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APRIL 2015

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24 Kenny Barron *Perfect Grace*

BY AARON COHEN

The soft-spoken pianist and NEA Jazz Master, a prolific recording artist with a heavy touring schedule, maintains the perspective that musicians should always be humble.



Cover photo and above image of Kenny Barron shot by Jimmy and Dena Katz at Dizzy's Club Coca-Cola in New York City's Jazz at Lincoln Center.

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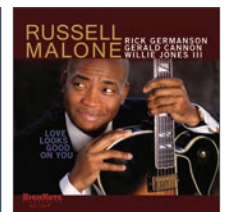
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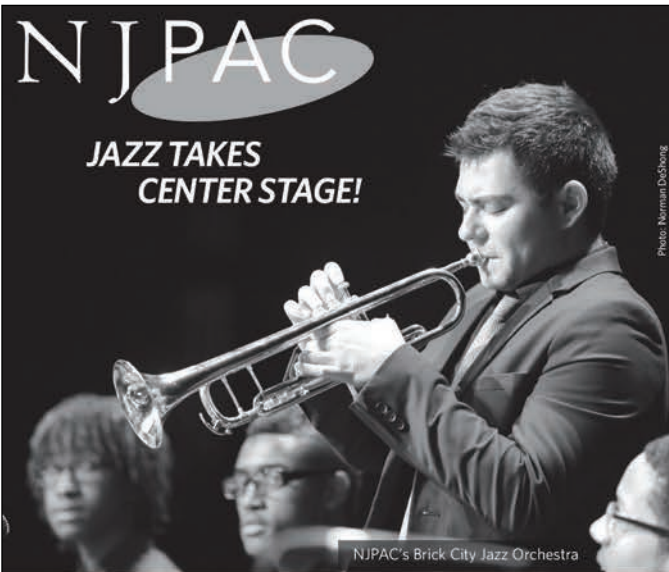


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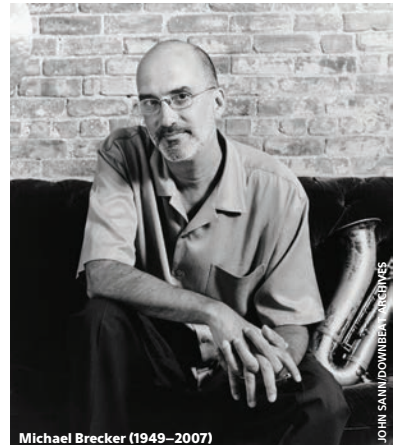
Lasting Impact

FEW THINGS IN LIFE ARE MORE IMPORTANT THAN MUSIC. For many people, those few things include family, health and the idea of helping others.

In this issue, we pay tribute to the great saxophonist Michael Brecker, who died far too young in 2007 at the age of 57. He had succumbed to leukemia, brought on by myelodysplastic syndrome (MDS), a cancer of the bone marrow. Beginning on page 30, you'll find our special Brecker celebration, including writer Bill Milkowski's recap of a tribute concert and fundraiser, as well as an interview with the jazz titan's wife, Susan Brecker.

The jazz world reveres Michael not only because he was an influential, prolific, unparalleled musician, but also because he was a humble man. In the years since his death, our thoughts of this great musician have become intertwined with the notion of helping other people who are enduring a medical crisis.

That's because Susan has embraced the mission of raising awareness about MDS and raising funding to further groundbreaking medical research. In 2010, she co-produced the documentary film *More To Live For*, which followed the lives of three leukemia patients facing life and death in search of bone marrow transplants, including Michael. Each time this film (directed by Noah Hutton) is screened at a festival, audience members are encouraged to learn more about MDS and get tested for the bone marrow registry.



Michael Brecker (1949–2007)

JOHN SANNI/DOWNBEAT.COM/RYNES

In conjunction with a screening of the film at the 2011 Monterey Jazz Festival, organizers convened a panel to discuss Michael's life and music.

During that panel, saxophonist Bob Mintzer recalled meeting Michael: "In 1974, I was in a loft on 20th Street in New York City. There was a lot of playing going on back then and frequently, if I couldn't find a whole band, I'd end up in some drummer's loft as a saxophonist, with maybe a trumpeter. Mike was playing in a band called White Elephant with Mike Mainieri and a bunch of other guys. He had just flown in from somewhere, and he just wanted to play and hang out. So, he came by this loft and he took out his horn and started playing. I had heard his playing on a *Dreams* record a few years earlier, but I had never heard him up close like that before. My jaw dropped. I was definitely a deer in the headlights. I had never heard saxophone playing quite like that, ever, in my life. We became friends and started to hang out and talk music and play together. He was one of the most dedicated, hard-working musicians I ever met. He was also one of the most talented."

Regarding Michael's legacy as a musician, Mintzer added, "What Mike was able to do as well or better than anybody else was to summarize the history of jazz saxophone playing and really know that history very, very well. That's true of any of the great innovators in jazz history. He knew the history of the music and was then able to build on that. He was somebody who was really a thinker and a practitioner and really liked to figure things out. And find little systems and ways to navigate music. He came up with a lot of new music as a result."

Drummer Peter Erskine, who was also on the panel, said, "Any solo I heard Michael play was deserving of a Grammy award. He's one of the few musicians that I have ever encountered—certainly who I have ever played with—who maintained that level of consistency. He demanded it of himself. As a consequence, it made everybody around him play better. Michael was just one of the greatest perfectionists and perfect musicians who I ever got to hear."

As we tip our hat to Brecker the musician, we also think about how we could help others avoid the medical difficulties he faced.

For information on how to be tested and be a bone marrow donor, or to contribute funds to the cause, visit the website nearnessofyouconcert.org or the site lovehopestrength.org. To learn more about donor programs and the documentary *More To Live For*, visit moretoliveforfilm.com.

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Applauding Delfeayo

As someone who played jazz trombone while attending the University of Toronto Faculty of Music in the fall of 1967, it was so nice to read about Delfeayo Marsalis doing so well and keeping the trombone in the public's view ("Humanity & Humility," February). Having grown up with the likes of J.J. Johnson, it feels good knowing the torch is in good hands and that jazz trombone is not taking a backseat.

As a teenager back in the early 1960s, I borrowed an ID to go listen to Vic Dickenson blow Dixieland with the Saints & Sinners band at the Colonial Tavern in Toronto, and he was always cool. My greatest thrill was having Phil Wilson (who was giving lectures in Toronto at a few universities) drive a friend's car out to where I live to give me a lesson.

TERENCE WRIGHT
BELLEVILLE, ONTARIO
CANADA

More Applause

That was a great article on Delfeayo Marsalis by writer Jennifer Odell in your February issue ("Humanity & Humility"). Delfeayo's album *The Last Southern Gentlemen* is truly inspired, as are his liner notes. As a musician, I related to his statement about jazz's functionality and audience appeal taking "the proverbial backseat to academic hubris." The humanity referenced in the article is displayed by his whole family. I've had the pleasure of meeting Ellis, Branford, Jason and Delfeayo, and each time felt I was in the presence of true Southern gentlemen.

DON CRESWELL
DCRESWELL@SMARTORG.COM

Jazz in Connecticut

The DownBeat International Jazz Venue Guide (February) did not include any Connecticut venues. *What!?!?* I realize Connecticut is a small state wedged in between Boston and New York, but those of us who live here have numerous options for live music. Firehouse 12 in New Haven presents a 14-week series in the spring and fall. Real Art Ways in Hartford hosts the monthly Improvisations series curated by Stephen Haynes and Joe Morris, while bassist Carl Testa curates the Uncertainty Music series in New Haven. The Side Door jazz club at the Old Lyme Inn in Old Lyme recently has presented weekday and weekend concerts with many of the best musicians of all ages. That's just four places to hear jazz in Connecticut—there are at least a dozen more. Give the Nutmeg State its due.

RICHARD KAMINS
RICHARD.B.KAMINS@SNET.NET

Jazz in Shanghai

In the International Jazz Venue Guide (February), I was perplexed that you would include Shanghai's modest and blues-oriented Cotton



Club, but would omit the sprawling JZ Club, located three blocks down the street. It is a venue that features name-brand jazz for audiences of 200 or more, seven nights a week. Nothing in China is in that same ballpark.

TOM SMITH
SURF CITY, NORTH CAROLINA

Jazz in Queensland

There is certainly no criticism implied here regarding the International Jazz Venue Guide in your February issue, but here's another jazz venue for Down Under. Your readers should be aware that there's a *great* little venue here in Cairns [Queensland, Australia]. Bernie's Jazz & Piano Cafe is known as "Cairns' only dedicated jazz club and piano bar" with live music six nights a week.

JOHN R. VICKARY
ATTITUDEJV@BIGPOND.COM

Remembering NHOP

On April 19, 2015, it will be 10 years since we lost the great Danish bassist Niels-Henning Orsted Pedersen. Let's see a tribute to this world-class bassist, who was one of the most highly sought-after sidemen in jazz, both for musicians traveling through Europe and recording artists such as Oscar Peterson, Joe Pass and Kenny Drew (with whom he recorded more than 50 albums). NHOP won the Acoustic Bass category in the 1981 DownBeat Critics Poll. How appropriate then that this great magazine should honor his memory!

JEFF BAILEY
JMB23233@YAHOO.COM

Correction

- In the February issue, the review of *What I Heard* by the Oliver Lake Organ Quartet should have been attributed to journalist Michael Jackson.

DOWNBEAT REGRETS THE ERROR.



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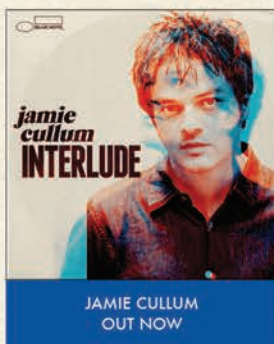
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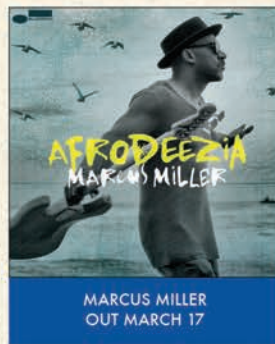
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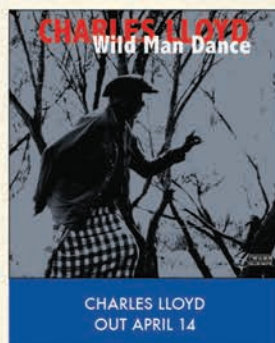
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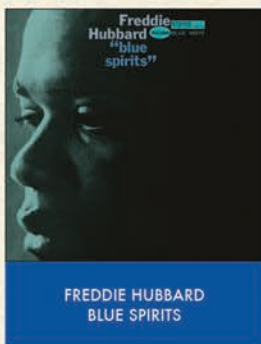


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SOUND PRINTS
OUT APRIL 7

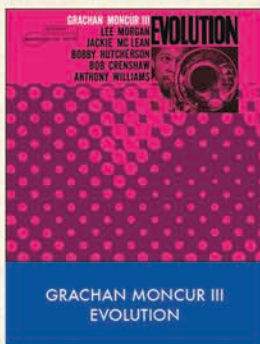


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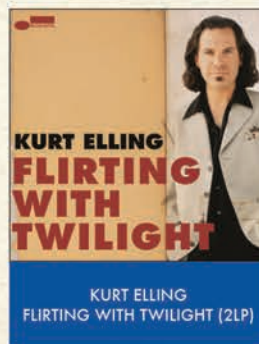
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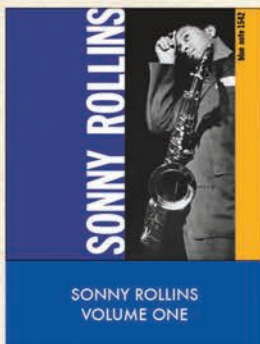
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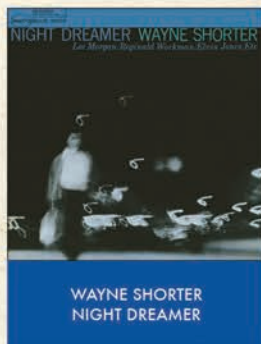
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The

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Beat

Murray Heats Up Winter Jazzfest

The 11th annual New York City Winter Jazzfest in Greenwich Village resolved some of the problems that had plagued past editions—most notably, overcrowding. The event has become extremely popular with open-eared music lovers in and around the New York University campus, as well as the hordes of European jazz fans for whom the festival has become a must-see destination. In recent years, lines wrapping around the block to get into cramped venues were a common sight.

To alleviate some of the pressure of overflow crowds, festival organizers opened up a few new venues for this year's edition, including the 391-seat Minetta Lane Theatre. While part of the attraction of the Winter Jazzfest has been the bar-hopping phenomenon, where a single ticket (in this case, a festival bracelet) offers admission to 10 different venues, the smartest way to go this year was to grab a spot at a favored venue and camp out there for the evening. This approach paid off nicely for the Jan. 9 marathon at the Minetta, which featured performances by David Murray, Trio 3 (Oliver Lake, Reggie Workman and Andrew Cyrille) with special guest Vijay Iyer, Marc Ribot & The Young Philadelphians with Strings and a retrospective of the music of John Lurie performed by past members of The Lounge Lizards.

Murray, who lives in Portugal, opened the proceedings at the Minetta with a clarinet summit featuring Hamiet Bluiett, Don Byron and David Krakauer. The set kicked off with a Butch Morris composition, "Obe." Murray soloed first on bass clarinet over a loosely swinging pulse provided by drummer Nasheet Waits and bassist Jaribu Shahid; the reedist's signature slap-tonguing, feats of circular breathing and audacious overblowing in the altissimo range were very much in effect in his extended solo.

Krakauer, an acknowledged virtuoso in classical and klezmer circles, took it all the way out on his solo, incorporating a series of expressive smears, note-bending and trills along the way. Bluiett hung in the lower register on his solo, playing it more old-school in a Jimmy Hamilton fashion while Byron played with fiery abandon and remarkable fluidity (at one point quoting from Duke Ellington's "Rockin' In Rhythm") while building to a shrieking crescendo.

Murray's "The Long Walk To Freedom" (which he dedicated to poet/writer Amiri Baraka, who had passed away exactly one year earlier) was a funeral dirge interspersed with bluesy gestures and conversational interplay by all four clarinetists. Murray's keening blasts on bass clarinet would occasionally break the solemnity of this soulful hymn-like number. Bluiett turned in a profoundly blue statement in his solo here, while Byron took a more quicksilver approach on this melancholy ode.

Morris' "Spoonin'" had Byron switching to bass clarinet and Krakauer

David Murray at New York City's Minetta Lane Theatre on Jan. 9.



channeling his inner Dave Tarras on some eccentric trills and klezmer-flavored exclamations on the clarinet. At one point during this whirlwind number, Waits and Shahid dropped out and contrapuntal weaving ensued by the four clarinetists, recalling Murray's wonderful a cappella horn work with the World Saxophone Quartet during the 1980s. They concluded their exhilarating set with the premiere of a new Murray composition, "Cycles And Seasons," which was brimming with dissonance and swing, in the finest tradition of Eric Dolphy and Thelonious Monk.

Murray returned with tenor sax in hand for a trio set featuring the telepathic rhythm tandem of pianist Geri Allen and drummer Terri Lyne Carrington. In this trio setting, Murray exhibited his runaway-freight-train approach to tenor, offering daring excursions into the highest register of the horn, though always being mindful of the melody, in the tradition of his heroes Lester Young, Coleman Hawkins and Ben Webster.

Carrington's forceful, Elvin Jones-ish playing on the kit lit a fire under the tenor titan, while Allen's tasteful underscoring, marked by a kind of harmonic impressionism, along with her cascading solos, further elevated the proceedings.

One piece, which was dedicated to the late New Orleans drummer and Ornette Coleman associate Ed Blackwell, found Murray playing a sly melodic motif over a funky groove. On this tune and others during the course of the set, Murray walked off the stage and let the magic between Allen and Carrington ensue. And when he would return to the fray, Murray would invariably launch into the intense, Albert Ayler-esque fusillades that have been his calling card for nearly 40 years.

—Bill Milkowski

Riffs >

Anat Cohen



Brazil & Beyond: Anat Cohen will release her seventh album as a leader, *Luminosa* (Anzic Records), on March 3. In addition to original material, the CD includes the clarinetist/saxophonist's interpretations of Brazilian classics as well as a Flying Lotus tune. Members from Cohen's touring quartet—keyboardist Jason Lindner, bassist Joe Martin and drummer Daniel Freedman—appear on the album, as do guest guitarists Romero Lubambo and Gilad Hekselman, percussionist Gilmar Gomes and the Brazilian players in her new band, Choro Aventuroso. Cohen will celebrate the release during a five-night run at New York's Jazz Standard on March 4–8. **More info:** anatchohen.com

Essential Lady Day: On March 31, Columbia/Legacy will release *Billie Holiday: The Centennial Collection*—a newly curated single-disc anthology with 20 tracks recorded from 1935–'45, at the height of the jazz and blues singer's career. Holiday was born on April 7, 1915.

More info: billieholiday.com

Nevilles Forever: On May 2, the Neville Brothers will be honored at an all-star farewell concert at New Orleans' Saenger Theatre, with performances by Widespread Panic, Trombone Shorty, Galactic, Allen Toussaint, Irma Thomas, Terence Blanchard, John Boutté, Anders Osborne, Ivan Neville, Ian Neville, the Neville Brothers themselves (Aaron, Art, Charles and Cyril) and others. Don Was will serve as music director for the event, which is being billed as "Nevilles Forever: A Celebration of the Neville Brothers and Their Music." The concert will be filmed and recorded for multi-platform distribution. **More info:** nevilleforever.com

Wild Times: Saxophonist/composer Charles Lloyd has signed with Blue Note Records and will release his first album for the label in 30 years with the April 14 arrival of *Wild Man Dance*, a live recording of a long-form suite commissioned by the Jazztopad Festival in Wrocław, Poland. Lloyd will present the North American premiere of the "Wild Man Dance Suite" on April 18 at the Metropolitan Museum Temple of Dendur in New York City, followed by two performances of the work during a four-night stand at SFJAZZ (April 23–26) in San Francisco. **More info:** charleslloyd.com

Caught >



Brian Blade at the Panama Jazz Festival

BILL BYTSURA

Blade Soars at Panama Jazz Fest

During the 12th edition of the Panama Jazz Festival in January, Brian Blade deftly handled multiple roles. In addition to serving as the festival's Artist in Residence, Blade performed with his Fellowship Band, and again with the Children of the Light Trio with bassist John Patitucci and pianist Danilo Pérez (the festival's founder and artistic director). Patitucci and Pérez have been Blade's partners in the Wayne Shorter Quartet since 2000.

Throughout the proceedings, Blade—who has collaborated with such upper-echelon improvisers as Joshua Redman, Kenny Garrett, Herbie Hancock, Bill Frisell and Chick Corea—displayed the qualities that have earned him deep respect among his peers.

"He thinks as a composer, and he's very expressive," Corea once said of Blade. "[He] does what might be considered, in more conservative music, radical things—like playing very quietly, or not playing at all or playing very edgy ... all within the same framework."

That description encapsulated Blade's contribution to the first song performed by Fellowship Band on the festival's first concert, which transpired on Jan. 12 at the Convention Center Auditorium in the City of Knowledge, a quarter-mile or so from the Miraflores Locks that grant entrance and egress to the Pacific Ocean from the Panama Canal.

An melodic improvisation by pianist Jon Cowherd set up bassist Chris Thomas' introductory melody statement on Cowherd's hymn-like "Landmarks" (the title track of the Fellowship Band's Grammy-nominated 2014 Blue Note album), in conversation with Blade's intense whispery strokes. The melodic exposition continued with a unison between Myron Walden on bass clarinet and Melvin Butler on soprano sax.

Blade opened "He Died Fighting," also from *Landmarks*, with stomping beats—the connotation was horses on the march. As Cowherd entered into conversation, Blade orchestrated, deploying a felt-tipped stick in the right hand and a regular stick in the left and putting a towel on the tom-tom to dampen the sound. As Thomas joined

the flow, the mood got funky, denoted by Blade's fierce, rolling thunder.

On the next selection, the saxophonists followed Cowherd's impressionistic invention with another breathe-as-one unison. Walden's piercing alto solo sustained interest for six minutes over the locked-in rhythm section, resolving into Trane-like stillness.

The two final pieces further showcased Blade's ability to generate an orchestral range of texture and endless rhythmic permutation. He augmented the drum kit with tambourine, chime-like bells and the padded handle of a paddle. He used hands and sticks conjointly, setting off clusters and combinations that imparted illusory chord changes.

Three days later, in the same venue, the trio reassembled for a performance of five Pérez compositions and arrangements from his 2014 release, *Panama 500* (Mack Avenue), and Shorter's "Delores."

Patitucci played six-string electric bass on "Rediscovery Of The South Sea"—after an atonal, rubato passage, on which the pianist deployed a variety of attacks, Patitucci got funky, then soloed on the blues.

Patitucci switched to acoustic bass on Pérez's "The Expedition," dedicated to Eric Dolphy, whose legacy was a through-line of the festival. Pérez positioned the unit for the journey with another atonal, percussive opening, complemented by Blade's ametric rhythm-timbre. They coalesced into tempo, then into swing, then into a funky feel before Pérez launched an open, swinging solo over Blade's tippin'-stroke brushes.

Patitucci's contrapuntal arco bass lines and Blade's declarative, mallet-generated grooves added texture to the refrain of Pérez's "Reflections On The South Sea," on which the composer constructed a long, swinging paean to melody.

The trio recomposed the Panamanian standard "Panama Viejo," which set up a tidal ebb and flow that governed the remainder of the performance. The set concluded with "Delores," on which Blade sound-painted and Pérez uncorked a swirling string of choruses around Patitucci's surging bass vamp.

—Ted Panken

Lewis Keeps Reaching Out

IN MAY, RAMSEY LEWIS WILL CELEBRATE

both his 80th birthday and the 50th anniversary of the recording of his famed album *The In Crowd*. The album's soul-jazz title track was one of 1965's top hit singles—a remarkable achievement for a jazz artist during the rock 'n' roll heyday. Recorded by Lewis' trio with bassist Eldee Young and drummer Isaac "Redd" Holt, *The In Crowd* is a timeless album that has introduced generations of fans to the world of jazz.

The renowned pianist-composer and NEA Jazz Master, whose long career has also stretched into broadcasting, education and arts administration, doesn't care much for milestones or talk of his legacy. "I try to stay in the present, mindful and aware of the moment, and ready to move on," he said during an interview at a Manhattan hotel in January. "As far as I'm concerned, I could be going on 50 or 90. I'm just happy to be playing piano, working with the band I got, writing again, touring, I've got a great wife—and a great life."

Your classic album *The In Crowd* was recorded over three days (May 13–15, 1965) at the Bohemian Caverns club in Washington, D.C. What do you remember about those shows?

I remember when they said that I was going to play the Bohemian Caverns, I remarked, "Isn't this the place where the hard-boppers are playing? And John Coltrane, Roland Kirk and other go-get-'em guys? They want us?" And they did.

We were at the club trying to come up with one more song. A waitress came over and asked if we'd heard Dobie Gray's "The 'In' Crowd." Eldee [Young] had heard it, and it was on the jukebox in the club. We listened to it, learned it, and at the end of the first set, Redd [Holt] whispered to me, "Don't forget to play 'The 'In' Crowd.'"

We started doing the song, and all of a sudden the guys in the club are moving their shoulders, and the women are standing up and clapping and dancing. We just looked at each other—it was such a pleasant surprise. When they put the single out, we got a call from [Argo Records executive] Phil Chess telling us he thought we had a hit record. In those days, did jazzers have hit records? What? Are you kidding? Soon enough, it was a bona fide hit that just kept selling.

Your longstanding trio mates in 1965, Young and Holt, had played with you for years, including on your 1957 debut, *Ramsey Lewis And His Gentle-Men Of Swing*. What did each of them bring to the table night after night?

Redd and Eldee were the rhythm section for a seven-piece band called The Cleffs, whose leader, Wallace Burton, played alto saxophone and piano. At that time, I played piano for the church's gospel choir. Now, from age 4 to 15, all I played was classical music and gospel. After church one day, Wallace asked me to join The Cleffs, and I knew I



Ramsey Lewis and bassist Joshua Ramos at The Blue Note in New York City on Jan. 18

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was in trouble when I learned that the pianist I was replacing had left to go work with Sarah Vaughan.

But Redd and Eldee realized they could utilize my gospel playing in the jazz songs the band was playing. And they were easy to play with. They had been working together for so long that they grooved. You could feel it. They were like a horse you got on—Hold on!—Don't worry: We gotcha! And the more I trusted them, the easier it got, and I found myself swinging with them. They're also the ones who helped me get to know the music of other pianists, like Bud Powell, George Shearing, Oscar Peterson and Erroll Garner, which opened up a whole new world to me.

How did that album's great success affect you?

It changed everything about me. Before *The In Crowd*, we had to watch what hotels we stayed in, because we were budgeted. In Washington, D.C., we used to pass this hotel and people would say, "That's where Ella Fitzgerald stays!" I thought, "One day I'm going to stay at that hotel"—and that allowed me to. We were able to experience more comfort on the road. The success also allowed me to choose whatever music I wanted to play. But I had to be sensitive to the record companies,

which are in business to sell records. The music I practice—or play on my own to entertain myself with—isn't necessarily what I would play in a concert and ask Jane and John Doe to check out.

In many regards, you work hard to bring your art to the audience, rather than expecting the audience to approach your art. How important is this distinction to you?

I think the gospel side of me, and playing in church, made me aware of an audience and an audience's needs. Musicians, singers, players—it's their job to reach out and touch. People come from all walks of life; they're not music majors. Many of them just want a nice night out. You don't dumb it down. It's up to you to find out how to present your music and reach people. In church, if you weren't moving people, then why were you there? That's something I learned when I was 9 years old. I don't think about this on the bandstand; in fact, I don't think about it at all. But I take very seriously the idea that the people who come to clubs and concert halls want to hear what I got. Not in a challenging way. Just, "Here I am—what you got?" For me, it's a positive thing, and I like reaching out.

—Thomas Staudter

Family, Friends Remember Haden

There was a lot of love in the room. Family members, friends and avid fans gathered at New York's Town Hall on Jan. 13 to share some love for bassist-composer Charlie Haden, who passed away on July 11 at age 76 after suffering from effects of post-polio syndrome. Hosted by his wife of 30 years, singer Ruth Cameron, this three-hour memorial and celebration of Haden's life was full of moving personal testimonies, humorous anecdotes and profoundly deep musical performances.

Following a somber solo trumpet overture by Michael Rodriguez on Haden's "Goin' Home," Pat Metheny performed a poignant medley of Haden compositions on nylon-string acoustic guitar, including "Message To A Friend" and culminating with the delicate "First Song." But his words for his fellow Missourian were even more profound than the notes he played.

Metheny, who was the best man at the wedding of Haden and Cameron, reminisced about first meeting the bassist 40 years ago when he was in the Gary Burton Group and Haden was playing in Keith Jarrett's quartet. He described how they struck an immediate connection based on their common Missouri roots and love of corny jokes and how their relationship deepened during the tour for Metheny's *80/81* album with Dewey Redman, Michael Brecker and Jack DeJohnette. "We understood each other without talking," Metheny told the audience. "That thing was always there between us. He always understood what I was trying to do in music—like no one else. There was this feeling that we could play anything together from the most 'out' stuff to the most complex harmonic stuff to things of total simplicity."

Bassist Putter Smith recalled Haden's focused intensity and drive as a young musician on the early '60s L.A. jazz scene, describing him as "a charming rascal." He also explained how Haden gave other bassists permission to play with intimacy on the instrument, which was a first for them. Alto saxophone great Lee Konitz and pianist Brad Mehldau (who recorded the brilliant trio album *Alone Together* with Haden in 1997) improvised a blues that had the 87-year-old Konitz alternately scat-singing a line and blowing through his horn in a passionate flow of in-the-moment testifying. Mehldau also talked about how Haden had been a spiritual mentor who had gotten him through some rough patches in his life, while Denardo Coleman (appearing on behalf of his father, Ornette Coleman, who was unable to attend) said, "Charlie's mission was to lift you up."

Saxophonist Ravi Coltrane (who studied with

Haden at CalArts as a young man) joined harpist Brandee Younger and pianist Geri Allen for a beautiful rendition of "For Turiya," a Haden hymn written for Ravi's mother, Alice Coltrane, in 1976 and which Allen had previously recorded with Haden and Paul Motian on the 1987 album *Etudes*. Pianist Henry Butler, who sang at Haden and Cameron's wedding 30 years ago, reminisced about his 1984 Impulse session with the great bassist before launching into a stirring, Paul Robeson-esque reading of "Deep River."

Bassist Scott Colley, Haden's former student at

included touches of the tender "First Song."

The evening came to a rousing conclusion with pianist Carla Bley conducting the Liberation Music Orchestra (with Steve Swallow filling in for Haden on bass) on her inventive arrangements of Haden's fragile "Silence," the hymn "Amazing Grace" and the civil rights anthem "We Shall Overcome."

The ceremony also featured video clips from the documentary *Rambling Boy*, including a precious segment of a 2-year-old Little Charlie The Yodelin' Cowboy singing "Roll Us Over The Tide." Haden



The Haden Triplets—Petra (left), Rachel and Tanya—sing with their brother, Josh Haden, on Jan. 13 at New York's Town Hall.

JACOB BILK/STAFF

CalArts, then joined pianist Kenny Barron, tenor saxophonist Joshua Redman and drummer DeJohnette on a rousing rendition of Haden's "Blues For Pat." Redman told the audience how Haden brought out a kind of tenderness and soulfulness in the playing style of his father (Dewey Redman) during the years he and Haden were in Jarrett's band. "Through Charlie, I gained insight into what kind of man my father was," the saxophonist explained. "He helped me to love my father."

An emotional highlight of the evening was the Haden triplets—Petra, Rachel and Tanya—performing close vocal harmonies with brother Josh on the country spiritual number "Voice From On High," accompanied by guitarist Bill Frisell and bassist Mark Fain. Frisell also accompanied Petra Haden on a moving rendition of the traditional "O Shenandoah."

