

TOP ALBUMS of 2014

ORAN ETKIN: GATHERING LIGHT

"Nearly perfect... what really pushes the recording close to 5-star status is the seemingly effortless chemistry among the five musicians."

— JAMES HALE

★★★★★ 1/2



RENÉ MARIE: I WANNA BE EVIL

"Sublime arrangements... Masterful... [René's] got a knack for acting and storytelling, making this one of the year's best jazz vocal albums."

— JIM MACNIE

★★★★★

THE COOKERS: TIME AND TIME AGAIN

"On their fourth disc, this Magnificent Seven of gutsy acoustic jazz delivers their most diverse outing yet. Each successive Cookers disc is increasingly fiery."

— JEFF POTTER

★★★★★



DAVID WEISS: WHEN WORDS FAIL

"The tunes are lovely... Harmonies shift in unsettled patterns... the soloists likewise pitch their virtuosity in search of an elusive place they can call home."

— JAMES HALE

★★★★★

ARTURO O'FARRILL: THE OFFENSE OF THE DRUM

"A dizzying world party... pushes the boundaries of a genre often consigned to the traditional label and embeds it in the realities of contemporary life."

— PAUL DE BARROS

★★★★★



ELIO VILAFRANCA: CARIBBEAN TINGE

"Hard bop with rhythms that originated from Puerto Rico, Cuba, Dominican Republic and Haiti... This Music is consistently exciting."

— SCOTT YANOW

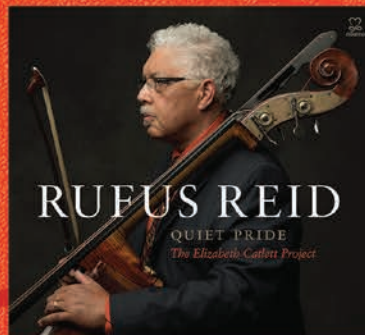
★★★★★

MICHAEL CARVIN: FLASH FORWARD

"A drummer of deep swing, exemplary chops and a potent individual voice... Carvin returns to the roots of standards he loves – and swings righteously."

— JEFF POTTER

★★★★★



RUFUS REID: QUIET PRIDE

"It takes great care and precise thinking to align musical compositions with a visual artist's aesthetic, and Reid has managed this ideally."

— JOHN CORBETT

★★★★★

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SILVER RAILS JACK BRUCE



DENA DEROSE

We Won't Forget You ... An Homage To Shirley Horn

HighNote Aug.

JORRIT DIJKSTRA

Music For Reeds And Electronics: Oakland

Driff Records Dec.

BOB DOROUGH

Eulalia

Merry Lane June

DAVE DOUGLAS/URI CAINE

Present Joys

Greenleaf Sept.

ANDREW DOWNING/JIM LEWIS/DAVID OCCHIPINTI

Bristles

Occdav Oct.

KAJA DRAKSLER

The Lives Of Many Others

Clean Feed

JOZEF DUMOULIN

A Fender Rhodes Solo

Bee Jazz

RONNIE EARL & THE BROADCASTERS

Good News

Stony Plain

DONALD EDWARDS

Evolution Of An Influenced Mind

Criss Cross Jazz

RODDY ELLIAS TRIO

Monday's Dream

Kwimu Music

JOHN ELLIS/ANDY BRAGEN

Mobro

Parade Light Records

PEE WEE ELLIS

The Spirit Of Christmas

Minor Music

ENSEMBLE DENADA

Windfall

Ozella

PETER EPSTEIN QUARTET

Polarities

Songlines

RICK ESTRIN & THE NIGHTCATS

You Asked For It ... Live!

Alligator

CHARLES EVANS

Subliminal Leaps

More is More

PETER EVANS

Zebulon

April

More is More

Jan.

THE SPIROS EXARAS/ELIO VILAFRANCA PROJECT

Old Waters New River

Harbinger

Sept.

FARMERS BY NATURE

Love And Ghosts

AUM Fidelity

Nov.

SCOTT FEINER & PANDEIRO JAZZ

A View From Below

Self-Release

March

AGUSTÍ FERNÁNDEZ/BARRY GUY/RAMÓN LÓPEZ

A Moment's Liberty

Maya Recordings

May



MIGUEL FERNÁNDEZ

Afrikan Blues

Sax On

Nov.

RENÉE FLEMING

Christmas In New York

Decca

Dec.

BEN FLOCKS

Battle Mountain

Self-Release

April

MARY FLOWER

When My Bluebird Sings

Bluesette

Nov.

RUTHIE FOSTER

Promise Of A Brand New Day

Blue Corn Music

Dec.

GARZONE/BERGONZI/WINTHER/ÂMAN/MOGENSEN

Quintonic

Stunt Records/Sundance

Nov.

JARED GOLD

JG3+3

Posi-Tone

June

LARRY GOLDINGS/PETER BERNSTEIN/BILL STEWART

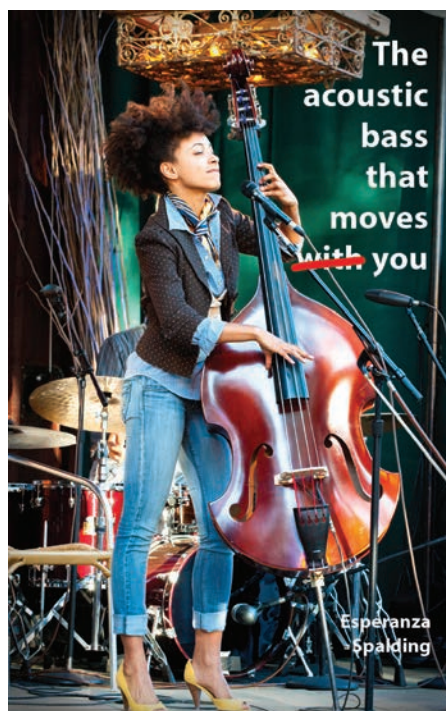
Ramshackle Serenade

Pirouet

Oct.

GRAND FATILLA

Global Shuffle



4 Models to Choose From:

The C-1
Fully Carved

The H-1
Hybrid

The K-1
Vintage Plywood

The Standard
Classic Plywood

All models feature a full acoustic response, as customizable as any string bass, with unparalleled arco and pizzicato sound, both amplified and acoustic.

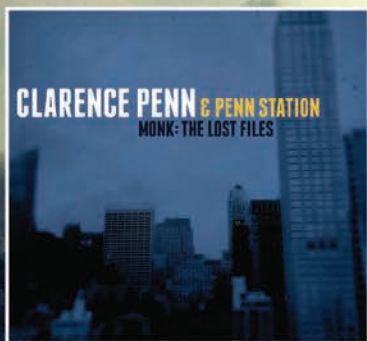
Travel with your Czech-Ease.
Record with your Czech-Ease.
Teach, learn, play, and **be moved.**

To learn about other David Gage products, like The Realist Transducer, visit DavidGage.com



Czech-Ease.com





Clarence Penn

Donald Vega/Chad Lefkowitz-Brown
Yasushi Nakamura/Gerald Clayton
Monk: The Lost Files



Hal Galper Trio

O's Time

"...the most complex, daring, exhilarating
music of Galper's career." JAZZTIMES



Laurie Antonioli

Songs of Shadow, Songs
of Light: Music of Joni Mitchell

NEW MUSIC from ORIGIN RECORDS



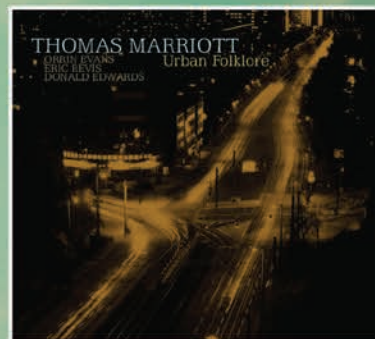
Chris Walden Big Band

w/Tierney Sutton/Arturo Sandoval/Wayne Bergeron
Full-On!



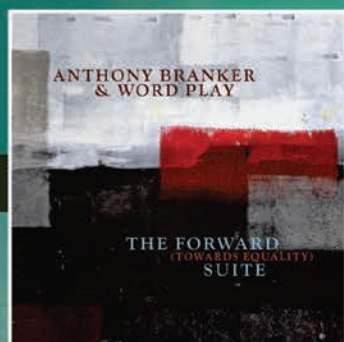
David Friesen Circle 3 Trio

Greg Goebel/Charlie Doggett/Larry Koonse
Where the Light Falls



Thomas Marriott

Orin Evans/Eric Revis/Donald Edwards
Urban Folklore



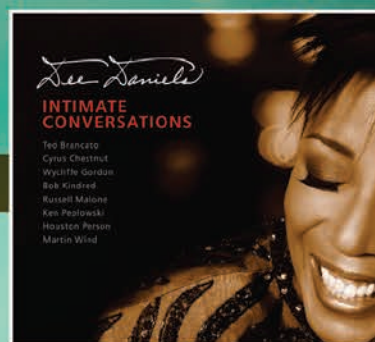
Anthony Branker

w/Ralph Bowen/David Binney/Conrad Herwig
The Forward (Towards
Equality) Suite



Jim Norton Collective

Time Remembered:
Compositions of Bill Evans



Dee Daniels







w/Cyrus Chestnut/Houston Person
Russell Malone/Wycliffe Gordon
Intimate Conversations

Also new for Winter 2014/2015: GEORGE COLLIGAN | GENE ARGEL | CHAMBER 3 | SCOTT HESSE TRIO
RYAN SHULTZ | BRAD GOODE | JOSH NELSON | JOHN STOWELL-MICHAEL ZILBER | COLLIER & DEAN
AL HOOD H2 BIG BAND | PIET VERBIST'S ZYGOMATIK | MARC SEALES | SPIN QUARTET & more...



WWW.ORIGINARTS.COM



Grand Fatilla Records	Dec.	THE HOT SARDINES Decca	Dec.	DARIUS JONES/ MATTHEW SHIPP <i>Cosmic Lieder: The Darkseid Recital</i> AUM Fidelity	Oct.	Dotted I Records	March
GUILLERMO GREGORIO/ PANDELIS KARAYORGIS/ STEVE SWELL <i>Window And Doorway</i> Driff Records	Feb.	ABDULLAH IBRAHIM <i>Mukashi: Once Upon A Time</i> Sunnyside	July	KIDD JORDAN/ALVIN FIELDER/PETER KOWALD <i>Trio And Duo In New Orleans</i> NoBusiness Records	May	KIRK KNUFFKE QUARTET <i>Chorale</i> SteepleChase	Feb.
MATS GUSTAFSSON/ THURSTON MOORE <i>Vi Är Alla Guds Slavar</i> Otoroku LP	Jan.	ICP ORCHESTRA <i>East Of The Sun</i> ICP	Nov.	PANDELIS KARAYORGIS QUINTET		KONITZ/TEPFER/ JANISCH/WILLIAMS <i>First Meeting: Live In London, Volume 1</i> Whirlwind	July
JEFF HACKWORTH <i>Soul To Go!</i> Big Bridge Music	June	IDEAL BREAD <i>Beating The Teens: Songs Of Steve Lacy</i>				ERNIE KRIVDA <i>At The Tri-C Jazz Fest</i> Cadence Jazz	Jan.
HAMMOND EGGS <i>Back In The Pan</i> In+Out Records	July					JOACHIM KÜHN TRIO WITH ARCHIE SHEPP <i>Voodoo Sense</i> ACT	April
HARD GARDEN <i>Blue Yonder</i> Hard Garden Music	April					SEUN KUTI + EGYPT 80 <i>A Long Way To The Beginning</i> Knitting Factory	July
BEN & ELLEN HARPER <i>Childhood Home</i> Prestige Folklore	Aug.					TOM LAGANA GROUP (FEAT. GEORGE GARZONE) <i>Vol. 1</i> Tom Lagana Music	Nov.
JOEL HARRISON/ ANUPAM SHOBHAKAR <i>Multiplicity: Leave The Door Open</i> Whirlwind	May					LATEEF/MITCHELL/ RUDOLPH/EWART <i>Voice Prints</i> Meta Records	April
TAYLOR HASKINS <i>Fuzzy Logic</i> Sunnyside	May					JEFF LEDERER <i>Swing n' Dix</i> Little (i) Music	Jan.
DAVID PHILIP HEFTI <i>Changements</i> Col Legno	April					R. ANDREW LEE <i>Eva-Maria Houben: Piano Music</i> Irritable Hedgehog	April
HELIO PARALLAX <i>Helio Parallax</i> M.O.D. Technologies	Oct.					CATHY LEMONS <i>Black Crow</i> VizzTone	July
GERRY HEMINGWAY <i>Kernelings</i> Auricle Records	June					JAMES BRANDON LEWIS <i>Divine Travels</i> Okeh	April
HERA WITH HAMID DRAKE <i>Seven Lines</i> Multikulti Project	April					HELGE LIEN TRIO <i>Badgers And Other Beings</i> Ozella	uly
VINCENT HERRING <i>The Uptown Shuffle</i> Smoke Sessions Records	March					JON LUNDBOM & BIG FIVE CHORD <i>Liverevil</i> Hot Cup	April
JOHN HIATT <i>Terms Of My Surrender</i> New West	Oct.	Cuneiform Records	July	<i>Circuitous</i> Driff Records	Feb.	TONY MALABY TAMARINDO <i>Somos Agua</i> Clean Feed	Dec.
THE HILLIARD ENSEMBLE <i>Transeamus</i> ECM	Dec.	VIJAY IYER <i>Mutations</i> ECM	May	RYAN KEBERLE & CATHARSIS <i>Into The Zone</i> Greenleaf	Dec.	PAT MALLINGER QUARTET WITH BILL CARROTHERS <i>Elevate</i> PJM	Aug.
HOLLY HOFMANN <i>Low Life: The Alto Flute Project</i> Capri	Sept.	JAIPUR KAWA BRASS BAND <i>Dance Of The Cobra</i> Riverboat	Jan.	JOHNAYE KENDRICK <i>Here</i> Johnygirl	Nov.	SARAH MANNING <i>Harmonious Creature</i> Posi-Tone	April
HONEST JOHN <i>Canarie</i> Rudi	Aug.	KEITH JARRETT/ CHARLIE HADEN <i>Last Dance</i> ECM	Aug.	STACEY KENT <i>The Changing Lights</i> Warner Bros.	June	RENÉ MARIE <i>I Wanna Be Evil: With Love To Eartha Kitt</i>	

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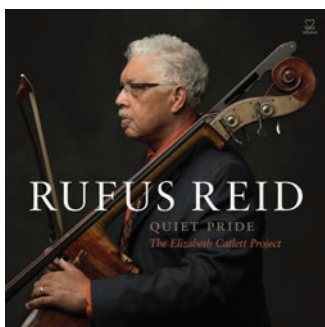
John "JR" Robinson
Legendary Studio Drummer



Jordan Espinoza
Musician's Institute Graduate &
Aspiring Professional Drummer



Motéma Jan.
**JEAN-LOUIS MATINIER/
MARCO AMBROSINI**
Inventio
ECM Sept.
MATS/MORGAN
[schack tati]
Cuneiform Rune Nov.
LEYLA MCCALLA
Vari-Colored Songs
Music Maker April



TOM MCDERMOTT
Bamboula
Minky Jan.
ZARA MCFARLANE
If You Knew Her
Brownswood March
**MEDESKI MARTIN &
WOOD + NELS CLINE**
Woodstock Sessions, Vol. 2
Woodstock Sessions July
MYRA MELFORD
Life Carries Me This Way
Firehouse Jan.

JOHN MENEGON
I Remember You
Inner Circle Music April
**CAVA MENZIES/
NICK PHILLIPS**
Moment To Moment
Nick Phillips Music May

**THE MICROSCOPIC
SEPTET**
Manhattan Moonrise
Cuneiform Rune Sept.

**ROSCOE MITCHELL WITH
CRAIG TABORN AND
KIKANJU BAKU**
Conversations I
Wide Hive Aug.

**ROSCOE MITCHELL WITH
CRAIG TABORN AND
KIKANJU BAKU**
Conversations II
Wide Hive Aug.

STANTON MOORE
Conversations
Royal Potato Family June

JOE MORRIS QUARTET
Balance
Clean Feed Dec.

BARBARA MORRISON
I Love You, Yes I Do
Savant Sept.

MICHAEL MUSILLAMI TRIO
Pride
Playscape Oct.

MESHELL NDEGEOCELLO
Comet, Come To Me
Naïve Oct.

**AURORA NEALAND AND
THE ROYAL ROSES**
The Lookback Transmission
Self-Release Nov.

ALON NECHUSHTAN
Venture Bound
Enja Sept.

THE NECKS
Open
Northern Spy March

CLOVIS NICOLAS
Nine Stories
Sunnyside Sept.

THE OCULAR CONCERN
Sister Cities
PJCE Records April

**ARTURO O'FARRILL &
THE AFRO LATIN JAZZ
ORCHESTRA**
The Offense Of The Drum
Motéma June

JOHNNY O'NEAL
Live At Smalls
SmallsLive July

**THE ED PALERMO BIG
BAND**
Oh No! Not Jazz!!
Cuneiform May

JASON PALMER
Places
SteepleChase Sept.



MATT PARKER
Worlds Put Together
BYNK Jan.

JUAN PASTOR
Chinchano
Ears & Eyes Records Oct.

DEXTER PAYNE

QUARTET + 1
Pra Vocé
Dexofon Oct.

OSCAR PEÑAS
*Music Of Departures And
Returns*
Musikoz June



PEOPLE
3xa Woman: The Misplaced Files
Telegraph Harp Sept.

**IVO PERELMAN/MATTHEW
SHIPP/MAT MANERI**
A Violent Dose Of Anything
Leo Records Feb.

**PERELMAN/SHIPP/
DICKEY/CLEAVER**
Enigma
Leo Records Feb.

DANILO PÉREZ
Panama 500
Mack Avenue March

PHRONESIS
Life To Everything
Edition July

PIXEL
We Are All Small Pixels
Cuneiform Rune June



Berklee Summer Programs:

A World of MUSIC

June 22–26: Berklee Global String Intensive

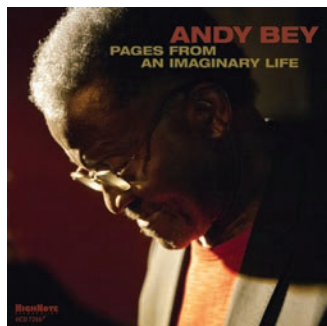
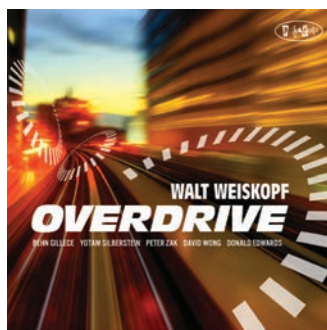
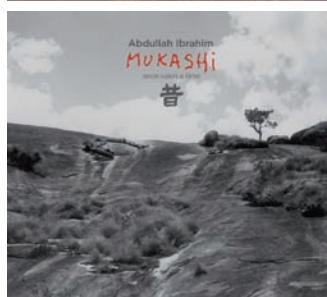
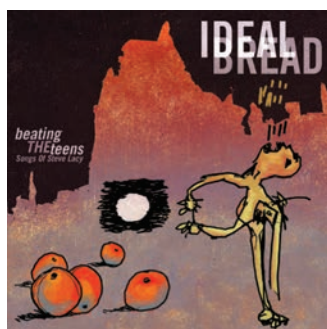
June 26–28: Berklee American Roots Weekend

July 11–August 14: Five-Week Summer Performance Program

For more information and to register, visit
berklee.edu/summer

Berklee
college of
music

SUMMER PROGRAMS



FRANK POTENZA

For Joe
Capri Jan.

TOM RAINEY

Obbligato
Intakt April

DANA REASON

Angle Of Vision
482 Music Feb.

RUFUS REID

Quiet Pride: The Elizabeth Catlett Project
Motéma May

DAVE REMPIS/JOSHUA ABRAMS/AVREEAYL RA

Aphelion
Aerophonic March

DAVE REMPIS/DARREN JOHNSTON/LARRY OCHS

Spectral
Aerophonic July

THE REMPIS/DAISY DUO

Second Spring
Aerophonic March

ERIC REVIS QUARTET

In Memory Of Things Yet Seen
Clean Feed June

MARC RIBOT TRIO

Live At The Village Vanguard
Pi July

SYLVAIN RIFFLET/JON IRABAGON

Perpetual Motion: A Celebration Of Moondog
Jazz Village Dec.

RIVERSIDE (DOUGLAS/DOXAS/SWALLOW/DOXAS)

Riverside
Greenleaf June

MATANA ROBERTS

Coin Coin Chapter Two: Mississippi Moonchile
Constellation Jan.

ALFREDO RODRÍGUEZ

The Invasion Parade
Mack Avenue April

JASON ROEBKE OCTET

High/Red/Center
Delmark June

THE ROOTS

... And Then You Shoot Your Cousin
Def Jam Oct.

THE DANIEL ROSENBOOM QUINTET

Fire Keeper
Orenda Sept.

ROSWELL RUDD

Trombone For Lovers
Sunnyside Feb.

FELIPE SALLES

Ugandan Suite
Tapestry Aug.

DINO SALUZZI GROUP

El Valle De La Infancia
ECM Aug.

ANGELICA SANCHEZ/WADADA LEO SMITH

Twine Forest
Clean Feed April

JC SANFORD ORCHESTRA

Views From The Inside
Whirlwind June

SAXOPHONE SUMMIT

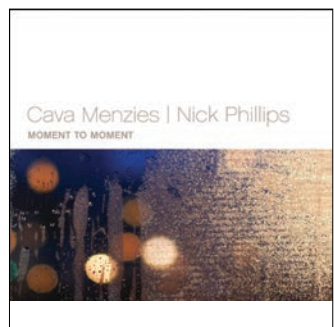
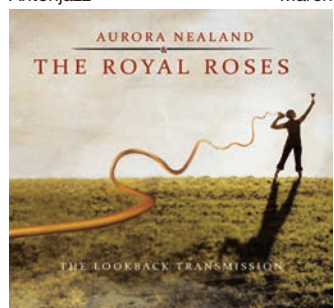
Visitation
ArtistShare Sept.

JENNY SCHEINMAN

The Littlest Prisoner
Sony Masterworks Aug.

ANTON SCHWARTZ

Flash Mob
Antonjazz March



IRÈNE SCHWEIZER/PIERRE FAVRE

Live In Zürich
Intakt March

LOUIS SCLAVIS QUARTET

Silk And Salt Melodies
ECM Nov.

SARA SERPA/ANDRÉ MATOS

Primavera
Inner Circle Music June

KAVITA SHAH

Visions
Inner Circle Music Aug.

SASI SHALOM

Moments Of Eternity
Self-Release Feb.

ANOUSHKA SHANKAR

Traces Of You
Deutsche Grammophon Feb.

NAOMI SHELTON & THE GOSPEL QUEENS

Cold World
Daptone Nov.

MATTHEW SHIPP

I've Been To Many Places
Thirsty Ear Nov.

GILLET SINGLETON DUO

Ferdinand
Self-Release Jan.

SLY5THAVE

Akuma
Truth Revolution Records April

GARY SMULYAN/DOMINIC CHIANESE

Bella Napoli
Capri Feb.

CLARK SOMMERS' BA(SH)

Ba(SH)
Origin Jan.

DAVE SPECTER

Message In Blue
Delmark Aug.

VINNIE SPERRAZZA

Apocryphal
Loyal Label Nov.

STEPHANE SPIRA

In Between
Jazzmax Sept.

STÅHL'S TRIO

Jag Skulle Bara Gå Ut
Moserobie April

HÅKON STENE

Lush Laments For Lazy Mammal
Hubro Sept.

JOHN STETCH

Off With The Cuffs
Addo Sept.

HELEN SUNG

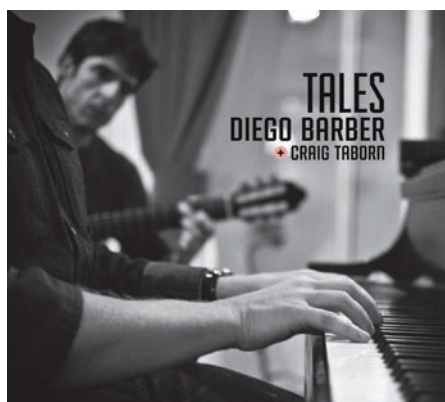
Anthem For A New Day
Concord March

NEIL SWAINSON/DON THOMPSON

Tranquility
Cornerstone May

THE THING

★★★★
NEW



Boot!
The Thing Jan.

KEN THOMSON AND JACK QUARTET
Thaw April
Cantaloupe

SIMON TOLDAM ORKESTER STORK
Bells Of Sunday Oct.
ILK

GISLE TORVIK
Tranquil Fjord Jan.
Ozella

ROKIA TRAORÉ
Beautiful Africa Jan.
Nonesuch

STEVE TRESELER GROUP
Center Song May
CMA Records

TRI-FI
Staring Into The Sun May
Tri-Fi

TRIO 3 & VIJAY IYER
Wiring Oct.
Intakt

MATT ULERY
In The Ivory Nov.
Greenleaf Music

COLIN VALLON TRIO
Le Vent May
ECM

THE VANGUARD JAZZ ORCHESTRA
OverTime/Music Of Bob Brookmeyer Dec.
Planet Arts

VARIOUS ARTISTS
A Celebration Of Blues And Soul (DVD) July
Shout! Factory

VARIOUS ARTISTS
It's Christmas On Mack Avenue Dec.
Mack Avenue

CAETANO VELOSO
Abraço June
Nonesuch



DAVID VEST
Roadhouse Revelation Sept.
Cordova Bay

FAY VICTOR ENSEMBLE
Absinthe & Vermouth March
Green Avenue Music

ELIO VILAFRANCA AND THE JASS SYNCOPATORS
Caribbean Tinge Sept.
Motéma

CHRISTIAN VUUST
Urban Hymn June
Aero Music

HARVEY WAINAPEL
Amigos Brasileiros Vol. 2 Nov.
Jazzmission Records

WAYNE WALLACE
Salsa de la Bahia, Vol. 2, Hoy Y Ayer Dec.
Patois

CHRISTIAN WALLUMRØD ENSEMBLE
Outstairs Jan.
ECM

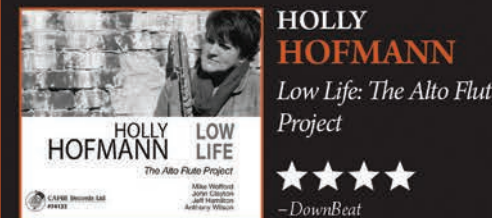
JD WALTER
One Step Away Jan.
Jwal Records

BOBBY WATSON & THE "I HAVE A DREAM" PROJECT
Check Cashing Day March
Lafiya Music

CAPRI RECORDS BEST OF 2014



JOSHUA BREAKSTONE
With The Wind And The Rain
★★★★½
-DownBeat



HOLLY HOFMANN
Low Life: The Alto Flute Project
★★★★
-DownBeat



FRANK POTENZA
For Joe
★★★★
-DownBeat



GARY SMULYAN DOMINIC CHIANESE
Bella Napoli
★★★★
-DownBeat



FELIPE SALLES
Ugandan Suite
★★★★
-DownBeat



★★★★ NEW



THE WEE TRIO

Live At The Bistro

Bionic

Jan.