Quartet West, Haden's L.A. group featuring pianist Alan Broadbent and tenor saxophonist Ernie Watts, performed the bassist's compositions "Hello My Lovely" and "Child's Play." Cuban pianist Gonzalo Rubalcaba, whom Haden had first encountered while in Havana in 1987 and later collaborated with on 1990's *Discovery: Live At Montreux*, 1991's *The Blessing*, 2001's *Nocturne* and 2004's *Land Of The Sun*, performed a transcendent solo piano meditation that

reminisces in other clips about his first encounter with jazz musicians back at the hotel after a Stan Kenton concert in Missouri and about his first encounter with Ornette Coleman at the Hillcrest Club in Los Angeles, followed by their all-day jam back at Ornette's pad.

The biggest surprise of the evening was a hilarious filmed testimony sent from comedian Richard Lewis, who was not only a close friend of Haden's but is also a knowledgeable jazz fan who understood the bassist's significance as a musical revolutionary who helped to change the course of the music. In his final farewell to Haden, looking directly into the camera, he addresses the bassist's penchant for corny jokes: "Charlie, play jazz in heaven if there is a heaven, but do not tell God, if there is a God, any jokes. No jokes!"

Members of the jazz community in attendance—from the Village Vanguard's grand dame Lorraine Gordon to 86-year-old jazz singer Sheila Jordan to esteemed jazz journalist Dan Morgenstern and the hundreds of fans who loved Charlie Haden—filed out of this heart-wrenching ceremony to the poignant strains of a recording of Haden singing "Goin' Home," bringing a kind of perfect symmetry to the sad but beautiful proceedings. —Bill Milkowski

Gamers, Musicians Unite for SFJAZZ Bowl

WITHIN A HALF HOUR AFTER SUPER BOWL

XLIX had ended, another historic football game commenced in San Francisco. This one took place at the SFJAZZ Center and involved a digital gridiron, largely improvised music, color commentary and play-by-play announcing.

The “Commissioner” behind the event was Eric Harland. The drummer and bandleader was ending a four-night residency with a program titled “Jazz + Video Games,” in which Harland and his Voyager sextet joined forces with the New York collective Snarky Puppy to recreate the scene where Harland and his friends play the video game Madden NFL 15 at home with music blasting in the background.

A couch and video screen were set up stage left with additional individual monitors for the frontline musicians, keyboardists Taylor Eigsti and Snarky Puppy’s Justin Stanton, Snarky Puppy percussionist Keita Ogawa and Harland. Expert video gamers Mr. Finesse and Panoramic took up the Xbox 360 controllers for a battle of the Bay Area’s NFL teams.

Trent “T.Lew” Lewis and Daniel Rovin, two Harland associates, provided commentary on the inaugural SFJAZZ Bowl from a makeshift-broadcasting booth in the upper terrace.

Although the audience was witnessing the clash of the San Francisco 49ers and Oakland Raiders on a gigantic video screen, the two-hour experience encompassed key elements of actual game day: The musicians were introduced individually by name, along with their alma mater



Musicians and video gamers at the SFJAZZ Bowl in San Francisco on Feb. 1

and, humorously, height.

The 10-piece band onstage (which also included Voyager vocalist Chris Turner, guitarist Nir Felder, tenor saxophonist Walter Smith III and double bassist Harish Raghavan, and Snarky Puppy’s Mike Maher on trumpet) blasted a rousing version of the familiar, horn-laden NFL on Fox TV theme song. The spotlight then focused on Turner, who delivered a soulfully understated version of “The Star-Spangled Banner.”

Featuring seven-minute quarters, the game started with Oakland scoring two touchdowns and a field goal before San Francisco responded with 17 unanswered points right before halftime.

Throughout, the “Snarky Voyager” ensemble offered a variety of accompaniment styles that ranged from moody to grooving to cinematic.

The halftime show featured an uninterrupted 15-minute set from the band that included a sparkling version of Herbie Hancock’s “Chameleon.”

The final score was Oakland 58, San Francisco 32. Raiders quarterback Derek Carr was crowned MVP, but Harland also deserved that honor for conceiving what was very likely the first concert to combine video games and live jazz.

The playing was inspired, the mood fun and the attitude refreshing—setting the scene nicely for a rematch in 2016.

—Yoshi Kato



Fifteen Hundred Years in the Making

Neil Peart is back for an encore performance: Introducing the Collector’s Series® R40 Icon snare drum. Crafted from 13 plies of Timeless Timber™ Romanian River Oak and finished in intricate laser-cut, exotic wood inlays portraying the artwork from some of Rush’s most famous recordings. Only 250 will be made. To learn more and see Neil describe his exact replica in detail, visit dwdrums.com.

Players ›

Spend time with David Gibson in what the trombonist calls his “crib”—the cozy Manhattan flat he shares with his wife, trumpeter Kiku Collins, and their two crafty cats—and you are as likely to hear about failure as success, about sickness as health, about poverty as riches. Gibson, it is clear, traffics in the complex world of personal revelation.

So it is hardly a surprise that on his quintet’s latest album, *Boom!*—his sixth as a leader and third for the Posi-Tone label—the 46-year-old Oklahoma native pushes the boundaries of autobiography. Across 10 tunes, eight of which are written by Gibson, the life and the musical life become nearly indistinguishable.

One example is “The Dance,” written in 2008. A sustained musical colloquy between Gibson, on trombone, and Josh Evans, on trumpet—with additional commentary by pianist Theo Hill, bassist Alex Claffy and drummer Kush Abadey—the tune grew out of the remains of a failed relationship. In it, you can hear the strain of two people who never quite connect.

“It’s about that conversation,” he explained, “wherein you can appreciate the beauty of language and how it can be used to obfuscate rather than communicate.”

Or take “Persephone.” Written some 20 years ago, after a time of turmoil that found Gibson unceremoniously following his then-wife back to Oklahoma, the piece refers to the Greek goddess of spring. Its ascending melodic motif recalls with some urgency the spiritual renewal Gibson felt playing with a reggae band on his return to Rochester, New York, where he had attended the Eastman School of Music.

“A lot of my classmates might have condescended to the music,” he said. “What I found was that the people were interacting with this music. There’s a joy that comes from that, but also a sense of responsibility and purpose.”

Or, in a more recent and pointed statement, take “Empathy.” The tune—born on a computer while Gibson was at his wife’s bedside during her treatment for a serious illness just months after they married in 2012—deploys a languid legato that evokes that agonizing moment to remarkable effect.

“I already knew the emotional weight and anxiety and fear,” he said. “But I saw my wife in pain in a way that I’ve never seen.”

For all the painful subject matter, Gibson’s take is never a maudlin one. Paradoxically enough, it retains a buoyancy of spirit that seems to chase the blues away, even as it attracts listeners. Gibson said the music became richer and deeper as it was developed for some 10 months, mostly in basement haunts like Smalls and Fat Cat, before the group hit the studio running in October.

The running start was no accident. Evans, who has worked with Gibson in a variety of situations over the years, noted that the quintet enjoyed a burst of energy with the recruiting of new personnel—he mentioned the addition of Hill and Abadey, who, like Gibson, are also members in good stand-

DAVID GIBSON

Personal Revelations



ing of Evans’ big band—just as the crop of tunes that appeared on the album was being developed.

“There’s been a big evolution,” he said. “The band has taken off.”

While the quintet has taken off, another project in which Gibson is involved—the George Gee Orchestra, a nonet for which he is the musical director—has kept him grounded, what with the demands of pleasing a band, its leader and, most particularly, the Lindy-hopping habitués of Swing 46 Jazz and Supper Club, where the orchestra plays once or twice a week.

“The best way to keep the dancers happy is to write swinging charts,” he said.

Producing those charts—a sampling appears on the orchestra’s latest album, *Swing Makes You Happy!* (Rondette Jazz)—has broadened his musical palette. As the group’s chief arranger and com-

poser, he has been tasked with painting a Basie-inspired canvas with only six horns. That in turn has forced him to discover instrumental combinations that yield striking colorations, which he applies elsewhere.

“Writing for the little big band,” he explained, “has influenced my writing for the small group in that I’ve learned more about specificity for each instrument.”

As he has gained that knowledge, Gibson’s section writing has deepened. With that deepening has come the ability to offer greater challenges for his bandmates. But those challenges have not been realized at the expense of the swing he supplies in generous quantities. And ultimately, the ability to strike that balance may be what best defines him.

“The music has a kind of light energy,” Evans said, “but it is serious.” —Phillip Lutz



Players >

COLLEEN CLARK

Solo All the Time

Drummer and composer Colleen Clark makes her remarkable debut with the simply titled album *Introducing Colleen Clark*, self-released and available on iTunes and Amazon. Indeed, it's an introduction to an artist who's not taking a typical journey with her music. The New York-based Clark, who leads an eight-piece ensemble, avoids a bombastic presence on the uptempo pieces like the spirited and joyful opener, "Happiness Is Fast & Slow," and likewise doesn't take the traditional role of brush-and-cymbals support for the ballads on the recording, including the tender "La Trivesta."

"I don't think of myself as a drummer," Clark said. "I'm constantly trying to add rhythmic support, but I also see myself as a melodic voice. I'm not sitting down and thinking, 'OK, I'm going to play a bossa nova groove' or 'OK, this is my big drum solo spot.' I'm active and interactive in my drumming, and I'm curious. It's cool for me to use different genres and be influenced by other cultural styles, especially Latin."

She referenced some drummer wisdom she once heard: "When you play the drums, it's a solo all the time. So I drum like I'm playing the piano, always adding something new musically."

With a chuckle, Clark said that she knew she wanted to be a drummer while still a toddler. But her father, an electric bass player, told his 4-year-old that she could play drums as long as she took four years of piano first. She was classically trained on the instrument, and, sure enough, when she turned 8, she was rewarded with a drum kit that was set up in the living room. "No one ever told me to be quiet," she recalled. "And my dad was digging it. Still, to this day, I'm thankful I learned how to play the piano."

As a young drummer, she wore out a cassette tape that had two songs on it: "Sing Sing Sing" with Gene Krupa's famous solo and "Channel One Suite" by Buddy Rich and his orchestra. She said that while attending Ithaca College in upstate New York, she began to feel confident in the role of band-

leader. "My first experience with seeing a drummer and bandleader that gave me a lot of direction was Brian Blade and Fellowship at the Newport Jazz Festival," Clark explained. "I loved the horns and the rhythm section instrumentation." On *Introducing Colleen Clark*, her octet consists of four horns (including trumpeter Bria Skonberg and saxophonist Sharel Cassity) and a rhythm section of piano, guitar and bass.

Other influences include Dafnis Prieto, who opened her eyes to Latin rhythms, and the Maria Schneider Orchestra, which inspired her compositional ideas. Add to that two important undergrad and graduate teachers/mentors: Ithaca professor and master percussionist Gordon Stout, who produced the album, and drummer John Riley at SUNY Purchase, where Clark got her master's degree. "Gordon told me to just write down what's in my head when it comes to composing," Clark said. "I sent him the music for the album, and he did a great study on it, helping me to shape it. Gordon and John both always told me to be musical, to get the highest-quality sound."

Clark described some of her tunes on the album as "complex." Case in point: the textured and harmonically challenged "Pyrotechnics." She said, "The horn players say the changes are hard, rhythmically difficult, while the piano and guitar lines are inspired by the concept of Bach fugues." (While she was teaching in Stout's place during his sabbatical, the college commissioned Clark to orchestrate the tune for concert band and jazz quartet; in October, Ithaca College School of Music students premiered the piece under the direction of Dr. Mark Fonder.)

In addition to fronting her band, Clark works with the New York Pops Education Program, which meets with students in the Bronx to expose them to music and holds a gala event where students come to Carnegie Hall to hear the Pops perform.

As for an inquiry about being a woman drummer—a burgeoning movement that's been giving

jazz a fresh vitality—Clark said, "Frankly, in all my playing I've never felt different from my male counterparts. It's really a question of the numbers. There are more men in the percussion seats, but there's a movement like you can see with Mindy Abovitz's Tom Tom Magazine, which is dedicated to female drummers. It's helping to give us exposure, and it's growing."
—Dan Ouellette

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B-3 groove master Raphael Wressnig made a trip to New Orleans, literally and spiritually, to cook some Gumbo. Soul Gumbo, that is. Featuring: Craig Handy, Stanton Moore, Jon Cleary, Walter "Wolfman" Washington, George Porter, Jr. (The Meters), Eric Bloom (Letuce), Tad Robinson & Alex Schultz

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ANDREA CANTER

Players >

JOEY CALDERAZZO

Authoritative Elegance

Among the most impressive piano trio recordings in recent years is Joey Calderazzo's 2013 album *Live* (Sunnyside), documenting a 2011 concert by the pianist, bassist Orlando le Fleming and drummer Donald Edwards. Improvising at length on harmonically modernist repertoire by Keith Jarrett ("Rainbow"), Bill Evans ("Time Remembered"), Paul Motian ("Trieste") and himself ("The Mighty Sword" and a "Confirmation" contrafact titled "To Be Confirmed"), as well as Bobby Troup's "The Meaning Of The Blues," Calderazzo generates a continuous stream of melody, inflecting the flow with authoritative elegance, emotional conviction and unerring pulse at tempos spanning rubato to burnout.

Calderazzo evokes a more measured, curated atmosphere on his follow-up, *Going Home* (Sunnyside), a live-in-the-studio recital with le Fleming and drummer Adam Cruz. It comprises seven originals—including high-octane numbers like the 12-tone-ish set-opener "Manifold" and the modal "Mike's Song," the anthemic "Legend" and the Monk-meets-James Booker swinger "One Way"—and meditative treatments of the standards "Stars Fell On Alabama" and "My Foolish Heart."

"I'm trying to throttle back, to go to six instead of staying on 10," Calderazzo said, differentiating his 49-year-old tonal personality from the force-of-nature wonderkind whose cusp-of-the-'90s status as Michael Brecker's pianist—and three accomplished Blue Note albums that showcased his efflorescent chops—garnered him an

international fan base. "It's more about journeying to the finish line than charging to it; playing to peaks and valleys rather than getting a certain trajectory. Years ago, 'Stars' would have been a complete harmonic rework. It would have been personal, and musicians would say, 'Damn, what are those chords?' Here, I tried to create all the substitutions with melody, to get the melody to sing."

Calderazzo sipped coffee in the massive lobby of Barcelona's Hotel Petit Palace, a 10-minute walk from the Palau de la Música Catalana, a few hours before the Branford Marsalis Quartet's penultimate concert of a November fortnight of one-nighters across Europe. He joined Marsalis in 1998, after the death of Kenny Kirkland, 11 years after Brecker—looking for a balls-out pianist to render repertoire from his eponymous debut leader recording, on which Kirkland had performed—heard Calderazzo at a clinic and launched an enduring musical and personal relationship.

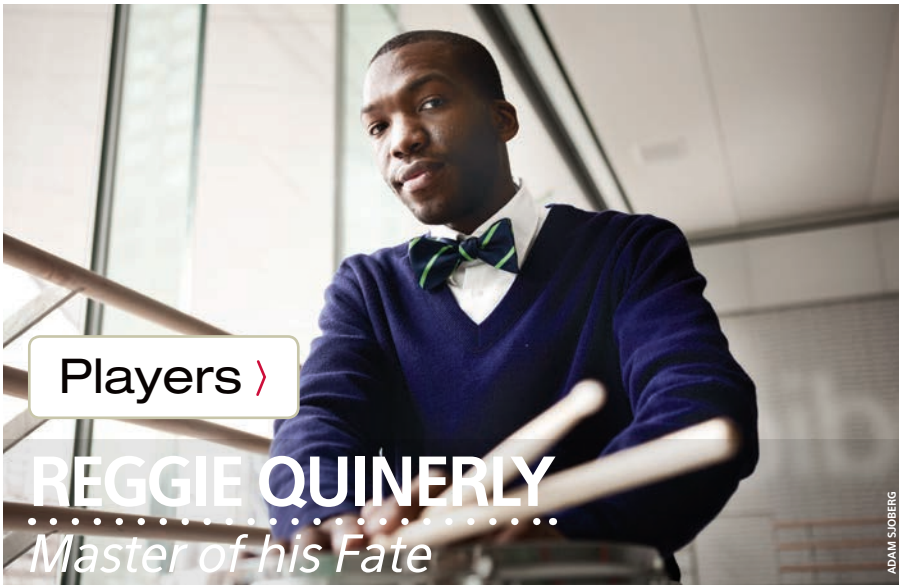
"Between 1998 and 2005, I was on the road 200 days a year between Michael and Branford and my trio stuff," Calderazzo recalled. "Both would play any tune I brought in, and I affected the sound of both bands. With Branford, we'd play a night of killing modern music, and I was in my element, but he'd encore with, like, 'Mood Indigo.' It would have been easy to play a solo with a lot of notes. But Branford did not like that. I would play bebop, but that didn't work. I had no background in swing music, and hadn't spent any real listening time with it. So I started checking out swing players—Nat Cole, Erroll Garner, Ellington.

"I lost a lot of fans when I became really integrated into Branford's thing. My first tours with Branford, I had a cheering section of Brecker people yelling 'Jo-eee!' at every gig. A year later that was gone. The better I got, the more they left."

Calderazzo became a working musician within a year after his father's death in 1982. "I didn't go to music camps," he said. "I learned on the street and off records. I had good fundamentals and I was a good reader. I got a scholarship to Berklee, but I only lasted three days. I was emotionally crippled. Between 1983 and 1987, I'd wake up at 5 in the afternoon, get ready, drive into New York, play my gig, and hang out until 6 or 7 a.m. But I wasn't prepared when I went on the road with Mike or when I got the Blue Note contract, and I didn't capitalize on my visibility. It was better for me to contribute to something good—to comp and create behind a horn player—than to do it alone."

As he approaches his half-century birthday, Calderazzo—a North Carolina resident since 2005—will continue to apply lessons assimilated during his 16 years with Marsalis to his own leader activity. "My idea when I started this trio was for the music to be different every night," he said. "On this record, it was hard to play in the moment, 98.9 percent improvised, in a studio where everything is antiseptic, and do six-minute songs. But I like it. I'm trying to get to something every time I play. I'm OK with not getting there. I've gotten better at getting out before it gets ugly."

—Ted Panken



Players >

REGGIE QUINERLY

Master of his Fate

ADAM SLOBBERG

As a kid growing up in Houston, Reggie Quinerly, 34, had an affinity for wisecracking and boasting, which often got him into trouble at school. One day his exasperated mother instructed her mouthy charge to memorize and recite William Ernest Henley's 1875 poem "Invictus," with the famous passage "It matters not how strait the gate/ How charged with punishments the scroll/ I am the master of my fate/ I am the captain of my soul."

Quinerly's second album, *Invictus*, is both a call to action and a showcase for his compositional

skills and sleek drumming style.

"I didn't understand the poem as a kid," Quinerly explained. "But since then I've read up on William Ernest Henley, and what he went through in his life, which included tuberculosis and a leg amputation. As an artist, 'I am the master of my fate/ I am the captain of my soul' means taking care of everything—from writing the music to releasing it. Sometimes you wonder 'Who is going to listen to my music or buy my record?' But you have to document your work as you feel and let people find the art wherever they do."

The Juilliard alumnus has a playing style that is spacious and streamlined, with a beautiful touch on cymbals and in brushwork. He also swings very hard, with the type of command one associates with Kenny Washington. Quinerly's bandmates—vibraphonist Warren Wolf, pianist Christian Sands, guitarist Yotam Silberstein and bassist Alan Hampton—are the perfect messengers to deliver his groove-yard sounds.

"I knew I wanted this particular instrumentation, so I found records that fit this lineup," Quinerly explained, citing the Montgomery Brothers' *Montgomeryland* and *George Shearing And The Montgomery Brothers*. "I wanted to do something a little cooler in style. Many of the things I write don't follow traditional harmony. I do have training, but I'm not bound by traditional rules."

His aerodynamically swinging band performs the zigzagging "Tavares" with Wolf in a particularly lyrical mood. "Nizmo Indian" is a 6/8 journey of equal parts ethereal melody and percolating solo sections. "Lester Grant" shows Quinerly's in-the-pocket approach to swinging the blues.

His compositions show a diverse range, such as the shimmering piano piece "Kunst Uberlebt" and his homage to the Roland TR-808 Rhythm Composer, "Child Of The 808," which sounds like Steely Dan ghostwriting for Flying Lotus.

"Even though I don't express it overtly in my music, I am very much influenced by hip-hop," he said. "One of the things that drew me in with hip-hop is how they sampled great musicians, whether it was Ramsey Lewis or Joe Sample. They brought all those influences together." —Ken Micallef

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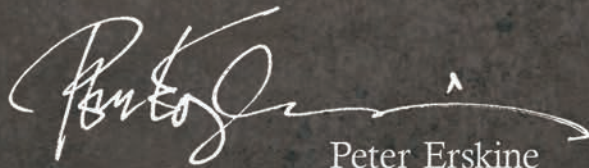
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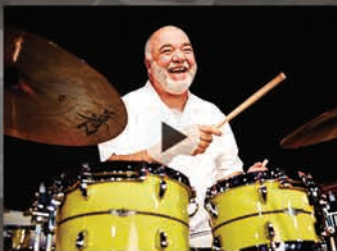
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Kenny Barron at Dizzy's Club Coca-Cola in New York
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KENNY BARRON



PERFECT GRACE



By Aaron Cohen II Photography by Jimmy & Dena Katz

Kenny Barron has his own way of conveying excitement. Those moments—when his eyes seem to radiate—came across sporadically during a conversation at a Chicago hotel bar in December. The pianist was in town for a performance with bassist Dave Holland at Symphony Center, where they would perform selections from their 2014 duo album, *The Art Of Conversation* (Impulse!).

About a half hour before sitting down to talk, the Grammy nominations had been announced. Barron got a nod in the Best Improvised Jazz Solo category (for “The Eye Of The Hurricane” on the self-titled album by Gerry Gibbs Thrasher Dream Trio, released by Whaling City Sound). Hearing this news for the first time elicited a bemused smile, not full-on illumination. (The winner in that category turned out to be Chick Corea.)

None of this means that Barron, a 2010 NEA Jazz Master, is ever detached. He records prolifically now. Late last year, he was planning live and studio gigs for his quintet and trio, as well as ongoing work with Holland. All of this stands in contrast to about a dozen years ago, when he received far fewer invitations from labels (although he was teaching full-time back then and constantly on the road). Barron’s academic load is lighter now, but a small number of advanced students still benefit from his lessons. His soft-spoken demeanor reflects a perspective that Barron says he draws from Kahlil Gibran’s book *The Prophet*, and an older pianist he once knew.

“There was a piano player in Philly, Hassan Ibn Ali,” Barron said. “He was a good friend. He and my brother [saxophonist Bill Barron] were very tight, and I remember he said that musicians should always be humble. That’s because the music comes *through* you, not from you. Sometimes we lose sight of that and say, ‘I’m a bad so-and-so.’ There’s always somebody better waiting in the wings. The other side of the coin is you can’t spend your time comparing yourself to other people. Because you’ll either be very vain or depressed. You have a story to tell, just like everybody else. It may be different, but it’s *your* story.”



Barron has already packed numerous experiences into his own story—including his teenage years playing r&b, learning on the job as a sideman to Dizzy Gillespie and Yusef Lateef, reinvigorating the duo format and becoming an esteemed mentor to multiple generations. He has earned the regard of legends and colleagues like saxophonist Jimmy Heath, who said, “Kenny is more than a master—he’s a great grand master and there’s a sparkle in his playing that never dies.”

But Barron has always accomplished this without ostensibly virtuosic runs or boisterous self-promotion. Another longtime bandmate, bassist Ron Carter, said, “When Kenny plays so well, [some listeners] think anybody can do this, that it’s so easy—fools that they are.”

That kind of grace came across when Barron

and Holland performed pieces from *Art Of Conversation* alongside some of their older compositions at Symphony Center. Their call-and-response patterns emerged subtly. These included the sly tempo shifts that Barron slipped in during the opener, his piece “Spiral.” The pianist also infused their rendition of Charlie Parker’s “Segment” with bits of stride and Latin clave patterns. When they played another Barron tune, the upbeat “Calypso,” he wove in hesitations that suggested some of that Trinidadian idiom’s familiar syncopation, yet this never became too easy for a listener to pin down. Nuance shaped the pair’s most profound exchanges. The encore, a rendition of Thelonious Monk’s “In Walked Bud” (also on the album), layered their own twists to the composer’s intervals, and their palpable sense of joy in

doing so spoke volumes.

The Barron–Holland duo began in 2012, although both had played together often in other groups. Three years later, Barron said that he’s become more calm during their collaborations, and that feeling has freed him to take more chances. He also has more years of experience in the piano/bass duo format to draw upon, including working at New York’s Bradley’s during the 1990s with Carter, Ray Drummond and Rufus Reid.

“It’s always a challenge, especially in terms of rhythm,” Barron said. “You have to do it whether you’re playing stride piano or walking a bass line. Again, I’m much more relaxed with it now. I don’t necessarily have to play a bass line, stride or imitation stride. I can play like I have a rhythm section and it’s OK. It’s all about feeling comfortable, and I feel much more comfortable at this time. Rhythmically, I think like a drummer, which is just the way you place accents. For drummers, 1 is not 1. It’s the end of 4. So there’s always that forward motion. That’s something I do that I got from playing with great drummers like Roy Haynes and Ben Riley. With Ben, we would do things together that were not planned because we were so in tune with each other.”

Duos with other distinctive instruments present their own creative demands and artistic rewards. Barron’s 1991 performances with Stan Getz shortly before the saxophonist’s death were captured for the moving *People Time*, which Sunnyside/Universal Music France released as a seven-disc set in 2010. That collection includes Barron’s poignant essay about their collaboration. His lesser-known 1975 concert with guitarist Ted Dunbar was issued in 1980 as *In Tandem* (Muse), and that dialogue provided its own tests.

“Playing with a guitar is a little more problematic because we are both chordal instruments,” Barron said. “That posed not a problem, but some challenges in trying to stay out of each other’s way, especially in terms of voicings. So one of us would have to play a little more sparse. He’d look at a chord and see one thing, and I’ll look at the chord and see something different. When you put it into action, it is sometimes like this [*putting his fists together*]. So we learned how to do that—leave a little space. I’m sorry we didn’t get a chance to do it more often.”

With a consistently fluid approach, Barron has also always added his own personality to new situations without too much adjustment. His *1+1+1* (Black-Hawk, 1986) alternates duos with Carter and bassist Michael Moore, the latter of whom Barron had never worked with previously. It’s an unusual setup, but Barron’s style makes it all cohere, especially when comparing the disc’s versions of Duke Ellington works with the two contrasting bassists.

“Every time there’s a new person you never played with before, it changes,” Barron said. “Even within a group. If there’s one change in personnel in a trio, it changes. Not better or worse, but different, so I, as a leader, have to adjust. Some people are stylists and they put their stamp on everything. That’s not my thing. I like to play whatever’s happening in the moment. If Joe Blow comes in playing bass, that’s what I react to. If Joe Blow comes in playing drums, that’s what I react to.”

"Rhythmically, I think like a drummer. So there's always that forward motion."

Throughout Barron's career, he's been comfortable in even more atypical settings, and learned something of value in each one of them. Even though he was a Tommy Flanagan fan since his youth, Barron played a more extroverted kind of music in Mel Melvin's r&b orchestra for one of his first experiences on a professional stage.

"That was like a variety show—you play for singers, you had to play for dancers, and by that I mean shake dancing," Barron said. "The music we played was basically for dancing. It wasn't [strokes his chin in mock contemplation], 'Hmmm ...'—that kind of music. We'd play for what was called cabaret parties in Philadelphia. So I learned a lot about grooves, dancing and things like that."

After moving to New York in the early 1960s and working as a sideman to such jazz leaders as Roy Haynes and James Moody, Barron joined Gillespie's band in 1962 and remained with him for four years. From his vantage point, he enjoyed that leader's extroverted humor, and to this day Barron's students are told not to take life too seriously (aside from the music itself). On some nights, the pianist felt like throwing up his hands in response to the trumpeter's incredible velocity. Resourcefulness was also key.

"Dizzy would play some stuff that was so incredible," Barron said. "The idea was you don't have to play everything you know at every moment. Me being young, I was 19, and, like most young people, that's what you want to do: You want to play everything you know at every moment. No, you don't have to do that."

By the latter part of the 1960s, Barron also began receiving more notice for his compositions, such as the pieces he wrote for a quintet LP he co-led with Jimmy Owens, *You Had Better Listen* (Atlantic, 1968). Bebop remained at the core of his work, but he never felt restrained within a single idiom and enjoyed hearing the burgeoning avant-garde. His Latin-inspired "The Black Angel" became the title track to Freddie Hubbard's jazz/rock album on that label the following year. Lateef encouraged Barron to further his writing in a more formal setting, so he attended a Borough of Manhattan Community College course where his classmates included Tootie Heath, bassist Bob Cunningham and Donny Hathaway.

"For our final project, I did a string quartet with no improvisation," Barron said. "It was the first time I had done that. Tootie wrote a woodwind quintet. I don't remember exactly what Donny wrote, but it was all great. After we had done all this music, we thought, 'Wow, it'd be nice to hear it.' So we hired people from the Symphony of the New World, which was really diverse, to give a performance at City University of New York's graduate center. And I had a chance to hear my string quartet. That was the greatest thing. I never wrote another one for a long time, but it was still a great incentive for composing."

While Barron's compositions tend to have lyr-

ical melodic contours, they also tend to open up in unexpected ways, such as the multi-part "Phantoms," which he said was an attempt to write in the style of Ornette Coleman. Regina Carter added her own Gypsy-influenced inflections to that piece on their 2001 duo album, *Freefall* (Verve). "Rain" (on *Art Of Conversation*)

emphasizes more open spaces. Barron came up with that one (and 10 others) during a weeklong writing residency in Tarrytown, New York, but, generally, he avoids any kind of strategies when devising a piece.

"If I write something, it's kind of up in the air," Barron said. "By that, I mean it's often left to chance how it's going to come out. There are some people who are very, very good writers and they have—I don't want to say devices—but things that they use and follow which help them. There's nothing wrong with that. It helps them get started and then creativity can come in. Sometimes you need something to jump-start your creativity. I kind of fly by the seat of my pants, which general-

"AN ARTIST AT THE HEIGHT OF HIS CRAFT."
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Electro-Acoustic keyboard wizard Marc Cary (#1 Rising Star Keyboardist in DownBeat's 2014 Critics Poll) celebrates his 20th anniversary as a recording artist with **RHODES AHEAD VOL. 2**, a powerhouse follow-up to his seminal 1999 release, **RHODES AHEAD VOL. 1**. Cary's fierce new project puts the iconic Fender Rhodes sound front and center, fusing drum n' bass, electronic music, acoustic jazz and funk influences, creating yet another visionary project - a testament to Cary's prolific and forward-thinking vision, versatility and creativity.

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3/7 - SAN JOSÉ JAZZ WINTERFEST	4/25 - THE SIDEDOOR JAZZ CLUB OLD LYME, CT
3/15 - LANTARENVENSTER ROTTERDAM, HOLLAND	5/9-10 - THE APOLLO THEATER NYC (HARLEM NIGHTS/U STREET LIGHTS w/JASON MORAN)
3/18 - FASCHING JAZZ CLUB STOCKHOLM, SWEDEN	5/25 - JAZZ IN THE ROUND LONDON, UK
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ly has served me pretty well. But I'm not the kind of person who can say, 'OK, it's 5 o'clock, it's time to write.' I can do it, but what comes out, I won't like. Most of the things I've written have been the results of noodling. Like 'Sun Shower.' It was really just noodling when I was with Yusef. It was at a soundcheck and we wound up playing it."

Even with Barron's training in improvisation and composition, he was initially reluctant to become a teacher himself. But in 1973—around the time he turned 30 and recorded his debut as a

leader, *Sunset To Dawn* (Muse)—bassist/professor Larry Ridley encouraged him to join the faculty at Rutgers, the State University of New Jersey.

"Teaching was not, in a million years, what I imagined myself doing. I was not a speaker. I was terrified. Say something to an audience? No. So to teach, wow. But Larry Ridley called me and I met with the provost to kind of do a presentation, and I guess it worked, because I got the job."

Barron stayed on the Rutgers faculty for 25 years, then taught at Manhattan School of Music.

Now he's at The Juilliard School. His students have included pianists Gerald Clayton and Aaron Parks, as well as flutist Anne Drummond.

"One thing I realized is that students will definitely test you," Barron said. "Teaching has also made me realize what I don't know. Young people today are so prepared in terms of certain things: technique, harmonic concepts. The only thing that's missing is life experience, which they'll get, eventually. Or, as Ben Riley used to say, 'They haven't had their hearts broken yet.' Those life experi-

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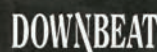
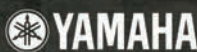
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ences—you can hear that. [Students] can be a little obsessed with technique, things like that. A little obsessed with the intellectual side of music, as opposed to the emotional. And that's where you have to really reach people, on an emotional level."

But, at the same time, Barron was flattered when one jazz legend felt that he was not far removed from his own students.

"About five or six years ago, I was playing in Los Angeles when Lou Donaldson came in," Barron said. "He said, 'Man, you sound like a young piano player.' That might have been a sideways compliment, but it's been the greatest compliment I've gotten."

Nowadays, Barron takes on only a handful of students. He has his own criteria for measuring their abilities, and he acknowledges the inherent limitations on what aspects of jazz can be taught.

"They have to come to the table with something," Barron said. "They have to know how to swing already; I can't teach that. And being able to be lyrical, to tell a story. If they can do that, I can push them a little further. And we also talk about different pianists, and we analyze Thelonious Monk and how his touch was different from Tommy Flanagan's touch. They don't have to play like Monk, but know how to do this."

A younger pianist from Philadelphia, Eric Reed, has known Barron for 30 years and has performed duet concerts with him in Europe. He shares Barron's belief that an ability to swing is internal, but adds that his elder also has other abilities that any mentor can impart, such as being supportive and magnanimous on the bandstand.

"Kenny reminds me of Billy Higgins on drums or Doug Watkins on bass in the sense that they're musicians who don't stick out," Reed said. "There's a difference between a stick-out and a standout. Kenny is outstanding, but doesn't stick out like a sore thumb. If you're listening to a band and let's say the drummer is very showy, not trying to blend in, that will make you notice him. Or a saxophone player who plays excessively long. Kenny's the exact opposite. He's saying, 'Don't notice me, notice the music.'"

That also explains how Barron can shape the sounds of other leaders, especially ones representing varying generations. Drummer Gerry Gibbs, a lifelong fan of the pianist, enlisted him and Carter for his Thrasher Dream Trio. Barron said that Gibbs' "very involved arrangements" caused him to lose some sleep, but he was able to pull it together in the studio. Their 2013 disc offered a nimble mix of originals and jazz standards. The group's recent *We're Back* (Whaling Sound) idiomatically connects to the r&b that Barron played as a teenager. He has his own way of establishing the pace for his colleagues, according to Gibbs.

"Whether you're playing fast or slow, Kenny has such a perfect grace, the way he touches the piano just automatically affects what you do," Gibbs said. "Because it doesn't force you to do anything, your sound becomes affected. With every strike, your cymbal sound is blended with other instruments. Kenny's touch—whether he plays soft, medium or loud—has an elegance with the way he strikes the keys and uses the pedals. When you hear that sound blended with your cymbals and drums, it goes to a unique place."

After all of these experiences, Barron knows that keeping himself open to anything has continued to yield fulfilling music. Sometimes that process begins accidentally. A few years ago, he was shopping with his wife, Joanne, in New York's Union Square neighborhood, and they heard the Brazilian Trio De Paz jamming at The Coffee Shop. Barron started sitting in with them regularly. Then in 2012, he recorded several Brazilian standards for *Kenny Barron & The Brazilian Knights* (Sunnyside) in Rio De Janeiro. As he's currently paying attention to such innovative

musicians as saxophonist Steve Coleman and pianist David Virelles, a future of new collaborations is far more likely than any kind of retirement.

"Music keeps you young," Barron said. "Musicians don't retire. They may slow down, but they never retire. I feel good about my life. I'm playing. I would like to play better, but that's normal. Somebody, a classical musician, was asked, 'At 90 you still practice, why?' He said, 'I feel like I'm making progress.' Music is a journey, but you never want to arrive." DB

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MICHAEL BRECKER

BEAUTIFUL SPIRIT

The June 1, 1973, issue of DownBeat included a feature on an exciting young saxophonist named Mike Brecker. Following a stint with the jazz-rock band Dreams, Brecker had recently joined pianist Horace Silver's quintet. Then 24, Brecker told journalist Herb Nolan, "My direction changes a lot, which is a drag, and I find myself wanting to play a lot of different ways while part of me wants to have a really individual style. I want to sound like myself. I want to be able to get my feelings out through playing—I really want to express myself."

Brecker felt that he was still seeking his individual voice. He told Nolan that he "felt like a beginner in a lot of ways," and he referred to his gig with Silver as "kind of a school." The self-conscious young man explained, "Horace's tunes, to me, have a distinctive sound, and I try to play things that don't sound like somebody else. I don't mind sounding like other people; that's just a way to grow. If I sound like Trane on a certain thing, or if I sound like Trane all night—screw it, that's just what I hear. I just let it come out."

Michael Brecker did, indeed, find his own sound. By the time of his tragically premature death on Jan. 13, 2007, he had become arguably the most influential jazz saxophonist since John Coltrane. It was a short but full life. He had risen to stardom

as a collaborator with his brother—the trumpeter Randy—in The Brecker Brothers; later received glowing accolades for his albums as a leader; won 11 Grammy awards; and appeared on hundreds of recordings. He excelled when playing alongside jazz giants (George Benson, Chick Corea, Jack DeJohnette, Herbie Hancock, Pat Metheny) as well as rock singer-songwriters (Joni Mitchell, Paul Simon, James Taylor). The diverse, lengthy array of artists with whom he recorded or performed includes Aerosmith, James Brown, Billy Cobham, Dire Straits, Peter Dinklage, Funkadelic, Billy Joel, Elton John, Elvin Jones, John Lennon, Dave Liebman, Mike Mainieri, Marcus Miller, Parliament, Lou Reed, Gonzalo Rubalcaba, Steely Dan, Mike Stern, McCoy Tyner, Tony Williams, Papo Vasquez and Frank Zappa. Brecker was awarded four more Grammys posthumously, and was elected by readers into the DownBeat Hall of Fame in 2007.

In this special tribute, DownBeat celebrates the life and legacy of Michael Brecker. On the following pages, we present a recap of the recent Brecker tribute concert at Jazz at Lincoln Center, as well as an interview with Susan Brecker, who honors her late husband by working hard to raise awareness about MDS (myelodysplastic syndrome) and raise money for groundbreaking cancer research.

Michael Brecker at the 2004 Newport Jazz Festival
(Photo: Mars Breslow)



A LOVING ELEGY

There was a collective gasp at the IAJE convention in January 2007 when word quickly spread about the death of Michael Brecker, who was 57. He had succumbed to leukemia, brought on by myelodysplastic syndrome (MDS), a cancer of the bone marrow. A loving father and husband, compassionate friend and beloved figure in the jazz community, known for his quick, self-effacing wit and quiet sense of humility, Brecker was also a Trane-inspired tenor sax titan whose profound impact on a generation of players was incalculable. Joe Lovano, Branford Marsalis, Donny McCaslin and Chris Potter have all cited him as an influence.

As Lovano told me in 2006 regarding his Saxophone Summit partner, "Every generation has leaders and pace-setters that people grab ahold of and are on their coattails. And for me, trying to be a contrast to Mike was a big thing in my development. Because he's so powerful and strong, it's like, 'Man, I gotta be able to stand next to this cat.'"

Ravi Coltrane, who would end up replacing the late saxophonist in the Saxophone Summit, alongside Lovano and Dave Liebman, summed up Brecker's legacy in a promotional video for the Saxophone Summit's 2008 album, *Seraphic Light*: "To look at Michael and his life and his work and



Randy Brecker at Jazz at Lincoln Center's Appel Room on Jan. 20

love and dedication for what he did, it is like a beacon. This guy did it, and he did it with a love and passion that was clearly so sincere and real."

An intensely emotional, cathartic memorial for Brecker was held at New York City's Town Hall on Feb. 13, 2007, just one month after his death. Stirring musical performances by Liebman, Pat Metheny, Herbie Hancock, Paul Simon and Brecker's brother, Randy, were interspersed by testimonials that touched on the man's generosity of spirit and sense of humanity. The evening was filled with tears and laughter and concluded with a Buddhist ceremony presided over by Hancock, Wayne Shorter, Buster

Williams and Brecker's son, Sam.

Now, eight years later, memories of Brecker still burn brightly. Several of those same friends and colleagues and family members who appeared at the Town Hall memorial gathered once again to pay tribute to the prodigiously gifted saxophonist-composer and celebrate the man at a special "The Nearness of You" benefit concert held in Jazz at Lincoln Center's Appel Room on Jan. 20. This gala affair, produced jointly by Brecker's widow, Susan Brecker, and his longtime manager Daryl Pitt, and hosted by journalist and TV talk show host Meredith Vieira, not only paid



KIRK WHALUM THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JAZZ CHAPTER IV

The Gospel According To Jazz may have gotten jazzier on this, the fourth visitation in Kirk Whalum's bestselling spiritual series. The genre-defying saxman (tenor, soprano and flute) asked his friends Rick Braun, Norman Brown, Doc Gibbs and John Stoddart to join him on an eclectic set of tunes comprising perhaps the expected ("Sometimes I Feel Like A Motherless Child") to the unexpected ("Un Amor Supremo") – all wholly original in the hands of these titans.

If you are just now joining the series, there is no better place to start your appreciation for *The Gospel According To Jazz*.

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tribute to Brecker's brilliance as a composer and influential player; it also served to raise awareness of the dreaded disease that took his life and to support cancer research being done at Columbia University Medical Center by doctors Azra Raza and Siddhartha Mukherjee.

"The first memorial was about bringing people together to share their sadness and grief," Susan said. "This one, I felt, was a celebration and a way to honor him and do something good, and show people that, yes, you can lose somebody so valuable to you, but you can turn it into something beautiful for the people who were left behind and for generations to come. You can use it as an opportunity to move forward."

Susan, who has become a forceful advocate for cancer research, spoke passionately to the well-heeled crowd about the urgency of funding the team of doctors and scientists who are working diligently to find a cure for MDS. She urged those in attendance to dip into their wallets to support the cause, pointing out that advances in research have already extended lives.

Perhaps the most convincing argument for funding was presented by Robin Roberts of the TV show *Good Morning America*. A breast cancer survivor who later contracted MDS and received a successful bone marrow donation from her sister, she told the crowd that money raised for research saved her life. "The procedure that I underwent to beat MDS did not exist 10 years ago. It's because of the money raised to research a treatment that I am here today."

Throughout the night of superb music, other celebrities offered praise for the late saxophonist. James Taylor, appearing despite nagging flu symptoms that compromised his vocals, nonetheless sang Hoagy Carmichael's "The Nearness Of You," which he had previously recorded for Brecker's 2001 Verve album, *Nearness Of You: The Ballad Book*. Backed by Brecker's 15-piece Quintet, conducted by Gil Goldstein, this lush, subtly bossa nova rendition went down smooth, although the intervallic leaps in Carmichael's melody posed a challenge for Taylor in his ill condition. After performing another of his tunes that will forever be associated with Brecker's instantly recognizable tenor work, "Don't Let Me Be Lonely Tonight," which featured a lyrical trumpet solo from Randy Brecker, Taylor reminded the crowd of another little-known part of Michael Brecker's legacy. "He led me to freedom from addiction and showed a number of us the way."

Paul Simon performed two songs that had significance to the Brecker legacy—"Still Crazy After All These Years," with tenor saxophonist Andy Snitzer recreating the famous Brecker solo from that 1975 tune, and "The Boxer," which Brecker had played on EWI while touring the world in Simon's band through 1991.

Other performances at this moving memorial included Bobby McFerrin's wordless vocal versions of Don Grolnick's "Pools" and Mike Mainieri's "Islands," both from Steps Ahead's 1983 self-titled debut that featured Brecker on tenor, and brother Randy's stunning trumpet performance of his "Elegy For Mike," which appeared on 2013's *The Brecker Brothers Band Reunion*.

Goldstein led the Quintet on a cleverly

crafted medley of four familiar Brecker compositions: "Syzygy," "Delta City Blues," "Never Alone" and the Celtic-flavored "Itsbyenne Reel." Pianist Joey Calderazzo, a longtime sideman in Brecker's quartet, performed his "Midnight Voyage" from Brecker's 1996 album *Tales From The Hudson* in a quintet setting with guitarist Adam Rogers, bassist John Patitucci, trumpeter Randy Brecker and drumming great Jack DeJohnette.

Alto saxophonist Steve Wilson turned in a show-stopping rendition of Brecker's "Angle Of Repose" from the 2003 Quintet album, *Wide Angles*. Singer Dianne Reeves delivered a remarkably soulful rendition of "One For My Baby (And

One More For The Road)," which she performed in an intimate duo setting with bassist Patitucci.

Susan Brecker felt that in addition to raising needed funding, the evening was a success on an emotional level: "Michael was such a positive guy. He was such a beautiful spirit in the world. And to honor him and to know that something good could be done with such sadness, to me, was just so Mike. He was guiding this. I really felt like he was in the room. Because so many people loved him and were there for him, I just felt so loved and supported by everybody there—especially the musicians. They couldn't have been more generous and caring."

—Bill Milkowski

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SUSAN BRECKER'S MISSION

A trained psychotherapist who gave up her private practice to raise her two children, Sam and Jessica, Susan Brecker began a long journey when her husband, Michael, was diagnosed with MDS in 2005. "I think everybody who gets diagnosed with something usually doesn't know what they need to know," she said. "Cancer is so elusive and profound of a diagnosis that when you receive the diagnosis, it's the beginning of this journey of education and emotional

regrouping and seeing who your support system is. It's such a life-changing event."

Along with Michael's manager Daryl Pitt, she began a tireless worldwide search for bone marrow donors. But finding that elusive perfect match was the proverbial needle in a haystack. They held donor drives at the Red Sea Jazz Festival, the Monterey Jazz Festival and Newport Jazz Festival, raising hundreds of thousands of dollars while testing thousands of new donors along the way.

But a perfect match for Michael was never found.

"We were told when Michael was diagnosed that he had two years to live," Susan recalled. "So it was terminal—it was going to be over. And then we had this opportunity to have this half-match transplant, so we moved to Minneapolis to have this happen. Jessica was the half-match donor for her father, and this procedure was really in the experimental phase then. Unfortunately, it didn't take, but Michael came home and recovered. He was not completely well, but well enough to have these life experiences that he would not have been a part of had he not had this transplant."

Brecker's transplant was done in November 2005, and by February 2006 the family was informed that it didn't take. "Michael came home and he had some really rocky months," Susan said, "but in May it seemed like he was going to be strong enough to record [the album] *Pilgrimage*, which had been delayed a couple of times because of his illness. So he made the recording and I figured, 'If he's well enough for that, let's go away and relax as a family.' And we did. We had a wonderful week at Sanibel Island in Florida that was so much fun. And Mike wasn't a well man but we were able to get to the beach, which he loved, and just hang out with the kids. Then we came back home and at the end of September was Sam's bar mitzvah, which Michael was quite sick for but was able to come and see his family and friends and be part of this huge moment in my son's life. At that point he was really on the decline, but to have him there for this important occasion just meant the world to all of us, and him. He wanted to be there. He wanted to be there for everything. Sadly, he was robbed. But he really was squeezing the most that he could out of a life that had been curtailed."

"That's why I feel so strongly about funding the research: Each new development, every new drug and therapy they learn about, is going to extend somebody's life—until they find a cure."

In 2010, Susan co-produced the documentary film *More To Live For*, which follows the lives of three leukemia patients facing life and death in search of bone marrow transplants, including Michael. "We made this film and took it to 25 film festivals around the world. Every time we showed the film, we tested people for the bone marrow registry. That's how I was able to make 54 matches, because we just tested so many people. And people are still making matches from the batch that we tested, as a result of the film."

Susan remains positive about the prospect of eventually eradicating the scourge of MDS. "The half-match transplant was experimental when Michael had it, but in the eight years since then, they've had huge success with it. So we are at the cusp of these inventions and discoveries, which is so exciting. So now is the time to fund the research, when they're really digging in and finding some answers, finally." —Bill Milkowski

For information on how to be tested and become a bone marrow donor, or to contribute funds to the cause, visit these websites: nearnessofyouconcert.org; lovehopestrength.org. To learn more about donor programs and the documentary *More To Live For*, visit moretoliveforfilm.com.



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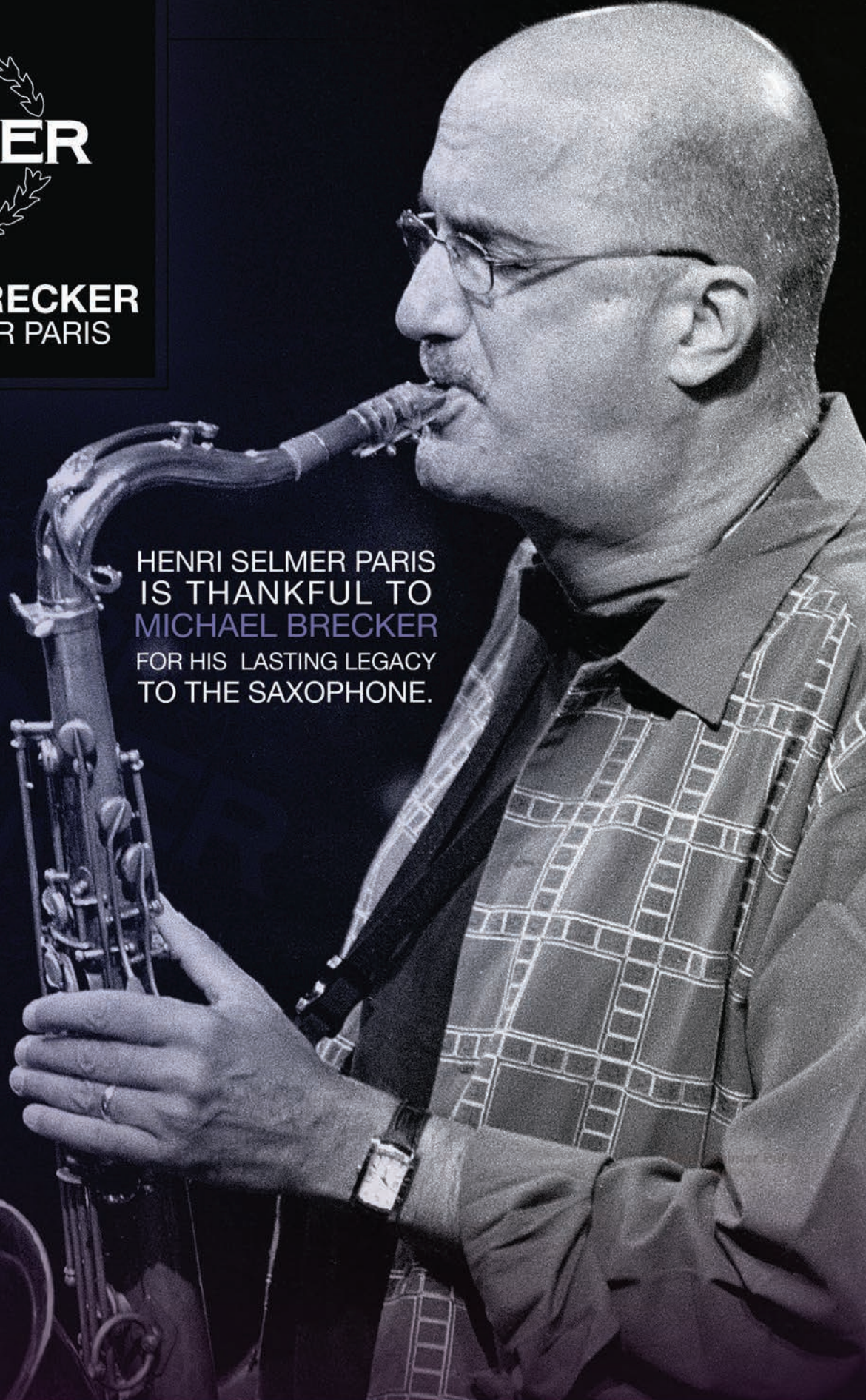
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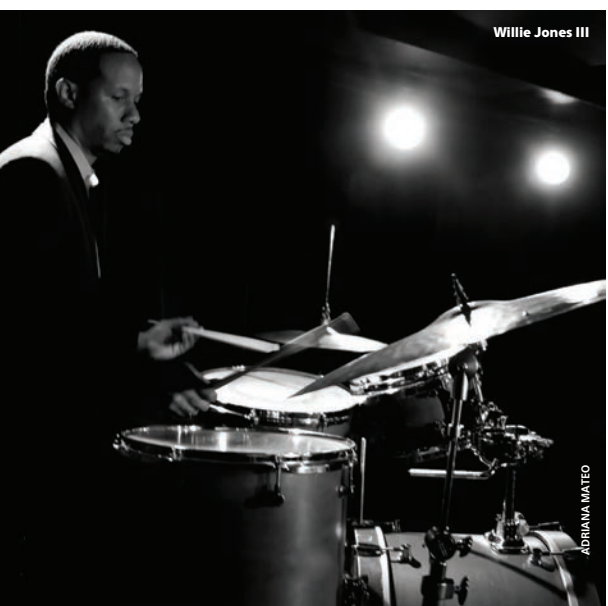
GEORGE KOPP



Mimi Jones



Greg Osby



Willie Jones III

ADRIANA MATEO



Jim Donio, president of the Music Business Association

BY ALLEN MORRISON

NAVIGATING THE DIGITAL JUNGLE

HOW JAZZ ARTISTS SURVIVE IN THE NEW MEDIA ERA

When Lisa Hilton handed over the royalty check, the teller at the Wells Fargo Bank near her home in Malibu, California, was incredulous. The jazz pianist, whose discography includes 17 albums, explained that the bank's ATM wouldn't accept the check. It was for 1 cent.

"And I'll bet they rounded it up," the teller joked. Hilton had to agree.

The check, one of several Hilton deposited that day, represented her share of performance royalties for one of her songs in a foreign country. Had it been for a single digital stream, however—or even for dozens—the payout could have been even smaller.

Countless artists in every genre of music have reported inadequate royalty payments from streaming, from Taylor Swift—who attracted enormous attention last November by pulling her albums off Spotify—to jazz guitarist Marc Ribot, who complained publicly that his latest album earned a

grand total of \$187 from some 68,000 streams in both the United States and Europe.

Welcome to the digital age.

At the recent Jazz Connect conference in New York City, many musicians voiced a mix of despair and skepticism about the business of music, yet the news is not all bad for jazz. In many ways, it's the best of times and the worst of times. It's easier than ever for jazz artists to record, but harder than ever for them to monetize their recordings.

The new media era favors business and social media-savvy entrepreneurs, but it penalizes musicians who want to maintain a single-minded focus on the demands of their art.

DownBeat spoke to leading independent jazz musicians, label executives and industry analysts to find out what they make of the radically altered music marketplace and what strategies they have devised for doing business in the current environment.

How Jazz Fared in 2014

As a whole, the music business is still reeling from the revolution of the late 1990s, when the CD format began to lose ground to digital music files, and when Napster and other digital file-sharing platforms led many consumers to expect that they could hear music without paying for it. After that, the genie was out of the bottle. In a single decade, the record business saw an astonishing decline: Revenues fell more than 50 percent, from about \$15 billion in 2003 to \$7 billion in 2013 (in constant 2013 dollars), according to RIAA figures. In 2003, almost all revenues were from the sale of physical products, mostly CDs; by 2013, two-thirds of the shrunken revenue pool came from digital distribution services like iTunes and Amazon, and streaming services like Spotify, YouTube and iTunes Radio.

Jazz, of course, represents a small fraction of the record business. Yet “the numbers for jazz this year were better than the overall market,” according to Jim Donio, president of the Music Business Association (formerly NARM). He cited statistics from Nielsen SoundScan showing that jazz’s share of the overall album market increased from 1.9 percent in 2013 to 2 percent in 2014.

Sales of jazz albums fell in 2014, with 5.2 million units sold (physical and digital combined), of which 3.2 million were CDs. Those numbers are down 6.5 percent from 2013, but they beat the overall recording market, which saw album sales decline by 11 percent.

It’s worth noting that the numbers are influenced by how albums are classified: The top jazz title for 2014 was Tony Bennett and Lady Gaga’s *Cheek To Cheek*, which sold more than a half-million copies, but could also be classified as a pop album. (The same was true in the early 2000s, when some industry insiders wanted to classify Norah Jones’ multiplatinum album *Come Away With Me* as a jazz album, while others argued that it should be considered a pop album.)

One reason jazz albums outperformed the overall album market for 2014 is that “the jazz consumer is an album consumer, and a physical album consumer at that,” Donio said. By contrast, sales of individual jazz tracks were down sharply, by 17.5 percent, considerably worse than per-track sales of other genres, which declined 12 percent.

An analysis of the larger marketplace, including jazz’s share of music streaming, is sobering. Jazz represented a mere 0.3 percent of on-demand streams last year. “Clearly the direction of the business is digital streaming,” Donio said. “Jazz has some work to do to develop its profile in the streaming space.”

The popularity of on-demand streaming ser-

vices has risen dramatically. According to the 2014 Nielsen Music U.S. Report, on-demand streaming was up 54 percent over the previous year, with 164 billion streams in 2014.

Does the CD Have a Future?

Label execs and artists alike describe a market where sales of both physical and digital products are in decline. At a conference panel on music streaming, Dick Huey, founder of the digital marketing company Toolshed, summarized it concisely: “We’ve gone from selling physical product, to selling downloads, to selling access.”

The CD format may be ailing, but it’s certainly not dead. “The CD may turn into a boutique item, similar to vinyl,” said Chuck Mitchell, vice president of Sony’s Masterworks division, which

good digital year,” thanks in part to iTunes, which named *Time And Time Again* by The Cookers the 2014 Jazz Album of the Year. The album received a further boost when Starbucks picked one of the album’s tracks as part of its “Pick of the Week” program. Herzen described both developments as, potentially, “a really good sign for jazz. It’s like being on NPR—you get a lot of attention.”

Motéma capitalized on another type of publicity after this year’s Grammy awards. *The Offense Of The Drum*—recorded by Arturo O’Farrill & The Afro Latin Jazz Orchestra—won the Best Latin Jazz Album category. Although the music industry has changed dramatically in recent years, Grammy winners still tend to benefit from a sales spike immediately after the awards show.

Motéma offers digital releases, but they continue to sell a lot of physical CDs. “With some albums, it’s 75 percent physical and 25 percent digital; sometime it’s the reverse,” Herzen explained. Naturally, she is besieged by new talent angling for a label deal. “I can only sign 10 projects in a year, and I should probably only sign eight. We can only take things that we feel passionate about, that we feel we can hit a home run with.” One of the label’s keys to success is simple: “We love marketing.”

Labels vs. DIY

Herzen often tells talented younger artists to try releasing albums themselves. “A lot of artists who submit to me are great ... but I just can’t sign [them]. Maybe they haven’t developed their fan base enough ... or their live performance chops are not quite where they should be. All we do is fan the spark with marketing. But there has to be a spark.” She is a firm believer in artists self-releasing their projects. “It doesn’t mean you have to do everything yourself—it’s more about taking your destiny in your own hands. If you love marketing and networking, then do it yourself. But if not, you’re better off hooking up with a label.”

Dozens of jazz artists have taken the plunge. After waiting for years “and not getting the call from Blue Note,” bassist Mimi Jones decided to self-release, saving up her gig money to finance her first album in 2009. “Then, so many people asked me how I did it, I decided to start a label,” she said. Her HotTone Music label now offers albums by pianist Shamie Royston, vocalist/sax player Camille Thurman and drummer Shirazette Tinnin, in addition to Jones’ own.