WALT WEISKOPF

Overdrive

Posi-Tone

Oct.

DAVID WEISS

When Words Fail

Motéma

Aug.

WESTERN JAZZ QUARTET

Free Fall

BluJazz

Sept.

DAVID WHITE JAZZ ORCHESTRA

The Chase

Mister Shepherd Records

July

MATT WHITE

The Super Villain Jazz Band

ARC

Jan.



BRAD WHITELEY TRIO

Pathless Land

Destiny Records

July

DOUG WIESELMAN

From Water

88 Records

March

MATT WILSON QUARTET + JOHN MEDESKI

Gathering Call

SteepleChase

SteepleChase

SteepleChase

SteepleChase

SteepleChase

SteepleChase

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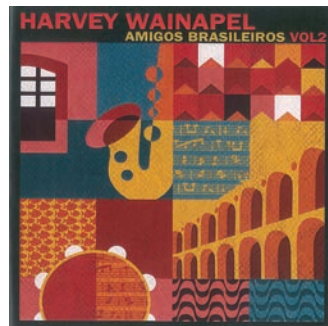
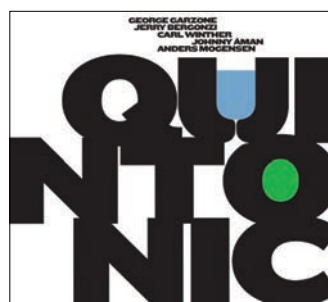
SteepleChase

SteepleChase

SteepleChase

SteepleChase

SteepleChase



Palmetto

Feb.

LUKE WINSLOW-KING

Everlasting Arms

Bloodshot

Nov.

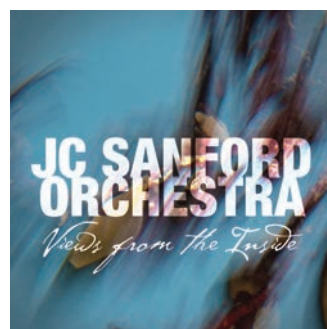
MICHAEL WOLLNY TRIO

Weltentrum

ACT

June

YARD BYARD: THE JAKI



BYARD PROJECT

Inch By Inch

GM Recordings

Sept.

YOSHIHIDE/SACHIKO M/PARKER/MARSH/EDWARDS/BUTCHER

Quintet/Sextet

Otoroku LP

Jan.

JACOB YOUNG

Forever Young

ECM

July

DENNY ZEITLIN

Stairway To The Stars

Sunnyside

Sept.

LAYLA ZOE

The Lily

Cable Car

Jan.

★★★★ HISTORICAL

RAN BLAKE

Plays Solo Piano

ESP-Disk

April

MICHAEL BLOOMFIELD

From His Head To His Heart To His Hands

Legacy

March

DON CHERRY

Live In Stockholm

Caprice

April

DON CHERRY

Eternal Rhythm

Edel:Kultur

Nov

JOHN COLTRANE

Sun Ship: The Complete Session

Impulse!

Feb.

BRIGITTE FONTAINE

Comme à La Radio

Superior Viaduct

April

THE JIMMY GIUFFRÉ

3 & 4

New York Concerts

Elemental Music

July

JOHNNY HODGES

Johnny Hodges With Billy Strayhorn And The Orchestra

Harmonia Mundi/APO

Oct.

OSCAR PETERSON/BEN WEBSTER

During This Time

NDR/Art Of Groove/MIG

July

BUD POWELL

Birdland 1953

ESP-Disk

July

SUN RA

Universe In Blue

El Saturn/iTunes

Sept.

VARIOUS ARTISTS

Classic African American

Songsters

Smithsonian Folkways

Oct.

VARIOUS ARTISTS

Creative Music Studio Archive Selections, Vol. 1

Innova

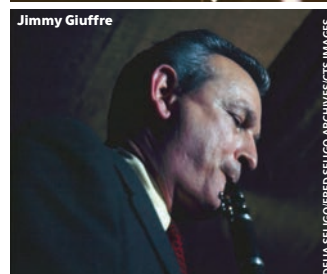
Dec.

VARIOUS ARTISTS

The Soul Of Designer Records

Big Legal Mess

Nov.



SONNY ROLLINS / **CHARLIE ROUSE** / **JAMES MOODY**
 / **JACKIE MCLEAN** / **BOB BERG** / **MICHAEL BRECKER** /
JOHNNY GRIFFIN / **DAVID S WARE** / **BENNY GOLSON**
 / **GEORGE COLEMAN** / **DEWEY REDMAN** / **BIG NICK**
NICHOLAS / **GATO BARBIERI** / **JOSHUA REDMAN**
 / **RALPH MOORE** / **BRANFORD MARSALIS** / **CHRIS POTTER**
ORNETTE COLEMAN / **JIMMY HEATH** / **ERIC ALEXANDER**
 / **DAVID SANCHEZ** / **DAVE LIEBMAN** / **JOE LOVANO** /
MARK TURNER / **JOE HENDERSON** / **BILL EVANS** /
LEE KONITZ / **MACEO PARKER** / **PAUL DESMOND** /
JOHN ZORN / **WAYNE SHORTER** / **DEXTER GORDON ...**

CHRIS POTTER	JERRY BERGONZI	JIMMY GREENE	CHARLES DAVIS	EUGENE ROUSSEAU	IVO PERELMAN	CHRISTIAN MENDOZA	JEAN-PIERRE MAGNET	FRED LAMBERSON
SAM NEWSOME	FRANK WESS	WILL VINSON	DAVID MURRAY	BRANFORD FIELDS	ERIC WYATT	VILLAFRUELA	DALE BARLOW	DANNY TURNER
PHAROAH SANDERS	BILL EVANS	MIGUEL ZENON	BOBBY WATSON	TONY MALABY	SCOTT HAMILTON	ANAT COHEN	IGOR BUTMAN	KENNY HING
JOEL FRAHM	RALPH MOORE	GARY SMULYAN	WOODY ALLEN	RICK MARGITZA	SADAO WATANABE	HAMIET BLUIETT	DAVID BINNEY	ERIC DICKSON
ERIC ALEXANDER	STEVE WILSON	MICHAEL HASHIM	CLARENCE CLEMONS	BOB MINTZER	CECIL PAYNE	RONNIE CUBER	MATANA ROBERTS	KENNY DAVERN
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Kenny Barron (left) and Dave Holland



Kenny Barron/Dave Holland *The Art Of Conversation*

IMPULSE! B002169802

★★★★★

This aptly named set features two masters at play, swinging solidly and waxing romantic “in the tradition.” Fans of Holland’s usually more off-kilter metrics may find it too genteel, but what pure pleasure nevertheless to eavesdrop on a sophisticated chat between two musicians with such luxurious sounds, consummate technique and open ears.

The duo brings seven originals (Holland four, Barron three) to an intimate, candlelit discussion, plus two bop tunes—Thelonious Monk’s “In Walked Bud” and the less often played B-flat minor riff by Charlie Parker, “Segment”—with a closer by Billy Strayhorn: his sumptuous ballad “Daydream.” But repertoire isn’t the point. One of the things that makes this album work so well is that Holland, even though he’s often walking and swinging in straight time, supplies the “bones”

of each structure, with his familiarly infectious vamps. His transportive opener, “The Oracle,” rolls out with a hypnotic flow in measures of four and two, evoking an oracular mood, indeed. On his boogaloo-ish “Dr. Do Right,” a similarly skipping feel prevails.

The other element that makes this album work is just how deeply these two musicians are listening to each other. As Barron reaches into the rich harmony of Holland’s romantic ballad “In Your Arms,” the bassist traces a line beneath him, creating a dance of consonance and tension. Same deal with Strayhorn, as both men speak in long, complete sentences, hearing each other out, then answering, buttressing or splitting away to new ideas. Barron’s achingly lyrical ballad “Rain” offers more of the same sympatico conversation.

There’s humor and playfulness, too, on Barron’s outlandishly Monkish “The Only One”—a play on a venerable lick whose lineage runs from “Jersey Bounce” to “Well, You Needn’t”—and an absolutely finger-popping edition of “In Walked Bud.”

While there is no arco bass on the album, Barron and Holland continually find timbral and textural nuance, especially on the unison lines in the high register at the close of Barron’s lilting and bluesy “Seascape.”

The only track that starts a tad smudgy is Holland’s “Waltz For Wheeler,” written for the late trumpeter and flugelhornist Kenny Wheeler. But the bassist’s firm, declarative solo clears the air in a hurry.

It’s easy to picture this warm and evocative duo playing Bradley’s, Manhattan’s old piano-bass duo mecca, so much so it’s almost heartbreaking that that will never happen. But hearing the album sows a seed of anticipation for hearing this conversation live, pretty much anywhere.

—Paul de Barros

The Art Of Conversation: The Oracle; The Only One; Rain; Segment; Waltz For Wheeler; In Walked Bud; In Your Arms; Dr. Do Right; Seascape; Daydream. (64:13)

Personnel: Kenny Barron, piano; Dave Holland, bass.

Ordering info: apple.com/itunes

Branford Marsalis *In My Solitude: Live At The Grace Cathedral*

MARSALIS MUSIC/OKEH 88875011652

★★★★★

There's something wildly simple about Branford Marsalis' first solo album, and it's fetching. Instead of turning this San Francisco performance into a placard for virtuosity, the esteemed reed player spends the bulk of his presentation yielding to facility. Most everything here, from extended improvs concocted on the spot to rudimentary blues motifs essayed with eloquence, sounds like it's coming from his horn unencumbered—thoughts made into sound, spilling forward as if they know their destination.

As a conversationalist, Branford is loquacious. Dude can spout all afternoon, and be quite captivating doing so. You get a parallel of that with his quartet work—squalls of ideas explode into a four-man fray. Here we see another side. With an array of saxophones at the ready and a majestic venue that brings an aural bounce-back to each utterance (the cathedral's natural echo is essential to the album's sound), he's more considerate, choosing to spotlight long tones and circumspect filigree. It's a seductive approach, learned at the hand of his numerous classical music dates and plotted from the notion that melody—even curt cascades of song-like motifs—is central to the music experience.

The catholic interests we've grown accustomed to in Marsalis' previous work mark this program. Take, for example, Hoagy Carmichael's "Stardust," essayed in deeply lyrical mode that recalls Lester Young, and "MAI, Op.7," a



through-composed piece by Ryo Noda that brings aggressive textural gambits and extended pronouncements to the fore in an effort to conjure the spirit of the Japanese shakuhachi. They couldn't be further apart aesthetically, but find value by giving this show an ambitious breadth.

Most impressive are the four improvs Marsalis creates. Each is reflective, casual and full of candor. Like some unholy middle ground between Sonny Rollins' *The Solo Album* and John Klemmer's *Solo Saxophone II*, Branford has dropped a soliloquy that speaks in tongues.

—Jim Macnie

Live At Grace Cathedral: Who Needs It; Stardust; Improvisation No. 1; Sonata In A Minor For Oboe Solo, Wq. T32: I Poco Adagio; The Moment I Recall Your Face; Improvisation No. 2; MAI, Op.7; Improvisation No. 3; Improvisation No. 4; Blues For One; I'm So Glad We Had This Time Together. (64:39)

Personnel: Branford Marsalis, soprano, alto, tenor saxophones.

Ordering info: okeh-records.com



Conrad Herwig *The Latin Side of Joe Henderson*

HALF NOTE 4557

★★★★★

The sixth album in trombonist Conrad Herwig's 20-year-old franchise in Afro-Caribbean revisionism elects a more personal nominee to its inner circle: tenor saxophonist Joe Henderson. Earlier "Latin Side" celebrations have focused conspicuously on the marquee power of modernism's reigning personifications—Trane, Miles Davis, Wayne Shorter and Herbie Hancock. Here, though, Herwig reaches beyond the orbit of Davis spinoffs to the less-celebrated Henderson, with whom he worked closely in the 1990s. It provides a connection to the man and material that earlier "Latin Side" projects have not offered. That said, the Henderson repertoire selected here is drawn entirely from his 1960s Blue Note and Milestone periods.

The traditional notion of superimposing a Latin accent on non-Latin material is not necessarily the business of this outing, since Henderson began his career as a leader in 1963 with a soft Brazilian shuffle. "Recorda Me," his first Blue Note side, was pure bossa nova. Herwig toughens up the rhythm here with a bit of Cuban fire, then cuts it in half with a jabbing a cappella chorus by pianist Bill O'Connell. The original version of "Afro-Centric" had a more complex time signature, but the Cuban feel here hardly alters its churning sense of movement. Herwig and O'Connell have brought a lot of sock to the material through their arrangements and an ensemble of heavyweight players who know exactly what to do.

They bring a loose and peppery spontaneity to all the staccato Latin energy. Herwig himself uses the legroom of a relatively laid-back "Black Narcissus" to discharge some swoops of high-wire trombone acrobatics with such poised accuracy they never seem to break a sweat. Lovano is the visiting guest who makes himself at home anywhere, while Cuber rolls along with a growling power. Hopefully, Herwig is scouting future subjects with a Latin side: Dizzy Gillespie, perhaps. Or Duke Ellington.

—John McDonough

The Latin Side Of Joe Henderson: Recorda Me; Mamacita; Afro-Centric; Black Narcissus; Blue Bossa; Inner Urge. (59:28)

Personnel: Alex Sipiagin, trumpet; Conrad Herwig, trombone; Joe Lovano, Ronnie Cuber, saxophones; Bill O'Connell, piano; Ruben Rodrigues, bass; Robby Ameen, drums; Richie Flores, percussion.

Ordering info: conradherwig.com



Ron Miles *Circuit Rider*

ENJA/YELLOWBIRD 7745

★★★★★

The same feeling keeps returning: We are in the new golden age of trumpet. Ron Miles predated the current wave by a decade, making himself known as a presence in many Bill Frisell projects and racking up quite a diverse discography as a leader. On *Circuit Rider*, the Denver-based cornetist reassembles his group with Frisell and drummer Brian Blade, following up on the trio's 2012 debut, *Quiver* (Enja).

The uncommon instrumentation calls to

mind Dave Douglas' Tiny Bell Trio, though it's considerably more laid-back than that classic '90s band. The five Miles originals have the songfulness one expects from a Frisell project, less quirky but just as melody-driven and harmony-conscious. A bluesy cut like "Dancing Close And Slow" spotlights the cornetist's singing tone, a rich and dark presence; on that piece and "Angelina," in an uncanny way you can hear the track titles appearing syllabically in the main themes, a ghostly, unspoken lyrical presence.

Frisell is brilliant, fingering original chord choices, soloing and supporting with extraordinary finesse. And Blade is so low-key you could miss how stellar and judicious he is, never adding a snare crunch or cymbal crash too much, but bringing the perfect flourish. Each of the two Charles Mingus compositions is a great choice: "Jive Five Floor Four" introducing a little funky hoedown, "Reincarnation Of A Lovebird" unspooling its long line, Miles glowing radiantly. The positive, optimistic outing ends with Jimmy Giuffrè's "Two Kinds Of Blues," a sly tune on which the guitarist's straightforward sound, simple strummed chords, and inventive cadenza take the cake.

—John Corbett

Circuit Rider: Comma; Jive Five Floor Four; The Flesh Is Weak; Dancing Close And Slow; Circuit Rider; Reincarnation Of A Lovebird; Angelina; Two Kinds Of Blues. (56:44)

Personnel: Ron Miles, cornet; Bill Frisell, guitar; Brian Blade, drums.

Ordering info: jazzrecords.com/enja

The Hot Box

Critics	John McDonough	John Corbett	Jim Macnie	Paul de Barros
Kenny Barron/Dave Holland <i>The Art Of Conversation</i>	★★★★	★★★★	★★★★	★★★★
Ron Miles <i>Circuit Rider</i>	★★★	★★★★	★★★★	★★★★
Branford Marsalis <i>In My Solitude</i>	★★½	★★★★	★★★★	★★½
Conrad Herwig <i>The Latin Side Of Joe Henderson</i>	★★★★	★★★★	★★★★	★★★

Critics' Comments

Kenny Barron/Dave Holland, *The Art Of Conversation*

A repertoire of seasoned but underplayed originals brings a smart civility to this feathery oasis of refinement. Barron's lines are clean, straightahead and boppish, but buffered with a Wilsonian restraint. "The Only One," a variation on "Jersey Bounce," is the model confluence of tune, tempo and touch. Holland radiates best in the slower gears.

—John McDonough

Overwhelming sense of solidity to these dialogues. Feet planted. For all his harmonic subtlety, Barron is matched by Holland's elegance and assurance. Refreshing to hear the latter in such an unfettered setting.

—John Corbett

The chemistry is in place and the rapport borders on sublime, but as the program moves along it seems like it's a bit too groomed. For all its attractions, there's some edge missing.

—Jim Macnie

Ron Miles, *Circuit Rider*

On his first, 2012 outing with this estimable trio with Bill Frisell and Brian Blade, Miles sounded severe and dry, like the odd man out in his own band. No such problem this time: Miles strides into town, preaching with robust, jubilant, folk-jazz warmth, tempering jubilation and bliss with a thoughtful sense of fate, per the "Circuit Rider" of the album's title.

—Paul de Barros

Perhaps the brass player's most convincing album yet. Great textural reach, a dedication to tunefulness and the rich wrapping of Frisell's strings—nice mix. I played it over and over and over and kept falling for its charms.

—Jim Macnie

Like a John Ford film in its initial frontier austerity, Miles' level, midrange roundness moves narrowly between the emotional neutrality of a Salvation Army cornet and the precision of classical chamber brass, which may be the album's dominant and somewhat cloistered flavor. Frisell and Blade gel irregularly in the tricky and broken paths.

—John McDonough

Branford Marsalis, *In My Solitude: Live At Grace Cathedral*

It would be extra thrilling if this was not an anomaly. Marsalis makes all the right moves in this huge room with hard surfaces, but you can feel that it would grow and deepen if he played solo more frequently. Beautiful idea to start with a Lacy tune, tip of the hat to the master, and the linear-melodic program moves searchingly, as if Marsalis were trying to sound every depth in the abyss.

—John Corbett

If virtue is inversely proportional to pleasure, then the virtuous piety of this music is measurable by the growing patience it takes to stay with it. Marsalis sounds beautiful, enhanced by the cathedral ambience. But in austere solitude, the music becomes a coda; listening, a chore. "Stardust" and the blues bring focus.

—John McDonough

At its extremes, this live solo recording in the massive airspace of San Francisco's fabled cathedral is thoroughly compelling. But the rest is so careful as to be, well, boring, especially when one considers how richly such solo sax territory has been explored in the past by the likes of Anthony Braxton, Roscoe Mitchell or Sonny Rollins. Nice to hear Branford's pure and piping tone on the alto excursions, though.

—Paul de Barros

Conrad Herwig, *The Latin Side Of Joe Henderson*

Love the rough-and-tumble vibe of the live date. The trombonist's "Latin Side" series has been a blessing from the get-go, but this hat-tip says a lot about its subject as well as the players recasting the tunes—the best of both worlds.

—Jim Macnie

Herwig and Joe Lovano really came to play for this album of vibrant, gritty, Manhattan Latin jazz. But overall the band sounds a bit jumbled, with electric bass jacked too high and some of the solos slightly off-mic. There's not much development or coherence in these strings of episodic solos, nor in a program that drops a warhorse like Kenny Dorham's "Blue Bossa" into a program of Joe Henderson tunes.

—Paul de Barros

This installation of Herwig's Afro-Caribbeanization series gets vitamin-C boost from Joe Lovano, whose exciting playing gooses the great octet. The Latin component is mostly drawn from, rather than imposed on, Henderson's tunes, the leader's big, un-brash trombone an insistent Cubanoid component.

—John Corbett



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Jason Marsalis Vibes Quartet *The 21st Century Trad Band*

BASIN STREET RECORDS 0304

★★★★★

On his latest album, the Jason Marsalis Vibes Quartet lays down a set of good, recognizable jazz that takes several different angles without losing its approachability. Marsalis wrote half the tracks, with one entry each from his quartet members and two by New Orleans up-and-comers Jasen Weaver and Cliff Hines. All of the tracks show off his vibraphone work on top of and with the band.

Marsalis and the band have tunes with a playful sound, as the Raymond Scott-like touches on the opening piece indicate. Marsalis keeps up that attitude with the lilting “The Man With Two Left Feet,” where the band alternates between freez-

ing and playing as dictated by Marsalis striking his instrument. The band also plays it straight-ahead with the hard-hitting speed of “Blues For Now” and the contemplative “Ratio Man,” but mixes in a more impressionistic mode on “Blessed Unrest” with its slowing and quickening tempos, excellent use of sustain pedal and beautiful resolve at the end. The band also refers to the standards “Goodbye Pork Pie Hat” in “Nights In Brooklyn,” and intersperses the melodies of other standards to make up the title track.

Several pieces start with solo vibraphone interludes that set up or contrast with the tunes they precede. This is most effective on the interlude that follows the political monologue of “BP Shakedown.” Here several quick melodies play out before the band stomps in on a descending, doom-like movement that portrays the outrageous and gross negligence of BP’s Deepwater Horizon oil spill and Macondo well blowout of 2010.

Although the titles make the tunes sound like they are too complex and intellectual, the songs themselves should appeal both to veteran jazz listeners and newcomers who can dig the melodies and drive. With *The 21st Century Trad Band*, the Jason Marsalis Vibes Quartet has put together a record that is both accessible and hip.

—David Kunian

The 21st Century Trad Band: Discipline Meets The Offbeat One; Offbeat Personality; The Man With Two Left Feet; Nights In Brooklyn; 18th Letter Of Silence; Blues For Now; Interzone; BP Shakedown; Blessed Unrest; The 21st Century Trad Band; Calm Before The Storm; Ratio Man. (77:23)

Personnel: Jason Marsalis, vibraphone; Austin Johnson, piano; Will Goble, bass; David Potter, drums.

Ordering info: basinstreetrecords.com

Marcus Roberts and the Modern Jazz Generation *Romance, Swing, And The Blues*

J-MASTER RECORDS

★★★★½

Pianist Marcus Roberts has always been a traditionalist. He got his start more than 30 years ago with Wynton Marsalis and since then has steadily released tributes to influential 20th century jazz composers, including Duke Ellington, Thelonious Monk, Jelly Roll Morton and George Gershwin.

The 12-piece band accompanying Roberts through this suite, which spans two discs, is called the Modern Jazz Generation. The definition of modernity is a little loose for Roberts’ journey, which for the most part holds right in the sweet spot of those aforementioned composers with an added nod to Charles Mingus and Count Basie. Roberts leaves his soloists ample space to give it a go, and his generosity does not disappoint. Baritone saxophonist Tissa Kohsia and clarinetist Joe Goldberg frequently rise above the dense horn parts to create reedy bookends to frequently fast and furious lines. Bassist Rodney Jordan takes a commanding solo to open the second half, thumping and throbbing alone on the upbeat “Being Attacked By The Blues,” while drummer Jason Marsalis is a robust engine throughout, swinging heartily on “Oh, No! How Could You?”

What makes this suite work is the enthusiasm and skill of the ensemble. They are extraordinarily tight, breathing in unison and attacking each note with unwavering precision. But for all the great



group work, a highlight of the album is a lengthy solo performance by Roberts. Always a highly sophisticated and self-reliant pianist, he lets loose with “Period Of Denial,” a rollicking boogie drunk with Southern charm and an unrelenting left hand.

—Sean J. O’Connell

Romance, Swing, And The Blues: Disc One: The Mystery Of Romance; A Festive Day; Evening Caress; It’s A Beautiful Night To Celebrate; Oh, No! How Could You?; The Intensity Of Change. (48:57) Disc Two: Being Attacked By The Blues; Reminiscence; Period Of Denial; In Transition; Reaching For The Stars; Tomorrow’s Promises (Recapitulation). (54:17)

Personnel: Marcus Roberts, piano; Marcus Printup, Alphonso Horne, Tim Blackmon, trumpet; Ron Westray, trombone; Corey Wilcox, tuba; Stephen Riley, tenor saxophone; Joe Goldberg, alto saxophone, clarinet; Ricardo Pascal, tenor and soprano saxophone; Tissa Kohsia, baritone saxophone; Rodney Jordan, bass; Jason Marsalis, drums.

Ordering info: marcusroberts.com



Bob Lark and his Alumni Big Band *Sweet Return*

JAZZED MEDIA 1068

★★★★½

For *Sweet Return*, trumpeter-flugelhornist and educator Bob Lark looked back over his three decades of directing big bands, seeking to sum up, or at least start to explain, the musical growth he’s experienced via musicians he has performed with and instructed along the way.

The result—Lark’s all-star nostalgia big band, featuring many Chicago-based alumni of DePaul University jazz ensembles—sounds like it has been a fully formed, working group for many years. In reality, as Lark explained in the liner notes, the group came together for one rehearsal, two sets at the Jazz Showcase in Chicago and two days of recording. The 10 standards on the disc are a testament to career-spanning musical bonds.

Lark’s band is polished and powerful, with a bright, biting brass section and a mellifluous group of saxophones. The members blend well as a section, but can still stand out in solos. There is plenty of feeling and emotion in the group, nobody merely going through the motions.

The tunes, arranged by members of the band, run the stylistic gamut but play to the group’s strengths while not being at all obvious or straightforward. While the playing is top-notch, the presented arrangements on their own are praiseworthy. “Take The ‘A’ Train” begins with a bombastic introduction by the horns, then slides into the familiar melody, saxes and trumpets working in concert on the tune, which has been elongated in parts, compressed in others. “Bye, Bye Blackbird” is a slow, cool groove; Gil Evans’ “Maids Of Cadiz” is given an added bit of melancholy.

While the history behind Lark’s band makes for a good story, *Sweet Return* is a chronicle of a well-versed ensemble playing at the full range of its abilities.