Guitarist Dave Stryker, after years of label releases, has made the do-it-yourself route work for him. Like almost all the musicians interviewed for this article, most of Stryker’s income derives from playing and teaching, but his boutique label,

Making Sense of Streaming

Recording artists are in an uproar about receiving little or no streaming revenue—a situation exacerbated by the fact that those services can have a damaging impact on sales of their CDs and digital downloads. By the time they filter down to most artists, revenues from music streaming services are minuscule—especially for those who don’t own their sound recordings. Compounding the problem, as the Music Business Association’s Jim Donio points out, every artist’s rate from streaming revenue can be different: For interactive services that stream on demand (think Spotify), the rate depends on the license negotiated by the artist’s label or other representative (e.g., CD Baby)—and the terms of the artist’s label contract.

Unlike the on-demand services, royalties for Internet and satellite radio services (e.g., Pandora, SiriusXM and webcasters) are collected by SoundExchange—a non-profit digital performing rights organization that claims to have paid out \$773 million in royalties to artists and owners of sound recordings in 2014.

Donio urges all recording musicians to register with SoundExchange, in addition to their other, traditional performing rights agency (ASCAP, BMI or SESAC). —Allen Morrison

includes the jazz-oriented OKeh label. “We still do a good physical business in CDs and, to some extent, in vinyl,” he said. Like many music fans old enough to remember the LP era, Mitchell regrets the decline of the album as a format. “It’s like, ‘Honey, we shrunk the product,’” he mused.

Mitchell sees an inexorable shift to streaming, noting that even the MP3 may be headed for the scrap heap. “I loved my iPod ... but I haven’t loaded anything into it in months, if not years. When we look back on it in a few years, the MP3 is going to seem like the audio cassette of the 21st century—useful for a while, but ultimately unsatisfactory.”

Jana Herzen—who used her entrepreneurial flair to turn Motéma Music, the indie jazz label she founded in 2003, into an improbable success story—saw a 25 percent increase in revenues in 2014. That included what she described as “a

StrikeZone, is more than breaking even.

For 20 years starting in 1990, Stryker had recorded an album a year for SteepleChase, the Danish jazz label run by Nils Winther, with occasional releases on other small indie labels. "At a certain point, it seemed the time was right to put out stuff on my own label," Stryker said. "I respect Nils, and I appreciate all he did for me. But I felt I could do the U.S. distribution—and getting it to radio and the press—better." Stryker does so with help from a publicist and a radio promoter. "You need to build relationships with DJs, promoters and journalists," he said.

Or, as Herzen puts it, "It takes a village" to record, distribute and promote an album.

In the old model of the record business, still in effect in some label deals today, the company usually paid the up-front costs of recording, musicians and marketing. It wasn't a gift: Most contracts allowed the label to recoup all of those costs before an artist saw any royalties. This meant, in effect, that artists would often have to wait years—or forever—to see their first dollar of royalties. "But at least you didn't have to cover all the up-front costs," Stryker said. "Now some of the labels just want you to give them the masters. That's when it becomes obvious that you should have your own label."

Stryker sees many advantages to the DIY route. "You can manufacture and distribute the CDs yourself," he said. "That means you have a lot of CDs that you can distribute to people, and it doesn't cost you the \$7 to \$10 that a label might charge you for them." There's also the publishing to consider; some labels want to own it or split it with the artist. "I've tried it different ways," he said. "I've split the publishing; I've given up the publishing; and I've owned *all* the publishing. I like owning all the publishing best," he deadpanned.

Another artist who founded his own boutique label is drummer Willie Jones III, who never forgot the advice of his mentor, drummer and educator Billy Higgins. "Billy was always preaching the importance of ownership and control of your music," he said.

Saxophonist Greg Osby, founder of the Inner Circle Music label, led a panel devoted to DIY labels at the Jazz Connect conference. He told the audience, "These days everybody has their own label because major labels aren't signing anybody."

But in a post-conference interview, Willie Jones pointed to some exceptions: "Oh, they're signing people. Blue Note is signing people right now—but if you're trying to do acoustic, straight-ahead, if you're trying to swing—good luck!" Jones has succeeded on his own terms.

"Initially I wanted to get a record deal, but I couldn't find anyone who would [sign] me," Jones said. He has now had enough success with self-releasing on his own WJ3 Records label that he has begun to issue albums by established artists such as pianists Eric Reed and Cyrus Chestnut.

How did he do it? Throughout his years of steady work as a sideman, Jones met people in the industry and got the lay of the land: "Because I had done so many sessions, I knew what sidemen were making. I figured, well, *I can pay that much*. I can do two tours and have enough money to pay for the studio and the musicians. Besides, the musi-

cians I used were all friends, so they cut me good deals. Once I was able to secure distribution, then I knew I could do it myself."

Considering that it can be a struggle just to break even, is it still necessary to have a CD? "Sometimes I wonder, 'Well, who's still out there buying CDs?' But I still get orders for them," the drummer said. "There are still quite a few mom-and-pop stores." Regardless of the economics, many artists and label executives believe it is still imperative to have a physical CD. "These days, having a CD is like having a business card," Jones

said. "Club owners don't take musicians seriously if they don't have a CD, and a nicely packaged one at that." Jones explained that most of his CDs are sold at his gigs. "Even if you're on a tour that's just breaking even," he said, "you can sell your CDs and make a ton of money that way."

Bassist/composer Ben Allison recorded 10 albums for Palmetto Records between 1998 and 2011 before deciding to start his own imprint. "The people at Palmetto were fantastic and very supportive of my music," he said. "But I reached a stage in my career where I felt that I could do as

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good a job or better of producing and distributing my music myself. I enjoy the extra control and sense of ownership that comes with having my own label. And I'm happy to say that I'm now officially in the black with my first release."

In order to create and distribute his new album, *The Stars Look Very Different Today*, Allison had to wear many hats, something that not all artists would be comfortable doing, he acknowledged. "I wrote, produced and mixed it. I also did the artwork and package design, wrote most of the press release and notes, and did all the back-end stuff," Allison explained, referring to ISRC registration, song indexing and other processes. He hired a mastering engineer to put the finishing touches on the album, as well as a publicist to help with promotion. He did all the radio promotion himself, with help from an intern.

Allison said that as publisher of his own music, he has an administration deal with a publisher to help him track down his publishing royalties. "And, of course, I take full advantage of the performing rights societies, in my case SESAC and SoundExchange," he said. "It's important for artists to identify the things they're comfortable doing and farm out the ones they're not comfortable with.... It comes down to a question of time versus money."

To Stream or Not To Stream?

Stryker now avoids streaming services like Spotify for the titles he controls, like his 2014 album *Eight Track*, preferring to sell directly to the public via iTunes, digital stores and his own website. He uses CD Baby for digital distribution and says he is happy with it. "I saw a lot of digital sales on *Eight Track*, thank you, God. Physical sales are happening off the bandstand. People need to know—that's how you can support the arts. That

and iTunes, which is the fairest deal out there. Or order it directly from the artist's website."

Some artists and label execs interviewed for this story saw benefits to having a presence on the streaming services, all in the name of "exposure," but Stryker remains skeptical. Many of his earlier albums are available on the streaming platforms. Do they help generate attendance at his live shows? "I don't think so," he said. "We're talking jazz. In principle, I would take a pass on Spotify until something more reasonable comes along. Yes, it might help up-and-coming artists get more exposure. But I just don't think it's fair."

Willie Jones sees it a bit differently. "The jazz market is so small—and seems to be getting smaller—I look at streaming as just another way for your music to be heard. If someone hears one of my CDs on Spotify, maybe it's someone who has an ear for high-quality music. I would hope that jazz lovers would want to buy it—in order to get higher quality audio. And maybe that will influence them to get our other CDs. Yes, the royalties at today's rates are almost worthless. But it is another avenue for people to hear your music, and as a jazz musician you have to be open to that."

Allison has appeared before Congress to press the case for revisions to the woefully outdated copyright law and the need for a fairer royalty system for digital streaming. (Allison serves as vice president of the New York chapter of The Recording Academy and chairs its Advocacy Committee.) He decries the present system for streaming royalties, which is based on a byzantine "percentage of revenue" model that pays based on the proportion of an artist's plays compared to other artists—not per actual stream.

"The streamers' current business model is close to legalized piracy," Allison said. "Here's a better model: If you listen to a song, you pay a penny." While streamers such as Spotify, whose

strategy is to convert "free" users into paid users, would probably object, Allison's elegantly simple idea would go a long way toward solving the equity issue that all artists currently face.

Allison hopes a revised U.S. copyright law, which has some advocates in Congress, will also address a key inequity in terrestrial radio. "When a song is played on radio [in the United States]," he said, "a royalty goes to the songwriter and publisher, but none to the performers. The U.S. is the only industrialized nation that doesn't have a performance royalty. Radio is still a very big industry—there's a lot of money there." He notes that digital broadcasters like Pandora, iTunes Radio, cable TV and SiriusXM pay performance royalties, and says that there is no justification for terrestrial broadcasters to avoid paying them.

Given the popularity of music streaming and a drastically reduced recording industry, monetizing jazz has become more difficult than ever. But it's also true that there are more potential sources of revenue than before, especially for those musicians who retain ownership of their works.

The artist advocacy group Future of Music Coalition has identified 29 discrete revenue streams for musicians beyond playing live and selling CDs and digital tracks. They include new classes of digital performance royalties, e.g., on satellite and Internet radio, collected by SoundExchange; performance royalties; synch and sampling licenses; ringtone sales; and support from crowd-funding campaigns and grants.

For those musicians who, in addition to their talent, have good networking skills and a desire to dive into the business and marketing side, there are, in many ways, more opportunities now than under the old record-company system. "This is not a market for the faint of heart," Donio said. "There's money out there, but to find that money and make it happen, you've got to hustle." **DB**

The Return of Vinyl

About 9 million vinyl records were sold in the United States in 2014. Vinyl has experienced a continuing resurgence since the mid-2000s, with sales steadily rising each year and soaring to a 51.8 percent increase in 2014, according to Nielsen. New vinyl LPs now account for 6 percent of all physical music sales. Jazz LP sales were up 81 percent in 2014 over the previous year.

Shoppers flock to New York City's Jazz Record Center, with a stock approaching 30,000 used LPs, along with new LPs, plus CDs and DVDs. "I've had a lot more requests for vinyl while CD sales have remained the same," said proprietor Fred Cohen. "It's a full-time job finding out where all the records come from and ordering them. And auction prices for vinyl keep going up and up. It's become crazy, and it's beyond Blue Note and Prestige; the fever has hit other labels as well."

The oft-cited sonic "warmth" of vinyl, its arguably wider dynamic range and the tactile aspect are more satisfying to many listeners than the fleeting, play-it-then-forget-it digital listening experience.

And it's not just indie stores that are selling vinyl, which can now be found at national retail chains like Target and Barnes & Noble.

Recent vinyl reissues include Resonance Records' *Echoes Of Indiana Avenue* by Wes Montgomery, Blue Note's 75th Anniversary LP campaign and ECM's Re:Solutions series.



Concord Music Group's reissue of Bill Evans' *The Complete Village Vanguard Recordings, 1961* has been a big hit. Pressed on 180-gram vinyl, the four-LP box set includes a 12-page booklet, liner notes by Orrin Keepnews and reissue producer Bill Belmont, photo proof sheets from the performances and a poster of Evans.

"We never stopped distributing vinyl,"

said Belmont (who refers to himself as Concord's "institutional memory consultant"). "We cut the Bill Evans LP set from digitized files taken from the original tapes used to create *Sunday At The Village Vanguard* and *Waltz For Debby*. A lot of people have been amazed at the quality."

Jazz musicians are beginning to release new titles on LP, despite the costs involved.

"The energy put into making a vinyl record is all-consuming" said alto saxophonist Andrew D'Angelo, describing his album *Norman* (self-released), with Jim Black and Trevor Dunn. "I spent months designing the artwork and the liner notes. When people buy my record, they know there's a lot of positivity put into it. It's a handmade product."

Clarinetist Ben Goldberg—whose latest vinyl release is *Orphic Machine* (Bag Productions/Royal Potato Family)—sees multiple advantages to the LP format.

"The day I release a CD, it's available on streaming sites based in Russia," Goldberg said. "It happens so fast. The LP is an object that can't be pirated. It's a way to stabilize the process between releasing music and getting paid for it." **—Ken Micallef**

Steve Gadd, Zoomed In

Creative insights from one of the world's most influential drummers.



PERFECTION IS OVERRATED

"I don't know anybody who's perfect. You go out there and do your best. And if you don't nail it, then you go out the next day and you try to get it right. That's really all you can do."

NO SHOWING OFF

"Instead of driving the music with this need to show off, I've learned to let the music dictate what I need to do. You have to really listen in order to do that."

SEEK INSPIRATION

"Originally you're inspired by hearing someone else doing something, and then taking it home and trying to learn how to do it. When I was growing up I would get records of Philly Joe, Elvin Jones, Tony Williams, and guys like that, and slow the records down and work out what they were playing, and then work on it and put my own feel to it. That's how we all learn."

BUT BE ORIGINAL

"You can't be a copy of somebody else, no matter how hard you try. It's impossible. I've seen people try to copy licks and get them exact, and I can tell they're not playing in a way that's natural or comfortable. That's not what music is all about. You have to develop your own bag of tricks. The worst thing in the world you can do is let your enthusiasm for somebody else's work stifle your own creativity."

GET IN THE GROOVE

"I've seen so many drummers who have chops and technique that would make your jaw drop to the floor. People are doing some really incredible things. To me, though, I find it just as inspiring on a whole different level when I see somebody who can play a groove and get inside it and make me tap my toes. If you can get people tapping their toes, that's it – you're playing music."

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Rob Mazurek

OPPOSING FORCES

By Bill Meyer || Photo by Guido Gazzilli

In 2013, multi-instrumentalist Rob Mazurek released a double album called *Matter Anti-Matter* (Rogue Art). The title refers directly to its juxtaposition of one CD of vibrant, forward-leaning jazz played by an all-star orchestra, and another of solitarily realized electronic sound. But it also speaks to the opposing forces that jolt Mazurek's music into multifaceted being. He is a cornetist steeped in modern jazz lyricism who has also made records of laptop music inspired by Austrian noise artists. He has studied with under-sung bebop artisans and sui generis New Thing icons, and gives honor to both. He remains durably connected to Chicago's jazz scene, but does much of his more ambitious work in Europe and Brazil. And while he envisions his art as a generative and dynamic thing—"a living organism moving through space," as he puts it—some of his most profound and affecting music responds to a family member's death.

Mazurek first picked up the cornet in 1975 when he joined school band after his family moved to Naperville, Illinois, but his musical trajectory was set by a transformative experience six years later at the Chicago Jazz Festival. "When I was 16, I saw the Sun Ra Arkestra perform," he says. "I was electrified, mystified and terrified by the fire-breathers, all the African drums, the costumes, the sound. I thought to myself at the conclusion of the concert, 'This is what I want to do.'"

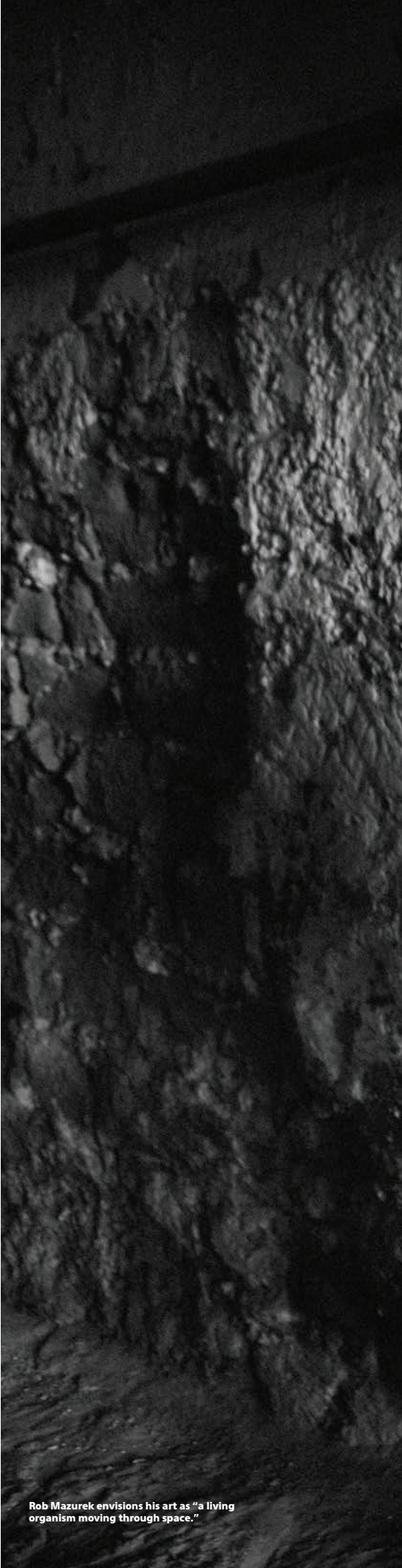
The path of Mazurek's creative journey has taken him through a myriad of musical dimensions. Despite his early brush with the avant-garde and his current pan-stylistic practice, he obtained a solid schooling in bop fundamentals at the Bloom School of Jazz and by accompanying Jodie Christian, Lyn Halliday and Kenny Prince on Chicago bandstands. Guitarist Jeff Parker recalls that when the two men first played together in 1992, "He was trying to play a lot like early Miles, Art Farmer and Chet Baker." But after making three records of solid, straightahead jazz for the Hep label, Mazurek quite consciously opened himself to new sounds, methods and influences. His instrumental sound has expanded beyond bright, bold brass melodies to encompass a freer horn vocabulary, electronic tones inspired

by musique concrète and sci-fi soundtracks, and Morton Feldman-inspired piano etudes.

In the mid-'90s, he founded the Chicago Underground to be a workshop in which he could interact with punk rock graduates like drummer John Herndon as well as free-jazz veterans like Fred Hopkins; it continues to this day as an equal partnership between Mazurek and percussionist Chad Taylor. Around the same time, Mazurek forged mutually enlightening relationships with post-rock, indie-rock and avant-garde figures including Jim O'Rourke, Sam Prekop, Luc Ferrari and the band Tortoise.

But in 2000, Mazurek exited the fluid ferment of Chicago to join his Brazilian wife, an academic and activist for indigenous people, in the Amazonian city of Manaus. Cut off from both the jazz and alternative music scenes, he first threw himself into painting (a discipline he has pursued since he found himself unaccountably moved by a Mark Rothko canvas in his early 20s) and making electronic music inspired by the sounds of electric eels and jungle environments. But after moving around the country, he connected with a circle of former musicians who were fans of his work, and who would form the core of his current groups, the Sao Paulo Underground and Black Cube SP. Throughout that time, Mazurek periodically returned to the United States and Europe to tour with the Chicago Underground and a series of other ensembles that have tested diverse dimensions of rock volume, electronic sound and free improvisation.

The largest and longest-lived is Exploding Star Orchestra, a big band whose book comprises dynamic, cosmic-themed suites of epic length. While certain Exploding Star Orchestra recordings showcase encounters with the late trumpeter Bill Dixon and saxophonist Roscoe Mitchell, it is the chemistry between Mazurek, a stream of occasional contributors and a handful of core members that puts it into orbit. Amidst the change, certain qualities persist. One is the subject matter, which is informed by the fringes of science and grapples with fundamental concerns of human existence. Another is the orchestra's immense sound, which features masses of jazz, noise, free improvisation, soapbox



Rob Mazurek envisions his art as "a living organism moving through space."



Mazurek learned important lessons about finding his own vocabulary while spending time with Art Farmer in the early 1990s.



GUIDO GAZZILLI

oratory and contemporary classical music pushing against one another like tectonic plates. Many of the core members are bandleaders themselves. While they grasp his intentions, he invites them to introduce ideas that eclipse his own.

Flutist Nicole Mitchell explains, “The reason why I love playing with Rob is because I always feel from him complete trust in me to ‘do my thang’—which is many times a rebellion from what he told me to do originally, but at the same time he’s much happier with what I chose to do. Some people, you feel you have to work really hard to figure out ‘What do they want?’ But in my experience with Rob, I can trust myself.”

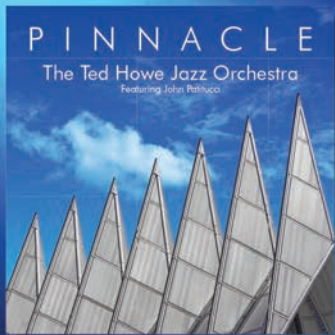
While the compositional buck stops with Mazurek, Exploding Star Orchestra’s music often evolves organically from discussions and brief workshop-like gigs between him and its members. Damon Locks, who is also a member of a dubwise groove duo called The Eternals, recalls how his climactic vocal turn about boxer Joe Frazier’s complicated relationship with Muhammad Ali on “Sixty-Three Moons Of Jupiter” evolved

out of a chat on a plane. “I’d just seen a film about him, and we were discussing it on the way to Sao Paulo. Chad [Taylor] happened to have an in-flight magazine with an article about Joe Frazier; Rob said, ‘Put this in,’ and I said OK. If anything rises to the surface, I can bring it to Exploding Star.”

Mazurek returned to the Chicago area in 2008. But he does frequent extended tours of Europe, and the ongoing support of individuals, institutions and festivals in Italy, Portugal, Brazil and most recently Marfa, Texas, has enabled his most ambitious projects to take form. Family ties, including a new marriage, keep him in Illinois, and a profound family event—his mother’s death in 2013—instigated two especially powerful releases the following year. He recorded *Return The Tides* (Cuneiform) with Black Cube SP, a Brazilian septet, just two weeks after her passing, and it uses in-the-red fidelity and psychedelic tape effects to both express and transcend raw emotional experience. Then three months later, on her birthday, he performed *Mother Ode*, a solo concert released by the Corbett Vs. Dempsey label. Part performance art, part ritual, Mazurek used physical props to frame its passage from serene melody to cathartic blow-out; since then, solo performance has become a more frequent and important part of his work, and a very different solo concert recorded in Rome has already been slated for release.

Currently, Mazurek maintains a host of ensembles, including Black Cube SP, Exploding

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Star Orchestra, Pulsar Quartet, Alternate Moon Cycles, Chicago Underground Duo and Sao Paulo Underground. The latter two maintain an ongoing relationship with saxophonist Pharoah Sanders. And Mazurek remains open to new projects, such as a recent recording with Italian experimentalists Attilio Novellino, Saverio Rosi and Tim Barnes that places his probing horn lines among machine sounds and radio static to create hallucinatory soundscapes. But he has also set 2016 as the year he will realize his most ambitious endeavor yet. It is an opera that will include a collaboration with singer-songwriter Emmett Kelly, the next Exploding Star Orchestra record, *Galactic Parables Vol. 1* (for Cuneiform), and parts not yet written, all of which will explore themes of being and becoming human and ponder what sort of life forms will replace us.

DownBeat caught up with Mazurek in Chicago in January.

DownBeat: Let's talk about your background. What was it like to study with Art Farmer?

Rob Mazurek: Some of my best lessons of all time came from hanging out with Art Farmer. There is no better player of beautiful, super-interesting, clean lines. I spent some time with him in the early '90s. At that time I had recorded three pretty straight-ahead jazz records for the Hep label out of Edinburgh, Scotland. He wanted to hear these records, so I brought them in the next day and he said come back tomorrow. I came back the next day and he had listened to the records. He said, "You know, you play jazz just fine. It sounds fine to me, but fine isn't good enough. You can't just sound like the people who have come before you—you have to find your own vocabulary. You have to find your own way to express yourself and your own ideas that isn't just copying your heroes." I was a Miles freak, and [a fan of] Lee Morgan, Kenny Dorham, Blue Mitchell, Art Farmer and Don Cherry. At that time I was learning their solos and being encouraged to try and play like them. That's what you do: You emulate the masters and, of course, hopefully you go on to do your own thing. But when Art Farmer suggests something, you listen really hard. The same thing with Bill Dixon and Pharoah Sanders. So that was

a real turning point. [Farmer] was real adamant about it. He said, "It's not even that you have to be able to play every single thing. You'd be surprised how many of the great jazz masters did a certain thing and did that certain thing well. And out of that they built their vocabulary." He was telling me to respect your heroes by not sounding like them. It was about a month or two after that that I started the Chicago Underground with Jeff Parker.

Talk about the making of Return The Tides.

Losing my mother was the most incredible thing that I have experienced in life. She was really close to me. My mom was always a hero; she was the one who was behind me no matter what. I had scheduled some shows in Brazil with Pharoah Sanders with the Black Cube SP group. I didn't know she was going to pass right away. The week leading up to when she was passing, I told her I'm not going. And you know, she insisted that no matter what happened I would go. And it just so happened that she passed after 11 days, and I went to Brazil two weeks after that.

I studied Buddhism really hard-core for about 10 years in the '80s and early '90s, and you try to get a better understanding of life and death, the interconnectivity of all things ... the idea of passing and what this is all about. You try to conceptualize and imagine yourself into believing this way or that way. But when it happens, man, it's really something else.

All I knew was that after she passed, I had to go to Brazil. Mauricio [Takara] and Guilherme [Granado] are some of my closest friends. We have a 10-year history of playing together. The last time those guys came to tour a couple years ago, they stayed at my folks' house. They met my mother and my father. I knew I had to do this with them. So we did the concert with Pharoah Sanders, and I decided to stay in Brazil for a couple weeks. When my mom passed, I really felt a seismic shift, a really strong feeling that not only changed my outlook on life and death, but also down to my playing and composing.

In Brazil, you make offerings to the orishas, Candomblé stuff, so we poured a bottle of Cachaça to the African-Brazilian deities. We did the first take and it was strong, it was powerful, it was cool. Then we just took a break and busted out another bottle of Cachaça, made

some more offerings to the various gods and goddesses, and then we went upstairs and then the only thing said was let's everybody get out of their skull, out of their heads, let's let go of ourselves and do this. So we played a second run of the thing, and that's exactly the record.

The funny thing is that we tried to mix it really nicely, make all the instruments sound beautiful, and the mixing kind of killed it. In the end, the rough edit of this thing is so powerful, and so cathartic, it's just fine the way it is. You know, you can make something as nice and beautiful as you want. You can fix anything in the world with editing, but sometimes—well, a lot of times—I prefer that blown-out, blown-speaker, gritty texture. I'm trying to find textures. I can write as pretty a melody as anybody else can. I've done it, and there are melodies in this suite as well, but this is how we played it. The only thing done in post-production on the whole record is the track that I reversed. I did that at the mastering session—at the very last second. My mother dealt with a lot of pain because she had severe rheumatoid arthritis. I felt when she passed that, instead of tears falling down, tears were falling upwards. So at the last minute, I said, "You need to reverse the sound."

Some musicians, like Exploding Star saxophonist Matt Bauder, make albums that deal specifically with genre. Do you think of genres or periods of time as part of your material?

I have never thought in those terms. That's probably why my music might be a little more obscure or strange, or maybe it's harder to put a finger on exactly what in the world I'm doing. Just dealing with things that come into my head, come into my mind, come into my soul if you want to call it, and then arranging it for whatever, for people, personalities and issues that I find interesting. I still feel like I'm being fairly classical in terms of melodic choices. I still have this absolute desire to break through to something. I'm not making music just to make a nice song on this record, or to play nice music with my friends. I'm really trying to find something that can give me a better understanding of why we are here, for myself and with the thought that other people might want that information. So when I talk about being a radical,

it's in that sense, and not the idea of being radical in the sense of being reckless. It's like trying to define the term *radicalness* to open things up in a rigorous manner. That's what drives me to play, that's what drives me to improvise, that's what drives me to paint, that's what drives me to work in a few other things like text and words and the larger experience of things.

One of my biggest influences is Bill Dixon. Bill Dixon is his own genre; he is the genre. I guess if someone asked Bill the same question about genre, he would say, "The sound world that I'm rigorously working on, that's the genre." When you listen to Bill Dixon, you don't hear a genre, you don't hear an artist vying for someone's attention. You are listening to an evolution: to days, months, years, decades of searching for a sound.

I have a tendency in a lot of my music to bury my sound, to use my horn as a textural element rather than for a ripping virtuoso solo. I like to think in terms of texture a lot more. There are plenty of people in Exploding Star who can play an extended solo that I can listen to all day, but texture is what's needed sometimes—even in a smaller group, like the duo, or a solo concert, or Alternate Moon Cycles.

Damon Locks' vocals in Exploding Star Orchestra are interesting because it's hard to know what it is. It's not spoken word, it's not rap, it's not dancehall and it's not jazz singing.

That's part of the reason why I like working with Damon so well; he kind of falls in the cracks, he's in the middle and all around all of that stuff. He was brought up dealing with punk music and more hardcore stuff, the great things he did with Trenchmouth and does with The Eternals, and I always liked his delivery. I don't want it to sound like spoken word and I don't want it to sound like traditional jazz singing; I like stuff that falls in the cracks. It's kind of like June Tyson meets Orson Welles on a space mission to Jupiter.

When I find people I trust, I don't have to say too much. With someone excellent like Nicole Mitchell, you barely have to say one sentence to her about any concept and she's all over it. You can trust her to do the perfect thing. I find that Damon has the same kind of attitude. **DB**

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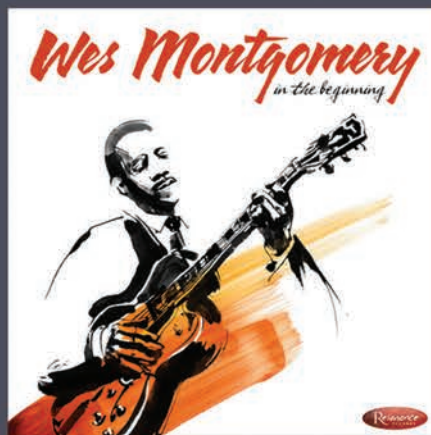
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REVIEWS >

Steve Turre



Steve Turre *Spiritman*

SMOKE SESSIONS 1502
★★★★★

It's always a good sign when a studio disc has the unbuttoned verve of a live album. From the first spin on, *Spiritman* conjures that vibe. Steve Turre doesn't go out of his way to bend trad rules or implement innovative thematic notions.

In a move that's overtly steeped in the blues lingo and funk flavoring that have fueled many of his recent dates, the esteemed trombonist makes a dent—not exactly easy for a mainstream swing session in 2015. But by fanning the flames of his ensemble and making sure he brings the fire when it comes time to solo, Turre

catches a spark.

In case non-New Yorkers don't know, Smoke is an uptown club that's become a bastion of this kind of heat. Turre, who always seems to be on a bandstand somewhere (he remains part of the *Saturday Night Live* crew) has found a welcoming home there, and his shows are known to be ardent affairs. *Spiritman* parallels that vibe.

It's an album rich in panache. The string of records Turre has made in recent years have been substantial in chops and execution, if mildly routine in the vision and innovation department. This new date, made with a savvy quintet, has a bit more splash all the way around. From the bounce of Gerald Cannon's bass to the vigor of Bruce Williams' reeds, the action is taken up a notch.

The book is largely standards—perhaps ho-hum on paper—but the leader's esprit is infectious, and the group (drummer Willie Jones III and pianist Xavier Davis round out the band) rises to each new challenge, whether it's injecting "It's Too Late Now" with a fervent demeanor or giving "Trayvon's Blues" an irresistible groove.

Throughout, Turre's brass mastery sits front and center. Look no further if you want to hear why he's so respected in the jazz community.
—Jim Macnie

Spiritman: Bu; Lover Man; Funky Thing; Trayvon's Blues; It's Too Late Now; With A Song In My Heart; 'S Wonderful; Peace; Nangaldef; Spiritman—All Blues. (70:01)

Personnel: Steve Turre, trombone, shells; Bruce Williams, alto and soprano saxophones; Xavier Davis, piano; Gerald Cannon, bass; Willie Jones III, drums; Wilson "Chembo" Corniel, congas (9).

Ordering info: smokesessionsrecords.com



Aaron Goldberg *The Now*

SUNNYSIDE 1402

★★★★½

The journeyman work of the Aaron Goldberg Trio has been a fairly fixed navigational point on the skyline since it first popped up in 1998, and especially since its move to Sunnyside 11 years ago. This straight-up, acoustic threesome has stuck together like the Musketeers, mixing its CDs with off-beat outside tunes, a sprinkling of originals and drop-in guests from the neighborhood. In this case, it's Kurt Rosenwinkel, whose guitar on the eminently lyrical "One Life" seems to harbor the deeply embedded alter ego of a flute. A master of unexpected sounds, he morphs almost invisibly between the two with the seamlessness of a soap bubble.

Having played together for so long, the trio's stated mission seems to be to resist the tempta-

Jack DeJohnette *Made In Chicago*

ECM 2392

★★★★★

Although Jack DeJohnette is not always thought of in relation to the AACM, his roots in Chicago and his affiliation with members of the association represent an integral part of his personal narrative. DeJohnette is reportedly the one who introduced Roscoe Mitchell to Muhal Richard Abrams, a fateful meeting for the future of jazz. DeJohnette's Chicago years are a legacy the drummer has been reaffirming of late, playing with Wadada Leo Smith and convening this all-star lineup for the 2014 Chicago Jazz Festival.

The concert was terrific and enthusiastically received, despite the fact that it made no compromises for the huge crowd. From the start, a burning line was established, Mitchell's "Chant" providing the saxophonist a platform for an incendiary solo, the child-like scalar theme giving way to peals of soprano. I remember thinking, "How unfriendly!"—but in a good way.

What's especially interesting is to hear this not as a nostalgia trip, but as a marker of how far everyone has traveled in the last half-century. DeJohnette is relaxed and open, leaving space, enjoying the pure ring of his cymbals. Henry Threadgill's beautiful and haunting alto, always and immediately recognizable, is paired nicely with Mitchell on Abrams' slowly emerging "Jack 5," and Larry Gray's big, ragged funk is reminis-

tions of preparation and assert the value of an intuitive spontaneity. Goldberg's intuitions have both depth and refinement, so experiments in spontaneity present few serious risks. But while a shakedown performance of a minor Brazilian ballad like "Trocando Em Miudos" may have what Goldberg calls "an explorative quality," it doesn't seem to hold the consummation of completeness. It's not that the performance sounds premature or empty—Goldberg can brocade any theme efficiently—merely uneventful. Ballads take time to root in one's experience, of course, and it's easy to undervalue them at first pass. Yet the impressionistic "Wind In The Night" has a consistency of mood and tone that reaches out softly in a quiet emotional arc. And "Francisca" has a fine, low-key romanticism.

The music jumps to life as the tempos do the same. "Yoyo" has a bluesy, Latin lode that bobs in an oblique and infectious manner. Charlie Parker's bop classic "Perhaps" snaps into focus from the first note and concisely frames Goldberg's tightly wrapped but understated virtuosity. Bolder and faster still is the Lennie Tristano/Warne Marsh tune "Background Music." Right and left hands play a rapid parallel line at a distance of several octaves. On the one hand, it emits a vague flavor of camp. On the other, it purveys the kind of muscle that Oscar Peterson once dazzled audiences with.

—John McDonough

The Now: Trocando Em Miudos; Yoyo; The Wind In The Night; E-Land; Perhaps; Triste Baía Da Guanabara; Background Music; Francisca; One's A Crowd; One Life. (52:40)

Personnel: Aaron Goldberg, piano; Reuben Rogers, bass; Eric Harland, drums; Kurt Rosenwinkel (10), guitar.

Ordering info: sunnysiderecords.com



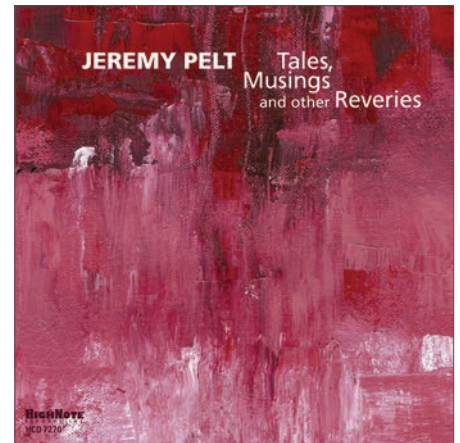
cent of Chicago bassist Fred Hopkins' work with the avant-garde trio Air. DeJohnette's "Museum Of Time" gave Abrams an opportunity to assert his softer side, an impressionistic undercurrent that colored the waves of unison horn. For the manic spontaneous encore, Mitchell returns to the urgent circular breathing of the concert's convening moments, closing the circle with a flinty soprano sprint.

—John Corbett

Made In Chicago: Chant; Jack 5; This; Museum Of Time; Leave Don't Go Away; Ten Minutes. (43:24)

Personnel: Jack DeJohnette, drums; Roscoe Mitchell, soprano saxophone, soprano saxophone, alto saxophone, flute, recorder; Henry Threadgill, alto saxophone, flute; Muhal Richard Abrams, piano; Larry Gray, bass.

Ordering info: ecmrecords.com



Jeremy Pelt *Tales, Musings And Other Reveries*

HIGHNOTE 7270

★★★★

The title *Tales, Musings And Other Reveries* suggests miscellany. Two drummers drive this project, and it starts out with a furious vibe, and one of the tracks is even dedicated to a New York victim of police brutality, Eric Garner. Yet despite these impressive attributes, the album's most affecting tracks are the quieter, intimate and lyrical ones. That's partly because Pelt's tone and turns of phrase, which owe something to Miles Davis, are so poignant on ballads, but also because the drummers in question are Billy Drummond and Victor Lewis, who shade each other so delicately with both cymbals and sticks.

After three so-so tracks, including Clifford Jordan's "Glass Bead Games" and Wayne Shorter's "Vonetta," the album comes alive on Pelt's fanciful "Everything You Can Imagine Is Real." Built over a winsome, rocking piano vamp and lovely descending chords, the tune showcases a lyrical solo by bassist Ben Allison. Pelt cuts to the heart of Jimmy Van Heusen's romantic ballad "I Only Miss Her When I Think of Her" as well.

A couple of more rhythmically juiced tracks also shine, both originals: "Nephtys," where Drummond and Lewis make a real ruckus in three, and "The Old Soul Of The Modern Day Wayfarer," which starts with soldierly momentum then swirls into multidirectional swing.

The rest of the tracks never really gel, though there are some good moments. "Glass Bead Games" starts with ominous tolling and a fierce thrum, then features a spirited conversation between Lewis (left channel) and Drummond (right). Pelt's rich, full tone on "Vonetta" evokes a yearning mood, but the track is diffuse.

Pelt returns to the dark feel of the opener with "Ruminations On Eric Garner," an open-form improv that settles into a deep, swelling three, which, though moving, never boils to catharsis. Nevertheless, kudos to Pelt for stepping forward on the subject, even if it is on an album that never quite comes into focus.

—Paul de Barros

Tales, Musings And Other Reveries: Glass Bead Games; Vonetta; Harlem Thoroughfare; Everything You Can Imagine Is Real; Ruminations On Eric Garner; I Only Miss Her When I Think of Her; Nephtys; The Old Soul of the Modern Day Wayfarer. (57:42)

Personnel: Jeremy Pelt, trumpet; Simona Premazzi, piano; Ben Allison, bass; Billy Drummond, Victor Lewis, drums.

Ordering info: jazzdepot.com

The Hot Box

Critics	John McDonough	John Corbett	Jim Macnie	Paul de Barros
Steve Turre <i>Spiritman</i>	★★★★	★★★	★★★★	★★★
Aaron Goldberg <i>The Now</i>	★★★½	★★★★	★★★★	★★★★
Jack DeJohette <i>Made In Chicago</i>	★★½	★★★★	★★★★	★★★★
Jeremy Pelt <i>Tales, Musings And Other Reveries</i>	★★★	★★★★	★★★★	★★★

Critics' Comments

Steve Turre, *Spiritman*

I'd rather hear Turre play trombone than seashell. But he can play a broken Coke bottle if he likes (for a few minutes, anyway) when he delivers the kind of swinging clarity he measures out on this neat and most recommended CD. He's earned it. His even sound has a felt-lined brawn that mirrors a fastidious precision. Altoist Williams is also on the money. —*John McDonough*

A heartfelt, straightforward, by-the-book session. Turre is ultra dependable, so even if the choices are not infused with surprise, the music is guaranteed to be solid when it allows space for his trombone. I could do with a minimization of shells, but Turre makes modal hay with them on his version of "All Blues," and Chemo Corneil's contribution to "Nangadel" is subtle and wonderful. —*John Corbett*

With his conch shells and soulful spirit, Turre's one of a kind, but he's been taking us to the same place quite a bit lately. This album has some definite high points—the trombone solo on "It's Too Late Now," for one—but some of it sounds merely congenial. —*Paul de Barros*

Aaron Goldberg, *The Now*

A program with some great kinks—the Brazilian tinge, the cool contrapuntal take on Bird and a dazzling 10-fingered Marsh—but focused on tight trio interplay as much as sweet songcraft. —*John Corbett*

The invention overflows and it's easy to hear because these three truly are a band. Nuanced thrills spill every which way, interplay sits in the front seat, and even the compositions are laced together wisely. —*Jim Macnie*

We all knew Goldberg was good, but wow, this playful, technically dazzling album just sizzles with swinging good feeling, great ideas and lyrical warmth. The coda by Kurt Rosenwinkel, as good as it is, doesn't really fit, though. —*Paul de Barros*

Jack DeJohette, *Made In Chicago*

This mix of minimalism, impressionism, brays and frenzied arpeggios harkens nostalgically to the '60s, when the AACM helped pioneer jazz as a performance art, breeding both influence and debate. Though the curtain of reverence around the AACM may camouflage some fishy wizards, DeJohette has formidable moments, and there is a reclusive beauty to Mitchell. —*John McDonough*

It's flecked with leftie clichés, but somehow each of these performances winds up fending for itself, and best, they all seem connected by the end. Which means this show plays like an album, an experience that makes room for squall, drones and percussion webs. Shrewd and resourceful. —*Jim Macnie*

Good for Jack, reconnecting with college buddies Roscoe Mitchell and Henry Threadgill, who chose a more radical path than he in the AACM. The beauty of this live album, however, is hearing just how compatibly broad the drummer's vision is and how easily he fits in. Mitchell's spiraling "Chant" is like trance music for a dervish; Muhal Richard Abrams sounds like two pianists on "Leave Don't Go Away." —*Paul de Barros*

Jeremy Pelt, *Tales, Musings And Other Reveries*

Pelt strains a bit in his more feverish forays, producing a sweaty, slap-dash turmoil. Lewis and Drummond are in sync, though the careening dialogs of "Ruminations" slide close to a kind of bumper car derby. Pelt needs the fences of structure, even if it's the stop-time ploy of "Harlem." "Wayfarer" is his best work, while he has a cool pensiveness on "I Only Miss Her." —*John McDonough*

Plenty of pleasing, unexpected things here, from Simona Premazzi's smart playing to the powder-keg of Drummond and Lewis. Double-drum groups have a low hit-to-miss ratio, but this pairing is massive; it pushes the whole trumpet quartet format into another zone, forcing Pelt to play his butt off, and opening up the sound space to feel more orchestral than chamber-like. —*John Corbett*

The sheer diversity of the tracks prompts reasons for acclaim—Pelt blends yesterday with tomorrow. The double-drummer choice pays off in the individualism department, too. Time and again, Drummond and Lewis trade ideas and jump-start the action. —*Jim Macnie*

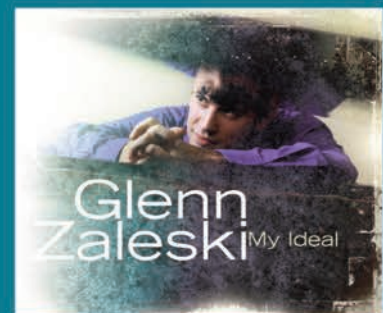


JOANNA WALLFISCH with DAN TEPFER THE ORIGIN OF ADJUSTABLE THINGS

SSC 1405 - IN STORES 3/3/2015

The *Origin of Adjustable Things*, is a stark and expressive duo album with rising piano master Dan Tepper. In the mysterious poetry of her lyrics, the freshness of her harmonic choices and the expansiveness of her sonic palette, Wallfisch sets a high bar as she and Tepper explore a musical universe of their own making.

"This album is very much a result of the personal and musical connection we share," says Wallfisch of Tepper, who served as engineer on the main recording session as well.



GLENN ZALESKI MY IDEAL

SSC 1406 - IN STORES 3/17/2015

with
DEZRON DOUGLAS bass
CRAIG WEINRIB drums

Zaleski had grown up learning to play the jazz music canon by listening to his heroes, Dave Brubeck and Bill Evans, most notably Evans's *Everybody Digs Bill Evans* and *Portrait In Jazz*, and knew that he wanted to record his own album of standards. He appreciated their approaches to using straightforward material as vehicles to express their distinct musical language and initiate group interaction. It was their model that he wanted so much to utilize in his own debut recording, for which he had just found his perfect musical foils in Douglas and Weinrib.



iTunes.com/joannawallfisch
iTunes.com/glennzaleski
www.sunsiderecords.com



Rudiments & Brainwaves

Researchers at Stockholm's Karolinska Institutet have discovered that drummers score exceedingly well on their 60-question intelligence test. And scientists at Stanford's Center for Computer Research in Music and Acoustics found that rhythmically directed music may remedy a range of neurological conditions. Furthermore, Harvard figured out that a drummer's internal clock doesn't move linearly like a real clock, but rather, in waves similar to human brainwaves. So next time you think the drummer has dropped (or added) a beat, know that, from his perch on Mount Intelligence, he's simply matching the elemental beat at the center of the universe.

Canadian drummer-composer **Curtis Nowosad** boldly tackles a new vision of post-hard-bop on his sophomore album, *Dialectics* (**Cellar Live 010115; 50:11 ★★★★★½**). Kick-starting the album with a time-shifting funk relay on Wayne Shorter's "Speak No Evil," Nowosad's group of tenor player Jimmy Greene, bassist Steve Kirby, trumpeter Derrick Gardner and pianist Will Bonness smack-down the song's hard corners every time, inserting rip-snorting solos like Pro Tools slice-and-diced sample injections. Nowosad and company repeat the feat on Monk's "Bye-Ya," bridging heated Latin circulation with angular, jumping rhythms that are as thrill-inducing as mad scientists riding a roller coaster. Nowosad is fiery and scalding one moment, breezy and swinging the next, and perpetually inventive throughout. His solo on "159 & St. Nick" sounds like a drum corps racing over Niagara Falls, his garrulous flams, crush rolls and skull-cracking accents pure joy.

Ordering info: cellarlive.com

Los Angeles veteran drummer and soundtrack composer **Jerry Kalaf** presents his sensitive sticking and serenity-inducing compositions on *Welcome To Earth* (**Palm Mountain; 51:22 ★★★**), performing with three different groups consisting of trio and sextet lineups. Kalaf's deeply felt, dark-toned ride cymbal playing and spacious brushwork are the subliminal stars here, his measured pulse steering his music's ethereal course. Every composition reveals Kalaf's subtle wit as well as the expressive playing of bassist Domenic Genova, saxophonist Doug Walter and pianist Rich Ruttenberg, among others. Fans of pianist Bill Evans' classic work need look no further.

Ordering info: jerrykalaf.com

Dylan Howe's beautiful, shape-shifting and at times eerie *Subterranean* (**Motorik; 51:22**



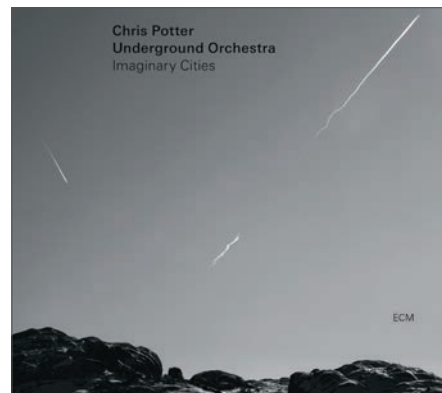
Dylan Howe

★★★★★) is like an interstellar journey with Tony Williams' *Spring* and Terje Rypdal's *To Be Continued* as your collective soundtrack. The son of Yes guitarist Steve Howe, Dylan has played on over 60 recordings and released four solo albums, one playing the music of David Bowie's *Low* and *Heroes* and described as "future jazz sextet with strings and electronics." *Subterranean* embraces sizzling electronic sounds and moody European soundtracks informed by Howe's pulsating, time-chipping drumming, with a subtle English chamber music approach. Ed Blackwell-inspired drumming opens "Weeping Wall," the song nearly levitating via a marimba loop, breathy saxophone and an ascending melody. "All Saints" does a slow burn with simmering metal guitar blasts and Dolphy-inspired tenor blowing. "Neuköln-Night" turns over a nightmarish vision of queasy synth, stark piano chords and traffic sounds set aloft by Howe's elastic, spring-boarding drum interplay. Colorful and consistently surprising, *Subterranean* leads you on a journey where the destination is no more important than the ride itself. Stunning, essential.

Ordering info: dylanhowe.com

Finally, what with everyone thinking they're as smart as their drummer, some want to become the drummer, as heard on pianist **George Colligan & Theoretical Planets' Risky Notion** (**Origin 82681; 55:11 ★★★★★**). As Colligan tells it, after recording his 25th album, it was "time for something drastically different." But can Colligan play? Well, can Jack DeJohnette play the piano? Can Chick Corea play the drums? Like these masters, Colligan acquits himself nicely in warm, open-ended compositions where he can flail, roll, stroke and swing to his heart's content. Throughout *Risky Notion*, Colligan's drumming sometimes exemplifies the naïveté of a young musician in love with the sounds of his instrument, his ideas sometimes executed hurly-burly. But Colligan's drumming is as joyful as his music is enthralling. **DB**

Ordering info: origin-records.com



Chris Potter Underground Orchestra *Imaginary Cities*

ECM 2387

★★★★½

Just as on *The Sirens*, the 2013 album that found him considering Homer, *Imaginary Cities* sees saxophonist Chris Potter thinking big and conceptually, conjuring utopian population centers. Here, he stretches his compositional palette to encompass a string quartet and an expanded version of his Underground quartet. The result is a triumphant integration of diverse elements that alternately soars and dances.

A big component of Potter's success was his decision to add two bassists to his expanded lineup—Scott Colley on double bass and Fima Ephron on electric. Together, they generate the momentum that gives *Imaginary Cities* much of its graceful motion, particularly on "Compassion," the first part of the suite for which the recording is named. Layered with David Eggar's cello, the twin bassists also create a rich, woody bottom to contrast with Adam Rogers' bright, chiming guitar, Steve Nelson's vibes and Potter's occasional foray on soprano.

Melding a jazz combo with a string quartet does not always yield good results. But with the superlative Mark Feldman on violin, Potter has a strong starting point, and he follows that up with writing that is imaginative and highly varied. On the final movement of the suite and on "Sky," the strings convey Middle Eastern and Indian moods, while on "Shadow Self" Potter taps into the Magyar folk harmonies that influenced Béla Bartók.

Finally, what stands out is the way that Potter fits his brawny tenor into this crowded field without making it sound forced. When he surges out of the ensemble on "Dualities" or suddenly dominates on "Shadow Self," he creates a palpable frisson in what is already exciting music. What has distinguished Potter in recent recordings is his ability to shift gears and introduce new thematic ideas to a line. That ability, combined with his burgeoning compositional ambitions, shows that his career has moved to a new level. —James Hale

Imaginary Cities: Lament; Imaginary Cities 1: Compassion; Imaginary Cities 2: Dualities; Imaginary Cities 3: Disintegration; Imaginary Cities 4: Rebuilding; Firefly; Shadow Self; Sky. (71:09)

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

Ordering info: ecmrecords.com

Jim Snidero

Main Street

SAVANT 2142
★★★★★

Dave Grohl made a much bigger deal out of his musical map of America. Infusing the musical DNA of the nation's great cities into the latest Foo Fighters album, the band crafted a record of geographical influences. The album rollout even came with a self-important, overproduced HBO miniseries.

On his fifth record for Savant, veteran alto saxophonist and venerable jazz educator Jim Snidero takes a cue from the Fools, albeit on a smaller scale and with arguably more musical results. The eight tunes on *Main Street*—"Las Vegas Tango," "Autumn In New York," "The Streets Of Laredo" and five originals—constitute Snidero's musical impressions of towns across America.

Snidero uses different tempos and feels for each programmatic title—"Post Time Saratoga" is meant to reflect the pace of the race track, while "Duluth At Noon" mirrors the speed of the city at midday—but the main takeaway is not the tunes, but his brilliant tone and effortless playing. Pianist Fabian Almazan, bassist Linda Oh and drummer Rudy Royston, heard here in top form, are more than solid accompaniment for Snidero.

Highlights of the disc are Almazan's introductions to two tunes—the pointillistic improvisation on "Duluth" and the haunting, rumbling pronouncement on "Las Vegas." The lineup, formed as a one-off for the disc, functions as an ensemble of peers who have been playing together for years.

Snidero's radiant, free-blowing tone rolls out of the saxophone with little resistance, making his solos of quick, tortuous barrages of notes sound like they're flying by with even more speed. The original uptempo numbers are compelling, but Snidero shines when interpreting other people's music. "Autumn" is a delightful slow-burn of a tune, and Snidero's ballad tone is forceful in its subtlety. He closes with "Laredo," ensconcing the traditional tune in a modern jazz aesthetic.

—Jon Ross

Main Street: Duluth At Noon; Post Time Saratoga; Las Vegas Tango; Oxford Square; Autumn In New York; Born In Redwood City; Walla Walla; The Streets Of Laredo. (51:24)

Personnel: Jim Snidero, alto saxophone; Fabian Almazan, piano; Linda Oh, bass; Rudy Royston, drums.

Ordering info: jazzdepot.com



ALBERT "TOOTIE" HEATH ETHAN IVERSON BEN STREET Philadelphia BEAT

SSC 1403 - IN STORES 3/3/2015

Last September, Albert "Tootie" Heath took his students Ethan Iverson and Ben Street back to his hometown Philadelphia for a gig, a hang with old friends, and this record date of music associated with his long career. A lavish booklet includes new and vintage photos plus commentary by Iverson and Hyland Harris.

Omar Sosa

Ilé

OTÁ 1027
★★★★★

To describe Omar Sosa as an "Afro-Cuban" composer/pianist is like saying James Joyce was an Irish writer. Fixing his point of origin and the tradition that spawned him doesn't begin to convey the singularity of his art, which, over the course of 22 albums as a leader (and seven Grammy nominations) since 1997, has mixed jazz and Latin rhythms with classical, flamenco, African and Middle Eastern elements to create a continuously surprising hybrid.

Sosa continues his cross-cultural odyssey with *Ilé*, which means "home" and "earth" in Lucumí, a Yoruba dialect used in the Santería religion in his native Cuba. Accompanying him are his Quarteto AfroCubano, consisting of drummer Ernesto Simpson and multi-reed player Leandro Saint-Hill (both from Sosa's hometown of Camagüey) and the Mozambican electric bassist Childo Tomas. They are complemented by guest artists from around the world, including the Afro-Cuban percussionist Pedrito Martinez, who makes exhilarating contributions to six tracks.

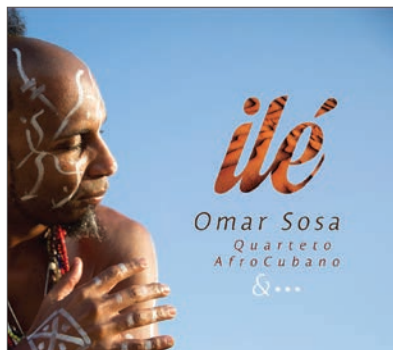
Very much a studio album, the project includes vocals, spoken-word lyrics, electronics, samples of folkloric singing from Mozambique and an array of found sounds including traffic noises, bird calls and crashing waves. Sosa mixes all these ingredients to create a striking, tropical sonic environment, with material ranging from meditative ballads like "A Love Lost" and "4U" to churning, percussive Latin funk and hip-hop tunes like "Mentiras Enemigas" and "Old Afro A Baba." The album is dotted with four "Momentos"—improvised interludes by Sosa on piano, soprano sax star Yosvany Terry and his father, Don Pancho Terry, the celebrated Cuban chekere player. American guitarist Marvin Sewell adds jazz and blues colors on several tunes, and the Catalan singer José "El Salao" Martín and percussionist Carlos "El Vikingo" Ronda add flamenco flavors to this spiritual travelogue.

—Allen Morrison

Ilé: A Love Lost; Momento I; 4U; Mentiras Enemigas (Enemy Lies); Momento II; D Vuelta (The Return); Old Afro A Baba; Dame La Luz (Give Me Light); Momento III; Sad Meeting; Momento IV; La Tarde; Mi Conga; A Love Lost Reprise (To My Late Mother). (64:15)

Personnel: Omar Sosa, grand piano, Fender Rhodes, Motif ES8, samplers, programming, vocals; Ernesto Simpson, drums, vocals, kalimba; Childo Tomas, electric bass, kalimba, vocals; Leandro Saint-Hill, alto and soprano saxophone, flute, clarinet, vocals; Marvin Sewell, guitars (1, 4, 7, 8, 12); José "El Salao" Martín, vocals (4, 12, 13); Kokayi, vocals (1, 7); Pedrito Martinez, percussion (4, 6, 7, 8, 12, 13); Yosvany Terry, soprano saxophone (2, 5, 9, 11), chekere (5); Eladio "Don Pancho" Terry, chekere (2, 9); Carlos "El Vikingo" Ronda, palmas (1, 4, 8, 11, 12, 13), cajón (1, 11); Zogaras, vocals (1, 6); Lazaro Ross, vocal sample (7).

Ordering info: melodia.com



bit.ly/166UD9d
www.sunmysticrecords.com



Ibrahim Electric *Rumours From Outer Space*

ILK 230

★★★★★

By the time a band gets to its eighth album, you might naturally assume you know what to expect from them, but that's not the way Ibrahim Electric works. The project of Danish musicians Stefan Pasborg, Jeppe Tuxen and Niclas Knudsen, the group is proudly, almost aggressively eclectic, and has never been afraid to serve up a song alongside a nod and a wink.

Rumours From Outer Space comes wrapped in comic book artwork detailing a sci-fi story vaguely mirrored in the track titles, and the bursts of color and onomatopoeia in the art are an apt visual aid for what lies inside. The album's bread-and-butter is concise, to-the-point jazz-funk, with Knudsen's guitar and Tuxen's B-3 trading leads, and Pasborg's hard-hitting drumming keeping things at a boil. "Attack From Above" offers a molten example of this approach, while "Space Invaders" is a wah-wah-soaked ride on the Mothership, as piloted by Frank Zappa.

The Zappa influence extends to the goofiness of the closing vocal track, and some of the album's finest moments come in the deviations from the funky core sound. "Big Boss" is a blast of wicked surf rock, and "The Afribians Are Coming" finds a middle ground between Fela Kuti and Santana. *Rumours From Outer Space* is big, interstellar fun. —Joe Tangari

Rumours From Outer Space: Attack From Above; Big Boss; Rumours From Outer Space; Moon-dogs On The Run; Sneaky Galaxy Gold Diggers; Tales From Xhinus; The Afribians Are Coming; Space Invaders; Jag Vill Leva. (38:43)

Personnel: Niclas Knudsen, guitar; Jeppe Tuxen, Hammond B-3 organ; Stefan Pasborg, drums; Rune Olesen, percussion; Nicolai Elsberg, vocal (9).

Ordering info: ilkmusic.com



Glenn Wilson

Timely

CADENCE JAZZ 1255

★★★★½

Veteran baritone saxophonist Glenn Wilson has spent much of the last decade and a half focused on family and education, making *Timely* only his second release under his own name since the odometer rolled over on this millennium. For the occasion, he assembled a quintet of old friends at Virginia Beach's Havana Nights Jazz Club for a set of lively, spontaneous post-bop. He shares the front line with trumpet player John D'earth, a frequent collaborator since the late '70s in each other's and Bruce Hornsby's groups. The two share a knack for intertwining their voices, making for a thrilling sparring contest on the title tune. Wilson is a formidable talent on the often unwieldy horn, with a fluid agility that is equally potent navigating the tricky zig-zags of Wayne Shorter's "Sightseeing" or painting lucid colors on D'earth's ballad "Inner Life." The influence of Pepper Adams that is implicit in his playing becomes explicit in two of the bari legend's tunes: the alternately moody and hard-charging "Diabolique II" and "Dylan's Delight," which shows off the precision swing of the robust rhythm section. The band cools down for the stealthy medium-tempo groove of Larry Willis' "To Wisdom The Prize," which features a bracing D'earth solo over stormy, roiling rhythms, followed by the uneasy calm of pianist John Toomey's turn. —Shaun Brady



Timely: Timely; To Wisdom The Prize; Inner Life; Dylan's Delight; Fat Beat; Sightseeing; Nothing Like You Has Ever Been Seen Before; Diabolique II. (68:50)

Personnel: Glenn Wilson, baritone saxophone; John D'earth, trumpet, flugelhorn; John Toomey, piano; Jimmy Masters, bass; Tony Martucci, drums.