—Jon Ross

Sweet Return: Una Mas; Bye, Bye Blackbird; The Maids Of Cadiz; Take The “A” Train; Rum Point; The Last Time I Saw Paris; A Narrow Path; The Peacocks; Old School; Just You, Just Me/Evidence. (77:40)

Personnel: Bob Lark, director, trumpet, flugelhorn; Randy Hamm, alto, soprano saxophone; Glenn Kostur, alto saxophone; Scott Burns, Chris Madsen, tenor saxophone; Mark Hiebert, baritone saxophone; Brent Turney, Dan Jonas, Marques Carroll, Kirk Garrison, trumpet, flugelhorn; Andy Baker, Tim Coffman, Craig Sunkin, Thomas Matta, trombone; Mike Stryker (1–3, 5, 9), Pete Benson (4, 6–8, 10), piano; Joe Policastro, bass; Bob Rummage, drums.

Ordering info: jazzmedia.com

Clarence Penn & Penn Station *Monk: The Lost Files*

ORIGIN 82674

★★★★★

If you were unaware of Clarence Penn's sharp, creative work with trumpeter Dave Douglas, or his years of empathetic, intelligent playing as a member of Maria Schneider's orchestra, you could be forgiven for assuming that *Monk: The Lost Files* was one too many recordings of Thelonious Monk classics. Penn's audacious interpretation of "Well You Needn't" quickly lays any reservations to rest. All stuttering beats and slippery electronics, with some spoken word thrown in for good measure, the opening song signals the drummer's intentions to reinterpret Monk as 21st-century material. His title alludes to a computer glitch that left him panicked, thinking he had lost the 2012 session altogether. And if that opening salvo is not enough to convince you that this is Monk like you have not heard him before, check out Donald Vega's first non-electric piano solo on "Green Chimney." No sooner does it start—sounding like any modern acoustic interpretation of Monk—than it is yanked away electronically, a slur of melting notes. Taking such liberties with Monk will not please purists, but Penn's approach has solid footing: using well-known thematic riffs as cells that can be chopped up, carried by Chad Lefkowitz-Brown's sax or Yasushi Nakamura's bass, or simply implied. If this makes it sound like some sort of postmodern intellectual exercise, that's not the case. In the hands of Penn's quartet, Monk comes off sounding like dance music, in much the same way that Jason Moran re-channels Fats Waller classics.

—James Hale

Monk: The Lost Files: Well You Needn't; Green Chimney; Evidence; Friday The 13th; I Mean You; In Walked Bud; Hackensack; Bemsha Swing; Think Of One; Rhythm-A-Ning; Solato's Blues. (52:31)

Personnel: Chad Lefkowitz-Brown, saxophones; Donald Vega, piano; Gerald Clayton, Fender Rhodes (5); Yasushi Nakamura, bass; Clarence Penn, drums.

Ordering info: origin-records.com

Tyshawn Sorey *Alloy*

PI RECORDINGS 56

★★★★½

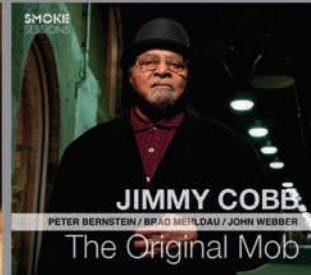
New York-based drummer Tyshawn Sorey's career is still budding, but we have already come to expect a good share of surprises with every new recording. *Alloy*, his fourth album as a leader, is no exception. It reflects Sorey's varied interests even though the stress is on classical and new music rather than jazz. His compositions feel like through-composed pieces, but they walk a fine line between improvisation and composition, a territory that an increasing number of jazz musicians are exploring. The central figure for these pieces, which often take epic proportions, is pianist Cory Smythe, who is given ample time to set sparse and minimalist moods that are alternately cerebral or visceral. "Returns" is a tension-and-release exercise that also takes into account volume considerations. "Movement" is reminiscent of Chopin. Incidentally, the atmosphere is not affected when Chris Tordini's bass and Sorey's drums enter—they could have easily seemed incongruous in such a context. This is a tribute to Sorey's ability to blend or rather juxtapose elements that should theoretically not fit together. Again, in the middle of "Template," Sorey suddenly makes his entry with a heavy syncopation that does not feel out of place. Finally, "A Love Song" is built around permutations of the three instruments, which follow an unpredictable path. Because Sorey wears his influences on his sleeve and borrows from Romantic, Impressionist or indeterminate music, the various segments that make up his tunes don't brim with originality when taken individually. What is commendable, however, is the way Sorey pieces them together.

—Alain Drouot

Alloy: Returns; Movement; Template; A Love Song. (66:02)

Personnel: Cory Smythe, piano; Christopher Tordini, bass; Tyshawn Sorey, drums.

Ordering info: pirecordings.com



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Liebman's Teamings

Dave Liebman is in his late 60s, and he has a long history behind him as a bandleader, sideman, educator and author. If the soprano and tenor saxophonist decided to take it easy and coast on his laurels, no one could say a thing about it without sounding like a jerk. But idling is anathema to the creative soul, and Liebman is still up for a challenge. In each of these projects, which vary drastically in style and aesthetic priorities, he finds ways to share the spotlight and draw on the inspiration of other artists.

Drummer **Phil Haynes** is, like Liebman, a man of broad interests and substantial instrumental facility. The title of his double CD **No Fast Food: In Concert (Corner Store Jazz 0107-0108; 48:15/51:03 ★★★★★)** constitutes a throw-down for anyone who wants music to come in a tidy package. The focus here is on equal interaction between three parties, with bassist Drew Gress holding down the third corner of this sonic isosceles triangle. But avoidance of boxes does not herald messiness. However loose the tempo gets, it never disappears, and however much Liebman, who slightly favors gruff tenor over lithe soprano here, tests a pitch's tolerance for distress, he brings it back to a grounding tune that'll quicken the pulse with assertiveness or tenderness. This is an excellent example of musicians checking their egos in order to realize a clear collective vision.

Ordering info: philhaynes.com

While the man has his name on the bill, the **Dave Liebman Big Band** is a team effort. Band director and woodwind player Gunnar Mossblad has been onboard since 2000, as have many of the players; Liebman, who sticks to soprano on this album, is the featured soloist, but by no means the only one worth hearing. Arranger Mats Holmquist indicates that he incorporated techniques similar to Steve Reich's into his charts, but the influence is inaudible. What one does hear on **A Tribute To Wayne Shorter (Mama 1047; 66:42 ★★★★★)** is a well-organized exposition of familiar big band color schemes applied to material from several phases of the dedicatee's long career. The ensemble playing is solid, but what really stands out are the solos, such as Liebman's elaborations on "Yes

Or No" and tenor saxophonist Dave Rickenberg's exuberant flight on "Black Nile."

Ordering info: mamajazz.com

If you follow New York's ecstatic jazz scene, you know author **Steve Dalachinsky's** liner notes, or have heard him sharing stages with Matthew Shipp and Federico Ughi. These aren't circles that Liebman usually runs in, but he and Dalachinsky find considerable common ground on **The Fallout Of Dreams (Rogue Art 0053; 70:23 ★★½)**. They were both born in Brooklyn in 1946, and each man was indelibly marked by the experience of coming of age in the time of atomic anxiety, beat poetry and the John Coltrane Quartet playing a train ride away. Liebman plays piano, flutes and percussion as well as saxophones here, and his contributions encompass pungent blues, far-out exoticism and, on a tribute to Jackson Pollock, illustratively expressionist splatter. This session is a double homecoming; Liebman not only gets to reminisce with a pal from the old neighborhood, but share a few spiritually satisfying moments with his old Lookout Farm comrade, pianist Richie Beirach, who appears on two tracks. Your mileage with this record will vary according to your appreciation for Dalachinsky's Kerouac-ian recitations, but if you can hang with that, there's a lot to love.

Ordering info: rogueart.com

A similar caveat applies to **The Miami Jazz Project (Zoho 201409; 56:11 ★★½)**. This six-piece electric band is a collaboration between Liebman, saxophone-flute player Arthur Barron and keyboardist-producer Abel Pabon that is intended to extend the tradition of early '60s Trane and '70s fusion. It cannot be denied that they get the vintage synth sounds right, nor that the saxophonists sound bold and beatific on "Dahomey Dance." But if you consider those synthesizer voices to represent the precise moment that electronic keyboard tones went south, this record represents an exercise in misplaced fidelity. And it doesn't help that the record's liner notes assert the absolutely inaudible influence of one "Don Van Fleet"; if you're going to throw around the good Captain Beefheart's name, guys, at least spell it right. **DB**

Ordering info: zohomusic.com



Chris Walden Big Band Full-On!

ORIGIN 82669

★★★★★

A busy arranger-composer in Los Angeles for the studios, films and television, Chris Walden has also been leading a worthy if part-time jazz big band. On *Full-On!* six singers are featured on seven selections, but Walden's orchestra is never merely in the background. In fact, with a few exceptions, the singers can be thought of as guest soloists who take their turns in the spotlight along with the instrumental soloists and the ensemble.

The five instrumentals are mostly pretty outstanding. Whether it is the opening "Bailout," the catchy "Bada Bamba" or "Out Of Town" (one of the strongest originals to come from the Yellowjackets), the band has its chances to wail. Three different trombonists—Bob McChesney, Alex Iles and bass trombonist Bill Reichenbach—are showcased on at least a good portion of a song apiece. "Arturo," with guest trumpeter Arturo Sandoval, is surprisingly more of a feature for tenor-saxophonist Brandon Fields with Sandoval just having a pair of fairly brief and mellow flugelhorn solos. The tenor battle between Fields and Rob Lockart on "Out Of Town" is particularly exciting.

Of the singers, Melanie Taylor is most memorable and not just because she is the only vocalist with two appearances. "I Can Cook Too" is a swinging tour-de-force, while on "Sir Duke" she hints at Ella Fitzgerald. Walden treats Stevie Wonder's piece as if it were a jazz standard, and the results are quite stirring. Courtney Fortune fares well on the retro swing original "Lost In The Memory," and Tierney Sutton is fine on the ballad "Only The Lonely" while Carol Welsman sounds quite joyful on "Hey Good Looking." But the real stars of *Full-On!* are Walden's arrangements and the enthusiastic big band. —Scott Yanow

Full-On!: Bailout; I Can Cook Too; Lost In The Memory; Gatsby; Sir Duke; Bada Bamba; If I Only Knew; Only The Lonely; Arturo; Hey Good Looking; Out Of Town; Ride Like The Wind. (54:18)

Personnel: Wayne Bergeron, Kye Palmer, Ron King, Kevin Richardson, trumpet; Arturo Sandoval, flugelhorn (9); Bob McChesney, Alex Iles, Paul Young, Rich Bullock, Andy Martin (7, 10), trombone; Jeff Driskill, Bob Sheppard, Rob Lockart, Brandon Fields, Tom Peterson, Kim Richmond (7, 10), saxophone, reeds; Mitch Holder (1-4, 6-12), Andrew Synowiec (5), guitar; Alan Steinberger, piano, keyboards; Kenny Wild, bass; Ray Brinker, drums; M.B. Gordy, percussion; Melanie Taylor (2, 5), Courtney Fortune (3), Dorian Holley (7), Tierney Sutton (8), Carol Welsman (10), Siedah Garrett (12), vocals.

Ordering info: origin-records.com

Ivo Perelman/ Karl Berger *Reverie*

LEO RECORDS 712

★★★★★

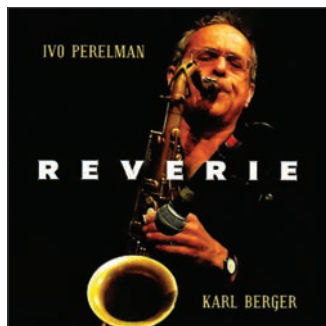
Saxophonist Ivo Perelman's latest album is a duo with pianist Karl Berger that holds to Perelman's tenets of "total spontaneity." When Perelman goes into the studio, there are no preparations nor sheet music. In this collaboration, the two musicians had never met before gathering in the studio, so it pushes the concept even further. The recording is more subdued though no less intense than Perelman's previous work. He plays his saxophone mainly in the conventional range, occasionally taking it to the extreme high notes, then coming back down to squeeze out tight clusters or longer legato phrases. Berger's playing is mostly sparse and airy, with few chords so as to give both of them greater freedom. Both of them challenge each other as they try to match similar phrases or add variations on "Pursuance" and the soaring arpeggios that cycle in and out on "Pensiveness." Much of this album has a meditative, mysterious quality as the players seem to carefully choose their notes. The songs may be spontaneous, but they do not sound it. They move in a deliberate direction. The album climaxes with the title track, a spiritual-like contemplation where Perelman keeps the tempo midway between a ballad and a burner and Berger repeats a series of chords that modulate to keep things interesting. It's a stirring end to an album that is intense without being loud or furious.

—David Kunian

Reverie: Transcendence; Contemplation; Pensiveness; Pursuance; Placidity; Reverie. (54:09)

Personnel: Ivo Perelman, tenor saxophone; Karl Berger, piano.

Ordering info: leorecords.com



Nir Naaman *Independence*

NAAMAN MUSIC

★★½

Saxophonist Nir Naaman, in his early 30s and a doctoral student at the New England Conservatory, is the latest in a line of talented jazz musicians from Israel on the U.S. scene. *Independence*, his debut album, has more glitter than grit; but as a demonstration of Naaman's instrumental fluency—on tenor, alto and soprano saxophone—it's a fine calling card.

The sessions for *Independence* were produced by one of Naaman's mentors, pianist George Cables. The veteran mans the keys for most tracks, with his energized solo upping the ante on "Dilemma" to the point that everything else going on seems wan in comparison. Another contributor is trumpeter Marcus Printup, whose expressive solos enliven "Ohali Blues" and "New Orleans Twist," in particular. Bassist Dezron Douglas mostly teams with drummer Gregory Hutchinson, though stickman Ulysses Owens Jr. steps in for a few numbers (as does another young Israeli, Roy Asaaf, on piano).

Naaman's ballad conception is still unseasoned, lacking a real sense of drama and with his tone too smoothly generic. It's only with "Eshal Elohai"—the saxophonist's arrangement of a traditional Yemenite Jewish song—that he reveals a distinctive sound, his tenor taking on a vibrating burr as it keens the strains of the Middle East.

—Bradley Bamberger

Independence: Ohali Blues; Dream; Eshal Elohai; The Very Thought Of You; Dilemma; Fall; Winter Sun; Independence; Polka Dots And Moonbeams; New Orleans Twist. (58:15)

Personnel: Nir Naaman, tenor, alto and soprano saxophones; Marcus Printup, trumpet (1, 8, 10); George Cables (1, 3, 5, 6, 8, 9, 10), Roy Asaaf (2, 4, 7), piano; Dezron Douglas, bass; Gregory Hutchinson (1, 3, 5, 8, 10), Ulysses Owens Jr. (2, 4, 6, 7), drums.

Ordering info: nirnaaman.com



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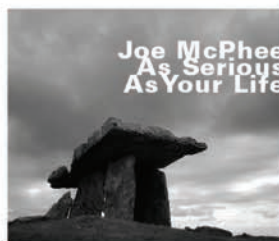
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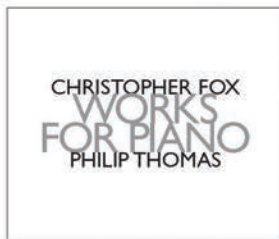
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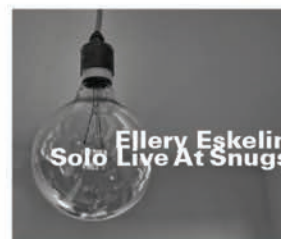
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NEW RELEASES OR REISSUES AS PART OF THE 40TH ANNIVERSARY OF HAT HUT RECORDS.



Otis Clay (pictured) collaborates with Johnny Rawls on their new album *Soul Brothers*.

DRAGANTASIS

Gone Like Tomorrow

Otis Clay & Johnny Rawls: *Soul Brothers* (Catfood 021; 39:04 ★★★★★½) The studio collaboration by these two veteran singers is one of the brightest stars in the 21st century soul-blues universe. Both have an uncanny sense of dramatic exactitude, projecting bracingly honest professions of faith or apprehension about matters of the heart. Bassist Bob Trenchard joined Clay and Rawls in composing solid, inviting songs that have a vivid kinship to the rich soul past. Outside material from the 1960s and '70s also suits the spry elders; they validate the enduring worth of Jimmy Ruffin's broken-dream "What Becomes Of The Brokenhearted?" and the blue-eyed rock-soul hit "Only You Know And I Know." Special mention to ever-resourceful Catfood guitarist Johnny McGhee, formerly with Marvin Gaye, Les McCann, many more.

Ordering info: catfoodrecords.com

JW Jones: *Belmont Boulevard* (Blind Pig 5162; 50:00 ★★★★★½) JW Jones, submitting his ninth album but first for an established American label, gives all of himself to finding a tone of emotional credibility in his rockin' blues. Unlike many peers, the talented Canadian guitarist deals in clarity and substantive excitement, not testosterone-heavy grandstanding. Jones may not be a top-level singer, but the appeal of his voice increases in interest with each listen. He and producer-drummer Tom Hambridge, in great demand these days, did the bulk of the writing, maintaining adequacy among songs with lyrics personal to Jones. They picked two undervalued evergreens to cover: Bobby Parker's "Watch Your Step" and Buddy Guy's "What's Inside Of You."

Ordering info: blindpigrecords.com

Big Harp George: *Chromaticism* (Blue Mountain 01; 47:29 ★★★★★½) San Franciscan George Bisharat isn't your everyday law professor; he's also a blues harmonica player. At age 59, he realizes his dream of recording his first album, furthering the West Coast blues tradition that identifies with the freedom and swing of jazz. Once schooled by the now-deceased maestro Paul deLay, Bisharat impresses with tone, creativity and control of his large, customized chromatic Hohners in entertaining originals and choice selections from the 1950s linked to Jesse Stone and T-Bone Walk-

er (swing-era drummer Gene Krupa, too). Like so many harp players since Paul Butterfield, Bisharat feels compelled to be a lead singer. Fortunately, he's more than satisfactory.

Ordering info: biggeorgeharp.com

Kaye Bohler: *Handle The Curves* (Kaye Bohler Productions; 38:27 ★★★★★) Kaye Bohler, a belter of the highest order, with Etta James hardwired in her DNA, holds nothing back about her strengths as a woman in 10 original songs on her fifth record. With guitarist Pete Anderson enamored of Stax in his production, too much really, Bohler sets up and relieves tension while "keeping the fire burning" in carnal love encounters and in coping with modern life.

Ordering info: kayebohler.com

Marcia Ball: *The Tattooed Lady And The Alligator Man* (Alligator 4964; 43:21 ★★★★★½) As she's done on 13 previous albums over four decades, Marcia Ball, a newly inked carnival attraction, taps into an elixir of Gulf Coast r&b and blues. The self-aware element to her vocals gives an aura of personal revelation to the lyrics of her typically appealing, intelligent songs—none better than the brokenhearted slow blues "The Last To Know." In the autumn of her career, some strain affects the flow of her vocals. Ball's boogie-and-blues piano is as potent as ever at heady or slow paces. Her working band, including excellent guitarist Mike Schermer, bristles with avid devotion to the music.

Ordering info: alligator.com

Markus James: *Head For The Hills* (Fिरenze 014; 55:34 ★★★★★½) That is, Mississippi hills once frequented by R.L. Burnside and Junior Kimbrough. Markus James has a background of creative exploration in blues, and this session, recorded in the Magnolia State and back home in California with only a drummer, is his take on rough, knife-in-the-gut sounds. His singing, ranging from heavy whisper to ecstatic shout, and his invasive slide guitar work reside in dark, unforgiving originals that are wakeup calls about looming personal or global chaos. In lesser hands, James' efforts would come off as pretense run amuck, but he has the creative ideas, the boldness and the conviction to transcend that trap.

Ordering info: markusjames.com

DB



Frank Catalano/Jimmy Chamberlin/Percy Jones/Adam Benjamin/Chris Poland *Love Supreme Collective*

ROPEADOPE

★★★

Tony Fitzpatrick's disrobing cover gal here, allied to unabashed association with *A Love Supreme*, John Coltrane's agonizingly chaste open letter to God—which celebrates its 50th anniversary this winter—equals bona fide jazz blasphemy. But unstoppable Chicago tenorist Frank Catalano's runaway career is characterized by lack of squeamishness (despite horrified memories of car accidents and finger truncation, survival from which he attributes to God's grace).

There is some canny bashfulness here in that his EP suite is 10 minutes shorter than the epochal Impulse! date from 1964. While jazz pedants might be unsettled by bandmembers' affiliations with such groups as Megadeth and Smashing Pumpkins, guitarist Chris Poland, drummer Jimmy Chamberlin, Kneebody keyboardist Adam Benjamin and Brand X bassist Percy Jones really bolster Catalano's gushy flights of feeling.

The tenorist emits a preemptive rasp within 20 seconds of the fade-in that recalls a screech from Trane's arsenal and references the "A Love Supreme" riff, but the buttery tone heralding "Resolution Of Purpose" owes more to Chicago sax titan Ari Brown. Unshackled with dubious comparisons, the music refreshes traditional tropes of avant-garde catharsis with new textures and timbres.

Ostinato hums from Jones wrap splintered sci-fi colorations from Benjamin and Chamberlin's driving tubs in a warm blanket, making this "Acknowledgement Of Truth" more acceptable to non-improv-friendly ears. Chamberlin and Jones fuel "Pursuance And Persistence," and Catalano rides Benjamin's rocket before persistence retards. "Psalm For John" shimmers like a Jim Jarmusch soundtrack with Poland's guitar fielding Catalano's restrained soprano.

—Michael Jackson

Love Supreme Collective: Acknowledgement Of Truth; Resolution Of Purpose; Pursuance And Persistence; Psalm For John. (22:01)

Personnel: Frank Catalano, tenor and soprano saxophone; Adam Benjamin, keyboards (1–3); Chris Poland, guitar (4); Percy Jones, bass; Jimmy Chamberlin, drums.

Ordering info: ropeadope.com; catalanomusic.com

The Mike Longo Trio Celebrates Oscar Peterson Live

CONSOLIDATED ARTISTS PRODUCTIONS 1048

★★★★½

Back in 1961, pianist Mike Longo had six months of private lessons with Oscar Peterson. The main thing that he seems to remember from that intense period was that Peterson insisted that he not copy anyone else (especially not him), but instead he should always work on developing his own voice.

Fifty-two years later at a live concert at the John Birks Gillespie Auditorium in New York, Longo paid tribute to Peterson not by trying to imitate his style (although there are a few hints in spots) but by performing some of his repertoire. Longo did not rehearse beforehand with bassist Paul West and drummer Ray Mosca and, other than giving his sidemen a list of songs, there was no prior preparation. As it turned out, it was not needed.

Throughout this set, Longo is heard in prime form. He comes up with fresh and swinging variations on 13 standards that Peterson liked to play. Longo does not attempt to play the type of superhuman runs that sometimes dominated Peterson's style, and instead is creative in his own complementary and swinging approach. West and Mosca have occasional solos (the bassist is well featured on "Yesterdays") and the trio sounds as tight as if they had been playing this music together in clubs for a week.

With the emphasis on cooking tempos (even Irving Berlin's "Always" swings hard), this is an enjoyable set of straight-ahead jazz. —Scott Yanow

Celebrates Oscar Peterson Live: Love You Madly; Sweet Georgia Brown; A Child Is Born; Always; Fascinating! Rhythm; Love For Sale; Tenderly; Honeysuckle Rose; Yesterdays; Work Song; 52nd Street Theme; I Remember You; Daahoud. (75:43)

Personnel: Mike Longo, piano; Paul West, bass; Ray Mosca, drums.

Ordering info: jazzbeat.com



Steve Heckman Quintet Search For Peace

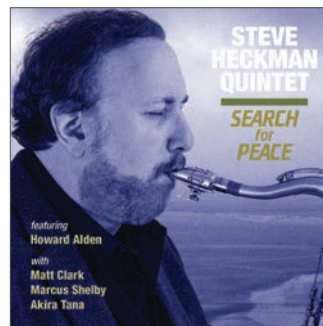
JAZZED MEDIA 1069

★★★½

With *Search For Peace*, saxophonist Steve Heckman reconvenes the group that backed him on his well-received 2013 album *Born To Be Blue*: guitarist Howard Alden, keyboardist Matt Clark, bassist Marcus Shelby and drummer Akira Tana. The previous album saw the quintet essay selections from Great American Songbook, accenting ballads. On *Search For Peace*, the emphasis is on vintage jazz compositions, with Clark on Hammond B-3 instead of piano.

Heckman's curatorial instincts hit the mark with a fresh arrangement of Sonny Clark's "Melody For C," though the saxophonist and company can often sound like they're making glorified bar-band music here—particularly when playing the banal calypso of Blue Mitchell's "Fungii Mama" and a wedding-party version of Randy Weston's "Hi-Fly." Clark's Hammond can sound rinky-dink as recorded, but his atmospheric work on a lovely rendition of "Autumn In New York" that sees Heckman trade his tenor sax for a bari.

Alden is a key draw here, with Grant Green's "Grantstand" featuring an electrifying solo from the guitarist. His flinty, flowing fretwork also lights up John Coltrane's "Spiral" and an otherwise workaday take on Thelonious Monk's "Pannonica." And Alden helps spark Heckman's original "Hangin' At Slug's," titled for the bar in New York's East Village where the saxophonist dug so much earthy jazz in the '70s. —Bradley Bamberger



Search For Peace: Fungii Mama; Grantstand; Search For Peace; Pannonica; Hi-Fly; Hangin' At Slug's; Melody For C; Autumn In New York; Spiral. (62:08)

Personnel: Steve Heckman, tenor and baritone saxophones; Howard Alden, guitar; Matt Clark, Hammond B-3 organ; Marcus Shelby, bass; Akira Tana, drums

Ordering info: jazzedmedia.com

Darrell Katz and the JCA Orchestra Why Do You Ride?

LEO 711

★★★★

Did Albert Einstein really say, "Bicycles are one of the greatest inventions of the modern age"? Did he also think that cats are better than sex? Further questions are posed by Darrell Katz and the Jazz Composers Alliance Orchestra on *Why Do You Ride?* Your curiosity may be quelled after listening to this 11-track album of free-ish big band commotion, flowing ensembles and, occasionally, snot-blowing solos. Vocalist Rebecca Shrimpton's elegant delivery helps frame this panoramic project. Inspired by Einstein and a desire to authenticate the scientist's peculiar quotes, composer-guitarist-bandleader Katz contacted the Albert Einstein Archives, who informed him that many of his collected quotes were incorrect or never uttered by the German genius. Undeterred, Katz wrote music in the spirit of discovery, arrangements that underpin questions between a teacher and a student concerning bicycle riding, the sense of flow, cats and, perhaps, sex. The resulting music is rich, swinging and often surprising. What begins in ordinary fashion soon expands into a free, throw-down-the-gauntlet big band tirade. Arriving on the cusp of the Boston-based orchestra's 30th anniversary, *Why Do You Ride?* balances modern music with timeless intellectual pursuits (and humor). —Ken Micallef



Why Do You Ride?: Why Do You Ride?; Any Intelligent Fool; What Did Albert Einstein Say?; Riding A Bicycle; Under The Cloak Of War; Sticks And Stones; The Mysterious; We Are The Dancers; A Better Teacher/Time/Few Are Those/Relativity; SamiBadGal; Monk's Mood. (72:43)

Personnel: Darrell Katz, guitar (1), composer; Rebecca Shrimpton, vocals; Hiro Honshuke, flute, EWI; Alan Chase, Jim Hobbs, Jeff Hudgins (11), Daniel Ian Smith (11), alto saxophones; Phil Scarff, tenor, soprano, soprano saxophone, clarinet; Dan Zupan, baritone saxophone, bass clarinet; Dan Bosshardt, baritone saxophone (11); Mike Pelpman, Gary Bohan, Forbes Gham, trumpets; David Harris, trombones; Jim Mosher, French horn; Bill Lowe, tuba; Norm Zocher, guitar; Joe Doubleday, vibes; Mina Cho, piano; John Funkhauser, bass; Ryan Edwards, percussion; Luther Gray, drums.

Ordering info: leorecords.com

Enrico Pieranunzi Stories

CAMJAZZ 5052

★★★★

All is in moderation with this trio of equals: pianist Enrico Pieranunzi, bassist Scott Colley and drummer Antonio Sanchez. They focus on simplicity, clarity and purity. They give each other plenty of breathing room: space within melodic lines, framed thoughts within phrases, ample silences between tracks. Generosity of spirit pervades each track, as they invest in balance and equanimity over tension and conflict. All but one Pieranunzi originals, they cast the welcome familiar aura of classically well-crafted melodies, all cut of the same cloth.

Like the long-playing vinyl 33rpm records (LPs) of our fading collective memory, the album offers two "sides"—uptempos followed by ballads. (The one hitch in the sequence is Scott Colley's "The Slow Gene," a pensive bluesy waltz with a falling unison motif.) The quick ones are succinct and restless, as the fully alert trio works as one: "No Improper Use" takes off like a whirlwind, "Which Way Is Up" is a fleet shadow dance for piano and drums, and bright tango and waltzing melodies go whirling in between.

"Where Stories Are" is a deceptively simple, gentle 16-bar melody with sustained tensions, confiding yet confident in spinning out subtle emotions. Another simple motif growing out of "Flowering Stones" weaves itself into double-time improvisations and the coda's tendrils. On "The Real You," bass and piano breathe as one, in a hymnic alliance that evokes Charlie Haden.

—Fred Bouchard



Stories: No Improper Use; Detrás Más Allá; Blue Waltz; The Slow Gene; Which Way Is Up; Where Stories Are; Flowering Stones; The Real You. (49:55)

Personnel: Pieranunzi, piano; Scott Colley, bass; Antonio Sanchez, drums.

Ordering info: camjazz.com



Mancini at the Movies

The mark of a great soundtrack is that it can stand alone. When you remove all the visuals, the plot, the movie stars, what's left? Addressing the usually less-than-pristine sound quality inherent in most soundtrack recordings of the day transferred from film or television, the nine-CD **Henry Mancini: The Classic Soundtrack Collection** (Sony Music 88843091732; ★★) reminds us that Mancini's main label, RCA Victor, got the message early on: Rerecord this unique brand of music in the studio, especially with the onset of stereo technology.

Eighteen soundtracks in all (far from a complete list), this set is not presented chronologically but in nine pairs of soundtracks that have some relevance to each other, the original album cover art reproduced throughout. So, for example, there's the movie music for *The Pink Panther* (1964) and *The Return Of The Pink Panther* (1975) on one CD, and *Breakfast At Tiffany's* (1961) and *Charade* (1963) on another. Missing for obvious reasons are such celebrated TV soundtracks to *Mr. Lucky* and *Peter Gunn*, but we do get in one of the high points of this collection the soundtrack to a dud of a related movie, *Gunn ... Number One!* (1967). In the end, for Mancini and the label, the line between what constituted a "soundtrack" versus "music from" recording remained a blurry one, one inconsequential to movie-music lovers.

Most of the hits are here. Along with Mancini's jazzy touches that revolutionized television music in the 1950s and led to the *Pink Panther* theme, there's the memorable music he created with such talents as lyricists Johnny Mercer and Leslie Bricusse. But it was because he worked with first-rate directors Stanley Donen, Howard Hawks, Stanley Kramer and, especially, Blake Edwards that Mancini was able to make his mark with the general moviegoing public. They, in a sense, were his Trojan Horses.

There have been Mancini packages before, the first and best being the single-LP *The Best Of Mancini* (RCA, 1964), followed by others, including box sets. *The Classic Soundtrack Collection* is a curious mix in that it avoids and includes titles that present a mishmash of Mancini the movie-music composer. As a result, included among the hits are a fair number of misses. But it's safe

to say that a certain kind of formula had crept into Mancini's soundtrack style by the mid-to-late '60s, his best music, with few exceptions, pretty much behind him by then. Along with the titles already mentioned, the knock-you-out originals here that have had lasting value also include the themes to *Breakfast At Tiffany's* ('61), *Experiment In Terror* ('62) and *Hatari!* ('62). And while the music to *Gunn* may be heard as a retread of the original TV soundtrack, the material still sounds fresh, swinging and tuneful, the talents of musicians like Bud Shank, Ray Brown, Jimmy Rowles, Shelly Manne and Pete Candoli serving up bona fide jazz.

A big part of Mancini's allure had to do with that uncanny, and selective, mix of winds, strings and vocals. It could be rhythmic and unexpected, as with the themes to *The Pink Panther* or *Experiment In Terror*, where swing music and a breathy tenor saxophone (courtesy of Plas Johnson) met up with the full orchestra in support with the former, or where those same strings and horns sidled up next to a sultry, crawling rock beat, eery auto-harp and angular chord substitutions to enhance the feel of something terribly unsettling with the latter. Then again, Mancini, when he wasn't doing a kind of fantasia of sorts, would go to that famous device of his using choruses to enhance the emotional impact of his music as well as the gist of whatever film he was working with. In this case, the best were the themes to *Charade*, *Two For The Road* and *Breakfast At Tiffany's*, the latter utilizing wordless vocals across a gently swinging piano and swerving string section. You hear traces of this combination here and there in other soundtracks included from such forgettable movies as *What Did You Do In The War, Daddy?*, *Arabesque*, *Visions Of Eight* and *Oklahoma Crude*.

Indeed, Henry Mancini's music was curtailed by lame scripts, passable directors and the times. He could have passed on some of these projects. But he didn't. Throughout, though, you could, and can, always hear his voice—a singular voice that has influenced scores of other film composers. Mancini remains a period piece unto himself, someone who somehow still manages to transcend time and place.

Ordering info: legacyrecordings.com

DB



Chicago Yestet Just Say Yes

TIDDLYWINKS MUSIC 081862

★★★★½

This ambitious 13-piece big band-with-a-conscience led by producer/arranger/composer/trombonist Joel Adams follows up its 2008 debut *Jazz Is Politics?* with a title that seems more capitulatory than combative—however, not in respect of Adams' highly detailed, forceful charts.

The band oozes with crafty pros and mighty soloists, plus smoldering singer Maggie Burrell and spoken word artist Rob Dz. The latter two inevitably dominate this session. "In The Here And Now" riffs on "Facebook friends" and the social media paradigm shift. Burrell's lyrics are darkly confessional, not glib postings, and "Thursday Night Blues" is an unsettling update of "Don't Explain." Her melancholy vocals, with rich coffee flavor reminiscent of Oleta Adams or Roberta Flack, dwell on the struggle and compromise of societal and personal progress, or lack thereof.

Dz shares weary languor on his extrapolations from "The Long And Winding Road." His voice has a fascinating timbre that makes you want to listen, though the Bacharach mash-up on "What The World Needs Now Is Disco" is somewhat gratuitous and oddly anachronistic despite the swaggering score.

Rousing and metrically hip, the opener "In The Here And Now" is driven hard by the stellar rhythm section of drummer Dana Hall, bassist Clark Sommers and pianist Ryan Cohan and boasts the leader's sole solo—a deliciously buttery volley, preferring tone and timing above superfluous note-play. Geof Bradfield's tenor follows, hurling color between every detail. Elsewhere he is matched with taught, burly forays from section mate Scott Burns. Another important member of the ensemble is classy trombonist Tom Garling, and listen for fine, committed contributions from Cohan, saxophonist Dan Nicholson and guitarist Jeff Parker.

—Michael Jackson

Just Say Yes: In The Here And Now; Uncommon Ground; What Was Ours; The 7th Dwarf; Glass Half Empty; The Long And Winding Road; Thursday Night Blues; What The World Needs Now Is Disco. (59:09)

Personnel: Dan Nicholson, alto saxophone; Scott Burns, Geof Bradfield, tenor saxophone; Marques Carroll, Victor Garcia, trumpet; Tom Garling, Joel Adams, trombone; Jeff Parker, guitar; Ryan Cohan, piano; Clark Sommers, bass; Dana Hall, drums; Maggie Burrell, vocals; Rob Dz, spoken word.

Ordering info: chicagoyestet.com

WHO Trio *The WHO Zoo*

AURICLE RECORDS 14, 15

★★★★½

On its sixth record, the WHO Trio paints a distinct line between acoustic and electric instruments, with one disc devoted to each aural pursuit. While each disc has its own distinct personality, they share a similar musical approach: a mostly subdued collective improvisation based on holistic musical feeling and not note-heavy fireworks.

The tunes on the acoustic disc have an atmospheric, impressionistic quality to them, and have a bit of a rock feel with classical styling. There are no truly distinct melodies, as the songs instead work as extended sound portraits that slowly move through different ideas. On "Chilabreela," repetitive eighth notes map out slowly moving chords atop drum filigree. This out-of-body, floating introduction moves into a seemingly endless, angular piano line. This second permutation of the tune soon segues into a third, more sparse approach, led by the bass with only occasional piano interjections.

The electric disc develops many of the same themes, but with electric keyboard interjections and an electric bass backing. "Egg Mixer" combines acoustic piano lines with keyboard beeps and other electronic sounds, maintaining a low-key approach until the last third of the piece, when raucousness takes over. The three pieces on the electronic disc are, on the whole, much longer than those on the first disc, and this gives the band even more space to develop multiple ideas within a single composition. The trio members are adept narrators whatever the amplification of their instruments. —Jon Ross

The WHO Zoo: Acoustic: Chilabreela; Raccitus; Demmpa; Whylateakki; Rembellarun; Sloeperr; Breneen. (50:24) Electric: Egg Mixer; Lamp Bowl; Kettle Opener. (54:17)

Personnel: Michel Wintsch, piano; Gerry Hemingway, drums; Banz Oester, bass.

Ordering info: gerryhemingway.com



Evan Parker/Sylvie Courvoisier *Either Or And*

RELATIVE PITCH RECORDS 1024

★★★★★

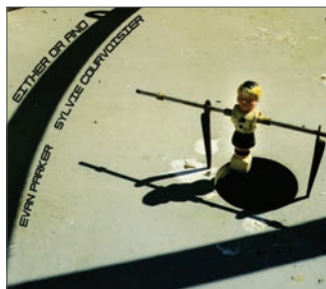
That legendary British saxophonist Evan Parker and Swiss pianist Sylvie Courvoisier recorded their first duo in New York is an intriguing coincidence. Parker opted for a career in music after seeing John Coltrane in the Big Apple in the 1960s, and Courvoisier's star has been rising ever since she moved there in 1998.

There are obvious factors that set these two free improvisers apart. In addition to the generational gap, Courvoisier's approach, for instance, is more steeped in contemporary classical music. But this does not prevent them from overcoming their differences and finding common ground. In fact, they don't even need any time to size each other up. The pianist's blunt attack is immediately on display, and the saxophonist is quick to pit his screechy warbled tenor lines against her heavy and potent clusters and runs.

Parker's generous sound on the tenor and occasional polyphonies are most striking, but on a couple of pieces he switches to the soprano. He deftly engages in his signature whirlwind ("Stillwell"), and his tone turns acrid in response to the pianist's tantalizing moves on the darker "Penumbra." Courvoisier relies on an arsenal of techniques to create unique moods. She can suggest mystery as she strums the piano strings at the onset of "Oare" or urgency as she gives the strings a much rougher treatment ("Spandrel").

Even though the duo can get confrontational, they also know how to turn their dueling into fun and communicate the pleasure they take in playing with each other.

—Alain Drouot



Either Or And: If/Or; Oare; Spandrel; Stillwell; Stonewall; Penumbra; Heights; Either Or And. (58:52)

Personnel: Evan Parker, soprano and tenor saxophone; Sylvie Courvoisier, piano.

Ordering info: relativepitchrecords.com

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Brian Lynch/Emmet Cohen *Questioned Answer*

HOLLISTIC MUSICWORKS 12

★★★★★

Veteran trumpeter Brian Lynch first met pianist Emmet Cohen in 2011 when Cohen was a student at the University of Miami. Lynch quickly recognized Cohen's potential, and he became one of the pianist's mentors and an important teacher. They played together often during the following year, with *Questioned Answer* (recorded in September and October 2012) being the result.

With bassist Boris Kozlov and drummer Billy Hart completing the quartet, the group performs three originals apiece by the co-leaders. In addition, there are explorations of three standards by

the duo of Lynch and Cohen.

Lynch has long had the ability to effortlessly essay complex chord changes while retaining his warm tone. Even at his most fiery, he sounds relaxed, and his jumps into the upper register are a natural part of his explorative style. Cohen is particularly impressive throughout this set. While there are times when he hints a bit at McCoy Tyner and early Herbie Hancock, he mostly sounds quite original, stretching the modern mainstream.

Lynch's three pieces ("Cambios," "Buddy" and "Questioned Answer") each have very advanced chord changes that inspire the trumpeter to play at his most fiery. Cohen rises up to the challenge, while Kozlov and Hart take brief solos and keep the music stimulating. Cohen's originals ("Dark Passenger," "Distant Hallow" and "Petty Theft") are colorful and unpredictable. Parts of "Petty Theft" find the quartet sounding like they are creating a free improvisation.

Each of the standards is reinvented by the duo to an extent. On "How Deep Is The Ocean," the rhythm is felt while rarely stated, and one can feel the presence of the melody even though it is mostly just hinted at. While "I Wish I Knew" is given a fairly straightforward treatment, "Just In Time" has some fascinating interplay between the two soloists. All in all, *Questioned Answer* features Lynch and Cohen bringing out the best in each other.

—Scott Yanow

Questioned Answer: Cambios; Dark Passenger; How Deep Is The Ocean; Buddy; Distant Hallow; I Wish I Knew; Petty Theft; Just In Time; Questioned Answer. (73:51)

Personnel: Brian Lynch, trumpet; Emmet Cohen, piano; Boris Kozlov, bass; Billy Hart, drums.

Ordering info: hollisticmusicworks.com

Carmen Lundy *Soul To Soul*

AFRASIA 13811

★★★★★

As Carmen Lundy mapped out the rough tracks on this powerful one-woman retrospective, she assumed each role: sang lead and backup, played every instrument and (co-)wrote almost every tune. She was scarcely freer parsing out her messages: limning autobiography, affectionate thanks, hard lessons learned, cautionary worldviews. Nonetheless, when she passed the "selfie" blueprints along to preferred session mates, they "got it," both music and her reflective glances, laying most tracks in one take. The rhythm team—pianist Patrice Rushen, bassist Darryl Hall, drummer Jamison Ross, percussionist Mayra Casales—stays yielding and flexible through paces of soul ("Life Is A Song In Me"), samba ("Everything I Need") and cool jazz (the title track and "Don't You Know How I Feel?" with their Randy Brecker sizzle).

Strong tracks are the opener "Kindred Spirits," childhood vignettes wrapped in warring voices, and the dazzling Afro-pop "Between Darkness And Dawn," on which Lundy dramatically vacillates her timbre and range, torn in debate with herself. Shared moments of relieved joy in "Daybreak," "Grace" and "Everything I Need" are tempered with heartsick prayers for broken youth ("When Will They Learn?") and deep thanks (expressed in "Grateful," in versions both resigned, with Warren Wolf's leisurely vibes



coda, and exultant, as Lundy scats and choruses with Bennie Maupin's celebrant tenor saxophone). After shared golden moments on "Sardegna," Lundy's valedictory duo with Geri Allen gently salutes hard-working pioneer bandleader Mary Lou Williams, thus directly achieving soul communion on yet another level.

—Fred Bouchard

Soul To Soul: Kindred Spirits; Life Is A Song In Me; Soul To Soul; When Will They Learn?; Daybreak; Between Darkness And Dawn; Grace; Grateful 1; Grateful 2; Everything I Need; Don't You Know How I Feel?; Sardegna; What's Your Story; Morning Glory? (72:05)

Personnel: Carmen Lundy, piano, Rhodes, keyboards, guitar, drums, percussion, string arrangements, programming; Patrice Rushen, piano, Rhodes, keyboards; Darryl Hall, basses; Jamison Ross, drums; Mayra Casales, percussion, congas; Geri Allen, piano, Rhodes (6, 8, 9, 13); Randy Brecker, trumpet, flugelhorn (3, 10, 11); Simphiwe Dana, vocal (7); Benny Maupin, tenor and soprano saxophone (5, 9); Carol Robbins, harp (4, 5, 6, 10); Ada Rovatti, tenor saxophone (3, 10); Warren Wolf, vibes (5, 8, 12).

Ordering info: carmenlundy.com



Chris Greene Quartet *Music Appreciation*

SINGLE MALT RECORDINGS 008

★★★★½

Chris Greene has a dry, booming tenor saxophone sound that perfectly melds with his laid-back, in-the-pocket approach. He's a player who flirts with the edges of r&b, is steeped in down-home blues sensibilities and runs through torrents of bebop when an uptempo tune calls for fireworks. And with nine records as a leader under his belt dating back to 1998, he still isn't all that well known.

Though the Chicago-area native's performance here is laid-back, the wide-ranging album makes a case for Greene to be known on a wider scale. His compositions are at times playful and carefree, but he can also write serious, careful melodies, as on disc two's "Molar Melancholia," performed on soprano; his gruff tenor sound translates well to the smaller saxophone.

Disc one's opener, "The Missing Part," by pianist Damian Espinosa, sets the in-the-pocket pace for the first seven tracks. On "Nostalgia In Times Square," one of the few standards on this two-disc set, he takes this approach to the extreme, pushing out a sultry, wonderfully deliberate melody on the Mingus tune; his readings of "Equinox" and "Deluge" are equally intriguing. "The Moose Is Loose," which closes the disc, raises the tempo slightly, but Greene still takes his time, playing with precision and caution.

"Divers," the opener on disc two, is a pure shot of adrenaline that has Greene bobbing and weaving through a vertiginous melody that is doubled on piano. At first, it sounds like a distinct contrast from "The Missing Part," but the B section is a slow, plodding time-out before returning to the original tempo. Greene doesn't return to this behind-the-beat outlook, racing off to his solo in an entirely different fashion from the previous tunes. What seems to be a change in approach is only a brief showcase, as Greene soon dials back the tempo. But that brief shot of pure vitality shows that Greene can do it all.

—Jon Ross

Music Appreciation: Disc 1: The Missing Part; Papuera; Institutional Samba; Nostalgia In Times Square; Clean & Clear; The Moose Is Loose. Disc 2: Divers; Solution; Molar Melancholia; Day Of Honor; Equinox; Deluge; Firecracker. (44:59/59:45)

Personnel: Chris Greene, tenor, soprano saxophones; Damian Espinosa, piano; Marc Piane, bass; Steve Corley, drums.

Ordering info: chrisgreenejazz.com

Mary Halvorson *Reverse Blue*

RELATIVE PITCH 1025

★★★★

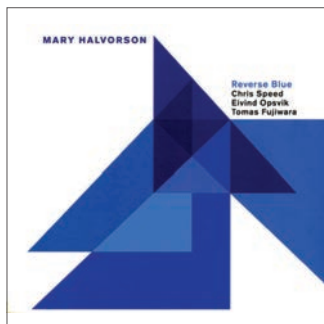
Guitarist Mary Halvorson has earned renown in progressive circles by creating a new, individual sound on her instrument, by turns woozy and spiky. She has also been an extraordinarily prolific composer, leading to excellent trio, quintet and septet albums as a leader over the past seven years or so. That's not to mention her questing duo and trio cooperatives, among much side work. The guitarist's latest leader venture is the *Reverse Blue* quartet with saxophonist-clarinetist Chris Speed, bassist Eivind Opsvik and drummer Tomas Fujiwara. It's a promising band, even if this first, rather under-produced album doesn't quite realize that potential; the sonic quality seems veiled, and there are wobbly tunes that would've benefited from another take, particularly opening rocker "Torturer's Reverse Delight." That said, the album's music remains an alluring blend of punchy hooks and evocative atmosphere. Halvorson wrote half the pieces, with the rest spread among the band. Her guitar undulates in tandem with Speed's clarinet on Opsvik's snaking "Rebel's Revue." The swinger "Really OK" received its definitive treatment as the title track of Speed's recent trio album; still, the guitarist's contributions—from jazzy comping to weird soloing—are a joy. The track to return to is Halvorson's "Hako," which features Speed's tenor tracing a forlorn line through exotic tension, like some lonely figure in a noir film.

—Bradley Bambarger

Reverse Blue: Torturer's Reverse Delight; Reverse Blue; Insomniac's Delight; Rebel's Revue; Hako; Ego Man; Old Blue; Ordered Thoughts Ceased; Really OK; Resting On Laurels. (56:30)

Personnel: Mary Halvorson, guitar; Chris Speed, tenor saxophone, clarinet; Eivind Opsvik, double-bass; Tomas Fujiwara, drums.

Ordering info: relativepitchrecords.com



Peter Zak *The Disciple*

STEEPLECHASE 31791

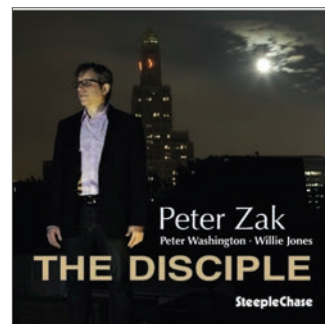
★★★★½

For his 10th CD as a leader, Peter Zak chose six pieces by jazz pianist-composers Chick Corea, Elmo Hope, Horace Silver, Herbie Hancock, Thelonious Monk and classical pianist-composer Alexander Scriabin. It's odd that he didn't include Bill Evans in that group, as Evans seems the most direct ancestor of this "disciple." He's there right from the start, in the lyrical whimsy of Zak's solo introduction to Corea's "The Loop," and in the ensemble freedom and flow through the tune's waltz time with drummer Willie Jones III's precise brushwork and bassist Peter Washington's melodic flights in and around the beat. You can also hear Evans in Zak's rearrangement of Monk's "Criss Cross." None of this is a bad thing. Zak takes Evans to a very personal place in his arrangements of pieces by others and in the three originals here. Zak's Sri Lanka-inspired ballad "Nightfall On Kandy" works over a lovely piano-bass unison line before the keyboard "solo" unfolds with the two in delicate counterpoint. He creates a beguiling form with his minor-key title tune, moving between waltz and straight swing, diverting the progressions to surprising places. There are also the straightforward pleasures of a superb piano trio moving between odd or Latin meters and propulsive walking-bass swing. And, finally, the rewards of the pianist's art: those flowing block chords, or the lovely series of short-phrase pearly arabesques Zak spins with his right hand on Hancock's "Requiem." The "disciple" pays homage here, but with his own pleasures to offer, in his own voice. —Jon Garelick

The Disciple: The Loop; Montserrat; Barfly; Nutville; Prelude Op. 35 #2; Requiem; Jackie; Criss Cross; Nightfall In Kandy; The Disciple. (65:10)

Personnel: Peter Zak, piano; Peter Washington, bass; Willie Jones III, drums.

Ordering info: steeplechase.dk

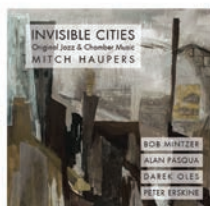


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Foreign Documents

When drummer Kenny Clarke decided to stay in Paris in 1948, he set a precedent that American jazz musicians have been following, in one way or another, ever since. It's the rare American jazzier who hasn't at least visited Western Europe, usually playing one of the myriad summer festivals there. With the general musical erudition of overseas listeners far surpassing that of the average American, foreign countries have often enticed our musicians from us. Not all jazz expatriates have found foreign countries to be their salvation, but the recording opportunities since the late '40s can't be underestimated. They might not have gotten rich off of foreign recordings, but American musicians often had their work documented in times when domestic labels weren't interested.

Tony Scott (1921–2007) was a versatile reed player whose orientation was essentially swing music—though he might also be heard playing with dixieland or rumba bands. Ben Webster was an important tenor model for Scott, while Charlie Parker's influence followed. Scott seriously addressed bebop's complexities and by the early 1950s had settled on the clarinet as his primary instrument. He eventually became a kind of musical gypsy—wandering the globe and absorbing facets of different ethnic musical styles. His *Music For Zen Meditation* album was a forerunner to the ECM aesthetic, as well as the interest in ambient music of the '80s. German jazz maven Joachim Berendt recorded most of the music on Scott's **Germany 1957/Asia 1962 (Jazz Haus 101743; 61:44 ★★)**. Scott is heard with two groups—one German and one Italian, and the showcases set him off as an expansive soloist. His playing is a curious blend of middle- and lower-register fluency and mercurial upper-register command. His higher tones can be all over the tonal map on the ballads, but he's solid on the fast bop heads like "A Night In Tunisia." The other musicians are merely adequate, though pianist Horst Jankowski turns in some nice block-chord work. A couple of '62 sessions in Hong Kong and Singapore show Scott towering over his backers.

Pianist Don Pullen (1941–1995) was a veteran of the New York avant garde of the '60s. He was about to leave the Charles Mingus band in 1974 when he recorded **Richard's Tune (Sackville 3008; 60:10 ★★★★★½)** in Toronto. It was the first effort under his own name, and Pullen's first solo album. On a program of originals, Pullen shows an impressive array of keyboard vocabulary but, more importantly, how to program a piece with enough variety, twists and turns to maintain interest. He was an in-and-out player who could

Don Pullen



BILL SMITH

make rhythm lyrical, tone clusters soft and no-time swing. A percussive attack was central to Pullen's conception, and one marvels at the many different applications he found for rhythm. Whether it's the sprightly "Kadji" or the romping "Big Alice," so much of this music cries out for a savvy choreographer and a good dance company.