Ordering info: cadencejazzrecords.com

Adam Birnbaum *Three Of A Mind*

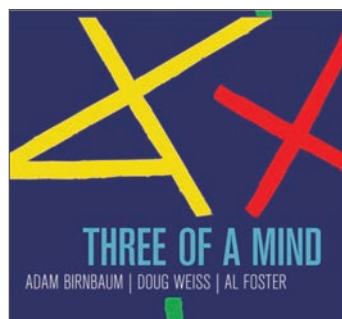
DAEDALUS 001

★★★★★

If the solo format is a kind of X-ray for pianists, the trio setting discloses much about how they see themselves in relation to other players. Lennie Tristano wanted stick-to-the-changes bassists and metronomic drummers; Cecil Taylor wanted accompanists to match his ferocity and push him to the wall. New York pianist Adam Birnbaum leads here with drummer Al Foster and bassist Doug Weiss. This trio's shared history allows for easy mutual exchange as they admirably skirt the overly familiar but imbue the music with a sense of newness.

The nine Birnbaum originals on this album draw attention to the playing rather than the compositions. He values rhythm as much as melody, like on the aptly named "Dream Waltz." But even on a slow tempo, Birnbaum injects energy into the playing. The loping, Monkish blues "Thirty-Three" has a smart use of space: The piano drops out to let the drums play melody on occasion. "Stutterstep" indicates an awareness of Herbie Nichols, and like that forgotten master's compositions, these tunes beg for horn complements.

The pianist has a light touch, with playing that dances over the bars. He favors major keys, and his lyricism seems to sparkle. Weiss, though submerged in the audio mix, couples strong rhythm with continual melodic input, and Foster is a model of percussive invention. That Birnbaum turns the lead over to Foster at the end of the peppery "Binary" indicates implicit trust. This is what a well-oiled rhythm section sounds like. —Kirk Silsbee



Three Of A Mind: Binary; Dream Waltz; Thirty-Three; Brandyn; Rockport Moon; Stutterstep; Kizuna; Dream Song #1; Huffy Henry; Ooh, What You Do To Me. (58:00)

Personnel: Adam Birnbaum, piano; Doug Weiss, bass; Al Foster, drums.

Ordering info: adambirnbaum.com

Nick Sanders Trio *You Are A Creature*

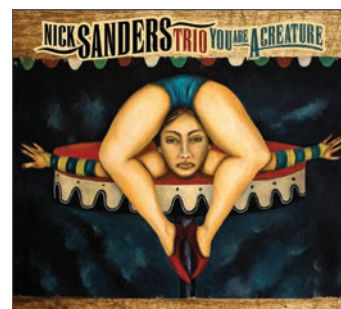
SUNNYSIDE

★★★★½

The cover of the Nick Sanders Trio's new album, *You Are A Creature*, is a color drawing of a contortionist. This is an apt symbol for this record, as the trio takes their music and contorts it just like the woman in the drawing.

For most of this record, the notes, melodies and rhythms are unexpected. There are sudden accents and phrases that switch direction and end abruptly, and at certain points it seems the band is playing the space in between the notes as well as the notes themselves. In that, this album has a certain Thelonious Monk quality, with less jarring dissonance. Some tracks sound like the soundtrack to a circus act ("Red Panda"). Others are percussive and jagged ("Round You Go"). Still others start as if they're going someplace, only to go in circles or digress. This is not necessarily a bad quality, but on such songs as the title track, it can be unsettling. However, the band follows up that track with a solo piano ballad, "Carol's Kid," whose beautiful, melancholy and slightly dissonant tone mixes modern classical and children's lullabies.

The band gets further out with the eerie start to "Zora The Cat" and the fast bass clusters and nimble cymbal work of "Repeater." There is also a little Bad Plus-esque interplay with "Keep On The Watch," the slinky "Peculiar People" and the bluesy Ornette number "The Blessing," with its great turnaround to end the album. —David Kunian



You Are A Creature: Let's Start; Wheelchair; Red Panda; Round You Go; Room; You Are A Creature; Carol's Kid; Zora the Cat; Repeater; Keep On The Watch; Peculiar People; Day Zombie; The Blessing. (54:49)

Personnel: Nick Sanders, piano; Henry Fraser, bass; Connor Baker, drums.

Ordering info: sunnysiderecords.com

Phil Markowitz/ Zach Brock *Perpetuity*

DOT TIME 9031

★★★★★

This debut recording by the Phil Markowitz/Zach Brock Quartet satisfies with its unclassifiable variety and spot-on playing. The chanted recitation, odd meter and minor mode of keyboardist and composer Markowitz's opening title track suggest a world music/jazz hybrid, and so does the Latin groove of his "Six Pack." But Markowitz, who says he formed the band out of his desire to write for violin, is never that easy to pin down.

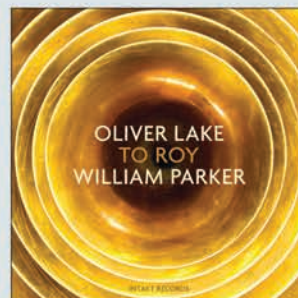
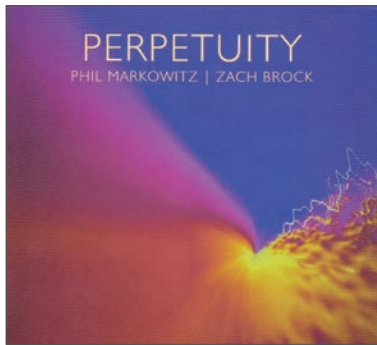
Brock is the perfect foil: a fiery string player open to whatever his partner throws at him, but with his own challenging writing style. Brock's "Fractures" builds up a head of steam over another odd-metered groove, but keeps returning to an ambiguous rising piano scale with chromatic bumps before spinning out into a bravura violin solo.

Some of the key changes suggest a taste for prog, as do the episodic narratives of the forms, but this band's taste is fairly impeccable. Markowitz and Brock like to build from simple riff figures so that every piece has a clear rhythmic and melodic spine, and when they veer from that template for a duet (Markowitz's "Mirrors"), it could pass for a modernist classical sonata. Perhaps as a reward, the band (which features the adept acoustic bassist Jay Anderson on most tracks) offers some flying jazz swing on the last number, Brock's "Ankle Biter," replete with traded fours. —Jon Garelick

Perpetuity: Perpetuity; Triple Dutch; Fractures; Six Pack; Nebulae; Notorious "Z"; Burning Lake; Rongtone; Mirrors; Ankle Biter. (72:50)

Personnel: Phil Markowitz, keyboards; Zach Brock, violin; Jay Anderson, acoustic bass (2, 3, 5, 7, 8, 9, 10); Lincoln Goines, electric bass (1, 4, 6); Obed Calvaire, drums; Edson "Café" Da Silva, percussion (4).

Ordering info: dottimerecords.com



OLIVER LAKE – WILLIAM PARKER TO ROY

Oliver Lake: Saxophone
William Parker: Bass

Intakt CD 243



SCHLIPPENBACH TRIO FEATURES

Alexander von Schlippenbach: Piano
Evan Parker: Saxophones
Paul Lovens: Drums

Intakt CD 250



MARK HELIAS OPEN LOOSE THE SIGNAL MAKER

Mark Helias: Bass · Tony Malaby: Saxophone
Tom Rainey: Drums

Intakt CD 245

March 30 Austin Texas · April 1 Denver Colorado
April 3 Boulder Colorado · April 4 Santa Fe New Mexico
April 5 Los Angeles · April 7 San Francisco
April 10 Seattle Washington

Chris Lightcap's Bigmouth *Epicenter*

CLEAN FEED 315

★★★★★

Epicenter has no center. It's a multipolar musical world. That's not to say there isn't a central point of reference. Maybe that's what bassist Chris Lightcap means by the album's title.

Pretty much all experimental, *Epicenter* still comes off as a nice walk in the park. The album opener, for example, is laced with a delicious indulgence of Wurlitzer funk, offset by tenor-tagging, a floating pulse and a busy ending flourish. The cadence of "White Horse" brings us back to a kind of rhythmic swirl before we touch down with a taste of Ornette-flavored drive through the title track—the epicenter, in terms of swing, pluck and group unity.

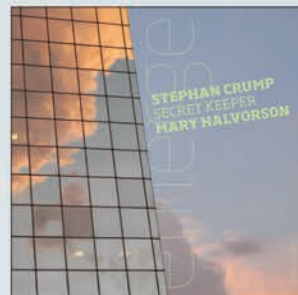
A characteristic of Bigmouth's decades-old sound (their first CD outing together since 2010's *Deluxe*), the bassist's legwork helps shape and rework the contours of this band. It's heads-up ball with enough flexibility to allow for some fun free-roaming in and outside the unconventional heads.

Even cooler heads prevail with "Stone By Stone," a solemn stroll that contains haunting tenor lines, more magical Wurlitzer, a nifty bass solo and the horns soloing through their unison lines. And then there's the cover of Lou Reed's "All Tomorrow's Parties" whose softly defiant backbeat is an answer to all the rhythmic twists and turns of everything that's come before, the pulse unobtrusively lurching toward an anthemic cataclysm. —John Ephland

Epicenter: Nine South; White Horse; Epicenter; Arthur Avenue; Down East; Stillwell; Stone By Stone; All Tomorrow's Parties. (53:45)

Personnel: Chris Lightcap, bass, acoustic guitars (2); organ (2); Craig Taborn, Wurlitzer electric piano (1, 2, 4, 6, 7); piano (3, 5, 8); organ (2); Tony Malaby, Chris Cheek, tenor saxophone; Gerald Cleaver, drums, percussion.

Ordering info: cleanfeed-records.com

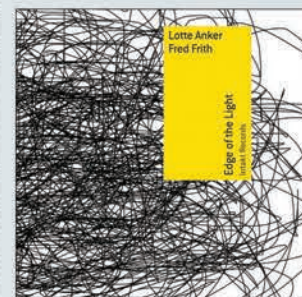


STEPHAN CRUMP MARY HALVORSON · SECRET KEEPER EMERGE

Stephan Crump: Bass · Mary Halvorson: Guitar

Intakt CD 249

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April 6 Purdue Univ; Hammond, IN · April 7 Pittsburgh, PA · April 17 Cornelia St Cafe; NYC, NY



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Can't Stand the Pain

Junior Wells, *Southside Blues Jam* (Delmark 628; 73:23 ★★★★★½)

Back to blues after a few years singing soul, Junior Wells asserts his considerable powers on a 1970 studio album that is true in spirit and in letter to a spirited performance in a Chicago barroom. A sensual, deceptively relaxed life force animates his every vocal and harmonica inflection in now-canonical material like "Long Distance Call" and in two spontaneous creations, "I Could Have Had Religion" and "Blues For Mayor Da-

ley." His authority is echoed in the contributions by comrades of high pedigree: pianist Otis Spann (on his last session), guitarists Buddy Guy and Louis Myers and drummer Fred Below. Like the original program, five bonus songs—including easy-paced "Love My Baby," with Guy cutting to the marrow of a sultry relationship—compel immediate, undivided attention.

Ordering info: delmark.com

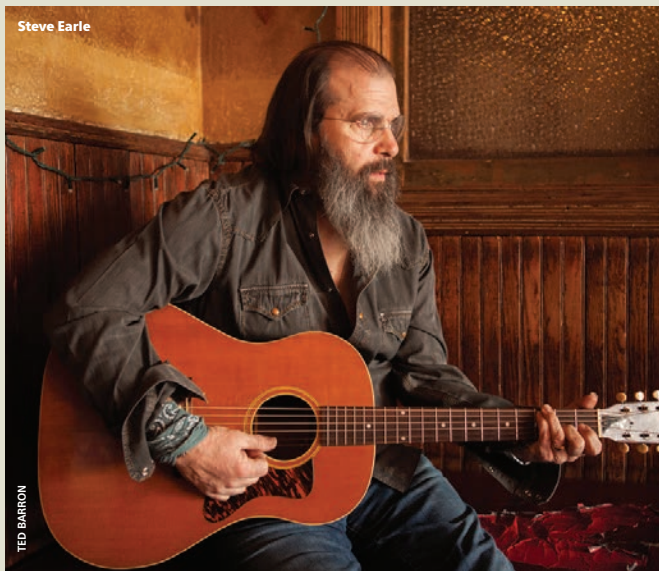
Michael Jerome Browne, *Sliding Delta* (Borealis 233; 50:46 ★★★★★) Canadian Michael Jerome Browne, best known as a guitarist in Eric Bibb's band, magnifies the magnificence of 1920s and 1930s country blues numbers through empathy with the frustration, tenderness and other emotions in songs once handled by Memphis Minnie, Johnny Shines, Blind Willie McTell and other hall-of-famers. A singer of clarity and character, he is as skilled on banjo and mandolin as he is on valuable old guitars. Fresh musical detail overrides instances of cliché.

Ordering info: borealisrecords.com

Big Dave McLean, *Faded But Not Gone* (Black Hen 0075; 53:37 ★★★★★½) Winnipeg-based Dave McLean, recording in Nashville with Ontario's roots band Blackie and the Rodeo Kings, has a genuine feel for storytelling. Using a shopworn yet effective singing voice and confident bending of guitar strings, the sixty-something bluesman serves up substantial original songs (to mention one, "Shades Of Grace," which poignantly takes a gospel path) and stamps his own sly accent on well-chosen songs belonging to contemporaries Tom Waits and Ray LaMontagne as well as influences Tampa Red and Skip James.

Ordering info: blackhenmusic.com

Steve Earle, *Terraplane* (New West 6328; 36:12 ★★★★★) An elemental virility informs the no-nonsense shuffles, stomps and sashays making up Steve Earle's first blues album and 17th



Steve Earle

TED BARRON

overall. The once hard-living maverick sings with deep knowledge of the dark and light sides of human experience, running his emotional engine at full-throttle while sustaining the crucial ambivalence of the blues. Lyrics often cut like razor barbed-wire, perfect fits for songs of kiss-off defiance. "Better Off Alone," a stunning track, is grounded in his seven failed marriages. Earle's ace band, the Dukes, plays for keeps.

Ordering info: newwestrecords.com

Jimmy McIntosh, *Jimmy McIntosh And...* (Arizona Club 02; 58: 40 ★★★★★) Jimmy McIntosh, a guitarist in the *Jersey Boys* show band in Las Vegas, presents a mostly enjoyable album of straight blues, jazz, New Orleans funk and hybrids with dependable guests like John Scofield, Ron Wood, Mike Stern and veteran saxophonist Albert Wing. He's an assured stylist whose well-ordered lines sometimes bespeak a winning, humble charisma. Sometimes, too, he's in thrall to a faceless fusion god.

Ordering info: jimmymcintosh.com

The Reverend Peyton's Big Damn Band, *So Delicious* (Shanachie/Yazoo 6303; 43:16 ★★) The Reverend's fingerstyle guitar work is worth hearing. However, his singing is an abomination of fey over-indulged mannerisms.

Ordering info: shanachie.com

Freddy Cole, *Singing The Blues* (High Note 7267; 44:57 ★★★★★½) Jazz singer-pianist Freddy Cole cleans up and dresses up the blues on his latest release, a belated companion to his fine 1964 LP *Waiter, Ask The Man To Play The Blues*. In good voice and at ease with jazz's root music, the dapper octogenarian has his way with standards like "Goin' Down Slow" and with bluesy tunes linked to his famous brother Nat. Minor distraction: Guest chanteuse Theresa Hightower twice encourages Cole to fall into sudsy mawkishness. **DB**

Ordering info: jazzdepot.com



Pablo Held *The Trio Meets John Scofield*

PIROUET 3078

★★★★★

From one perspective, this remarkable live recording duly documents a potent Euro-American alliance and a cross-generational dialogue. Sophisticated young German pianist Pablo Held (not yet 30) and his tight trio meet guitar hero John Scofield, now into the sixty-something zone. More broadly speaking, though, the empathetic musical connection made here speaks to a kind of friendly jazz globalism: Scofield has moved easily back and forth across the Atlantic for decades, with Brit composer Mark-Anthony Turnage and many others, while Held draws on great American jazz traditions in his vocabulary, and the two get along famously here.

Pristinely recorded at the Philharmonic Hall in Cologne, Germany, *The Trio Meets John Scofield* is a wonder to behold. The program is neatly divided between a pair of works by each leader, and a lyrical take on Joni Mitchell's "Marcie" to cap things off. Held's cerebrally swinging "Cameo" opens the set, and the balladic "Nocturne," with space given to wistfully ambling lines by a solo Scofield, supplies a lovely, dark reverie in the middle of the set's arc, before Scofield's "Imaginary Time" takes its temporal and harmonic detours.

In a way, the centerpiece is also the album's longest track, a kind of medley-fied suite of Scofield's "Kubrick"—its emotive angularity reflecting the late, great Stanley Kubrick's filmic patois—and the uber-cool and restless "Camp Out," a brilliant deconstruction/reconstruction of Allan Sherman's "Hello Muddah, Hello Faddah (A Letter From Camp)." Held's fine trio—with bassist Robert Landfermann and drummer Jonas Burgwinkel—lays down fluid support.

It's fascinating, too, to track the differences of each leader's voice, between Held's probing pianistic neo-modernism and Scofield's loose-limbed, surprise-filled, sometimes sucker-punchy and always engaging lingo. To coin a phrase, these intergenerational comrades should really go on meeting like this.

—Josef Woodard

The Trio Meets John Scofield: Cameo; Kubrick/Camp Out; Nocturne; Imaginary Time; Marcie. (63:30)

Personnel: Pablo Held, piano; John Scofield, guitar; Robert Landfermann, bass; Jonas Burgwinkel, drums.

Ordering info: pirouet.com



**Ornette Coleman/
Howard Shore**
*Naked Lunch: Complete Original
Soundtrack Remastered*

HOWE RECORDS 1017
★★★★★

**Ornette Coleman/Jordan
McLean/Amir Ziv**
New Vocabulary

SYSTEM DIALING 009
★★★

Those on pins and needles with word of a new, under-the-radar Ornette Coleman recording should temper their expectations. *New Vocabulary* is an album spearheaded by trumpeter Jordan McLean—a key member of Afrobeat revivalists Antibalas and the show band for Broadway’s *Fela!*—and shuffling, ping-pong drummer Amir Ziv. Coleman, who has a reputation for being generous with next-generation musicians, not only jammed with McLean and Ziv over several weeks in 2009; the octogenarian apparently allowed them to record and shape the results. The album is underweight, all atmosphere, yet Coleman’s iconic alto can’t help but add some gravity.

There are oblique echoes of Coleman’s work in the album’s song titles (“Wife Life,” “Sound Chemistry”) and in the dub-wise take on funky Prime Time electricity. McLean, with his processed trumpet ambience, also has an ear for late-’60s/early-’70s Miles Davis. Keyboardist Adam Holzman—a Davis veteran who plays with McLean and Ziv in the digital-jazz band Droid—contributes to three tracks; his cascading piano makes “Gold Is God’s Sex” a highlight.

And how does the great man play? Coleman’s horn sings and dances gamely throughout. His phrasing instantly raises a smile as a snatch of a tune seems to playfully reference glories of yore. It’s a joy to hear Coleman play anew, particularly in an unfamiliar setting. Even his post-take remarks (“You know ... there was no plan there”) feel like a gift.

One true latter-day Coleman masterpiece—the soundtrack to David Cronenberg’s 1991 film *Naked Lunch*, now remastered and reissued with 17 minutes of bonus material—has been strangely unsung in the jazz world. Yet Coleman plays virtually throughout Howard Shore’s darkly majestic orchestral score. Any jazz fan who knows the movie

prizes the opening title sequence scored with a dramatic mini-concerto for saxophone. Coleman has never played more beautifully, more sensuously. The score incorporates several dynamic trio performances with the saxophonist joined by drummer and son Denardo and bassist Barre Phillips. “Ballad/Joan” ravishes the ear, as does a dreamscape interlacing of Monk’s “Misterioso.” Evoking Burroughs’ Tangier-like locale, there are wafts of North African instrumentation and a sample of Coleman’s “Midnight Sunrise” with the Master Musicians of Jajouka. The film is fantastic, a classic; but Shore’s hallucinogenic score can make for cinema of the mind.

— Bradley Bamberger

New Vocabulary: Baby Food; Sound Chemistry; Alphabet; Bleeding; If It Takes A Hatchet; Value And Knowledge; Population; Wife Life; The Idea Has No Destiny; H2O; What’s Hotter Than The Sun; Gold Is God’s Sex. (42:01)

Personnel: Jordan McLean, trumpet, electronics; Amir Ziv, drums; Ornette Coleman, alto saxophone; Adam Holzman, piano.

Ordering info: systemdialingrecords.com

Naked Lunch: Naked Lunch; Hauser and O’Brian/Bugpowder; Mugwumps; Centipede; The Black Meat; Simpatico/Misterioso; Fadela’s Coven; Interzone Suite; William Tell; Mujahaddin; Intersong; Dr. Benway; Clark Nova Dies; Ballad/Joan; Cloquet’s Parrots/Midnight Sunrise; Nothing Is True, Everything Is Permitted; Welcome To Annexia; Writeman; Hauser And O’Brien (complete); Dual Typewriters; Simpatico (reprise); Martinelli; Intersong (take 2); Bugpowder (take 9). (66:21)

Personnel: Ornette Coleman, alto saxophone; Barre Phillips, double bass; Denardo Coleman, drums; J.J. Edwards, sintir; Aziz Bin Salem, ney; David Hartley, piano (6); London Philharmonic Orchestra; Howard Shore, conductor.

Ordering info: howerecords.com

New Classics

A slew of superb London-based players interpret some of Morton Feldman's most austere works built around duration and decay on **Two Pianos And Other Pieces, 1953–1969 (Another Timbre 81; 64:00/70:48 ★★★★★½)**. As the title suggests, there are a number of works for two pianos, anchored by Philip Thomas and AMM's John Tilbury, and all of the compositions use between one and four pianos. Since all pianos differ in terms of sustain and resonance, every performance of these spare, meditative dialogues is unique, depending upon what instrument it's played upon.

All 13 pieces here, spread over two discs, explore such patient layering of tones; all of the notes are exactly scored, but depending on the piece, performers move through the sequences at their own pace. Certain works, such as "Between Categories"—the latest, from 1969—features four pairs of instruments, adding a richer timbre and more complex instructions regarding which sections of the score a particular group of instrumentalists play, tempo and sequence of notes. But despite the seemingly open directive, the work is meticulously constructed, and like the best of Feldman's work, the performance alters our perceptions of time.

Ordering info: anothertimbre.com

Three intimate chamber pieces by the deeply original, highly spiritual Russian composer Galina Ustvolskaya are performed by Moldovan violinist **Patricia Kopatchinskaja**, Austrian pianist **Markus Hinterhäuser** and, on one work (a trio for clarinet, violin and piano from 1949, the earliest piece here), Swiss clarinetist **Reto Bieri** on **Galina Ustvolskaya (ECM 2329; 68:04 ★★★★★)**. This one-time student of Shostakovich didn't experience much success until the '90s (she was born in 1919), and these bracing, austere works reinforce her visionary streak, with writing that transmutes familiar forms with stern repetition and terse phrases. Kopatchinskaja brings a fiery intensity to these stormy yet measured works, and when Bieri joins in on the trio piece their lines ripple, twist and complement one another with electric clarity. "Duet For Violin And Piano," the latest work here, from 1964, manages to be both harrowing in its emotional torpor as well as meditative in its sparse, jagged lines.

Ordering info: ecmrecords.com

Violinist **Miranda Cuckson** reaffirms her standing as one of the most sensitive and electric interpreters of new music on **Melting The Darkness (Urlicht Audiovisual 5988; 67:16 ★★★★★½)**, a stunning program of microtonal compositions for violin (and on a few, electronics). With the exception of "Mikka S" by Iannis Xenakis, all of the works are by living composers, each of whom the violinist has worked with previously,



Miranda Cuckson

J. HENRY FAIR

and she brings a necessary light touch to these often stormy pieces. In her liner notes she writes that the seven pieces were sequenced in a way that "illuminates the interplay between dark and light."

She navigates the extremes of devastation and sweetness in a characteristically powerful piece by Austrian composer Georg Friedrich Haas, "De Terrae Fine," while the six-part "Come Ricordi Come Sogni Come Echi" by Christopher Burns—written as a response to the late Luigi Nono masterpiece "La Lontananza Nostalgica Utopica Futura," which they've worked extensively on together—is a gripping study of many of the frictive, textured sounds used in the original piece. The collection also includes work by Oscar Bianchi, Alexander Sigman, Ileana Perez-Velasquez and Robert Rowe.

Ordering info: mirandacuckson.com

Celloist **Jeffrey Zeigler** got plenty of experience playing a wide variety of new music as a member of Kronos Quartet, and he carries on that forward thinking on his first solo album, **Something Of Life (Innova 905; 69:53 ★★★★★)**, featuring six works all composed in the current decade, most written for him. Felipe Perez Santiago's "Glaub" is a richly shimmering work where the composer's processed electric guitar creates dense clouds of sound surrounding some looped cello parts and an almost sobbing, ascending line. Glenn Kotche adds drums and bits of the field recordings that inspired his piece "Something Of Life," which intentionally blurs the line between audio verite and something composed. In fact, many of the pieces blur all sorts of lines—between genres, between live performance and production—with powerful results. **DB**

Ordering info: innova.mu



Bob Dylan *Shadows In The Night*

COLUMBIA 88875057962

★★★★

As a young man, Bob Dylan started composing idiosyncratic material because he couldn't find traditional folk songs that conveyed what he wanted to express. Now, as an old man, he has turned to the Great American Songbook to communicate his feelings: "Autumn Leaves" "Where Are You?" and Irving Berlin's masterpiece "What'll I Do." One might associate such compositions with a certain degree of theatricality—as opposed to the ostensibly autobiographical songcraft that rockers claim as currency.

Rather than hide behind layers of sonic trickery, Dylan, 73, leaves himself exposed on *Shadows In The Night*. When a singer sails into senior citizen status, it's common for a producer to augment his fading instrument with the bulwark of lush orchestration, backing vocalists or sprightly duet partners. Dylan eschews all that. Teamed with his road band, he recorded relatively spare versions of 10 songs—all of which had been previously cut by Frank Sinatra—and then produced the album himself (under the pseudonym Jack Frost).

Whereas Sinatra majestically belted out the prayer "Stay With Me" bolstered by soaring strings, Dylan pairs his gritty vocals with Tony Garnier's poignant arco work and Donny Herron's masterfully hypnotic pedal steel guitar.

No one's ever going to confuse Dylan with Pavarotti, but he's in fine voice here—at least compared to the guttural growl heard in recent concerts and on his 2012 album, *Tempest*. The frayed quality of his vocals highlights the vulnerability and isolation of these desperate narrators.

On "Why Try To Change Me Now," Herron crafts a dreamy, drifting melodic line as Dylan convincingly portrays a bewildered, weary character who knows that he'll *always* be out of step with society's conventions. Bravo. —*Bobby Reed*

Shadows In The Night: I'm A Fool To Want You; The Night We Called It A Day; Stay With Me; Autumn Leaves; Why Try To Change Me Now; Some Enchanted Evening; Full Moon And Empty Arms; Where Are You?; What'll I Do; That Lucky Old Sun. (35:21)

Personnel: Bob Dylan, vocals; Tony Garnier, bass; Donny Herron, pedal steel guitar; Charlie Sexton, Stu Kimball, guitars; George C. Receli, percussion; Andrew Martin, trombone (1, 10); Francisco Torres, trombone (1, 2); Alan Kaplan, trombone (2); Dylan Hart, French horn (1); Joseph Meyer, French horn (2); Daniel Forno, Larry G. Hall, trumpets (10).

Ordering info: bobdylan.com

Albrecht Maurer/Lucian Ban/Mat Manieri *Fantasm*

NEMU 105

★★★★½

Albrecht Maurer, Mat Manieri and Lucian Ban's new record, *Fantasm*, lives in the space where modern classical and avant-garde jazz meet. With the absence of percussion instruments and bass, the entire record has an airy feel. There is a cliché in jazz about how the space between the notes is as important as the notes themselves, and across every song here, the musicians are playing the space as well as the notes. Pieces such as "Elysium Planitia" have a heavy march cadence that moves into a dancing melody from Maurer's violin over a pizzicato from Manieri. In a similar mode is "Last Steps," with its thoughtful, tentative mood.

But the record is not all deep and dark. Songs like "Aura" work their way to great climaxes and come back down before the strings reach even higher over a chiming, strident piano. "El Corazon" starts with melancholy piano, soars inspirationally and then repeats that pattern in different ways. The title track, a Paul Motian composition, is also a highlight as it embodies the space and texture of the drumming master, but also reflects the urban New York nights where Motian worked. Throughout the record, the musicians on *Fantasm* balance mystery and exuberance with continual movement. This is a record that incorporates space and stillness without ever being still.

—David Kunian



Fantasm: Irreverence; Fantasm; Aura; Pina; Elysium Planitia; El Corazon; Twin Rivers; Last Steps; OK Now. (54:34)

Personnel: Albrecht Maurer, violin; Lucian Ban, piano; Mat Manieri, viola.

Ordering info: nemu-records.com

Tigran Hamasyan *Mockroot*

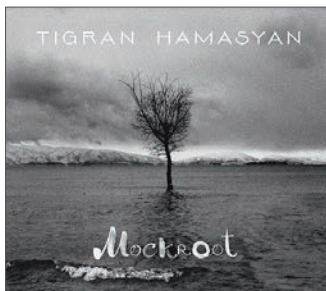
NONESUCH 400249

★★★★½

Unusual for jazz pianists, Tigran Hamasyan's debut for Nonesuch features a number of novel touches. One way to characterize his music: Think Pat Metheny, who, although a jazz guitarist, actually revels in composition that many times veers off into fairly un-jazzy territory, opting for intricate arrangements, using a variety of modes and rhythmic strategies that seem more aligned with current contemporary classical or film music.

Likewise the prolific Hamasyan, whose 12 tracks on *Mockroot* feature 10 of his own compositions as well as arrangements of two more traditional Armenian melodies. Another, less novel touch (also like Metheny) is his use of electronics, offered up through sound effects, synths and, with drummer Arthur Hnatek, live electronics. That commingling of line and voice (yet another device much utilized by Metheny over the years) permeates *Mockroot*. The fast-paced, rock-oriented funk of "Double-Faced" and the insistent, slightly dreamy "Song For Melan And Rafik" enhance the material with a sense of urgency, in each case the music heading toward a kind of derish—in this world but not of it. The pretty waltz "Lilac" slopes away from the fast and furious to reveal Hamasyan's more relaxed, unhurried (if still passionate) playing. "Entertain Me" loops us back into that odd-time-signature, tightly arranged musical world that may be his hallmark. "The Grid" threatens to go off the grid with more complex, intricate twists and turns, only to become the set's jazziest piece.

—John Ephland



Mockroot: To Love; Song For Melan And Rafik; Kars 1.; Double-Faced; The Roads That Bring Me Closer To You; Lilac; Entertain Me; The Apple Orchard In Saghmsovanq; Kars 2. (Wounds Of The Centuries); To Negate; The Grid; Out Of The Grid. (58:23)

Personnel: Tigran Hamasyan, piano, voice, keyboards, synths, sound effects; Sam Minaie, electric bass; Arthur Hnatek, drums, live electronics; Areni Agbabian (2), Gayanée Movsisyan (5), vocals; Ben Wendel, saxophones (2); Chris Tordini, bass (2); Nate Wood, drums (2).

Ordering info: nonesuch.com

Ernesto Cervini *Turboprop*

ANZIC 0047

★★★★½

Drummer Ernesto Cervini is a player with a deep sense of camaraderie. As a leader, his ecumenical nature shines in his compositions and arrangements. This intention is entirely clear on his latest Anzic release, *Turboprop*.

The album's 10 tracks are well-picked but can feel at times saggy. A few could have stood to be 30 seconds shorter. The group's smart take on Charlie Parker's "Red Cross" is extremely fun and initially seems poised to play out like some buoyant horn exercise before naturally morphing into a jam. The 12-minute "Three Angels" is inspired but after a while feels a bit hard to endure, with somber passages that can stretch into the maudlin. "Cheer Up Charlie" sags just as much here as when Mrs. Bucket first sang the Willy Wonka tune in that washroom. However, Joel Frahm's saxophone solo provides an ever-so-needed sweetness that makes this tune work.

The album's song construction makes a nice mix of clever compositional construction and easy swing, showing Cervini has the capacity to support and sustain these songs, but rarely does he seem to make a definitive statement that resounds as it should. *Turboprop* exhibits a good composer, arranger and drummer who can pull together a good band (and a particularly sweet tenor saxophonist). That says well enough for right now.

—Anthony Dean-Harris



Turboprop: Unnecessary Mountain; Red Cross; Fear Of Flying; The Engulfed Cathedral; Three Angels; De Molen; Cheer Up Charlie; Bindi Bop; Marion Theresa; The Windup. (68:09)

Personnel: Ernesto Cervini, drums; Tara Davidson, alto and soprano saxophones; Joel Frahm, tenor saxophone; William Carn, trombone; Adrean Farrugia, piano; Dan Loomis, bass.

Ordering info: anzicstore.com

Teus Nobel *Legacy*

FLYIN'HIGH 022

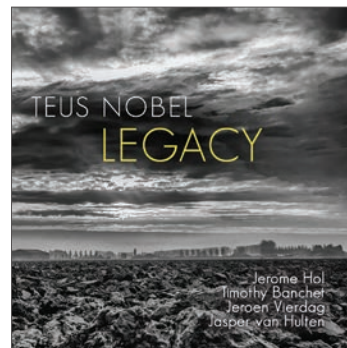
★★★★½

The title *Legacy* proclaims Teus Nobel's consciousness of the intimidating lineage of great modern jazz trumpeters, and his intent to give credit where it is due. The Dutch trumpet and flugelhorn player honors Miles Davis, Woody Shaw, Roy Hargrove, Eric Vloiemans and the tragically disabled Jarmo Hoogendijk, among others, on his second album.

The record starts with "Quiet Now," which strongly echoes "In A Silent Way," then goes right into a *Jack Johnson* tribute entitled "Mr. Shiny Pants." Each track expresses not just the musical style, but the emotional tenor of its subject, and the control that Nobel and band display in the early moments of the latter tune are especially rewarding. But they start to fritter away the capital acquired in those early moments of skillfully managed tension before the tune ends, when Jerome Hol's guitar solo runs out of ideas before it runs out of notes.

Other tunes go wrong in a variety of ways. While the passages of gritty rhythm and ambient ethereality on "Way Behind" are equally well executed, the shifts between them feel arbitrary. A celebration of Nobel's contemporary, Christian Scott, borders on the slick glibness of smooth jazz, and "Esho Funi" sinks too deeply into the upholstery of '70s-style pillow-talk r&b. But the album closes strong, with spirited sparring between Nobel and trombonist Ilja Reijngoud "Woody's March" that shifts fluidly from martial to Iberian modes.

—Bill Meyer



Legacy: Quiet Now; Mr. Shiny Pants/Quiet Now; Why Not?; Suite For Jarmo; Bass Intro Way Beyond; Way Beyond; Beam Me Up, Scotty; Esho Funi; Woody's March. (55:33)

Personnel: Teus Nobel, trumpet, flugelhorn; Jerome Hol, guitar; Timothy Banchet, piano; Jeroen Verdag, contrabass; Jasper van Hulst, drums; Ben van den Dungen, soprano saxophone; Ilja Reijngoud, trombone.

Ordering info: flyinhighrecords.com

Gustav Lundgren Trio *Berthelville*

LUNDGREN 012

★★★

Traditionally the domain of French musicians, gypsy swing has enjoyed a renewed interest in the past 15 years in many parts of the world. In Sweden, guitarist Gustav Lundgren is leading the charge. But make no mistake, Lundgren is neither a revivalist nor a Django Reinhardt imitator; his music points to the connections the genre has with other musical forms or styles, providing a refreshing perspective while expanding the thematic palette.

Obviously, Lundgren cannot help paying tribute to Reinhardt with a medley of some of his most famous compositions and a rendition of "Montagne Sainte-Geneviève." He does so with flashes of virtuosity, elegance and a sharp delivery. Andreas Unge's supple bass and Martin Widlund's strumming on second guitar offer simple but effective accompaniment.

Lundgren's eclecticism is expressed through songs from unexpected sources: Norah Jones, Tom Waits and Cuban singer/songwriter Silvio Rodríguez, among others. He gets to showcase some of his own compositions as well. Whether they are faithful to the gypsy swing canon ("May First") or sound like generic ditties ("Berthelville"), they are alternately contemplated and vivacious, but always sunny.

—Alain Drouot

Berthelville: May First; Lambada/Llorando Se Fue; My Dear Country; Guia; Peche À La Moucher/Daphne/Belleville; Take It With Me; A New Beginning; I Should Care; El Patio; Óleo De Una Mujer Con Sombbrero; Berthelville; When I Fall In Love; Montagne Sainte-Geneviève; There Will Never Be Another You; Riomaggiore; The Great Gadjó; Gunnar. (60:19)

Personnel: Gustav Lundgren, Martin Widlund, acoustic guitar; Andreas Unge, bass.

Ordering info: lundgrenmusic.com



Wolff & Clark Expedition *Expedition 2*

RANDOM ACT

★★★★½

The longstanding colleagues and jazz veterans teamed up in 2012 for some potent performances around their home base of New York City and followed up with their self-titled debut in 2013. This sequel, which also features bassist Christian McBride, trumpeter Wallace Roney, rising star saxophonist Hailey Niswanger and 17-year-old bass sensation Daryl Johns, takes things up a notch.

Like on their previous outing, Wolff and Clark have their way with pop and jazz standards, and on this one the hip quotient is off the scale. They swing Cream's "Sunshine Of You Love" in a way that Ginger Baker would hardly recognize, while turning Prince's "1999" into a lyrical and swinging vehicle for newcomer Niswanger's soprano sax. Their re-imagining of "Monk's Dream" has the drummer incorporating his slickest, most syncopated drum patterns since "Actual Proof." McBride digs in on a formidable solo on Wolff's "Clark Bar," while Roney contributes some bristling trumpet lines on Wolff's ambitious arrangement of "A Night In Tunisia." They close out in swinging fashion with a 7/4 take on Monk's "In Walked Bud" that features another outstanding McBride solo and a whirlwind drum solo by Clark. Drum students will have enough to shed on for years from this super-hip Wolff & Clark showcase.

—Bill Milkowski

Expedition 2: Clark Bar; Sunshine Of Your Love; Israel; Madiba; Monk's Dream; Stray; Gingerbread Boy; Mulgrew; 1999; A Night In Tunisia; Invisible; In Walked Bud. (64:00)

Personnel: Michael Wolff, piano; Mike Clark, drums; Christian McBride, bass (1, 2, 5, 6, 8, 12); Daryl Johns, bass (3, 4, 9, 10); Hailey Niswanger, saxophones (2, 3, 4, 9, 10); Wallace Roney, trumpet (4, 10).

Ordering info: www.randomactrecords.com



Mark Wade Trio *Event Horizon*

MARK WADE MUSIC

★★★★½

The three musicians on *Event Horizon* haven't been a trio for very long, but according to bassist Mark Wade, the music for the album was written with his bandmates in mind. Featuring Wade, pianist Tim Harrison and drummer Scott Neumann, the CD begins on a conventional note, Wade's "Jump For Joy" a breezy, medium-tempo swing waltz. The leader's first solo almost passes without notice, so natural and smooth is Wade's insertion before Harrison and Neumann follow suit.

The album becomes progressively more engaging as one tune follows another. "Apogee" is another showcase for Wade, the song's lyrical bent helping to frame the bassist's labyrinthine solo, its rubato ruminations appealing, altogether fitting for such a melody. "Singsong" plays like a malleable dance tune. Its recurring themes are more like instances or fragments, and the enveloping structure enhances Wade's soloing throughout. *Event Horizon* is as interested in form as it is with pure expression, the nooks and crannies evidence that a real group-mind is at work.

That seemingly formless form that permeates this project comes to an end with a 5/4 dance through the album's only cover, Harold Arlen's "If I Only Had A Brain." Played as if the Wizard of Oz always meant it to be in 5, this playful song (with another plucking solo from Wade) injects a leavening dose to a project that otherwise lingers in realms more akin to mystery, invention and not a little bit of brooding.

—John Epland



David Helbock Trio *Aural Colors*

TRAUMTON 4615

★★★★½

The hazard in versatility is that the musician who can do many things might mistake showcasing them for an end rather than a means. Austrian-born pianist David Helbock's keyboard facility certainly isn't in question. He is equally capable of negotiating elaborate figures at speed, holding down a groove and whacking some dissonance out of his instrument. He can play a fast calypso, hint at gospel, swing some Schönberg, get lush enough for cocktail hour and peck out dance rhythms with a prepared instrument.

And his rhythm section is with him every step of the way, amping up the velocity and cramming in a few extra notes and flourishes whenever they get the chance. What he doesn't do is make a case for why this stuff should all be on the same record, beyond the fact that he can play it all. It feels more like an advertisement of his diverse abilities than an expression of creative intentions.

—Bill Meyer

Aural Colors: Yellow Meets Red; Sechs kleine Klavierstücke op. 19, Nr. IV; Sechs kleine Klavierstücke op. 19, Nr. III; Sechs kleine Klavierstücke op. 19, Nr. II; Opfili, bist so kugelrund; Intro To The Myths; Horus And Jesus; AM—Anonymous Monkaholics; Virus Ukelelen Song; Healing Colors; Para Hermeto. (50:26)

Personnel: David Helbock, piano; Raphael Preuschl, bass ukulele; Herbert Pirker, drums.

Ordering info: traumton.de





Allegra Levy
Lonely City

STEEPLECHASE LOOKOUT 33118

★★★

The 24-year-old singer/songwriter Allegra Levy has a pleasing alto, a sultry delivery and a propensity to swing. *Lonely City*, her first album, is consistently engaging.

Levy cites Richard Rodgers, Jule Styne and Henry Mancini as inspirations. Her best songs, while not reaching those Olympian levels, are well-crafted enough to suggest she has been paying attention. The set is produced by trumpeter John McNeil, her former teacher at New England Conservatory; his sprightly horn arrangements are a highlight of the album. Accompanying Levy is a tight, highly professional quintet that includes Adam Kolker on tenor sax, John Bailey on trumpet, Jorge Roeder on bass and Richie Barshay on drums. Pianist Carmen Staaf, who arranged several of the tunes, makes a strong impression with her sure-footed soloing and delicate touch.

Levy's best songs show her potential with original melodies and clever, polished lyrics. "I Don't Want To Be In Love," an uptempo samba, could have been sung by Peggy Lee or Nancy Wilson. The ballad "Why Do I?" is elegantly simple yet manages to surprise both melodically and with its sophisticated lyric. Her tune "I'm Not Okay" demonstrates her mordant, rueful tone as well as her ability to write a memorable hook: "I'm not okay / and I never will be / I'm not okay / and that's okay with me / Don't be a fool and try to save me / I'd rather sit and live the blues God gave me."

As a singer, there is an occasional tentativeness in the rhythm of a phrase, or the way she sidles up to a note when, with a dash more confidence, she might hit it on the head. Still, Levy bears watching. Jazz singers who write originally and prolifically are uncommon, especially those who write in the style of the Great American Songbook. —Allen Morrison

Lonely City: Anxiety; I Don't Want To Be In Love; Everything Green; A New Face; Why Do I; A Better Day; I'm Not Okay; Clear-Eyed Tango; Lonely City; Our Lullaby; The Duet. (53:08)

Personnel: Allegra Levy, voice; Adam Kolker, tenor saxophone; John Bailey, trumpet; Carmen Staaf, piano and arrangements; Jorge Roeder, bass; Richie Barshay, drums; John McNeil, arrangements; Steve Cardenas, guitar (1); Lolly Bienenfeld, trombone (2); Mark Feldman, violin (3, 8); Andy Green, guitar (9); Aubrey Johnson, voice (9); Fung Chen Hwei, violin (11); Victor Lowrie, viola (11); Mariel Roberts, cello (11).

Ordering info: steeplechase.dk, allegralevy.com

David Roitstein/Larry Koonse
Conversations

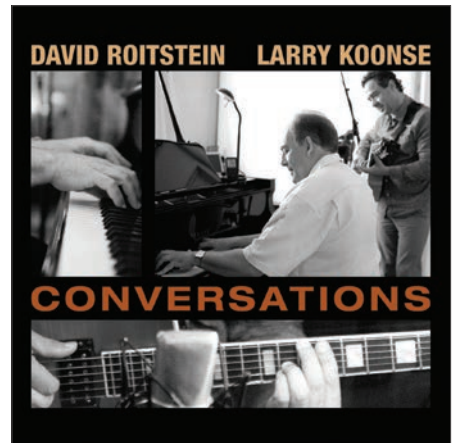
JAZZ COMPASS 1024

★★★★

Pianist David Roitstein and guitarist Larry Koonse rule deeply considered, thought-provoking jazz terrain here. This album speaks low but eloquently and, like any good conversation, dares you to overhear it.

The literate Roitstein is jazz program director at the California Institute of the Arts in Valencia, where Koonse is on the faculty (Koonse also has toured with artists spanning Cleo Laine and Larry Goldings). These two have recorded before and know when to intertwine and when to give each other room. Together, they forge a unique sound, oddly courtly even at its most angular.

Roitstein and Koonse wrote six of the 10 tracks; the others are the Brazilian flutist Léa Freire's playful, ringing "Mamulengo," pitting Roitstein's pushy piano against Koonse's witty single notes in a tune suggesting both gavotte and samba; a rendition of Monk's stealthy "Think Of One," hitching Koonse's bass-like rhythm to Roitstein at his most barrelhouse; the soothing tone poem "Snowglobe" by Polish jazz bassist Darek Oleszkiewicz; and a sweet version of Jobim's "Luiza" featuring a patient Koonse. Roitstein's most entertaining originals are the happy "Blip Blop," an exchange that feels almost physical (Koonse is a virtual rhythm section here) and "George Kennedy," a querulous musi-



cal portrait in which Roitstein's left hand evokes the sculpted funk of Horace Silver. Koonse's tunes may be more straightforward: "Candle" is patient and warming; "Child's Time" is a jazz lullaby with the two at their least adorned; and "Blues For Adam" is insistent, building from chords until Koonse takes off. This is an intellectual blues—curlicued, persistent and, finally, assertive. These two are such fine players—and thinkers—that their music never comes off as anything but heartfelt. —Carlo Wolff

Conversations: Mamulengo; Think Of One; Candle; Blip Blop; In Time.; Snowglobe; George Kennedy; Childs Time; Blues For Adam; Luiza. (51:10)

Personnel: David Roitstein, piano; Larry Koonse, guitar.

Ordering info: jazzcompass.com

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At Era's End

Jack Bruce, who died last October at age 71, was one of the great jazz-loving musicians in rock. Before earning world renown with Eric Clapton and Ginger Baker as the ultimate '60s power trio Cream, the Scotsman quit his classical studies to play jazz in U.K. clubs. Post-Cream, Bruce collaborated with the likes of guitarist John McLaughlin (*Things We Like*, all free-bop instrumentals), saxophonist John Surman (see *Spirit: Live At The BBC, 1971-78*) and keyboardist Carla Bley (heard on the underrated *Live At Manchester Free Trade Hall, '75*). He joined Tony Williams' rock-tinged Lifetime band, playing and singing on *Turn It Over*. Decades later, in a tribute to Lifetime-era Williams, Bruce teamed with organist John Medeski, guitarist Vernon Reid and drummer Cindy Blackman as the raucous Spectrum Road, which released an eponymous album in 2012.

Bruce expanded the melodic-dynamic role of the bass in rock music, and he was a powerful, fearless singer, his keening vocals pushing toward the sharp edge of a note in a way that could tingle the spine when he was on his mettle. Working mostly with lyricist Pete Brown, Bruce wrote some of Cream's most enduring songs, whether psychedelic rock ("White Room") or smart, hook-heavy updates on the blues ("Politician"). Bruce also composed inspired pieces for his solo albums into the 21st century; in particular, though, his 1969 masterpiece *Songs For A Tailor* yielded songs that he re-interpreted throughout his career.

In 1993, to mark his 50th year, Bruce convened friends old and new in Cologne, Germany, for career-spanning concerts telecast by the venerable *Rockpalast* program. That event's audiovisual record has been reissued as a lavish, warts-and-all three-DVD/CD set, *The 50th Birthday Concerts (MIG 90612; 119:00/109:00/75:37 ★★)*. Bruce—who was no teetotaler and would have severe health problems later—sounds in decent-enough shape, but this is a problematic document for those who want to remember the protean musician at his best.

Things begin awfully with a Bach-influenced piece featuring Bruce on cello, out of tune; he moves to piano for a Satie-esque miniature, better. Then he sets things fully right by demonstrating his gift for surprising melody, singing his solo tune "Can You Follow?" Throughout the DVDs, the audio mix isn't attractive, and there are performances made lame by dated keyboard sounds. But it is Bruce's self-indulgent fretless bass at overbearing volume that renders barely listenable several jazzy workouts with Baker and a pre-Cream mentor, saxophonist Dick Heckstall-Smith. Bruce later fronts a fusion-tinged rock combo that blights blues covers and his own songs alike.

What works? Bruce's brassy "Never Tell Your Mother She's Out Of Tune" almost bests the original groove; but a raggedy performance mars the

Jack Bruce



TINA KORHONEN

poetic "Rope Ladder To The Moon." Bruce caps the shows with a run of Cream hits, joined again by a muted, tipling Baker. One evening was supposed to feature Clapton, but stepping in for the no-show was rock-guitar journeyman Gary Moore, whose metallic tone is overwrought, even if his way with "NSU" is undeniably fiery.

Ordering info: mig-music-shop.com

Joe McPhee's 1996 album *As Serious As Your Life (Hatology 704; 56:48 ★★★)* has a Stonehenge-like image on the cover. It feels apt, as his solitary ruminations—on saxophones, cornet, piano and electronic percussion, sometimes overdubbed—have an ancient, ritualistic feel. There are abstractions on George Gershwin, John Coltrane and Sun Ra-meets-Conlon Nancarrow, as well as homages to Miles Davis and author Valerie Wilmer, whose book on '60s-'70s avant-jazz inspired the album title. This remains a master class in the expressive possibilities of solo studio play (especially when McPhee is on tenor), but his closing, James Earl Jones-in-a-cave spoken manifesto should've been cut with the reissue.

Ordering info: hathut.com

Although he moved into film/TV scoring in the late '90s, Canadian guitarist **Jerry De Villiers Jr.** led fusion bands earlier in the decade. He dug into his tapes for the previously unreleased studio and live material of *The Turning Point Archives (Timeless Momentum 20141; 76:05 ★)*. His guitar is redolent of late-'80s Joe Satriani (though less virtuoso), and the tunes, plagued by slap bass and horribly dated keyboard sounds, sound like bumpers for old public-access TV shows. **DB**

Ordering info: timelessmomentum.com



Tomoko Omura *Roots*

INNER CIRCLE 037

★★★★½

Tomoko Omura grew up in Shizuoka, Japan, a city that lies not far south of Mount Fuji, one of her homeland's most iconic geographic features. Living in New York, as she does today, the violinist no longer has a natural symbol of her nation standing as a backdrop to her town, but she does carry the traditional songs of her country with her.

Roots, her second album as a leader, brings the music of her childhood memories squarely into the modern jazz world she inhabits today, often to beautiful effect.

The first thing we hear is not her violin but her double-tracked voice; the singing is functional, but all the fireworks come from her fingerboard. On "Tinsagu Nu Hana (Balsam Flowers)" she begins by playing a gorgeous, unaccompanied melody, then warps to another galaxy for her later solo, which calls back to Jerry Goodman's work with Mahavishnu Orchestra.

The well-spaced moments where she plays pizzicato all add a sense of urgent drive; on "Chakkiri-bushi," she nearly fuses with Noah Garabedian's bass, and the result swings hard.

Omura is a deft arranger, calling on her rhythm section to vary the feel and leading the charge through starts and stops. Will Graefe's guitar is a wild card. On "Ge Ge Ge," he plays with a spiky rock tone, shifting through several vastly different moods over the course of a wild solo.

A good leader gets great performances from her band, and Omura provides a framework that brings out the best in her collaborators. *Roots* may look to the past for inspiration, but it showcases a leader with a fine future. —Joe Tangari

Roots: Antagata Dokosa (Where Are You From?); Ge Ge Ge; National Anthem; Kojo No Tsuki (Castle In The Moonlight); Tinsagu Nu Hana (Balsam Flowers); Cha Tsu Mi (Green Tea Picking); The Mountain; Soran-bushi; Chakkiri-bushi; Hometown; National Anthem (Reprise). (59:38)

Personnel: Tomoko Omura, violin, voice; Will Graefe, guitar; Glenn Zaleski, piano, keyboards; Noah Garabedian, bass; Colin Stranahan, drums.

Ordering info: innercirclemusic.com



Gary McFarland *This Is Gary McFarland*

CENTURY 67
★★★★½

This package memorializes Gary McFarland, one of the busiest New York jazz arrangers of the 1960s. His ascendance coincided with the rise of bossa nova, and McFarland was adept at translating the mercurial song form into orchestrations. He wrote some beautiful orchestral settings for great soloists, yet wasn't immune to commercial forces.

A DVD of Kristian St. Clair's recent McFarland documentary and a previously unreleased live CD are potent reminders of McFarland's gifts. His sudden death from poisoning at age 38 in 1971 robbed music of a composer/arranger who expanded the jazz vocabulary and intelligently addressed the pop music of the day in a way that shortchanged neither.

A late bloomer, McFarland wasn't serious about music until his twenties. Playing in a band during his Army service, summers at the Lennox School and a cup of coffee at Berklee solidified his passion. He was a synthesist who utilized current trends to inform his style. The structural simplicity and harmonic complexity of bossa nova intrigued him; he reduced the role of saxophones, writing simplified parts that took on translucent beauty when combined. The albums for Stan Getz, Steve Kuhn and Bill Evans still stand as orchestral highlights for those soloists. McFarland's own *America The Beautiful* (1968) was a thoughtful response to a country in turmoil.

St. Clair deftly tells the story, using poignant testimony from trombonist Bob Brookmeyer, guitarist Joe Beck, pianist Kuhn, bassist Richard Davis, drummer Grady Tate, contractor Emile Charlap, author Gene Lees and many others. A canny sense of the sharp '60s graphics of the McFarland album covers makes *This Is Gary McFarland* a stylish doc.

He was an artist, but McFarland was also a careerist. He used his star quality to his advantage, but signed with a shady manager, who may have dipped into McFarland's till. Hanging out at Jim & Andy's with the guys reinforced alcoholic tendencies. One night he took a drink spiked with Methodone, and a decade of momentum was stopped. This film rehabilitates an unjustly forgotten musical legacy.

The accompanying CD is a '65 radio broadcast from Seattle's old Penthouse club. McFarland's vibes lead a small band with reedman Sadao Watanabe, guitarist Gabor Szabo, bassist Eddie Gomez and drummer Joe Cocuzzo. The music is deceptively simple—light-textured, but harmonically layered and gently swinging. Gomez and Cocuzzo supply the flexible rhythm and structure, while the soloists operate with plenty of space.

McFarland and Szabo work particularly well together—accompanying or supplying counterpoint throughout. The inclusion of Beatles tunes

must be some of the earliest jazz engagements of that canon. McFarland's soft vocalese, embroidering his vibraphone cushion, shows that he thought deeply about source material, overlay, space and controlled intensity in his work. One wonders why it's taken so long to see release. —Kirk Silsbee

This Is Gary McFarland: Intro; Beginnings; NYC; Meet Me At Jim & Andy's; I Love To Say Her Name; Soft Samba; Overload; The Manager; 1967–1971; November 2, 1971; Epilogue; End. (58:37)

Personnel: Gary McFarland, vibraphone; Sadao Watanabe, tenor saxophone, flute; Gabor Szabo, guitar; Eddie Gomez, bass; Joe Cocuzzo, drums.

Ordering info: lightintheattic.net

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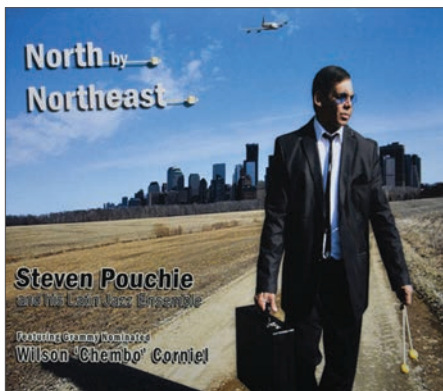
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Steve Pouchie *North By Northeast*

LATIN JAZZ ALIVE

★★★★

Patrons in Manhattan clubs may be content to sit reverently hushed while listening to jazz. But just a few miles away in the Bronx—the borough Steve Pouchie And His Latin Ensemble call home—club-goers want much more. They demand high-quality music, plentiful food and, when the spirit strikes, they want to dance. That spirit is central to vibraphonist Pouchie's third disc, a set mixing originals and smartly re-arranged covers.

Pouchie's compositions favor simple ear-grabbing melodies, as heard on the cooker "The Cell." Occasionally he does stretch further, as when the feverish rhythm section goads him during

Chris Biesterfeldt *Phineas*

BIEST 1002

★★★★½

Pianist Phineas Newborn Jr. died over 25 years ago, destitute and under-recorded, at the age of 57. In his prime, he was one of the most technically gifted pianists to swing a trio. His legacy lives on in the seemingly impossible two-handed runs captured on such albums as *We Three* (1958) and *The Newborn Touch* (1964), but he has never been held in as high regard as other nimble pianists like Art Tatum and Oscar Peterson. Guitarist Chris Biesterfeldt is doing his part to keep Newborn in the conversation.

Completing the trio of challenging last names is upright bassist Matthew Rybicki and drummer Jared Schonig. The band doesn't aim to replicate or overtake the Newborn songbook, instead using his recordings as loose source material for their funky forays. Like Tatum and Peterson, Newborn was a gifted interpreter. Thus only three songs on the album are penned by him, with the bulk of the material coming from other notable jazzmen. "Cookin' At The Continental" burns with a breathless solo from Biesterfeldt that covers the full range of the instrument. A confident and straightahead "Juicy Lucy" features a solo from Rybicki that is patient and wonderfully disjointed. "Manteca," a tune that Newborn positively demolishes on *A World Of Piano!* with Paul Chambers and Philly Joe Jones, is taken in a different direction. Instead of the manic bombast that marks the

"Tunisia By Day," a winning, energized cut that humorously offers a melody-altered slant on "A Night In Tunisia."

Ace conguero and co-producer Wilson "Chembo" Corniel is a strong presence throughout. So it's not surprising that the groove-o-meter stays pegged to the max. He's supported by drummer Diego Lopez, who injects hip contemporary touches, the urgent and solid bassist Solo Rodriguez and tasty keyboard compers Sam Barrios and Adan Perez. Special kudos go to tenor man Julio Botti, who spins out some of the set's finest solos.