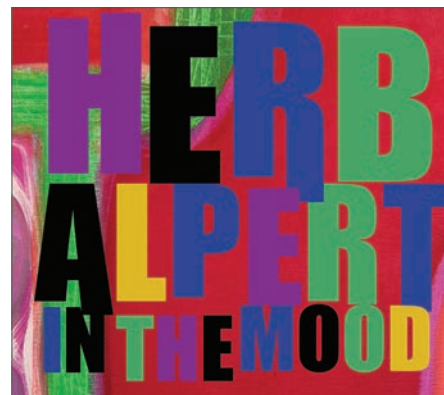
Clarinet virtuoso John Carter (1929–1991) and cornetist Bobby Bradford (born 1934) established the first new music band in Los Angeles in the mid-'60s. **Tandem (Eminem 5204; 82:42/47:81 ★★★★★)** collects two live duet recitals from '79 and '82 and is incisively revelatory when it comes to their differences and their common ground. While mostly playing Carter's pieces, a shared vernacular in blues, bebop, free-floating exploration and marches is on full display. The interchange between supporting role and lead voice can change in an instant, and though the voices are distinct, their rapport is supreme. Bradford's expressive cornet supplies such rich percussive input that the absence of a drummer isn't an issue. A solo can conjure abject melancholy, playful Terpsichore or an imaginary cavalry charge. Carter's own work can milk a huge range of emotion and leap the length of the clarinet's range—sometimes in an instant. They made amazingly consequential music.

Mark Murphy's vocal extravagance is not for everyone, but his courage is beyond question. The profuse improvising singer (born 1932) meets with a German group on **Shadows (TCB 33802; 60:07 ★★★★★½)**, which boasts pianist Fritz Pauer and Karl Heinz Miklin. Murphy favors stream-of-consciousness originals or rambling deconstructions of standards like "If I Should Lose You." His flights can be hallucinatory or downright loony, but he performs them with absolute conviction.

Maybe the most important feature of the Murphy set is the great progress made by the German players since Scott's sojourn. They're in tune with Murphy and have their own statements to make that are every bit as valid as the star.

Ordering info: store.hmus.com

DB



Herb Alpert *In The Mood*

SHOUT! FACTORY 15522

★★★

Herb Alpert may be the most successful pop instrumentalist of all time. Perhaps his greatest achievement is crafting light and attractive settings for his modest trumpet playing. Since disbanding his Tijuana Brass Band in about 1970, Alpert has recorded in many formats, some of which have reflected his love of jazz. As a young man he heard Chet Baker, and that lyrical model has been a component in Alpert's sound.

The album at hand is not a jazz album, per se, though he does some improvising. Like all Alpert productions, the instrumentalists are top-notch, though kept on a short leash. (One of the biggest treats on this collection is the wonderful melodic lines of Hussain Jiffry's electric bass.) He has gathered pop standards from throughout the decades ("Chattanooga Choo Choo," "Begin The Beguine," "When Sunny Gets Blue," "All I Have To Do Is Dream" and "Spanish Harlem") and recast them in new settings. Color—supplied by the keyboards of Bill Cantos, Jeff Lorber and Jamieson Trotter—and pervasive percussion dominate the instrumentation. A world-beat overlay on a chestnut like "Chattanooga Choo Choo" may be a momentary novelty, but the format often turns into so much atmospheric ephemera. A groove-laden "America The Beautiful" is a bit daring, but the trumpet wisely just sticks to the theme.

The Alpert trumpet is much as it has always been: round-edged, soft-toned, confined to the middle register, and without a great deal of presence. The berimbau-laced keyboard wash on the moody "Morning" is where Alpert turns in his best rhythm playing with short, elliptical phrases. And "Sunny," with its spare backing and warm trumpet, gives his best ballad accounting.

Say what you will about Alpert, but he knows what works for him.

—Kirk Silsbee

In The Mood: Chattanooga Choo Choo; Blue Moon; Zoo Train; Begin The Beguine; Don't Cry; Let It Be Me; Spanish Harlem; 5 am; Morning; When Sunny Gets Blue; Amy's Tune; All I Have To Do Is Dream; Sneaky; America The Beautiful. (45:48)

Personnel: Herb Alpert, trumpet, vocals; Bill Cantos, keyboards, vocals; Jeff Lorber, keyboards; Eduardo del Barrio, piano, string arrangements; Paul Jackson Jr., guitar; Jamieson Trotter, piano; Hussain Jiffry, bass; Mike Shapiro, drums, percussion; Brad Dutz, percussion; Ricardo Hambrá, percussion; Lani Hall, vocals; Oliver Schnee, arrangements.

Ordering info: shoutfactory.com

Simon Phillips *Protocol II*

PHANTOM RECORDINGS

★★★

Simon Phillips has manned the kit for the Who, Jeff Beck, Peter Dinklage, Judas Priest, Roxy Music, Toto, the Pretenders and myriad jazz cats. As an in-demand session and live musician, he can be excused for waiting 14 years between albums bearing his name. Arriving a quarter-century after his first solo project, the one-man-show *Protocol*, the British timekeeper revisits—and improves upon—his original fusion concept with a band capable of fleshing out his ideas with all-for-one collaborative vision. As should be expected, Phillips' masterful percussion provides foundations for the songs and tills the grooves his mates follow, explore and expand. Yet his admirable restraint comes as a bit of a surprise. Giving his colleagues plenty of room to walkabout, Phillips never turns *Protocol II* into an exercise in showy soloing or histrionic playing. Not that his limb-defying footwork and handwork aren't evident, not to mention his force. He sounds as if he yearns to whittle his sticks down to toothpicks during an intense sequence on "Enigma" and unleashes hard-and-heavy pounding on "Octopia." Yet the 57-year-old remains primarily wedded to blending progressive signatures, fluid tempos, funky rhythms and atmospheric vibes on a jazz-rock set Tony Williams could've proudly called his own. Andy Timmons' liquid guitars and Steve Weingart's spongy keyboards occasionally time-travel back to 1986, but Phillips' deft control and attention to detail ensure everything remains on the straight and narrow.

—Bob Gendron

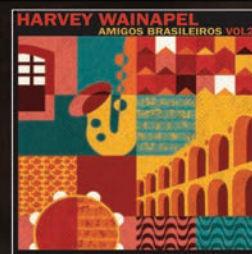
Protocol II: Wildfire; Soothsayer; Gemini; Moments Of Fortune; Upside In Downside Up; First Orbit; Octopia Enigma. (59:02)

Personnel: Simon Phillips, drums; Andy Timmons, guitars; Steve Weingart, keyboards; Ernest Tibbs, bass.

Ordering info: simon-phillips.com



HARVEY WAINAPEL AMIGOS BRASILEIROS VOL2



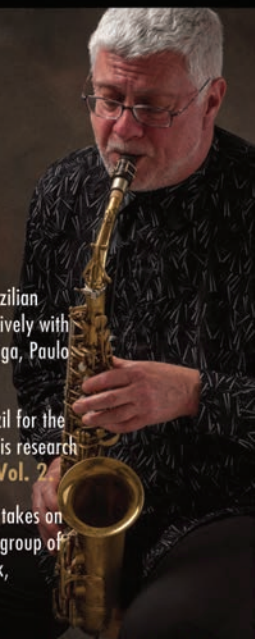
Reedman Harvey Wainapel's long love affair with Brazilian music has been unwavering. He has performed extensively with Aíto Moreira & Flora Purim, Jovino Santos Neto, Guinga, Paulo Bellinati, and Claudia Villela among many others.

Wainapel has explored the length and breadth of Brazil for the past 14 years, and now presents the latest results of his research and encounters in his new CD *Amigos Brasileiros Vol. 2*.

Ranging from traditional-style choro to contemporary takes on folkloric rhythms, this CD release features a different group of great Brazilian musicians and composers on each track, including Gilson Peranzetta, Léa Freire, and Spok.

O Globo (Rio de Janeiro's daily newspaper): "Wainapel displayed incredible intimacy with the language of Brazilian music and great stage presence."

Ivan Lins: "Harvey understands Brazilian music in a way that's very unusual; he's got the spirit, he's a great musician!" www.harvjazz.com
www.cdbaby.com



Guillermo Klein *Live At The Village Vanguard*

SUNNYSIDE 1337

★★★★½

When Argentine pianist Guillermo Klein took his quintet to the venerated New York jazz club for this recording in November 2012, he had been exploring his country's older traditions for a while. Two years earlier he released *Domador De Huellas* (Sunnyside), which fused the folkloric sounds of northwest Argentina with jazz and included singer Liliana Herrero on a couple of tracks. But she stepped to the front for this live session that mixed Klein's originals with compositions from the South American songbook and one interpretation of a European classical piece. Herrero's rough voice may seem unnerving at first. But the folk-rock singer has a reason for this tone, not the least of which was that her songs and style were a protest against Argentina's right-wing dictatorship of the 1970s and '80s. Here, the coarse phrasing is an ideal contrast to Klein's lyricism and the group's gentle electric forays. Klein's quintet is equally intense—and, often, just as dark in tone—on its own. On the minor-key "Argentina," the band plows through different tempos while still keeping an ominous undercurrent. The group also modernizes Olivier Messiaen's "O Sacrum Convivium-Phase" with Richard Nant's muted trumpet locked in a dance of sudden shifts with keyboardist Aaron Goldberg. This demeanor never lacks warmth, especially with saxophonist Bill McHenry's guest spot on "Brazadas" and the group's lilting conclusion, "Eternauta."

—Aaron Cohen

Live At The Village Vanguard: Golondrinas; Dulzura Distante; Cartas De Amor Que Se Queman; Argentina; O Sacrum Convivium-Phase; Moreira; Brazadas; Milonga Triste; Zamba Del Arribeño; Se Me Va La Voz; Eternauta. (65:07)

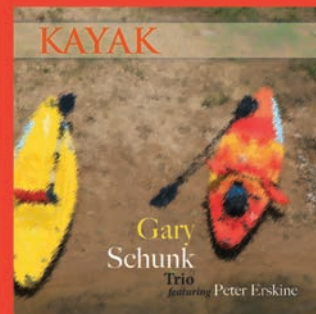
Personnel: Guillermo Klein, piano, vocals; Richard Nant, trumpet, percussion; Aaron Goldberg, Fender Rhodes; Matias Mendez, bass, vocals (1, 10); Sergio Verdinelli, drums; Liliana Herrero, vocals; Bill McHenry, tenor saxophone (7).

Ordering info: sunnysiderecords.com



"Detroit jazz pianist Gary Schunk has never lacked for talent, ideas and great stories. What he has lacked is the opportunity to be heard by a wider national audience. The Gary Schunk Trio's new album *Kayak* (Detroit Music Factory) features Peter Erskine - should rectify that unfortunate situation."

~ Linda Yohn - WEMU



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A Darker Shade of Pale

James Gavin's *Is That All There Is: The Strange Life of Peggy Lee* (Atria) depicts a singer who captivates on record and must have been electrifying live. It's also a picture of a vain, calculating woman who didn't know how to express love anywhere near as well as she could sing about it. Like New York jazz journalist Gavin's other subjects, Lee was authoritative in music despite a chaotic, self-destructive personal life.

Lee embodied a culture shifting from big band to small combo, vinyl to CD, and black-and-white to color, like trumpeter-vocalist Chet Baker, whom Gavin chronicled in 2002 in *Deep in a Dream*, and Lena Horne, the entertainer whose life he explored equally exhaustively in *Stormy Weather: The Life of Lena Horne*, published in 2009.

While Lee is fascinating—she inspired Marilyn Monroe as well as Madonna and k.d. lang, and even punk icon Iggy Pop gives her props—his book spotlights yet another person who isn't easy to like.

Despite her charm, talent and dogged survival instinct, the woman born Norma Deloris Angstrom comes across as narcissistic and delusional. Lee presented a challenging childhood as a kind of Grimm's fairy tale in her public accounts, infantilized her daughter by Dave Barbour, the first and most interesting of her four husbands, and tried to take songwriting credit not due her from Otis Blackwell (who co-wrote "Fever") and Paul Horner, her partner in *Peg*, a failed 1983 bio-musical. She regularly treated her help, both at home and onstage, like trash.

At the same time, Lee, a master of inviting vocal style who based her sultry, low-key approach on that of the black singer Maxine Sullivan, was a gifted songwriter, disciplined musical presence and pioneer businesswoman. Her thirst for control paid off in winning a judgment against the Walt Disney empire in connection with unpaid videocassette royalties from *Lady and the Tramp*, the cartoon feature in which Lee co-wrote six songs and performed four character voices.

What a voice Lee's was, and how artfully deployed. Lee apparently had a breakthrough in 1941 at nightclub in Minneapolis, shortly before she established herself in Los Angeles, where she became a star. She was figuring out how to enthrall a crowd engaged in talk not quite small enough:

"I knew I couldn't sing over them," she said in 1955, "so I decided to sing under them. The more noise they made, the more softly I sang. When they discovered they couldn't hear me, they be-

gan to look at me. Then they began to listen." She learned to sing, as she put it, "softly, with feeling."

The facets of her artfulness and the troubled striations of her personal life are detailed, perhaps to a fault, in a book that is as much about a changing musical industry as it is about Lee. It recounts her uneasy relationships with Benny Goodman and, decades later, Jerry Leiber and Mike Stoller, who wrote the rueful art song after which this book is named. It piles on anecdote as excessively as Lee applied her makeup. It bubbles with remarkable tidbits, like this one about lighting expert Hugo Granata.

Lee hired Granata, who was said to know how to "bring out the radiance in such stars as Marlene Dietrich, Dinah Shore and Debbie Reynolds," before her 1960 debut at Basin Street East, a Manhattan jazz room that became one of her signature venues. "I can take fifteen pounds off *each side* of a gal singer," Granata boasted.

"Lee needed it," Gavin writes. "With her seesawing weight and her proclivity for wearing too-tight dresses that clung to her like a sausage skin, clever lighting helped."

Despite its ups and downs (she never became the movie star she wanted to be), Lee's professional career, which effectively began with Goodman's band, spanned 78rpm platters and compact discs, extravagant big bands and thrifty nightclub trios. It peaked with "Fever," a 1958 hit that seemed to come out of left field and sealed Lee's image as a

musical temptress.

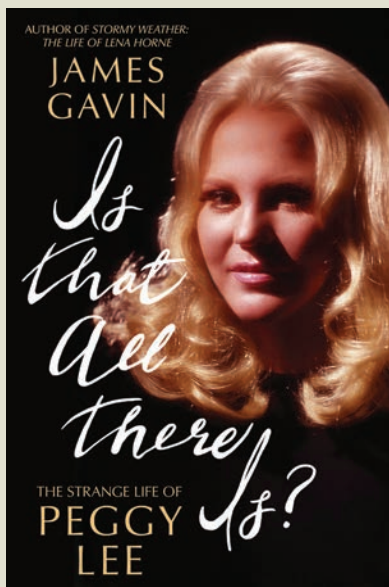
Gavin's account of that recording conjures the heat that made Lee's rendition even more startling than the meatier Little Willie John original:

"In the hour or so that it took to produce a finished take, the chart took on a life of its own: sparse, shadowy, and dominated by the calm but lashing voice of a woman in lust," he writes. "'Fever' filtered the heart of R&B through the cool sparsity of West Coast jazz. ... At a time when the pop charts were full of schmaltzy, string-laden love songs and rock and roll bombast, the minimalism of 'Fever' was disarming."

Would that her whole life were equally disarming, but it isn't. While Gavin rightfully credits Lee for helping define that "compelling sense of less-is-more known as cool," his book doesn't quite convince one that Lee, her own best fabulist, justifies elevation to the top rank of jazz.

Ordering info: imprints.simonandschuster.biz/atria

DB



The New Orleans Suspects *Ourobouros*

LOUISIANA RED HOT RECORDS 1179

★★★★½

There's a long tradition of established New Orleans players shuffling into different combinations, and many of them—even the good ones—often don't last. When the New Orleans Suspects formed in 2009, they could have become one of those temporary shufflings, especially after a pair of live albums from the band didn't necessarily suggest staying power. With *Ourobouros*, though, something has clearly clicked. The Suspects include drummer "Mean" Willie Green (a 30-year veteran of the Neville Brothers), bassist Reggie Scanlan (who helped give swamp rockers the Radiators three decades' worth of cult-favorite status), Dirty Dozen alum Jake Eckert on guitar, Jeff Watkins on saxophones and CR Gruver at the keyboards.

Their first studio album features a varied set of originals that draws on compelling blends of all of those elements and more. Raw, searing guitar peels burn across lighthearted, buoyant vocals on "Soothe Me," setting up an almost Little Feat-inspired juxtaposition. Another highlight, "Pocketful Of Grits," layers triplet-dense rhythms beneath riffs on historic New Orleans funk motifs, while James Booker-esque flourishes and segues into a Professor Longhair-like rolling gait on "Things In Your Mind" point to Gruver's fluency in the history of New Orleans piano.

When references to the work of other artists peek out above the band's more original moments, it's not without a sense of humor. Case in point: The avant-space funk of "Hoodoo And Cunyans," a sweeping nod to the likes of Dr. John and Michael Ray, opens with dark tweaks of feedback and garbled words from Col. Bruce Hampton and others, such as, "You can't make eye contact with a cunyan, but you can look straight in the eyes of a hoodoo." What sounds like a long giggle run through an effects processor follows before the tune breaks into a dirge.

—Jennifer Odell

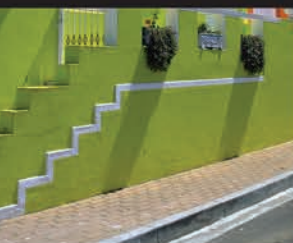
Ourobouros: Get Back What You Given; Cigarette Smile; Magdalena; Pocketful Of Grits; Soothe Me; Things (In Your Mind); Hoodoo And Cunyans; Carnivale; Walk Of Shame; Yo Flambeaux! (53:13)

Personnel: Reggie Scanlan, bass; "Mean" Willie Green, drums, percussion, vocals; Jake Eckert, guitars, mandolin, vocals, percussion; C.R. Gruver, keyboards, organ, piano, electric kazoo, percussion, vocals; Jeff Watkins, saxophones, clarinet, harmonica, vocals; Michael Skinkus, percussion; Ian Smith, trumpet, trombone; Col. Bruce Hampton, Tanya Shylock, River Eckert, Jase Gruver, vocals.

Ordering info: neworleanssuspects.com



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NEW!



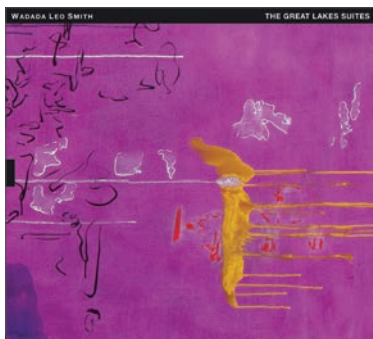
NEW!

Wadada Leo Smith *The Great Lakes Suites*

TUM 041

★★★★½

On this two-CD set of multi-part suites, trumpeter Wadada Leo Smith pays tribute to the North American Great Lakes. Smith has a lengthy history with the members of this quartet, and along with this shared history is a mutual sense of how collective improvisation illuminates



Smith's distinctive compositional ideas. Contrasting images of serenity and fury run throughout the discs, especially on the opening "Lake Michigan." While reedman Henry Threadgill holds on to singular upper-register alto notes, Jack DeJohnette's array of colors from every part of his kit burns beneath him. Similarly, bassist John Lindberg's arco dissonance remains the ideal complement to Smith's restrained tone. Lindberg's dynamic bass lines and DeJohnette's rapid time changes also frame Threadgill's flute solo on "Lake Ontario." "Lake Superior" emphasizes more contrasts between minimalism—Lindberg's repeated two-note motif—and DeJohnette's fast-paced open-ended resourcefulness. Ultimately, it all coalesces with the lyricism that Smith commands from his muted solo. Smith conveys a more pronounced tone on "Lake Huron," which opens the second disc. Here he also emphasizes the inclinations that go back to the earliest days of the AACM composers who determined how silent passages and instrumental expressions should be given equal weight.

—Aaron Cohen

The Great Lakes Suites: Disc One: Lake Michigan; Lake Ontario; Lake Superior. (41:46) Disc Two: Lake Huron; Lake Erie; Lake St. Clair. (48:35)

Personnel: Wadada Leo Smith, trumpet; Henry Threadgill, alto saxophone, flute, bass flute; John Lindberg, bass; Jack DeJohnette, drums.

Ordering info: tumrecords.com

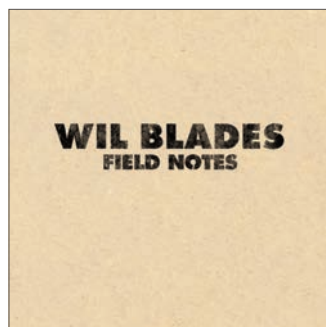
Wil Blades *Field Notes*

ROYAL POTATO FAMILY

★★★★½

"Magnificent, wonderful, sometimes tragic" is how Wil Blades is described by his 8-year-old daughter in the opening seconds of this recording. While this is a satisfying organ trio album, it is neither the first nor the last of those things. But it is occasionally wonderful. Blades mans the Hammond B-3 and is joined by guitarist Jeff Parker and drummer Simon Lott for a set of tunes mostly composed on the road but away from the spotlights. Blades sticks to the party groove and serves it nicely, blending a '70s-era Booker T & the MGs sound with the occasional spidery out-funk from Parker's guitar. He is not a showy organist. He stays in the pocket and propels the group with healthy doses of stability. Blades affixed a clavinet to the top of his behemoth to complete the '70s vibe for the closing intergalactic swagger of "(I Can't Stand) The Whole Lott Of You," while Parker digs into the effects board for his feature number "Parks N' Wreck." "Dewey" revisits the clavinet with a scuzzy waddle, embracing a disjointed groove that appears to be in no rush whatsoever, while the following tune, "Addis," pops with a transferable urgency that works its way around the band. The closer and lone cover on the album is the Big Bill Broonzy honky tonk standard "I Only Get The Blues When It Rains," an unusual choice that gives Parker an airy space to solo before Blades steps in with a hokey drawbar setting. Each tune is a bite-sized chunk of funk, a good soundtrack to an afternoon in the backyard. The trio hangs almost exclusively with tradition, only veering from the road when the adventurous Parker rips a hard left turn.

—Sean J. O'Connell



Field Notes: Intro/Miller's Time; (I Can't Stand) The Whole Lott of You; Chrome; Dewey; Addis; Parks N' Wreck; Forgetful; Red Lanterns Are Blue; I Get The Blues When It Rains. (50:12)

Personnel: Wil Blades, Hammond B-3 organ, clavinet; Jeff Parker, guitar; Simon Lott, drums.

Ordering info: royalpotatofamily.com

Jimmy Bennington/ Demian Richardson Trio *Exotic Coda*

CIMP 403

★★★★½

Once mentored by Elvin Jones, Chicago-based drummer Jimmy Bennington celebrates 25 years in the music business with a series of recordings, the latest of which is a session cut with trumpeter Demian Richardson and bass player Ken Filiano. The program includes mostly originals



by either Bennington or Richardson, the latter penning the most memorable tunes with the swinging "Know More Blues" and a stirring ballad, "Moonbeams." The drummer also pays tribute to some lesser-known musicians who've had an impact on his musical development. "Biggs' Tune" was penned by trumpeter Samuel Biggs and "Three Note Tune for Nippon" by saxophonist Seth Paynter, both a throwback to Bennington's days in Texas. The songs bring together the familiar and the unfamiliar mainly because of Bennington's unique sound and loose drumming, which doesn't follow traditional rhythmic patterns and leaves quite a bit of room to freedom. Richardson's well-defined notes and clean delivery mean that he can really project as a stately soloist, while his playing betrays the influence of Don Cherry and Woody Shaw. Filiano's boundless invention and highly melodic lines confirm his status as one of the most exciting bassists in jazz today. Bennington is the real architect of the session, and although he had definite ideas and communicated clear directions to his cohorts, he did not quell spontaneity.

—Alain Drouot

Exotic Coda: Know More Blues; Tough Lick; Three Note Tune for Nippon; Happy House/Here's That Rainy Day; Biggs' Tune; Moonbeams; Crumbs In My Mouth; Otha And Out; Exotic Coda. (68:58)

Personnel: Demian Richardson, trumpet; Ken Filiano, bass; Jimmy Bennington, drums.

Ordering info: cimprecords.com

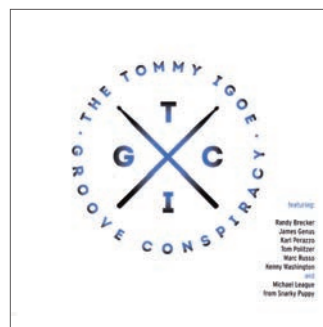
Tommy Igoe *The Tommy Igoe Groove Conspiracy*

DEEP RHYTHM MUSIC

★★★★½

This powerhouse studio recording is a showcase for Tommy Igoe's Dave Weckl-like precision on the kit as well as a vehicle for the formidable improvisers in his big band. They open on a funky note with Ted Firth's harmonically tweaked arrangement of Joe Zawinul's soul anthem "Mercy Mercy," underscored by Igoe's slick hi-hat work and thunderous tom fills and featuring blistering solos from former Yellowjackets alto saxophonist Marc Russo and Tower of Power's lead tenor man Tom Politzer. Firth's arrangement of Bob Berg's uptempo shuffle "Friday Night At The Cadillac Club" is full of breaks for Igoe to fill with his celebrated chops, and his ambitious writing for the horns in the spirited shout chorus section kicks this energized romp into another zone. They dig into a groove of another color on trombonist John Gove's swaggering arrangement of Joshua Redman's "Jazz Crimes," then channel *The Atomic Mr. Basie* band on baritone saxophonist Aaron Lington's swinging arrangement of Quincy Jones' "Jessica's Day." The versatile ensemble also captures an authentic samba vibe on Pinta's arrangement of Arturo Sandoval's "Caprichosos De Le Habana." The energy level never flags for a second on this exhilarating big band outing.

—Bill Milkowski



Groove Conspiracy: Mercy, Mercy, Mercy; Friday Night At The Cadillac Club; Jazz Crimes; Let The Good Times Roll; Aquele Um; Jessica's Day; Caprichosos De La Habana; I Didn't Know What Time It Was; Plan B; Quarter Master. (64:54)

Personnel: Tommy Igoe, drums, programming; Dewayne Pate, bass; Colin Hogan, piano; Drew Wiggins, guitar; Louis Fasman, Steffen Kuehn, Dave Len Scott, Nick Ciardelli, trumpet, flugelhorn; John Gove, Jeanne Geiger, trombone; Mike Rinta, bass trombone; Marc Russo, alto saxophone, soprano saxophone; Tom Politzer, tenor saxophone; Alex Murzyn, tenor and alto saxophone; Aaron Lington, baritone saxophone; Randy Brecker, trumpet (9); Kenny Washington, vocals; James Genus, bass (1); Michael League, bass (10); Karl Perazzo, Latin percussion (8, 10); Scott Kettner, Brazilian percussion (5, 7).

Ordering info: tommyigoe.com

Béla Fleck/ Abigail Washburn

Béla Fleck & Abigail Washburn

ROUNDER 11661-36262

★★★★★

Béla Fleck may be the most innovative banjo America has ever produced, with a style that draws on bluegrass, jazz, classical and world music. Abigail Washburn started out as a traditional clawhammer player, but a sojourn in China led her to incorporate Chinese folk music and scales into her playing and composing. This is their first outing as a duo, recorded at their home studio. The only parameters were limiting themselves to a single banjo on each track—no overdubs. Fleck and Washburn play contrasting styles on the instrumental “Banjo Banjo,” with Washburn’s clawhammer rhythms laying a foundation for Fleck’s jazzy improvisations; his guitar-like lines emphasize the banjo’s mellow mid-range. “I’ve Been Workin’ On The Railroad” gets a new minor-key melody and a melancholy vocal from Washburn that implies the hard work railroad hands had to do. There’s some baroque ornamentation in “For Children: No. 3 Quasi Adagio, No. 10 Allegro Molto—Children’s Dance,” a medley of two Bartók pieces played at a slowly accelerating pace. The duo plays Little Hat Jones’ “Bye Bye Baby Blues” with a ragtime lilt. Fleck’s cello banjo plays simple, syncopated double bass-like lines here to complement Washburn’s sassy singing.

—j. poet



Béla Fleck & Abigail Washburn: Railroad; Ride To You; What’cha Gonna Do; Little Birdie; New South Africa; Pretty Polly; Shotgun Blues; For Children: No. 3 Quasi Adagio, No. 10 Allegro Molto—Children’s Dance; And Am I Born To Die; Banjo Banjo; What Are They Doing In Heaven Today?; Bye Bye Baby Blues. (47:00)

Personnel: Béla Fleck, vocals, flathead banjo, cello banjo, uke banjo, bass banjo, baritone banjo; Abigail Washburn, vocals, open-back banjo, fretless banjo, cello banjo, uke banjo, bass banjo, baritone banjo.

Ordering info: rounder.com

Marshall Allen Presents Sun Ra and His Arkestra

In The Orbit Of Ra

STRUT 109

★★★★½

Now 90, alto saxophonist Marshall Allen has led the Sun Ra Arkestra since its founder left for another sphere 21 years ago. His commitment to the Arkestra includes this two-disc compilation, which provides a historical overview and serves as an ideal primer for someone who has yet to learn about what made their music so crucial across this planet. Just about all of the tracks on *In The Orbit Of Ra* have been previously released, including several that the Arkestra recorded for its own Saturn label in the 1960s (which Evidence reissued on CDs in the 1990s and remain in print). But this collection offers a single source for the band’s days in late-’50s Chicago when it added an electric piano, unique harmonies and distinctive cosmic philosophy in the post-bop era—along with its forward-leaning use of synthesizers and even further experimentation in the 1970s. But two previously unreleased tracks and a newly available extended version of “Island In The Sun” from the late 1960s would also make this set worthy for Sun Ra completists.

—Aaron Cohen



In The Orbit Of Ra: Disc One: Somewhere In Space; The Lady With The Golden Stockings; Somebody Else’s World; Spontaneous Simplicity; Plutonian Nights; Angels And Demons At Play; Island In The Sun (Extended Version); Rocket Number Nine Take Off For Planet Venus; Solar Differentials. (53:18) Disc Two: Astro Black; Have You Heard The Latest News From Neptune; Dance Of The Cosmo Aliens; Trying To Put The Blame On Me; Planet Earth; The Nile; Reflects Motion (Part 1); Reflects Motion (Part 2); Ancient Aethiopia; Interplanetary Music; We Travel The Spaceways. (68:36)

Personnel: Sun Ra, piano, percussion, Wurlitzer electric piano, intergalactic organ, space harp, synthesizer, electro-vibraphone, Farfisa organ, rockschord, gongs, bells. Various other musicians including: Marshall Allen, alto saxophone, flute, oboe, percussion; Phil Cohran, cornet, percussion; John Gilmore, tenor saxophone, percussion; James Spaulding, alto saxophone; Pat Patrick, baritone saxophone; Ronnie Boykins, bass; Robert Barry, drums; June Tyson, vocals; Jim Herndon, percussion.

Ordering info: strut-records.com

Annie Lennox

Nostalgia

BLUE NOTE B002176702

★★★★½

A belter with class, unlike Ethel Merman, Annie Lennox sounds so comfortable singing these songs. The scene here is akin to being taken by the hand by someone you least expected to reintroduce you to songs you’ve always loved. Lennox is onto something here. There is a canned aspect to everything in a way, but isn’t that where pop and jazz have always met? Just listen to her own version of Billie Holiday’s “Strange Fruit” to get an idea of how true feeling, sincerity and respect are all rolled into one as the white, Scottish Lennox sings this harrowing song of malaise and utter hopelessness of being black in America. She reharmonizes some songs in little or big ways, “Strange Fruit” one of them, another Holiday standard “God Bless The Child” even more so. “Mood Indigo,” the set closer, is given a facelift in the spirit of what this classic Ellington blues probably enjoyed when it was first released as a radio instrumental in 1930, and before Irving Mills put a lyric to it. Of course, some songs stand out more than others, like “Strange Fruit” or “September In The Rain,” where Lennox remains herself even as she disrobes before a melody and lyric that convey so much vulnerability.

—John Ephland



Nostalgia: Memphis In June; Georgia On My Mind; I Put A Spell On You; Summertime; I Cover The Waterfront; Strange Fruit; God Bless The Child; You Belong To Me; September In The Rain; I Can Dream, Can’t I?; The Nearness Of You; Mood Indigo. (42:35)

Personnel: Annie Lennox, vocals, pianos, Fender Rhodes, flute, percussion; Mike Stevens, guitars, Hammond organ, accordion, harmonica, vibraphone, keyboards, programming; Ivan Hussey, cello; Neal Wilkinson, drums; Chris Hill, double bass, bass guitar; Nichol Thomson, trombone; Simon Finch, trumpet; Richard Brook, percussion.

Ordering info: bluenote.com

Roseanna Vitro

Clarity: Music Of Clare Fischer

RANDOM ACT RECORDS 1016

★★★★★

Roseanna Vitro’s relaxed readings pay respect to the delightful songs of Clare Fischer, beloved West Coast composer and pianist, whose legacy leaves more intimate moments than imposing monuments. Vitro, who has applied her rich, soothing voice to intricate sambas with passionate commitment (*Tropical Postcards*, 2004) embraces Fischer’s cherished songs and lusciously nuanced harmonies. Except for now-classics with lyrics by Fischer himself—“Morning,” “Pensativa”—Vitro and co-producer Brent Fischer (Clare’s son, cameeing nicely on vibes) ambitiously unearthed old and new lyrics in beautiful repurposings: producer Paul Wickliffe’s lively “O Canto” and Roger Schore’s beatific “Sleep Sweet Child.” Weaver Copeland’s “Seagull,” a fresh salty splash, and Cheryl Pyle’s bopping Ellington tribute provide pretty content for fine singing. Poised violinist Sara Caswell’s elegant solos and subtle voice-weaving offer Vitro a gracious alternative from bossy saxophones. Fischer’s justly famous standards are freshly revisited. “Morning” rises with an uplifting 12/8 vamp, a plangent minor tinge, Mark Soskin’s startling solo and Vitro’s fine scatting; “Pensativa” stretches languidly under Vitro’s lam-bent warmth. A fine surprise is Fischer’s handsome melody and buoyant lyrics on “I Remember Spring” with a sturdy bass solo by regular bandmate Dean Johnson.

—Fred Bouchard



Clarity: Music Of Clare Fischer: Morning; Web Of Love (Inquietação); Love’s Path (Love’s Walk); Seagull (Gaviota); Swingin’ With The Duke (The Duke); Pensativa; Life’s Journey (Pavilion); Sleep My Child (Sleep Sweet Child); Take Your Breath And Sing (O Canto); I Remember Spring. (56:52)

Personnel: Roseanna Vitro, vocals; Mark Soskin, piano; Sara Caswell, violin; Dean Johnson, bass; Tim Horner, drums; Mino Cinelu, percussion; Brent Fischer, vibes (9).

Ordering info: randomactrecords.com



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Pianist-composer-educator Kenny Werner is the artistic director of the Performance Wellness Institute at Berklee College of Music (Photo: Jos Knaepen)

ZEN AND THE ART OF JAZZ: PART 1

Music and Spirituality

BY KENNY WERNER | PHOTO BY MICHAEL WEINTROB

First, an opening statement: There has been a silent question creeping into the consciousness of musicians, and particularly music educators. It is the question that must not be asked, something akin to “he who must not be named.” The question is: More and more young people are flocking to music schools to become professional musicians—more than at any point in history. There are more prodigies and virtuosos than ever before, but fewer places to play. What’s up with that? I have a new theory, perhaps one we can rally around. More and more young people will pour into music universities around the world until one day everyone on earth will look around and suddenly realize that everyone they see is a musician. At that point, we will have fulfilled the ancient prophecy of heaven on earth.



Kenny
Werner



Kenny Werner: "Surrendering to the 'Master Musician Within,' one experiences a power that never dwindles."

When I was 7 years old, I saw a friend's father play, and I was mesmerized. I ran home and told my parents to get me a piano. They rented a Wurlitzer upright with an option to buy. I sat down and plunked out a few notes. After figuring out that I could play the melodies of any tune I had heard on the radio, I went into the kitchen and announced to my mom, "Good news, I won't be needing piano lessons. I just figured out how to play!" I guess I've never really wavered from that

belief. To me, playing music is natural. It should be easy and not overly important if it makes you feel unworthy to play it. Music is for you—God's gift to mankind. God said, "Here, I give you music. Have fun, go forth and *play*." (Hint, music is the only art form with the verb *to play* suggesting it might be only a game).

An enlightened being realizes that every impulse, every fiber of his being, every blade of grass, everything on this earth, including his mis-

takes, are nothing less than a gift from God. God being defined as whatever or whoever one thinks is the Giver of all this. Even if one thinks of all of it as one big accident, he may rejoice at the great boon of such an accident. There's always a reason to rejoice. I certainly have not fully attained this state of mind in my life, but it's pretty much the way I feel when I'm playing music. I always have, but at a few critical times in my development I could have lost this easy wisdom while pursuing my music education. The trick was to become a trained musician without having my dreams trampled on. At those points I met two very important teachers.

The first was Madame Chaloff in Boston, whom I met while attending the Berklee School of Music in 1970. She spoke of the "secret of playing piano," and said that the arms should "defy gravity."

This was my first introduction to effortless-ness. Until then, I had grunted and groaned and made all sorts of weird faces. I later recognized this as tension and nothing more. Madame Chaloff was a real stickler for the perfect drop of the finger. I spent months learning to play one note. I think that once or twice I got it right, and we actually went on to the second finger!

She was such an important influence on my development that I acknowledged her in my book *Effortless Mastery* (Aebersold Jazz), noting: "Madame Chaloff was very one-pointed in her focus. Music was about playing for God. I was grateful for that message. ... She made the connection for me between spirit and music. Through



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her, I was able to merge the two.”

After attending Berklee, I got the opportunity to go to Rio de Janeiro. João Assis Brasil was a concert pianist who was the twin brother of the late saxophonist Victor Assis Brasil, with whom I traveled to Rio to play concerts. I lived there about four months and stayed with Victor’s family, which pretty much allowed me to study with João on a daily basis.

He had taught me valuable lessons about just dropping the fingers and “being kind to myself.” He had achieved success at being a very high-level concert pianist through intense pressure and practice, but it had taken its toll. He had adapted through various methods of self-discovery a new strategy to live and work by. There were two main components. One was a five-finger exercise of just releasing the fingers effortlessly onto the white keys of the piano.

As I wrote in *Effortless Mastery*, “This was similar to Madame Chaloff’s one-finger exercise, but not as elusive. This exercise only needed to be done for five minutes—a short amount of time to focus without pressure. Concentrating in this manner, five minutes became ten, ten became twenty, and so on, until one could practice effortlessly for as long as one wanted. At the time I met him, João had been working this philosophy for about two years, and his personality was rather luminous. ... Using the five-minute concept, he had built up his practice time to eight to ten hours a day. But now it was pressure-free, and he felt a great deal of love and joy while doing it. As I watched him play, I felt like some kind of inferior species—he made it all look so easy!”

The second component was learning to be “kind to himself.” This may sound ridiculously simple, but for me it was a revelation. When the pressure built in me to do better or to play better, or my ego tormented me with my reaction to the success of others, I could practice just being kind to myself.

In *Effortless Mastery*, I described a revelatory moment we shared: “One day we were listening to Horowitz playing—I don’t remember which piece, but João was joyously listening while I was biting my fingernails. I was thinking so much, I could barely hear the music. Thoughts like ‘Oh, that playing is so great ... it’s really painful to hear it! ... This means that I am nothing ... unless ... if I practice eight hours a day for the next twenty years ...’ raced through my mind. My mind often behaved like that. In fact, it behaved that way all the time. Just at that moment, João put his hand on my shoulder, and I jumped. He startled me. When I turned around, he was smiling. He must have been reading my mind, or at least my body language, because he said, ‘Be kind to yourself!’ This statement, uttered at that moment, was revelatory. It showed me the folly of my thoughts. At that moment, I was able to let go, and suddenly *I heard the music*. Horowitz was playing so exquisitely! I felt reborn.”

João told me to practice the five-finger exercise and nothing else for two weeks. I freaked out. I thought I would perish, but I trusted him, so I tried it. Long story short, after six days I escaped and played duo with Victor at a friend’s party. What happened is best quoted from my book: “When we arrived at the party, people asked us to play. I apologized for what was about to happen. I explained that Victor’s crazy brother had me touching the piano for only five minutes a day. I was out of shape and had no idea what would come out. What followed was something I will never forget. We played ‘Autumn Leaves.’ I put my hands on the piano and they played! I mean that they actually played by themselves while I watched. And what they played was blowing my mind and everybody else’s. Not only was it good, but it was so much better than I usually played. The change was astounding. In just six days of meditating, more or less, at the piano, I was totally different. My touch, usually hard and strained, sounded balanced and beautiful, like Bill Evans. I had discovered the secret of his sound. Also, at this stage of my development, I usually needed about thirteen notes to find eight good ones. There was no great rhythm or symmetry to my lines. But this night, I was playing perfect, symmetrical lines in beautiful swinging time.”

This experience was so dramatic, so clear, that this became my philosophy for life. I returned home and quietly practiced this relaxed, self-affirming way at the piano. Over the next 10 years I played from that “space” more and more. I learned to practice difficult things from that space, and before long people were asking me how I was playing from such a free space. Answering the question gradually turned into teaching. Teaching evolved into lecturing, and after a while I was more known for what I was *saying* than what I was *playing*. I wasn’t sure how I felt about that, and truthfully, I’m still not sure. But God has gifted me with a dual talent, being able to play this music on a



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Claude Lakey

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fairly high level but also being able to explain how others might attain it. This comes from developing not just a high level of freedom, but of discipline, to play from a space of complete freedom and to practice from a state of complete focus. This is the essence of "Effortless Mastery."

In the '70s and '80s, I followed the holistic movement of people adapting various spiritual, psychological or physical disciplines to transform their lives from mundane to profound. I needed quite a bit of reprogramming myself. The promise of drugs had decayed into simple dependency, but the "buzz" and expanded awareness of drugs was attainable through other means. Drugs opened a window that closed after the drug wore off, leaving the seeker hungrier than ever for ... what? Consciousness? Awareness? Living in that awareness takes practice and repetition, just like playing music. I thought if humans could uplift their lives, why not musicians? What evolved for me was a career as a musician, teacher and also as an author. It has taken many years to embrace the last two. I have resolved to do that now.

Channeling the flow of music is one of the great possibilities we humans have. In order to allow music to stream through, one must have the inner balance to stay out of the way.

Music history is rich with stories of musicians who were consumed by the fire of the senses, who were so close to the fire of creativity, to the creator, that they couldn't handle the light and heat. The only time the mind or body would behave is when functioning as a pure channel to and from the music of the spheres, the music of the Self, or, if you like, the music of God.

To say "music and spirituality" is actually redundant. Music *is* spirituality. There is no one who plays who does not desire union with his beloved. The world is made up of those who know it and those who don't, and those who seek it in other forms. It can be realized through religion, a wisp of a thought or on the wings of intuition. God takes all comers. He can be as nasty as you make him, or as pure a light as can be conceived of. Surrendering to the "Master Musician Within," as I describe in *Effortless Mastery*, one experiences a power that never dwindles. It takes effort and training to find the currents of consciousness and exercises to attain and maintain that awareness. Once there, the currents will do the rest. When one draws his strength or his ideas from the creative source of all, in his mind or in actual fact (doesn't matter which), his spirit soars on the wings of song and whatever he creates moves from the mundane to the profound, from playing while sneaking peeks at his watch to "Where did the time go?" ("I closed my eyes and when I opened them the concert was over and for some reason people were staring at me and applauding furiously.") Oh yeah, it can happen. But one must learn to connect with this great power, this great wisdom that takes so many shapes. Whatever crazy version of this force you secretly entertain is also the truth, and you should go with it.

Music has no morality in and of itself. It is a higher language than that. For example, in society, to some people, sensuality and spirituality are at odds with each other. In music they are just layers. Sensuality is simply, "Hmmm, this feels real-

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ly good,” and spirituality is, “Thank you (to the Giver) for this feeling.” Surrendering to the flow is sensual and spiritual. Evil in our society features cruel or gruesome acts that most of us cannot abide, but in music, evil is simply another color, and one that turns many of us on. It makes me wonder if we couldn’t resolve all the issues that separate us by moving to a higher language—*music*.

Practice in being a spiritual channel is balanced by practicing precision and technique, not for its own sake but specifically to handle the information that arrives from the Master Musician. What if he wants to speak in 5/4 time? Would you let him stumble over your lack of facility? One acquires all the technique possible as an act of worship. Virtuosity serves at the feet of consciousness. *This is the highest music.*

One of the games of life is learning increasingly complex forms and then experiencing liberation again and again by mastering those forms. That is the principle behind martial arts, video games and many other pursuits. The whole idea is to negotiate the complexities of form while completely surrendering yourself to The Source. The infinite, *the unstuck sound*.

Can you play in 13/4 and feel as primal as if you were a caveman banging a bone on a rock and yelling at the moon? Not all musicians express their spirituality the same way. Some express it through the faithful rendering of a style of music. Some express it quite formally and joyfully

through their religion. And for some, the spiritual path is the search itself.

Louis Armstrong, Charlie Parker, Thelonious Monk, Duke Ellington—they were all aware of the tradition but were even more tuned in to that “still, small voice within,” the god of their creativity, leading them to notes that they yearned for, not necessarily the notes they should play.

Religion has a history of toggling from the mystical to the dogmatic, back and forth. Jazz has moves through those same cycles: freedom, then the re-imposing of form, then the inevitable desire for freedom, and so forth. Jazz always liberates itself sooner or later from being too free or too stuck in convention by individuals who are led by inspiration, intuition, passion or, if need be, addiction.

Be a channel for your personal god of music. If he is pious, you play that. If he is sex-crazed, you play that. The tradition is certainly rich with musicians serving that yearning. The important thing is to train yourself to be able to handle whatever the Master Musician wants to play. Then you have to get out of the way and let him express himself. Ride the music on the wings of true inspiration. Build a highway to that music through your training.

To doubt yourself, that is ego. Ego has an interesting role in this play, thwarting natural flow and supplanting greatness wherever it can find a foothold. It is a character in all the great novels and movies, as is the concept of wandering in the

dark for lack of recognition of one’s true identity until one finds out in some manner that he is a great being. Ego is the wicked witch, the snake offering an apple, the Devil in *Damn Yankees*.

In the next installment of “Zen and the Art of Jazz,” we shall look at how many ways ego conspires to thwart the flow, inhibit the breath and fill us with fear that limits our vision of ourselves. Ego withholds our greatness, hides from us the fact that wisdom lies within. We needn’t invest all our faith in authority figures, whether they be religious or cultural. The great thing about music is that all the power and wisdom lies within our own being.

Imagine observing your body playing music while you peer out from the ecstasy of your being and every sound you hear “is the most beautiful sound you’ve ever heard.” That is the musician’s equivalent of enlightenment. What would that sound like? What would that feel like? It is the promise of being a musician, a channel, one of the great benefits of being human.

DB

Kenny Werner is a world-class pianist, composer, educator and author whose prolific output continues to impact audiences and musicians around the world. His groundbreaking 1996 publication *Effortless Mastery: Liberating the Master Musician Within* is a guide to distill the emotional, spiritual and psychological aspects of an artist’s life. One of the most widely read books on music and improvisation, it is required reading at many universities and conservatories. Werner was recently named Artistic Director of The Performance Wellness Institute at Berklee College of Music. His new CD *Coalition* (Half Note) features Miguel Zenón, Lionel Loueke, Benjamin Koppel and Ferenc Nemeth. Visit Werner online at kennywerner.com.



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CREATING A MORE COMPLETE ARTIST

Jazz musician-educator Ed Partyka finds a wealth of creative work in Europe

BY JAMES HALE

"If you love big bands, like I do," said trombonist, composer, arranger and jazz educator Ed Partyka, "Europe is the place to be in the 21st century."

The 47-year-old Chicago native was speaking via cellphone in transit from his home in Graz, Austria, where he is department chairman of the Jazz Institute at the University of Music and Performing Arts, to Lucerne, Switzerland, where he teaches composition at the University of Applied Sciences and Arts. In addition to his busy academic schedule, Partyka also leads Frankfurt's HR Big Band, has his own jazz orchestra, is in demand as a guest conductor throughout western Europe, and still finds time to play trombone and tuba with Carla Bley and Steve Swallow. He has also been a member of the WDR Big Band (1992–2002) and the Vienna Art Orchestra (2000–'08), and has released eight recordings under his own name and been featured on many others.

A graduate of Northern Illinois University, Partyka originally moved to Germany in 1990, the year the country was reunified, following the fall of the Berlin Wall. He said his relocation was as much a reaction to the music scene in California as anything else.

"I wanted to go somewhere other than Chicago after I finished my bachelor's degree, and I was all set to go to California State University Northridge," he said. "I went out to L.A. and I hated it. I was into Lester Bowie and the AACM, and the L.A. I found was all about the business of music, and I wasn't interested in that at all."

Around the same time, he attended a master

class held by Jiggs Whigham, the American trombonist who had emigrated to West Germany in the '60s.

"He told me about the German scene, so I auditioned for the Conservatory of Music in Cologne and got into the master's program," Partyka said. "It was a difficult time; I didn't speak German at all."

Coincidentally, the move soon put Partyka in close proximity to the musician who has been his biggest influence: Bob Brookmeyer.

In Chicago, Partyka had been entranced by the renowned trombonist and composer since hearing his music in high school.

"He was one of the main reasons I became a musician. I transcribed a lot of his solos, and he was just a major, major influence on me."

When Brookmeyer relocated to the Netherlands in 1991, Partyka got the feeling that destiny was dealing him a good hand. He signed up for a master class and wound up winning a spot in Brookmeyer's GEMA Jazz Composers Workshop in 1994, beginning an association that would last until the elder musician's death in 2011.

"It was an incredible learning experience for me," Partyka said. "Bob had an amazing work ethic, and he wasn't afraid to teach you right from wrong and how to find the important parts of a composition. Bob really passed on the importance of melody. He taught me that melody is the main meal, the rest is just spice, and he taught me the role of the soloist in serving the melody."

These were lessons Partyka began to pass along to younger musicians in 2003, when he

landed his first teaching position at the Johannes Gutenberg University in Mainz, Germany. He moved to the Jazz Institute in Graz in 2006.

"Jazz education in Europe is so different than in North America," he said. "For one thing, because it is state-subsidized and tuition is free, the playing field is really level. Students get into university jazz programs because they have interest and potential, not because they're more able to afford tuition. Because money is no object, we get to choose the best 25 applicants." Another differentiating factor, he noted, is that students in Europe do not get as much advanced music instruction before university. They arrive without the kind of highly developed chops and reading skills, or the playing experience, that U.S. high school graduates generally possess.

He said that despite those differences, the system in Austria follows the model established by Boston's Berklee College of Music, with an emphasis on ear-training, arranging, harmony and music technology, and students come from more than 20 countries.

"Elsewhere in Europe, things are somewhat different. In German schools, they're asking a lot of hard questions about the past, focusing on their own local traditions and moving away from the blues and other American jazz roots. There's a big movement away from standards, and more interest in creating a more complete artist."

For big bands, he said, that means blurring the lines between contemporary popular music and traditional big bands, with their focus on brass and woodwind instruments, and introducing a

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Ed Partyka: "It's important to let students know what's really going on in music right now."



PETER PURGER

lot of electronic elements to augment the standard instrumentation.

In Austria, for whatever reason, the shift away from the traditional big band approach has not been as radical, which fits with Partyka's teaching philosophy.

"In Graz, I focus on two areas," he said. "I teach beginning arranging, where my goal is to give students the tools and methods they need. And I teach arranging and composing at the master's level, covering the entire spectrum of big band music, right up to people like John Hollenbeck. For those in the master's program, I also look at career development and try to share my knowledge."

"Ed has a way of teaching that brings focus to the importance of a solid foundation, yet he encourages authenticity and creativity to flourish," said vocalist Dena DeRose, who is also on the Graz faculty.

"I think it's important to let students know what's really going on in music right now," said Partyka. "That's why I believe it's vital to remain active myself. I like to take students to Frankfurt when I'm working on a project there so they

can see the entire development."

He also uses his classes as an ongoing series of auditions, and currently has four former students in his big band. The amount and quality of work he provides musicians is miles ahead of what recent graduates could find in the United States, he said, pointing to the fact that relatively tiny Switzerland supports three contemporary big bands, all of which actively commission new music.

With that much opportunity, Partyka is finding no shortage of new work. In the past two years, he has written almost 50 arrangements and compositions for the HR Big Band, and conducted projects with guest artists ranging from singer Theo Bleckmann to long-time Rolling Stones pianist Chuck Leavell. His own big band, which has been based in Berlin since 2007, performs an average of 15 times a year and released a new CD, *Hits, Volume One* (Mons Records), in 2014.

Over the life of his band, Partyka has seen his music change significantly. "I used to write angry, sad music," he said. "Everything was in a minor key until I was 40. As I've been getting happier in my life,

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I find myself just trying to tell a story and touch listeners."

"Ed's tunes include a lot of the European influences from his many years there," said DeRose, "yet he can still swing hard like Count Basie or Mingus. Working with him on a project with the HR Big Band in 2013 gave me great insight into his arranging pen. He keeps in mind the lyrics, creates a very hip vibe and makes space for the vocals to sparkle."

Partyka said that these days he finds himself filling the role of arranger more than composer. That is reflected on *Hits, Volume One*, where he features just two of his compositions.

"I feel so grateful to be here right now," he continued, "because there's a wealth of work for creative musicians. It's really artistically pleasing and financially rewarding. I was back in Chicago last year and all I heard from big bands was swing music. A lot of good musicians there are still playing weddings and bar mitzvahs. Where is the paid, creative music outside of New York City?"

Partyka is confident that he has found the answer to that question. **DB**

A Wide Dynamic Scope

Ed Partyka is nothing if not self-aware, and his liner notes to his 19-piece big band's latest recording, *Hits, Volume One* (Mons Records), reflect on his shift away from "dark, depressing music filled with dissonance" to music that is "lighter and slightly more hopeful."

There is reflection in the album's overall concept, too, with Partyka looking back over his band's seven-year history and picking the pieces that have garnered the biggest response from listeners. As he notes, this results in a diverse group of compositions, ranging from "Blue Skies," composed by Irving Berlin in 1926, to "Undiscovered First" by Canadian indie-rockers Leslie Feist. It also serves as a showcase for Partyka's expanding repertoire of vocal arrangements, delivered by 33-year-old German singer Julia Oschewsky.

Oschewsky receives support from Partyka's love of clarinets and bass trombones. The foggy softness of those dark horns provides subtle contrast to her expressive voice, while the occasional lift of lighter brass and crisp drum work by Reinhold Schmölzer add upward propulsion. For the Feist song, Partyka wisely lets Oschewsky's unadorned voice carry the verses, using only a handful of horns for a restrained ostinato. When the full band joins in for the chorus, the effect is powerful.

Nothing ever appears rushed in Partyka's arrangements, creating a feeling of space, as well as accentuating the wide dynamic scope of his band.

That scope is especially evident on his interpretation of a Portuguese fado, "Na Palma Da Mao," where the woodwinds blend sensuously behind Oschewsky's vocals, and on a brawny, noir-ish version of "Chelsea Bridge."

Partyka gives his musicians more space to stretch out on "Hair Of The Dog," which he calls "the 'serious' jazz piece on this recording." Inspired by the third act of Verdi's *Rigoletto*, it features expansive solos by reed player Mark Wyland and pianist Hendrik Soll, and leaves no question of Partyka's place in the lineage of Bob Brookmeyer alongside better-known acolytes like Darcy James Argue and John Hollenbeck. —James Hale



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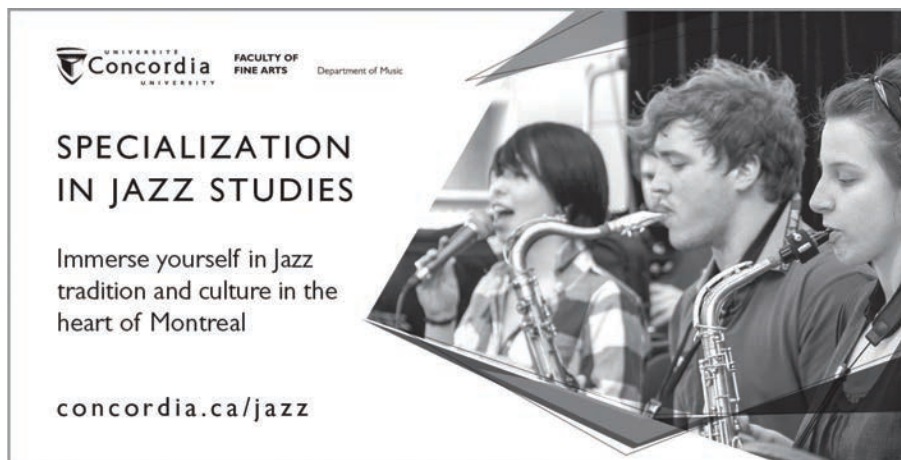
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Making the Vital Connection Between Verbal and Musical Communication

THE VOICE IS THE MOTHER OF ALL MUSIC AND THE mother of all instruments.

We know jazz is a unique form of music. But why? When asked this question, most people will respond that it's the presence of improvisation that sets jazz apart. But improvisation exists in blues, rock, country, folk, African music, Indian music—virtually all the musics of the world. In fact, the presence of improvisation is the rule, rather than the exception. The desire to improvise, to express oneself and say something new and original is a human need that crosses all cultural and national boundaries.

Although improv is in no way unique to jazz, by virtue of both its tradition of transcendent soloists (each with an entirely unique and personal voice) as well as its virtuoso tradition (in evidence from its earliest days), jazz is the *ne plus ultra* for the improviser.

The heart and soul of jazz repertoire consists of the Great American Songbook—tunes composed largely for Broadway shows and movies by such names as Gershwin, Berlin, Hammerstein, Rodgers, Hart, Porter, Arlen, Kern, Mercer, Loesser and others. Each of those songs represents a unique harmonic challenge. But in addition to this inexhaustible source of repertoire, there are so many others—for example, the works of the great jazz composers (Ellington, Monk, Dameron, etc.) as well as the original compositions by legions of musicians not necessarily thought of as composers *per se*. In fact, jazz players have always been in voracious pursuit of new material to serve as a basis for improvisation. When Stan Getz, Charlie Byrd and others first brought the Latin music of South America to the attention of the jazz world, it was viewed as an exciting, cutting-edge development. But nowadays, jazz musicians don't think twice about performing whatever material they connect with—whether it be from India, Africa or the worlds of classical music, pop or rock.

It takes years of hard work and an ever-increasing mastery of our instruments to develop the ability to improvise. Players are lucky to find a teacher early on who stresses not only *what* to play but *how* to play the things one plays: with mastery, good sound, control and legato (more on legato later).

After having dedicated years of time and energy to learning how to improvise, what has one finally attained? Nothing. This may sound harsh, but the goal in playing jazz is not to become an improviser. Improvisation, or the ability to create melody (or rhythm) over harmony, is a craft and as such is something any teacher can instruct anyone to do—in the sense of playing notes that are correct in terms of diatonic harmony—in the first 5 minutes of their first lesson.

The ultimate goal in jazz, the prize we should be keeping our eyes on both as musicians as well as teachers, is developing our unique voices, our own very individual and personal way of playing and expressing ourselves.

Improvisation is not the goal; it's a craft: a means to get to where we want to be, which is to express ourselves in a unique and personal way. That enables us to move from the level of craft to that of artist, an owner of a unique musical voice. The question is, How can we make this leap from improviser to artist?

When we listen to the music of the greatest improvisers in jazz history—iconic players like Louis Armstrong, Coleman Hawkins, Lester Young, Charlie Parker and John Coltrane—we're immediately struck by just how personal their playing is. And from our study of jazz history, we're aware of

Joshua Breakstone



how vastly each one influenced the players who followed them, as well as the direction of jazz itself. But the question is, why? What was it about the playing of each of these giants that made his music so personal and enabled him to communicate on such a deep level?

My belief is that each of these greats possessed an instinctive understanding of the connection between speech (verbal communication) and music (non-verbal communication) and had an innate ability to use the dynamics of speech in his music.

Our understanding of the very human trait of verbal communication is profound. In a split-second, we can identify the voice of a friend with whom we haven't spoken in years. We pick up subtle nuances subconsciously. We hear voices and are learning to grasp their subtleties before we're even born, from the time we're in the womb. Most amazing is that of the billions of persons on the planet, each possesses a unique speaking voice all his own.



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Joshua Breakstone: "The ultimate goal in jazz is developing our unique voices."



How is it possible, then, that among the multitudes of musicians over the course of jazz history, there have been so relatively few who developed their own voice?

The dynamics of the voice are relatively few. But before explaining the dynamics themselves, let's back up and first define what a dynamic is. Simply put, a dynamic is a range: hot and cold (dynamics of temperature), fast and slow (dynamics of speed), loud and soft (dynamics of volume). So, what about the dynamics as they specifically apply to the voice? Yes, there's loud and soft. But if you were to read this piece (or anything else) aloud, you'll notice more.

• **Direction of lines.** Every sentence we speak ends in an inflection. It either rises or falls in pitch, or it can finish in basically the same range as it began. In speaking, we vary and balance the inflection naturally. No one would end *everything* he says with a rise in pitch at the end, or with a descent in pitch. Yet when we apply this concept to music—the direction of the lines we play—we find few instrumentalists have any awareness of or control over the direction of the lines they play, a dynamic that is one of the ways by which each of us defines our own means of communicating verbally.

• **Duration of tones.** When we speak, we use a range of syllable durations, balancing sounds that are held longer with those that are shorter in duration. Each of us does this naturally and in a unique way. To fail to do so results in what most people would refer to as speaking in a monotone or droning on. In music, the parallel would be limiting oneself to eighth notes. A musical monotone of a sort, this approach doesn't sound natural, particularly when compared to an instrumentalist who makes thorough use of the dynamic range of note durations—balancing 16th notes against passages of quarter notes, half notes or whole notes, for example.

• **Use of space.** This is the most philosophical of the dynamics, but also the most basic. If I were to deliver a speech over the course of an hour or so, and then conclude by saying something like, "Thanks for coming today. If there's just one thing

I'd like you to take away from today's speech, it's this: ... (pause)." Before continuing, you will have the attention of everyone in the room. Why? Space creates a vacuum, and when there is space, the listener wants to hear what follows. It's the same way in speech as in music, although in music, the implications of leaving space are even more formidable than with speech, demonstrating mastery, control, confidence and communicating on a deep level. Using space gives rise to another indispensable and very much "verbal" facet of musical self expression: phrasing.

When we consider the voice, the three above-named dynamics are pretty much the sum total of everything we have at our disposal to distinguish our voices. Just three. (There's additionally the timbre, or tone quality, and range of our voices, both of which are very much manifestations of our anatomy—perhaps the equivalent of an instrument such as a guitar where, even though each one sounds like a guitar, every guitar sounds very much different. It's not for nothing that singers refer to their voices as their "instrument.") Translating these dynamics of the voice to one's instrument results in the development of a personal and unique musical voice.

There are other dynamics we can use to enhance our playing and become more expressive players. A few come to mind: We can play lines of a basically diatonic nature and then balance them—contrast them—with material from a blues scale; then, perhaps, resolve that blues-scale material back into the diatonic framework. We can achieve essentially the same end by playing material that falls completely "outside" the diatonic framework and then bring it back "in." We can use tensions and resolve them.

Earlier on, I mentioned the importance of legato. In the most simple sense, *legato* means smooth. But the implications of legato go way beyond that and speak to the connection between our voices and the music we play. Frequently, a new student will play for me and I'll hear whatever it is he's playing come out as disjointed, slightly on the staccato side. But when I have that student sing whatever it is that he's just played, it comes

out smooth, and every note is given its full value. Remember, it all comes from the voice. When we describe a particular musician's playing as being "musical," it means that it sounds like he's singing—and this means legato and a clear connection to the voice. Whenever we're working on a passage that doesn't seem to be coming out exactly right, there's a reliable way of finding out exactly how it should sound: Sing it! Everything we play should sound like we're singing it—that's music.

Let's think about solos. How does the concept of a vocally inspired system of improv inform our appreciation of what constitutes a good solo? Where do we get our ideas? How do we know what to play?

Everybody wants to play lots of "stuff" (vocabulary) and to have command of a wide range of material both harmonically and melodically. To achieve this, transcribing is a good start. But virtually all my students ask me how to play new ideas rather than endlessly repeating what comes easily, what they have under their fingers, licks or ideas they've committed to memory. Again, the answer comes from the voice.

When I was studying at Berklee many years ago, I had a friend who had fallen in love with Clifford Brown's playing. He would say, "Clifford's telling a story," or "Clifford's really saying it" (both speech-related metaphors, by the way). But I couldn't hear any story. What I heard was beautiful, soulful, emotionally charged trumpet playing, but at that point the storytelling was beyond me.

Years later I came to understand that telling a story musically is like telling a story verbally. Think of a book. It's roughly equivalent to a CD. A book is divided into chapters like the individual tracks of a CD, each one with a title. Chapters are constructed of paragraphs, each of which starts with a sentence stating the paragraph's subject. The sentences that follow serve to develop the subject. When the subject is fully developed, it's time for a new paragraph in which the subject sentence of *that* paragraph is again developed.

In improvising, we aspire to do the same. Rather than throwing out vocabulary and "stuff," we play ideas and then develop those ideas until we feel we're ready to move on to the next idea, which we then develop as well. This is what makes strong solos and great playing, where there's a logical unfolding of ideas. This is telling a story musically.

Finally, consider this: Many times it doesn't matter what we play. What's more important is what we *do* with the things we play. Developing ideas is about starting someplace and taking your musical ideas somewhere else. It's about logic, making sense and telling a story. **DB**

Jazz guitarist Joshua Breakstone has recorded 20 CDs to date as a leader with such luminaries as Barry Harris, Tommy Flanagan, Kenny Barron, Pepper Adams, Jack McDuff, Mickey Roker, Al Harewood, Kenny Washington and others. His *Jazz Etudes: Studies for the Beginning Improviser* (Hal Leonard) has become a standard text at colleges and universities throughout the world. Breakstone has conducted workshops and clinics worldwide and teaches privately in his studios in Manhattan and New Jersey. His most recent CD, *With The Wind And The Rain* (Capri), features his group The Cello Quartet. To contact Breakstone, visit joshuabreakstone.com or jzguitar@earthlink.net.

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Creative Writing Concepts for the Modern Large Jazz Ensemble

LIKE MANY YOUNG MUSICIANS TODAY, I was lucky enough to acquire a strong foundation in jazz harmony and arranging early on in my musical development. As an undergraduate at the University of Northern Iowa, my first great mentor, Professor Robert Washut, provided me with all of the info about theory, orchestration and the historical context of jazz writing I would need to be a successful arranger. In addition, he strongly encouraged me to stretch myself, take risks and try to go beyond traditional jazz boundaries—the raw material was necessary to build the ship, but creativity should be the captain.

This prepared me well for experiences studying privately with Bob Brookmeyer and later in the BMI Jazz Composers' Workshop, led by Jim McNeely. The bottom line remained largely the same: how to take risks, be distinctive and expand the ideas of what big band jazz might sound like. So even with substantial skills in jazz harmony

and orchestration, I've always felt that technique is a jumping-off point for one's own creativity, rather than as a goal in and of itself. What follows are some suggestions as to how to go beyond your technique and establish a personal style of writing effective and engaging music for large ensemble.

In my years of hearing a lot of new large-ensemble music in New York City, both as a part of the BMI Jazz Workshop and as curator of the Size Matters large-ensemble series, I've found that the one thing I'd like to hear more from developing composers is a larger sense of form. In our private lessons, Brookmeyer said two things you should decide when beginning a piece were duration and formal structure, before you begin to work on any actual musical material (pitch or even rhythm).

Very early on in the process, I begin to sketch out what the entire piece might look like in terms of sections/events and how long it might be. While this sketch is not set in stone, it forces me to look

at the big picture so I can see how ideas could connect. Having a plan of what events will happen (and when) means it's easier to write *towards* something, rather than just endlessly writing for the sake of more information. It also creates the sense of filling in a section while knowing what that moment will lead to. This may also help you to have a clear ending for the piece. Music that has a logical conclusion rather than something that seemingly sounds like the composer just ran out of ideas is always preferable.

In addition to lack of planning, I believe that one of the culprits in the creation of seemingly aimless charts is music software. Don't get me wrong: I am totally addicted to Finale, and I'd have a much harder time getting through what I want to do as a composer without it these days. Finale, Sibelius and other software programs make it easier to create music, and create it quickly—which can be a good thing—but being able to just slap

Example 1

Example 3

Example 2

cal wallpaper” (see Example 1). “Rhythm Of The Mind” is sort of an exercise in transposing traditional instrumental roles. It begins with the winds playing the groove and the drums playing the melody. Later, the band members chant in rhythm (sans rhythm section at first) while a clarinet solos over the polyrhythmic layerings of the text (see Example 2). The piece ends with the ensemble replacing their chanting rhythms with improvised percussion, again accompanying the clarinet soloist.

Who says that the entire ensemble has to be playing in the same tempo the entire time? Charles Ives was the first composer I heard use the technique of having musicians play multiple tempos simultaneously, particularly when he was trying to depict different bands playing different music passing near each other. And soon afterward, I was exposed to George Russell’s similar idea of “Tempo Individuality” (one player or a group of players playing in their own self-determined tempo apart from the main ensemble). The results really stuck with me, and I find myself frequently using some form of it in order to depict more than one event happening simultaneously or some sort of competing mood or character. It gives a feeling of indeterminacy while still being supported by a strong structure. Plus, it has the added benefit of always sounding a little different every time you perform the piece. One example is during my programmatic work “An Attempt At Serenity,” where an antagonistic contra-alto clarinet is trying to distract from a newly established, serene mood of the solo trumpet and ensemble (see Example 3).

Another possibility in creating a personal approach is using extended techniques such as playing inside the piano or having the guitarist play with a slide. Ask saxophonists if they have any multiphonic textures that could be written into a chart.

And if you’re looking for even further extensions of timbre and instrumental roles, who says you need to use standard instrumentation? If you’re in college, there are other players around who are probably dying to play interesting new original music, and I’ve found this is generally true in the professional world, as well. Or, if you know someone who plays an instrument not normally associated with jazz, write him or her into the fold. I was beginning to feel that the instrumentation of a traditional big band—even with the supremely talented doublers to whom I had regular access—was restricting the orchestral colors I was hearing, so I started writing for my own unique 15-piece ensemble. It helped me come to some musical solutions I wouldn’t have arrived at if I had been writing for a more standard ensemble.

In the end, it’s all about experimentation and taking risks. It’s hard to stumble upon something fresh when you solely rely on the skills and techniques you’ve utilized time and time again. I’ve definitely failed as often as I’ve been satisfied with the results, but I feel I’ve developed as a more individual artist by having stepped out on that ledge on a regular basis. **DB**

some stuff onto the computer and have it played back perfectly doesn’t ensure actual creativity has taken place.

Besides having a clear formal concept before you begin much work on a piece, there are some other things you can try to help you make your music your own and get yourself “out of the box,” so to speak.

The element of surprise is often beneficial in maintaining interest—whether it be a texture, a dramatic mood shift or a simple twist of a melody. For me it’s about constantly striving to balance *predictability* with *inevitability*—the confluence of “I totally saw that coming” and “Wow, I can’t imagine that having happened any other way.”

If you’re writing for a standard big band instrumentation, experiment with different instrumental combinations. The concept of writing across sections is not really novel, as great jazz composers have been doing this for decades. But what can you come up with that is new, or at least unconventional? See if you can match up instruments that might not normally go together (e.g., alto saxophone/trombone/guitar unison). If you have players who double, you’ve obviously got even more possibilities and can get even more color combinations.

Can you place instruments in nontraditional roles? For instance, the *basso ostinato* has been in existence since the early Baroque period. But how about a *tromba ostinato*? In my piece “2nd & 7th,” I have the two trumpets trade off playing a repeated figure, creating a consistent pattern that sort of fades into the background—a term John McNeil refers to as “musi-

JC Sanford is a Brooklyn-based composer-conductor-trombonist. His recent debut CD with the JC Sanford Orchestra, *Views From The Inside* (Whirlwind Recordings), received a 2014 Aaron Copland Fund Recording Grant. Sanford also conducts the twice-Grammy-nominated John Hollenbeck Large Ensemble and the Joel Harrison 19 in addition to leading his own small groups JC4 and Triocracy. For more info, or to follow up on this article, go to jcsanford.com.

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Gary Burton's Vibraphone Solo on 'Remembering Tano'

IN 2013, THE NEW GARY BURTON QUARTET released its second album, *Guided Tour* (Mack Avenue), which showcases the writing and playing talents of all the band members. Vibraphonist Burton, whose recording career stretches back to the '60s, provided a subdued tango, "Remembering Tano," on which he plays a solo that exhibits not only his technique, melodicism and command of rhythm, but also a creative approach involving counterpoint and call-and-response.

But before that, I'd like to point out Burton's familiarity with various rhythmic subdivisions. In this one solo we hear eighth notes, 16th notes and 32nd notes, plus eighth-, 16th- and quarter-note triplets, and even some quintuplets (in bar 43). The manner in which he nonchalantly moves between

these various feels demonstrates his rhythmic sophistication while never giving the sense that he's showing off. He uses it more as a means of creating a push-and-pull through his improvisation.

The main feature of Burton's approach to this song is the manner in which he often answers himself, playing as if he's two people. He sets this up at the outset, with paraphrased ideas in measures 1 and 3, that when resolving on the downbeats are left sustaining while he answers himself in the lower register. The strength of the main lines and the solid way they resolve on the chord changes also create the sense of this being a melody, rather than a solo.

Call-and-response returns in measures 20–22. As before, Burton plays an idea ending

on a chord tone, and while this note is sustaining answers himself in a lower register. In this instance, when the lower part culminates on a chord tone, Burton answers that in the higher register while the lower part is still ringing. This overlap produces more of a sense of two individual voices. Burton likes this effect enough that he reintroduces it at a couple of key points in the progression: bars 35 and 48, where we resolve back to the tonic. In both cases, Burton resolves to the root and responds underneath. The first time his lower line ends on the fifth, making it clear we're not finished yet. The second time, the lower voice resolves to the root as well. Both parts coming to rest on the tonic clues us in that the solo is ending.

There are also places where Burton creates the sense of two parts by using counterpoint. Measures 6–8 are one example, where he plays a low C \flat and D \flat , setting up an interior melody. When he plays the low D anticipating measure 8, even though this is part of the top line, it sounds

like the culmination of the lower melody he had set up. This idea is revisited in an altered manner in bars 25–26. Here Burton plays a descending line leading to the low A \flat on the A \flat m. After jumping up to a high triplet, he descends down to a low G on the E \flat maj7. Though sounding like two licks, there is a connection created between the A \flat resolving down to the G.

We hear another variation of this technique in bars 32–33, where the major third of D \flat and F underneath the D \flat 7 resolves to the same interval a half step down (C and E) on the C7 (though the C anticipates the measure). These counterpoint ideas serve to help define the chords as well as to create more harmonic motion. They are a clever way of filling space while still leaving the feeling of space, since the ear takes it in as two separate lines.

DB

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



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The revolutionary barrel has a rectangular cavity on the inside as opposed to a regular circular cavity—the idea being that a rectangular cavity has three vibrational modes that occur across each geometric axis, whereas a circular cavity has only two vibrational modes (longitudinal and across the bore). When the dimensions of this rectangular cavity are set to match the acoustic impedance of the cylindrical cavity on a regular clarinet barrel, the harmonic complexity is increased and the harmonic spectrum can be more evenly distributed. The possibility that the transverse vibrations in the rectangle will have a harmonic relationship to less incisive clarinet notes is greater, and the result is an increase in clarity and intonation on the throat tones as well as other notes.

It's important to experiment with the way the barrel's horizontal cavity is positioned in relation to your mouthpiece. You can set it so it's horizontally or vertically aligned, or at a 45-degree angle (to the left or right). I found that when I had it in horizontal position, certain notes were richer in tone and prettier-sounding, with more of a spread to the sound. In the vertical position, I had more power than usual, with the tone more focused. Angling it 45 degrees to the left or right (it didn't seem to matter which direction) made it feel like the clarinet responded more dynamically in general and facilitated playing across the break—resulting in smoother transitions and a more even scale. Playing lead alto on some old-school big band arrangements that called for quick switches to clarinet and back turned out to be a much less nerve-wracking—and more rewarding—experience. It didn't take me long to figure out that this barrel really does make a big difference in clarinet sound and response.

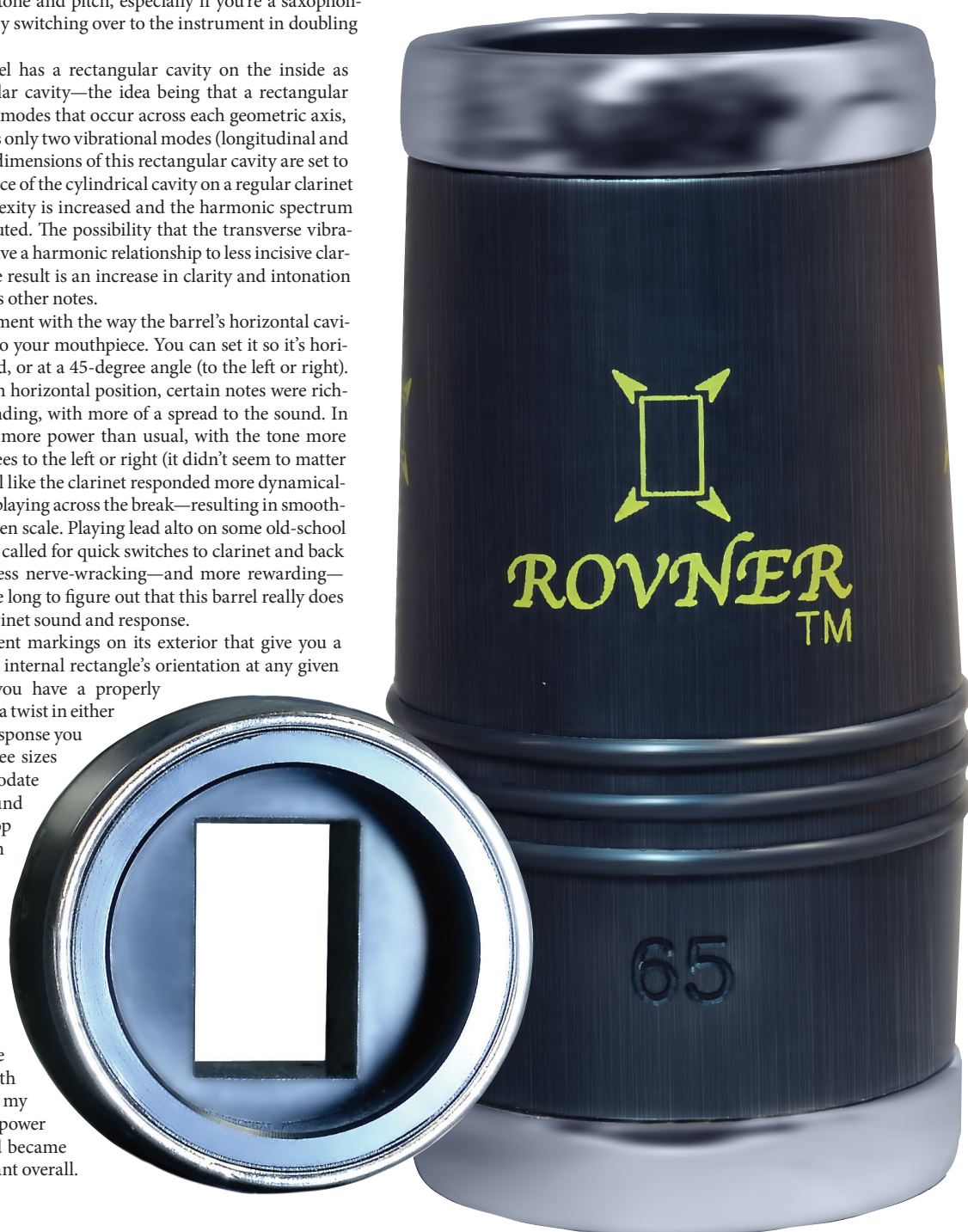
The barrel has convenient markings on its exterior that give you a clear visual indicator of the internal rectangle's orientation at any given moment. So, as long as you have a properly greased cork, you can give it a twist in either direction to fine-tune the response you desire. It is available in three sizes (64, 65 and 66) to accommodate your intonation needs. I found the 64 helped me stay on top of the pitch, especially when playing soft in the low register, where I have a tendency to go a little flat on clarinet.

Rovner recommended I try the Rectangular Bore barrel with the company's relatively new Van Gogh ligature, and it made a noticeable difference. With the Van Gogh in place, my low notes projected with power and the instrument's sound became much bigger and more vibrant overall.

If you're a saxophone player who feels like you could use a little help when it comes to the clarinet, or if you're a clarinetist who's interested in fine-tuning the nuances of your sound, check out the Rectangular Bore barrel from Rovner Products.

—Bruce Gibson

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You might not be aware just how much you care about your ligature until you've tried out the Compass from Claude Lakey.

The Compass ligature is an innovative one-size-fits-all design that you can use on a bunch of different mouthpieces—hard rubber or metal—for tenor, alto and soprano saxophone, and clarinet, too. It's made to work with any brand of mouthpiece it will fit, not just Lakeys. And it has a lifetime warranty.

The Compass has a tightening dial that you can turn in tiny increments to get the perfect amount of pressure and grip on your reed. The dial doesn't screw up-and-down like the ring on an old metal Link; rather, it gradually reels in a thin line of strong steel lace and places uniform pressure on the reed and most of the mouthpiece.

It fit perfectly on my Lakey 5*3 Jazz alto mouthpiece. As I slipped the

Compass over the reed and started to turn the knob, a light clicking sound let me know the grip was tightening all around, and I was impressed when the dial came to rest at the perfect point. I couldn't click any further, and I didn't need to. The reel system is designed by BOA Technology, which you might know as a maker of athletic gear.

With the Compass, your reeds can vibrate more freely because of the way the pressure is distributed, so you get a more vibrant sound with increased volume. My Lakey sizzled even more than usual—which came in handy when I was trying to make my alto sound like the whole Basie orchestra on the shout chorus to “Fly Me To The Moon” during a small-band jobbing gig. I discovered that reed changes were incredibly fast and easy.

The Compass is ultra-flexible. It fit my vintage H. Couf alto mouthpiece, my Vandoren V16 tenor, RPC tenor, Selmer Super Session soprano, Selmer D soprano, clarinet—even my metal Brillhart Level-Air baritone mouthpiece. Foam inserts that adhere to the inside of the ligature wings are included for use with smaller-sized mouthpieces. They formed a perfect fit with the Brillhart and the soprano pieces, and I could tell they would work fine with any other metal piece for that matter. The Compass comes with three different sizes of caps to protect your reed and mouthpiece tip when not in use.

Once you figure out the Compass, it will lead you tonally in the right direction.

—Ed Enright

Ordering info: claudelakey.com

Samson Expedition XP106w

Rechargeable Portable Pro P.A.

Samson Technologies has been involved with wireless audio since 1980. In fact, it was an early wireless microphone system design that sparked the founding of the company. Samson now distributes more than 250 products worldwide, serving both the consumer and professional markets with its Samson and Hartke lines of gear. With a focus on portability and functionality, Samson recently released the Expedition XP106w portable P.A. system. This 100-watt, single-speaker unit features a wireless microphone, four-channel mixer, Bluetooth connectivity and rechargeable battery for plug-free operation.

Samson has 11 models in its Expedition line that range from full 1,000-watt systems down to ultra-portable 25-watt public address units. The 106w is currently the company's most powerful offering in its rechargeable line, upping the ante from 40 watts to 100 and making it the first wireless rechargeable to bridge the gap between consumer and professional applications. Samson has also graduated to a four-channel mixer, adding one additional channel to its previous rechargeable models.

At the heart of Expedition 106w is a single two-way speaker enclosure featuring a 6-inch woofer and 1-inch high-frequency driver powered by a 100-watt Class D amplifier. The cabinet is constructed from molded plastic that's quite sturdy and road-worthy. The unit weighs less than 15 pounds, making it extremely easy to lug around using the built-in handle. The speaker can be set down on any surface on its molded feet or raised up on a stand utilizing its 3/8-inch speaker stand mount. The audio mixer is built right into the speaker cabinet, making it a true all-in-one package.

Not only is the Expedition XP106w incredibly portable, but it is also extremely simple to use. I was up and running seconds after unpacking the box. Once fully charged, the P.A. is capable of operating for up to 20 hours. Included with the XP106w is a Stage XPD1 USB digital wireless microphone system, which includes a handheld dynamic microphone transmitter featuring Samson's Q6 capsule and a wireless receiver built into a USB stick. The mic requires two AA batteries for operation, and after plugging the USB

receiver into its appropriate channel on the unit, you are ready to go. The system operates on the 2.4GHz band and can handle a range of up to 100 feet. The audio quality of the system is very good, with clear sound and a decent amount of gain before distortion. The 106w offers only volume control, with no tone or EQ options, but there is a Music/Speech selector button that offers two options for the tonal response curve.

Alongside the wireless microphone, which operates in channel 3, the XP106w offers three additional audio channels.

Channel 1 features an XLR/quarter-inch combo jack for either a wired microphone or line input such as a guitar. Channel 2 offers a 1/8-inch input for music players such as iPods, plus an additional line-input jack for instruments and keyboards. Channel 4 accepts Bluetooth devices and allows for wireless input from any Bluetooth-enabled device such as laptops, tablets, iPods or smart phones. Connecting is quick and easy by using the Bluetooth-pairing button located on top of the cabinet.

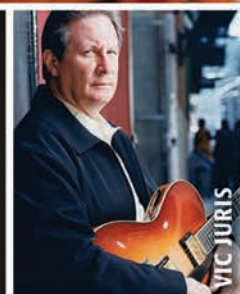
The Samson Expedition XP106w is a highly capable and reliable product for those needing a portable sound-reinforcement solution. Although it may not meet the demands of professional musicians requiring a more sophisticated solution, the unit's impressive array of features and extremely lightweight package make it a strong contender worthy of its \$299.99 street price.

—Keith Baumann

Ordering info: samsontech.com



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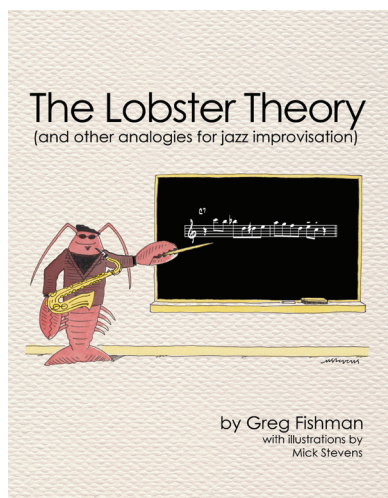
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Fresh Ideas

The Lobster Theory (and other analogies for jazz improvisation), by saxophonist and educator Greg Fishman, presents a new, holistic approach to learning the language of jazz. It's a well-written book that brings essential musical concepts to life through the use of easy-to-grasp analogies as well as cool illustrations by New Yorker magazine cartoonist Mick Stevens. The book teaches complex ideas in a fun, friendly, often humorous way, using everyday experiences from common situations to help students think outside the box and to encourage them to be more creative with their improvisations. Fishman does an excellent job of mixing and combining the five senses to get his points across, and he provides some original tunes that clearly exemplify and articulate the concepts he explains.

More info: gregfishmanjazzstudios.com

Subbing Out

Fender Audio's PS-512 is a full-bodied Class A/B powered subwoofer that pairs with P.A. systems that have a "sub out" feature, such as Fender's Passport series. With its 12-inch Fender special-design ferrite magnet and 3-inch voice coil, the PS-512 will increase a system's bass frequency output and maximize the power sent to the mid- and high-frequency drivers. More info: fender.com



'Klip' On

The iKlip Xpand and iKlip Xpand Mini are the next generation of microphone stand mounts for tablets and smartphones.

Both models feature an expandable, spring-loaded bracket design with rubberized gripping points that can be extended to hold a range of mobile devices to a standard microphone stand pole or horizontal boom. More info: ikmultimedia.com



Double Trouble

VHT's Echo-Verb is a delay and reverb pedal with two completely independent sections. The delay section is completely analog and features a decay control that simulates a vintage tape echo machine's high-frequency roll-off. The separate reverb section offers dwell, tone and mix controls. More info: vhtamp.com



Brush with Greatness

Boso Drumsticks has designed the Natural 5A and Strata 5A fixed-handle wire brushes as a complementary size to the company's 5A model bamboo drumstick. The expansive brushes feature a medium gauge wire with a uniform sound and feel at every tempo and dynamic level. The rubber is recycled material, the ink is soy-based and the sticks are finished with a natural beeswax coating. By layering natural and compressed bamboo on the Strata 5A model, Boso is able to mimic the density of hickory and match the weight drummers are accustomed to. More info: bosodrumsticks.com





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Vijay Iyer (left) and Jason Moran at a master class at New England Conservatory on Sept. 30

Moran, Iyer Deliver NEC Master Class

TWO OF THE MORE ACCLAIMED PIANISTS

in jazz teamed up for an enlightening and engaging master class for an audience of 100 young musicians and fans at Boston's New England Conservatory (NEC) on Sept. 30. Jason Moran (a faculty member at NEC) and Vijay Iyer (a faculty member at Harvard University) offered a chaty yet charged session that began and ended with improvised duos on paired Steinway grand pianos. They held a congenial discussion, invited up one pianist and later a duo for critique, and answered questions from the audience.

Each musician offered nuggets of wisdom based on his experiences. Iyer recalled, "My lesson from Roscoe Mitchell was to not necessarily riff on what you've just played—a principle of avoidance. Otherwise, you build too much on a simple idea. My trio tries to build something, always improvising—every note offers a choice."

"Any one of us can 'keep the beat,'" Moran said. "You hack in the forest until you make a space and can see your surroundings. Don't always play *all* the time; it's OK to leave space; the world will not end. Some get scared they'll be ridiculed or shamed for an idea."

Regarding source material for jazz musicians, Moran relayed an anecdote about John Coltrane: "Trane took 'My Favorite Things' right off a Billboard No. 1 hit, *The Sound Of Music*. I try to find material my trio could *never* sound like—and play that. We grooved for hours on 'Human Nature' and split open the last four bars of the chorus. You've got to find the marrow of a tune and dig it out. Step up to those challenges."

When Shane Simpson, the solo pianist, played "Just You, Just Me" in Monk's angular stride style, both masters gently demanded more. Iyer observed, "That's satisfying stride, fully embodying Monk's building blocks, but how do you spin it into your own vocabulary? Push it toward your own language."

Moran suggested, "Show me the top and bottom in your arc of development. Take a hand away; let your intuition trail off in a new direction. More propulsion, less activity. Make it *evolve*. Try again."

Simpson's second and third efforts proved lighter, with lilting arpeggios, Willie "The Lion" Smith shakes and hammered block chords. The masters renewed their affirmative message. Iyer advised, "Dig as deep as you can into yourself, and push your limits beyond where you think you can go. Your own touch and hands are special."

Moran's comment was more humorous: "There's no baton waving over your head. Alter the form! Change directions! Monk's not paying you to lug his bag around. Don't just play the package: Shape it, carve it, bake it, sand it."

The duo of Chris McCarthy and Isaac Wilson also tackled Monk, but their "We See" came clothed in rumbles, hanging sustains, strong ostinati and fast unison octaves. When Iyer asked them how they relate, Wilson said they were faced with constantly thinking about binary choices. Iyer responded, "Our nervous, fidgety hands can get in the way: They carry us in the moment and can take over. That felt a little relentless; pull one hand away for release."

Moran added, "Set up a pulse and let it run itself. One person can do a lot. Try not to solo this time." The second duo fluttered, tentative and lean, an undirected, spacey, dirge-like fantasia.

"I liked that—a lot!" Moran said. "You showed the mirror to each other: same register, ostinato notes. That opens a crevasse—go digging! It may feel alien, but I promise, the more you do it the better it will be."

Moran also offered some long-range encouragement: "Someday after a concert, somebody will say to you, 'I don't listen to jazz, and I didn't want to come today, but after hearing this music, I'll be back for more.'"

—Fred Bouchard

John Zorn (left) receives his honorary degree from NEC President Tony Woodcock.



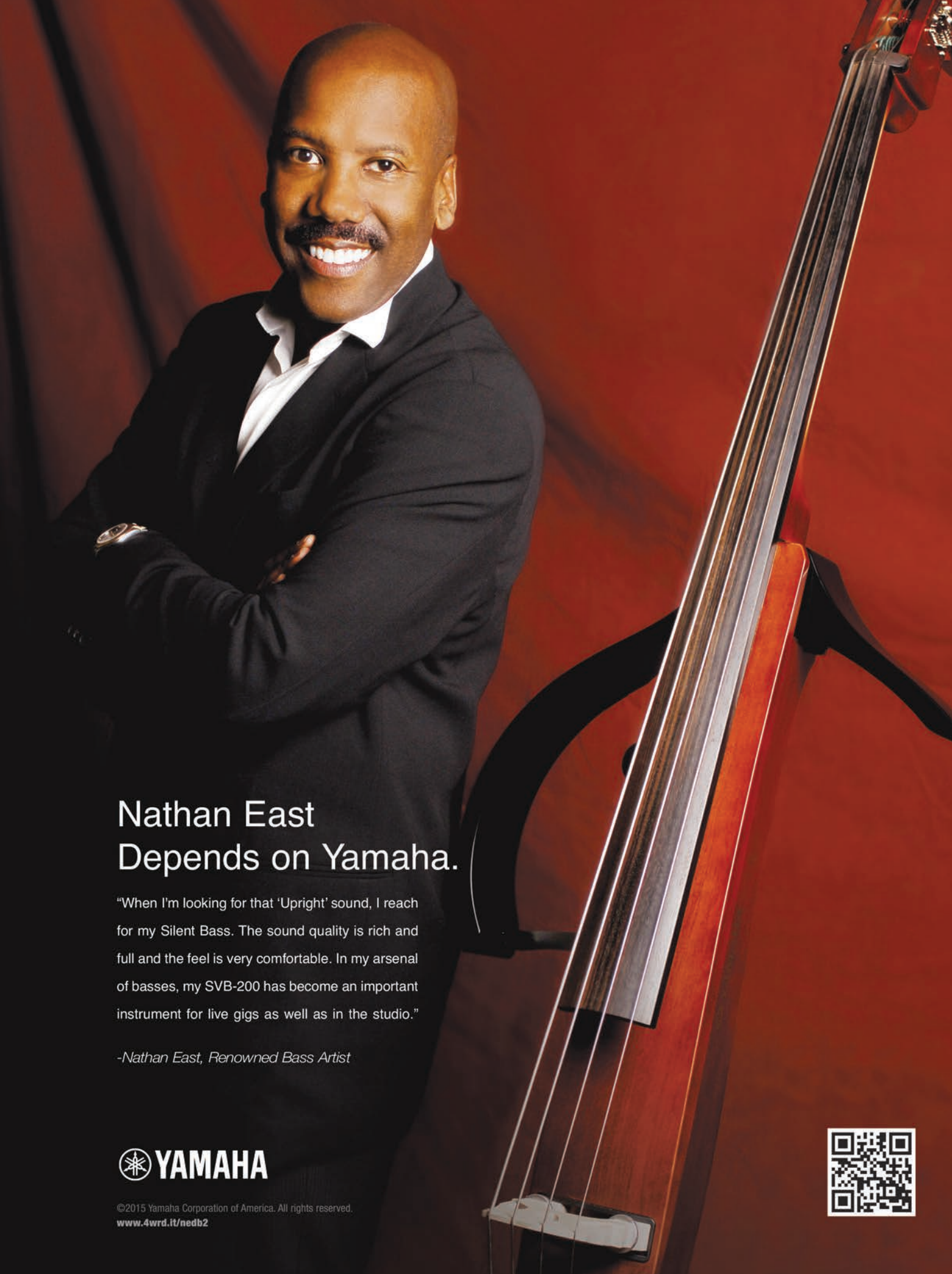
Dr. Zorn : On Nov. 4, New England Conservatory's Jordan Hall presented *The Music of John Zorn: A 35-Year Retrospective*, featuring repertoire from the saxophonist-composer's myriad projects spanning 35 years. During the concert—which included performances by NEC faculty, students and ensembles—Zorn was presented with an honorary Doctor of Music degree. The event was sponsored by NEC's Contemporary Improvisation Department and included a pre-show question-and-answer session with Zorn.

necmusic.edu

Check It Out: *The Checkout—Live at Berklee*, a series of live multimedia broadcasts on WBGO—88.3 FM (Newark, New Jersey) and wbgo.org, continues Feb. 4 with vocalist and bassist Katie Thiroux, followed on April 1 by the high-energy cumbia sound of the Gregorio Uribe Big Band. Both are Berklee College of Music alumni currently based in New York. *Checkout* performances take place in the Red Room at Cafe 939 in Boston. Selected shows from the series will be available online for on-demand listening at nprmusic.org, and they will also be archived at checkoutjazz.org.

Full-Timer: Pianist, composer and bandleader Arturo O'Farrill has joined the Brooklyn College Conservatory of Music as a full-time faculty member and director of jazz ensembles, a position he has held on an interim basis for the past two years. A founder of the nonprofit Afro Latin Jazz Alliance, O'Farrill was educated at the Manhattan School of Music, the Aaron Copland School of Music at Queens College and the Conservatory of Music of Brooklyn College. O'Farrill has taught at several institutions of higher education, including The Juilliard School, Queensborough Community College, University of Massachusetts at Amherst, The New School, SUNY-Purchase and the Manhattan School of Music. afrolatinjazz.org

College Fund: The Idaho Jazz Society (IJS) is seeking donations to an endowment fund to help provide college scholarships. Initial funding came from the Dayle Fowler estate. The IJS is "dedicated to the promotion, appreciation and preservation of jazz." idahojazzsociety.org

A portrait of Nathan East, a smiling man with a mustache, wearing a dark suit and white shirt. He is standing next to a large, upright Yamaha Silent Bass. The background is a warm, reddish-brown color with some geometric lines.

Nathan East Depends on Yamaha.

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Sonny Rollins

Sonny Rollins took his first Blindfold Test in 1957, and his most recent one was conducted at his home in 2014. “Music is like Mother Nature,” the Grand Jedi Master saxophonist said. “You can’t fool it. Either you have a gift or you don’t.” Rollins’ own abundant gifts are on display throughout *Road Shows, Volume 3* (Doxy/Okeh), his third self-produced album of location recordings. (See “Best Albums of 2014” on page 43.)

Joe Lovano Us Five

“Ko Ko” (*Bird Songs*, Blue Note, 2011) Lovano, tenor saxophone; James Weidman, piano; Esperanza Spalding, bass; Francisco Mela, Otis Brown III, drums.

That’s “Ko Ko.” I liked it a lot. It was the song, yet it wasn’t the song. He didn’t try to play it with the 4/4 pulse of the original “Ko Ko.” He was able to extemporize and do a lot of things. Of course, the drummer had a lot to do with what was happening, because he sort of played straight all the way through. He must have had his Wheaties that morning. [DB: There were two drummers.] Aha! When I first heard “Ko Ko,” I had bought a record by my favorite, Don Byas—“How High the Moon.” The other side was “Ko Ko” by Charlie Parker, who I wasn’t familiar with, because I was listening to tenor players. The more I heard it, the more I liked it. What they did was very much in the spirit of “Ko Ko,” and yet different. I don’t know the player or the drummers, but top musicianship and top concept.

Jimmy Heath

“Forever Sonny” (*Little Man, Big Band*, Verve, 1992) Heath, tenor saxophone solo; John Eckert, trumpet solo; Jerome Richardson, Ted Nash, Bill Easley, Loren Schoenberg, Danny Bank, reeds; Eckert, Lew Soloff, Bob Millikan, Virgil Jones, trumpets; John Mosca, Eddie Bert, Benny Powell, Jack Jeffers, trombones; Roland Hanna, piano; Tony Purrrone, guitar; Ben Brown, bass; Lewis Nash, drums; Steve Kroon, percussion.

The saxophone player was out front and forceful, and it had a lively beat; the rhythm section and the percussion really moved it along. It’s a creative arrangement. The tenor saxophone playing has a traditional quality, but I can’t identify him exactly. Maybe Jimmy Heath. [after] I wonder who the title is about. How about Sonny Stitt? I knew Jimmy way back, when they used to call him “Little Bird,” when he was playing alto more than tenor.

Branford Marsalis

“Laughin’ & Talkin’ (With Higg)” (*Romare Bearden Revealed*, Marsalis Music, 2003) Branford Marsalis, tenor saxophone; Wynton Marsalis, trumpet; Eric Revis, bass; Jeff “Tain” Watts, drums.

Very interesting record. I don’t know the players, but they are very musical. That type of playing was very prominent in the ’60s. The saxophone player was inventive and did very interesting things. He got some nice passages together with the trumpet player, and showed that they were simpatico. It’s obvious that they’ve been playing together—they’re a team of some duration. The bassist was very good. When he played by himself, he played a few interesting lines. They’re all top-notch. [after] So they are a team! The trumpeter reminded me of Don Cherry, then I realized that he was playing a more traditional style. But it was more avant-garde than I’d associate with Wynton.

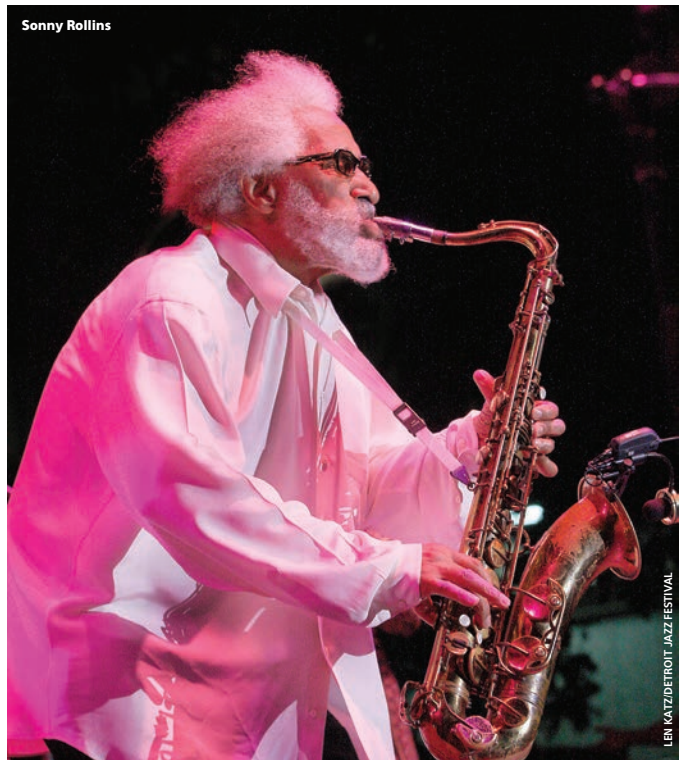
Roscoe Mitchell

“The 4:50 Express” (*Sound Songs*, Delmark, 1994) Mitchell, tenor saxophone.

I heard something that reminded me of Eric Dolphy. But if it’s not Eric Dolphy, I don’t know who it is. I really liked what this guy was doing. It was interesting, and he was able to sustain the narrative, so to speak. He set it up beautifully and had a good set of lungs. I have to give this high, high stars. He was able to do what was inside of him; that was his expression. I’d imagine that he sounds like that all the time, whether it’s solo or not.

Chris Potter’s Underground

“Small Wonder” (*Ultrahang*, ArtistShare, 2009) Potter, tenor saxophone; Adam Rogers, electric guitar; Craig Taborn, Fender Rhodes; Nate Smith, drums.



I like the arrangement and the broken rhythms. People seem to be playing more broken rhythms today than straightahead rhythms, which I’m all in favor of. I like that they were trying to do some extemporization against something besides a 1-2-3-4, 1-2-3-4. The piece was great. The saxophone was great. The guitar player was also great—he played in concert with what the composition called for.

Michael Brecker

“Loose Threads” (*Pilgrimage*, Heads Up, 2007) Brecker, tenor saxophone; Pat Metheny, guitar; Herbie Hancock, piano; John Patitucci, bass; Jack DeJohnette, drums.

Great playing by everybody. Listening to this reminded me that I personally prefer to play without a piano because, to me, piano music is different than other music. The pianist was great, but a piano has so many more tonalities, chord structures, volume ... everything more than a horn has. [DB: Are you saying that the pianist got in the tenor player’s way, or that the efflorescence of the pianist’s solo took away the spotlight from the tenor player?] I’m saying the latter. I came up in an era when it was a soloist and then the band accompanying them. This piece would be the exact opposite from that. Other than that, everyone was superb.

Ivo Perelman

“Singing The Blues” (*The Hour Of The Star*, Leo, 2011) Perelman, tenor saxophone; Matthew Shipp, piano; Joe Morris, bass; Gerald Cleaver, drums.

The saxophone is such a versatile instrument that it can almost re-create any sound, and this is an excellent demonstration of its bountiful sounds. I have no idea who this is, but he’s very good, and he’s got his own thing. High marks. The arc of the piece was such that I didn’t realize it was as long as it was, and that it was one horn playing all the way through.

James Carter

“Gloria” (*Gardenias For Lady Day*, Columbia, 2003) Carter, tenor saxophone; John Hicks, piano; Peter Washington, bass; Victor Lewis, drums; string camarata.

Wonderful. I thought I heard Duke Ellington’s “Don’t You Know I Care,” but it went somewhere else. This person played inflections that I haven’t heard anyone else play. I don’t know the player, but he’s superb. As I said, everybody has something different to express through the saxophone. **DB**

The “Blindfold Test” is a listening test that challenges the featured artist to discuss and identify the music and musicians who performed on selected recordings. The artist is then asked to rate each tune using a 5-star system. No information is given to the artist prior to the test.



Terell Stafford

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