Old school is embraced throughout and Pouchie hits pay dirt by reaching way back with the irresistible floor-filler "Frenesi Cha-Cha." Such positive spirit defines the disc. A telling moment is heard when the band abruptly shifts into "Somewhere" during their "West Side Story Medley." The usually plaintive tune of doomed lovers is transformed into an uplifting dance floor joy. Pouchie's band convinces us, "Hey, maybe there really is a place for us." —Jeff Potter

North By Northeast: North By Northeast; The Cell; Frenesi Cha-Cha; West Side Story Medley; Tus Ojos; Tunisia By Day; My Favorite Things; A Mis Contrarios; Cuban Chant; Triste Y Alegre. (59:00)

Personnel: Steve Pouchie, vibes, marimba; Wilson "Chembo" Corniel, congas, bongo, cowbell, shekere, batá; Julio Botti, tenor saxophone; Solo Rodriguez, bass; Diego Lopez, drums; batá; Adan Perez, keyboards (1, 2, 6, 8); Sam Barrios, keyboards (3–5, 7, 9, 10); Joe DeJesus, Cuban flute (3); Ariel Santiago, flute (9); Charles Alletto, guitars, tres (10); Guido Gonzalez, trumpet (1, 4); Andy Hunter, trombone (1, 4); Jorge Maldonado, vocals (3, 5); Román Diaz, batá, vocals (7).

Ordering info: cdbaby.com



Newborn version, Biesterfeldt goes for a swinging chicken scratch that culminates in a popping solo from Schonig over the tune's introductory riff. Throughout the recording, Biesterfeldt attacks each tune with a madman's spirit, bouncing from chords and single lines at the speed of light. This album stands on its own as an invigorating trio recording while paying homage to one of the undersung greats of jazz.

—Sean J. O'Connell

Phineas: Harlem Blues; Sugar Ray; Cookin' At The Continental; The Midnight Sun Will Never Set; Caravan; Reflection; Juicy Lucy; Domingo; Phineas; Manteca; Sweet And Lovely; Theme For Basie; Blues From Phineas. (69:41)

Personnel: Chris Biesterfeldt, guitar; Matthew Rybicki, bass; Jared Schonig, drums.

Ordering info: cdbaby.com



Nate Birkey *Just A Closer Walk*

HOUSEHOLD INK 147

★★★★½

Over the course of his career, which spans nine releases as a leader, trumpeter and vocalist Nate Birkey has consistently cleaved to a less-is-more ethos, whether by virtue of his West Coast cool vibe or specific technical choices that prioritize feeling and lyrical expression.

That quality is particularly evident on *Just A Closer Walk*, Birkey's spiritually minded new studio album. The disc opens, appropriately, with a nod to Donald Byrd's 1963 gospel-jazz game changer *New Perspective*, which Byrd referred to as a "modern hymnal."

Yet where Byrd made Duke Pearson's stirring "Cristo Ridentor" famous with the help of an eight-piece gospel choir, seven instrumentalists and his own clean and clear articulation, Birkey's take is introspective and mellow. A hushed fuzz of percussion juxtaposed against the restraint of Birkey's lines underscore the song's somber essence. "And It Can Be" takes that quietude a step further as Birkey, having put aside his usual mix of playing and singing for this all instrumental album, virtually transforms his trumpet into a human voice, complete with ranges of emotion that taper off into a diaphanous whisper at the song's end.

That's not to say *Just A Closer Walk* neglects the uptempo, New Orleans-inspired elements of the church music that influenced it. A playful rhythm section kicks things off with a parade beat on "What A Friend We Have In Jesus." As the tune progresses, a series of occasionally knotty improvisations update the song's traditional foundation before a low piano refrain heralds a return to the opening rhythms. "His Eye Is On The Sparrow," meanwhile, nearly flirts with funk. Albums like this suggest Birkey is on his way out from under the shadow of all those early Chet Baker comparisons; his musical ideas deserve to stand on their own.

—Jennifer O'Dell

Just A Closer Walk: Cristo Redentor; What A Friend We Have In Jesus; And It Can Be; His Eye Is On The Sparrow; If Thou But Suffer God To Guide Thee; O Sacred Head, Now Wounded; Just A Closer Walk With Thee; Turn Your Eyes Upon Jesus; The Deacon; Soon Ah Will Be Done. (55:04).

Personnel: Nate Birkey, trumpet; Tom Buckner, tenor saxophone; Jamieson Trotter, piano; Jim Connolly, bass; Peter Buck, drums.

Ordering info: householdink.com



Russell Malone *Love Looks Good On You*

HIGHNOTE 7268

★★★★

Guitarist Russell Malone slows himself down for his HighNote debut. In the disc's liner notes, he talks about not emphasizing playing fast runs, but quietly focusing on the songs themselves. Actually, he's always been a considerate and melodic player, but along with this new focus he also leads a quartet that challenges his approach. They just do so quietly.

Malone does burn through the inspired opener, the late Mulgrew Miller's "Soul Leo." The guitarist has paid tribute to his much-missed colleague in the past, such as through his own composition, "Blues For Mulgrew" (on *Playground*, MaxJazz, 2004). Malone's quick-tempo solo here uses such techniques as repeated notes in the higher register, but the delivery is graceful, not insistent. Pianist Rick Germanson also maintains his own voice while echoing Miller's take on hard-bop.

Malone's title track is a poignant ballad, which exemplifies his new perspective. He brings a vocal sense to his unhurried single-note lines, which make ideal use of space. Bassist Gerard Cannon and drummer Willie Jones III respond with an ostensibly light touch here, as they do with the group's version of Thad Jones' "The Elder." But the rhythm section is never merely placid, such as on Isaac Hayes' "Ellie's Love Theme." As Cannon drives the beat, Jones becomes freed to color the song through his melodic use of brushes and cymbals. Malone's lines convey a lingering resonance that re-creates, and enhances, the sound of Hayes' vibes on his original version (from *Shaft*). When Jones briefly explodes, on George Coleman's "Amsterdam After Dark," Malone provides an ideal understated response. Still, the most moving performance is the guitarist's solo reading of "Lift Ev'ry Voice And Sing," in which his nuanced reading of the civil rights anthem blends a reverent delivery with a few improvisational flourishes.

Through shedding the flash from his thoughtful solos and compositions, Malone knows how to create an enduring legacy. —Aaron Cohen

Love Looks Good On You: Soul Leo; Love Looks Good On You; The Elder; Ellie's Love Theme; Your Zowie Face; Mirrors; Amsterdam After Dark; Lift Ev'ry Voice And Sing; Suite Sioux. (51:39)

Personnel: Russell Malone, guitar; Rick Germanson, piano; Gerald Cannon, bass; Willie Jones III, drums.

Ordering info: jazzdepot.com

NILS WOGRAM NOSTALGIA
NATURE
NWOG012 // RELEASE APRIL 10th 2015

"NAVIGATING THE PAST WITH TOTALLY CONTEMPORARY IDEAS AND TECHNIQUES" (DOWNBEAT)

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Insider's Perspective

Guitarist-educator Garrison Fewell, a long-time professor at the Berklee College of Music, was a mainstream guitarist who garnered accolades for his playing for 20 years before having an awakening of sorts and diving headlong into the freedom pool. A practicing Nichiren Buddhist for 37 years, the same amount of time he's been on the Berklee faculty, Fewell has had an ongoing interest in the connection between spirituality and improvisation. His curiosity led him to compile the 25 thought-provoking and insightful dialogues with renowned improvisers and musical visionaries that constitute *Outside Music/Inside Voices* (Saturn University Press). Dedicated to the late John Tchicai and Roy Campbell (both of whom contribute lively metaphysical musings in the book), this treatise is in the tradition of Art Taylor's *Notes and Tones*, though focusing strictly on the role of spirituality in music while also revealing each subject's initial encounter with improvising.

For *Outside Music/Inside Voices*, Fewell begins each dialogue by posing the same question: "What is the importance of spirituality in your music and how has it influenced your skills as a creative artist?" And while improvisers like drummer Han Bennink and pianist Irene Schweizer downplay the role of spirituality in their music, others speak eloquently on the subject. As alto saxophonist Oliver Lake puts it, "I always looked at playing the saxophone and playing music as a way of going to church. If I had my horn in my mouth and I was playing, I felt like I was at church."

To bassist William Parker, "Each concert is a communal gathering, each work is a prayer." He further tells Fewell, "Spirituality is a light in the darkness—it allows us to see things. Life is a tunnel but spirituality is like a light in that tunnel."

As pianist Myra Melford sees it, the process of improvising is itself connected to the divine. "It's really tapping into your heart energy that's so connected to everything else in the universe, from thoughts and mental energy to the physical earth and planets. It's the thing that we all share, that's innate in all of us."

To drummer Milford Graves, improvising is a lifestyle. "If you want to learn to improvise, you gotta put yourself out there, just like Buddha did." And as pianist Dave Burrell sees it, "There is a truthfulness that binds improvisation to spirituality."

Trumpeter-saxophonist Joe McPhee, who speaks of music as a "mysterious force for good," recalls being touched by seeing both Ayler and John Coltrane in concert. "It was like being in a jet plane going down the runway, and just where it starts to take off and you feel that kind of lift."

All the subjects cite examples of how they have been healed, physically or spiritually, by the

OUTSIDE MUSIC *inside voices*

DIALOGUES ON IMPROVISATION AND THE SPIRIT OF CREATIVE MUSIC



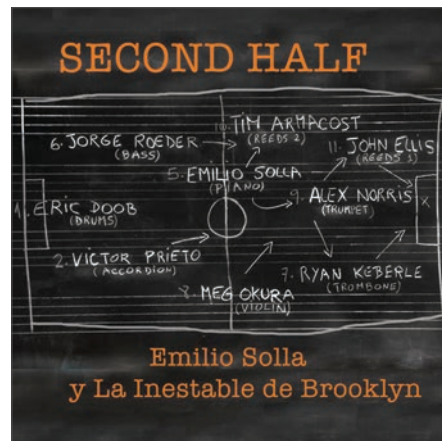
GARRISON FEWELL
Photos by LUCIANO ROSSETTI

music. Campbell, who suffered a stroke that affected his speech and caused some paralysis, made a full recovery, which he attributes to the healing force of music. "There is something beyond myself that creates what I'm doing," he explains. "In other words, I'm an instrument of an instrument."

Others interviewed by Fewell in this artfully crafted book, which features evocative black-and-white photos by Luciano Rossetti, include Steve Swell, Nicole Mitchell, Liberty Elman, Matthew Shipp, Ahmed Abdullah, Marilyn Crispell, Henry Grimes, Baikida Carroll, Henry Threadgill and Wadada Leo Smith.

Sadly, the guitarist-educator-author was diagnosed with cancer around the time he undertook the interviews for *Outside Music/Inside Voices*, and he has been struggling with the disease ever since. He continues to record music and perform even though he has been undergoing chemotherapy almost constantly for the past two years. As he expressed in an email: "The music and the thoughts and the spirit give me much joy and actually help me to stay well in spite of the intention of some other cells in my body to act otherwise! I'm sad that I lost John Tchicai and Roy Campbell these past two years because they were not only great musical collaborators and mentors, they were my very close friends and positive spirits to travel together with in music and life. Just a month before Roy passed I started playing and recording with Dave Burrell who is the sweetest man and wonderful musician. He and his muse Monika who is a writer and poet have become very close friends with me and my wife. These experiences are even beyond the words I was able to capture in my book and are truly the joy of sharing music for a lifetime." **DB**

Ordering info: garrisonfewell.com



Emilio Solla y La Inestable de Brooklyn *Second Half*

SELF RELEASE

★★★★

Despite the witty chalkboard schematic on the cover, this music has nothing to do with soccer, regardless of the punning title evoking the quintessential TV commentator non-statement, "It's a game of two halves." The halves in question are bisected by pianist/composer Emilio Solla's mid-life crisis, fuelling fresh resolve to steady and quantify his musical mission.

As an Argentinian, Solla is enthusiastic about soccer; he is also passionate for Piazzolla, as evidenced by "Suite Piazzollana," which commences with a jovial flute/accordion *pas de deux* that fades, returning as a minor-tinged tango excavated by the leader's piano, Meg Okura's violin and Jorge Roeder's febrile bass. The third movement of the suite, softened by flugelhorn and arco bass, is buoyant and airy.

To finish, Solla's lines hearken back to Buenos Aires, and John Ellis takes a feathery tenor foray before antiphonic colorations take us to another brisk climax. The scoring is rich yet uncluttered, and clearly Solla, thanks to a residency at Manhattan's Zinc Bar, has refined this tentet material (he's also arranged for Arturo O'Farill and Paquito D'Rivera).

"Esencia" is tethered by an ostinato launchpad for Prieto and Okura before a fanfare finale. "Raro" is especially layered but permits drummer Doob to let loose, before yearning, tidal lines herald cup-muted rasps from Ryan Keberle's outstanding trombone. After brief dissonance, all comes to a brash asymmetrical denouement. "Rhythm Changed" is a tad too pretty, and I could live without the surprising revival of "American Patrol" despite the deft arrangement. A lavish, assured set that speaks volumes about Solla's accrued wisdom. —Michael Jackson

Second Half: Llegará, Llegará, Llegará; Chakafrik; Para La Paz; Suite Piazzollana; Esencia; American Patrol; Raro; Rhythm Changed. (59:42)

Personnel: John Ellis, tenor saxophone, flute, bass clarinet; Tim Armacost, tenor and soprano saxophone, alto flute; Alex Norris, trumpet, flugelhorn; Ryan Keberle, trombone; Meg Okura, violin; Victor Prieto, accordion; Emilio Solla, piano; Jorge Roeder, double bass; Eric Doob, drums; Pablo Aslan, double bass (7); JP Jofre, bandoneon (3); Marcelo Woloski, bombo legüero (2, 6).

Ordering info: emiliosolla.com

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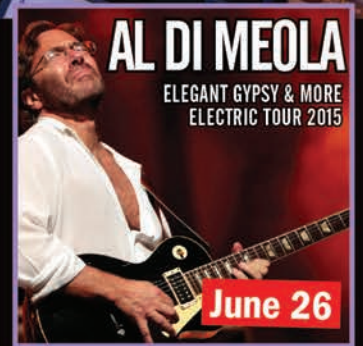
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MUSICIANS' GEAR GUIDE

BEST OF THE NAMM SHOW 2015

This year's NAMM Show, held Jan. 22–25 at the Anaheim Convention Center, showcased new instruments and equipment from all segments of the music industry. The show featured four exciting days of product introductions and demonstrations, and plenty of big-name players showed up as endorsers and performers at the after-hours concerts and all-star jams. In the following pages, DownBeat presents the best of The NAMM Show, a trade-only event that is not open to the general public.

Reporting by David Ball, Ed Enright, Katie Kailus, Bobby Reed and Brian Zimmerman





6



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9



10



13



11



12



14

1. Orianthi performs on stage at the 30th annual NAMM TEC Awards. 2. George Clinton oozes funky goodness at the John Lennon Educational Tour Bus Imagine Party (Jesse Grant/Getty Images for NAMM). 3. Eastman artist Bob Mintzer solos with his big band, featuring Peter Erskine (left). 4. Mark Guiliana gives a demonstration at the Sabian booth. 5. Eric Marienthal (left), Paquito D'Rivera and Jerry Vivino played at this year's VandoJam. 6. Trombone Shorty & Orleans Avenue thrills the audience gathered at the NAMM GoPro Stage (Jesse Grant/Getty Images for NAMM). 7. Tony Levin plays at the NS Designs exhibit. 8. Terry Gibbs (right) and his wife, Rebekah, help honor the late Buddy DeFranco, who posthumously received the Legend Award from Yamaha's Band & Orchestra Division. 9. Nathan East is inducted into the NAMM TEC Awards Hall of Fame (Jesse Grant/Getty Images for NAMM). 10. Dr. Lonnie Smith walks the show floor. 11. Rick Baptist (left) and Jon Faddis hang at the Schilke booth. 12. Mindi Abair performs at the She Rocks Awards (Jesse Grant/Getty Images for NAMM). 13. Mark Wood (left) and Jordan Rudess appear at the Wood Violins exhibit. 14. Alphonse Mouzon at the Canopus booth.



1. WINDY CITY WAILIN'

The Yamaha Xeno Chicago B-flat trumpet has been updated with the input of John Hagstrom, second trumpet in the Chicago Symphony Orchestra brass section, to offer ideal response and a clear high register. Revamped valves optimize the flow of air, creating ideal response with just the right amount of resistance. [usa.yamaha.com]

2. WARM & COMPLEX

P. Mauriat went with a completely remodeled body tube for its Master 97 Alto Saxophone, featuring a state-of-the-art bow and bell design for improved tuning. Its sterling silver octave pips give the horn an added element of warmth and complexity.

[pmauriatmusic.com]

3. SOUND STABILIZER

A cool new gadget from ReedGeek, the Klangbogen is a weight and energy diffuser that fits into the lyre holder of a saxophone—where the neck meets the body of the instrument. It helps to maximize tone and minimize wall flex in this highly unstable part of the saxophone. [reedgeek.com]

4. FIT FOR FADDIS

Schilke worked with jazz trumpeter, composer and educator Jon Faddis to come up with a one-of-a-kind B-flat trumpet. Built to Faddis' specifications, the S42L "Faddis" model includes a custom round tuning slide without waterkeys, adjustable tuning bell soundpost, heavy valve caps and removed "nibs" on the second slide. [schilke.com]

5. LEAD THE PACK

The 1632RGL-LT Ultra Lightweight Professional Lead Trombone from XO Brass has an ultra lightweight nickel outer slide and nickel-silver crook with hand-lapped chromed inner slides for superior response and a more centered tone. The free-blowing lead-bore instrument was developed with the assistance of trombonist, composer and arranger John Fedchock.

[xobrass.com]

6. STATE OF THE ART

Theo Wanne's Durga 3 Alto Saxophone Mouthpiece is made with a unique A.R.T. (Advanced Resonance Technology) material, providing a rich, resonant sound and a more responsive feel than hard rubber. A.R.T. was discovered through the testing of materials used in the aerospace and medical fields. [thewanne.com]

7. GET DIGITAL

Compatible with iPad versions 2, 3 and 4, the Manhasset 3200 iPad mount transforms traditional Manhasset music stands into digital music e-readers. The mount's spring-loaded arms grip the iPad firmly and securely, and the 360-degree rotation feature allows users to switch quickly between landscape and portrait modes. Perfect for gigging musicians.

[manhasset-specialty.com]

*Schilke and Jon Faddis...
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*Jon Faddis performs
on a Schilke S42L
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Photography by Ryan Bennett

1. BLUE BEAUTY

Blue Microphones' Mo-Fi features a built-in audiophile amplifier matched with high-powered, precision drivers, giving these headphones reliable, consistent accuracy on any device—whether in the studio, at home or on the go. [\[bluemic.com\]](http://bluemic.com)

2. LOUD & CLEAR

Electro-Voice's EKX series includes eight models—four powered and four passive. The speakers feature wood enclosures, onboard Quick Smart DSP, signal synchronized transducers, EV engineered components and 1,500 watts of high-efficiency sound. [\[electrovoice.com\]](http://electrovoice.com)

3. LES PAUL LOOK

Gibson's Les Paul Reference Monitors use carbon-coated titanium tweeters and non-woven carbon woofers to ensure clean transient impulse response and large headroom. [\[gibson.com\]](http://gibson.com)

4. PRO COMMENTARY

The GOLav from MXL Microphones works with GoPro Hero3, Hero 3+ and Hero4 cameras, letting users record commentary for their GoPro videos. The GOLav has a right-angle mini USB connector built into the microphone cable, so no adapter is needed. [\[mxlmics.com\]](http://mxlmics.com)

5. BLAST OFF

The Launchpad Pro MIDI grid instrument is an update on Novation's Launchpad, with enhanced RGB LED feedback as well as velocity- and pressure-sensitive pads. It is specifically designed to help the musician apply effects, dip in and out of specific mixer controls and switch between four key modes. [\[novationmusic.com\]](http://novationmusic.com)

6. COMPACT POWER

Presonus' StudioLive 328i loudspeakers are compact, powered, three-way speakers that rely on an 8-inch coaxial speaker with a 1.75-inch titanium compression driver to reproduce the mid and high frequencies and dual 8-inch ferrite speakers for low-frequency reproduction. [\[presonus.com\]](http://presonus.com)

7. WIRELESS WARRIOR

Samson's Synth 7 wireless system features all-metal construction as well as a dynamic LCD setup, which hosts the system's auto frequency spectrum analyzer, letting the user graphically see all the noise on the available channels and identifying the best channel for a given performance location. [\[samsontech.com\]](http://samsontech.com)

8. HANDHELD CONTROL

TC-Helicon's MP-76 allows singers to roam the stage freely while controlling their vocal processor directly from the mic. The MP-76 features four user-assignable Mic Control buttons and a numeric LCD display. [\[tcgroup.tc\]](http://tcgroup.tc)

9. PROTECT YOUR EARS

The UE Pro Sound Guard is a compact and portable device that connects in-line with any sound source and in-ear monitor. It provides automated sound level management to limit unwanted noise from unanticipated high levels of sound and enables greater sound fidelity. [\[pro.ultimateears.com\]](http://pro.ultimateears.com)

10. HI-RES & HANDY

Zoom's Q8 Handy Video Recorder is a compact video camera that uses Zoom's mic capsule system and records four tracks of audio. It combines a high-definition video camera and a high-resolution four-track audio recorder in one compact package. [\[zoom.co.jp\]](http://zoom.co.jp)





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1. VINTAGE VOYAGE

Travel through time with Sonor's Vintage series, which brings back the sound and look of the company's iconic Teardrop drum sets. Just like their acclaimed predecessors, the Vintage series drums feature hand-selected premium German Beech shells with rounded bearing edges. They also improve on the past by featuring Sonor's exclusive Tunesafe tuning system. [\[sonorusa.com\]](http://sonorusa.com)

2. JUST ADD WATER

Dream is the North American distributor of the Wambooka, a drum made from a single piece of polycarbonate. By adding water inside the drum, players can bend pitches, change the timbre and create myriad effects. This versatile instrument was inspired by an ancient drum, the darabuka. [\[dreamcymbals.com\]](http://dreamcymbals.com)

3. GO ELECTRONIC

NFUZD Audio's NSPIRE Series Rock Full Pack allows players to convert their acoustic drum sets to electronic drums, using real-size trigger pads and BFD Eco software with 55GB of 24-bit/44.1Hz full-bandwidth drum samples. Plus, when using headphones, players can practice in near-silence without any fear of waking the kids or neighbors. [\[infuzd.com\]](http://infuzd.com)

4. BIG & UGLY

Using the slogan "Big & Ugly," Sabian offers six unique ride cymbals that are big, dark, loose and dynamic. All six models offer great complexity, versatility and a distinctive appearance. Sabian has combined old world cymbal-making with 21st-century innovation. Despite that slogan, these rides are quite beautiful. [\[sabian.com\]](http://sabian.com)

5. GET A GRIP

Vic Firth's VicGloves are crafted in cabretta leather, with a ventilated synthetic mesh palm and back, as well stretch lycra between the fingers. Your hands can "breathe" while you play, and the synthetic rubber grip on the thumb and forefinger provides outstanding grip and control. [\[vicfirth.com\]](http://vicfirth.com)

6. STAYING PUT

Old pillows are notorious for their inconsistency. The KickPro bass drum pillow solves the problem by combining a weighted core with a non-skid, rubberized bottom and a fleece cover. This design lets the pillow be positioned easily and flexibly, with as much or as little contact with the bass drumhead as desired. It stays securely in place without applying Velcro or other adhesives to the drum. [\[kickpropillow.com\]](http://kickpropillow.com)

7. STACK 'EM

Zildjian's fx line of cymbals has five new models: the 10- and 12-inch fx Spiral Stackers, the 8- and 10-inch fx Oriental China "Trash" and the 7.5-inch Volcano Cup Zil-Bel. The Spiral Stackers create a visual spiral effect when played, are extremely light and produce multiple sounds and colors by hitting different parts of the stack. [\[zildjian.com\]](http://zildjian.com)

8. SOLID CONSTRUCTION

Sakae's Stave snare drum is constructed using segments of compressed, sustainable Japanese cypress. The compression process helps the drum produce a more controlled and tight sound. Stave drums are made using segments of solid wood rather than traditional plies, resulting in a snare with maximum projection. [\[sakaedrums.com\]](http://sakaedrums.com)

9. DON'T GO NUTS

The easy-to-use PinchClip replaces wingnuts on cymbal stands and hi-hats. PinchClip is a stainless-steel flange that flexes, making setting up and packing up much faster. Its specially designed arms can securely grab on to any threaded device. Plus, it solves that frustrating problem of looking for dropped wingnuts on dark stages. [\[pinch-clip.com\]](http://pinch-clip.com)





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Our new Platinum Pro EQ and Platinum Stage universal preamps are designed for players looking for a pro-quality preamp/DI for their acoustic guitar, violin, cello, bass, resonator guitar, banjo, mandolin or other acoustic instruments that may be too small or too precious to have an onboard preamp.

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1. AMP UP

Line 6's AMPLIFI TT guitar tone processor makes it possible for guitarists to turn any speaker system into a guitar amp and Bluetooth streaming system that mixes in guitar amp tones. It lets guitarists develop their musicianship while interacting with the music they love. Featuring DSP, AMPLIFI TT delivers more than 200 amps and effects with great sound quality. Guitarists can choose from thousands of professionally designed presets. [\[line6.com\]](http://line6.com)

2. THREE'S COMPANY

Harman's DigiTech has debuted the TRIO Band Creator Pedal, which creates a virtual band that plays along with the user. The TRIO listens to what is played and automatically generates bass and drum parts that match chord progressions and rhythmic feel. Plug a guitar into TRIO, press the footswitch to teach TRIO the chords and rhythm, then press the footswitch again to start playing with a customized personal band. TRIO provides a selection of built-in effects for your guitar that vary according to the genre selected, letting users play in a power trio, jazz trio or other ensemble at the touch of a button. [\[digiotech.com\]](http://digiotech.com)

3. ARTIST PRECISION

Fender released several new artist signature bass guitars, including the Steve Harris Precision Bass. The instrument comes in a regal gloss white finish with special pinstriping, mirrored pickguard and West Ham United F.C. crest. Fender also debuted the U.S.A. Geddy Lee Jazz Bass, which combines the specs and features of the Rush frontman's three favorite basses: two Fender Custom Shop versions of his signature model and Lee's original black '72 Jazz Bass. [\[fender.com\]](http://fender.com)

4. HIT THE GOLDMINE

100 Jazz Lessons, part of the new Bass Lesson Goldmine series from Hal Leonard, was written by Josh Needleman and Matt Rybicki for upright and electric bass. Topics include string crossing, intonation, double stops, fingering strategies, raking, "two" feel, jazz waltz, odd meters, ostinatos, pedal points, reharmonizing and more. The publisher has also rolled out blues, rock, jazz and funk/r&b books in the series. [\[halleonard.com\]](http://halleonard.com)

5. VERSATILE AXES

Yamaha has released the entire lineup of Pacifica electric guitars in the United States. They feature solid tonewood construction with alder bodies, rosewood fingerboards and maple necks. Their versatility is due in large part to top-notch pickup and hardware selections, helping guitarists create a diverse tonal palette. [\[usa.yamaha.com\]](http://usa.yamaha.com)

6. ANNIVERSARY MODELS

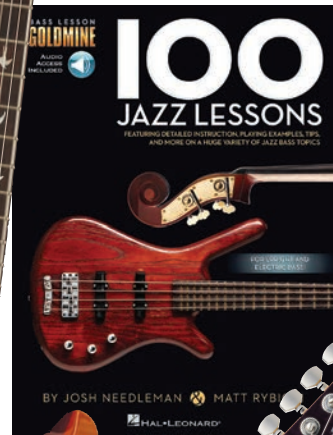
PRS is offering a series of 30th Anniversary Custom 24 guitar models in each of its electric guitar product families, including the U.S.-made Private Stock, the U.S.-made Core line, the vintage-inspired, U.S.-made S2 and the PRS-designed SE guitar. Each model incorporates the visionary design and craftsmanship that has become synonymous with the brand. [\[prsguitars.com\]](http://prsguitars.com)

7. CLASSICALLY MODERN

D'Angelico Guitars' new EX-DH is the latest addition to the company's collection of hollowbody archtop guitars. The new EX-DH dual humbucker hollowbody is an archtop that merges classic and modern styles. As an alternative to the brand's 17-inch models, the EX-DH's 16-inch body offers the legendary D'Angelico tone in a comfortable, smaller body size and boasts gold Kent Armstrong pickups and matching gold Grover super rotomatic tuners. [\[dangelicoguitars.com\]](http://dangelicoguitars.com)

8. TUNER DEMAND

Due to popular demand, D'Addario has re-released its Clip-On Headstock Tuner with improved features. The headstock works on guitars, basses and other stringed instruments, using vibrations rather than sound. Using a highly sensitive piezo sensor and large multi-color display, the Clip-On Headstock Tuner lets guitarists tune easily and accurately in noisy and dimly lit environments. The tuner features a flip-up display that automatically turns the tuner on when opened and off when closed. The screen is also reversible. [\[daddario.com\]](http://daddario.com)





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1. UPGRADED DIGITAL

Yamaha's P-115 Digital Piano, which replaces the P-105, has improved damper resonance and reverb effects. Its Pure CF Sound Engine reproduces the sound of Yamaha's CFIIIS 9-foot concert grand piano. Other key additions include a controller app for iOS, expanded polyphony (192 notes) and more drum rhythms (14). The aux outputs and USB port enhance the P-115's versatility and connectivity. usa.yamaha.com



2. UPDATED KRONOS

The new Kronos from Korg features the nine-engine structure from previous versions, with improvements to sound capability and overall functionality. The SGX piano engine now includes a 9GB Berlin grand with dedicated una corda samples plus sympathetic string resonance. There are new banks of sounds based on famous song titles, plus a "best of" bank from KApr. korg.com



3. HIGH STANDARD

Kurzweil's Artis SE follows the standard established by the company's Artis and Forte keyboards. Featuring a new German 9-foot grand piano sample, the Artis SE has a Fatar TP-100 weighted keyboard bed. Also included in the Artis SE sound library are vintage electric pianos, clavinet, synth sounds, string sections, orchestras, guitars and percussion. americanmusicsound.com

4. CROSSOVER SYNTH

Roland's JD-Xi interactive analog/digital crossover synthesizer features a true analog synth engine along with a wide selection of Roland's SuperNATURAL digital sounds. Equipped with 37 mini keys, the JD-Xi comes packed with built-in drum kits, a four-track pattern sequencer, vocoder and auto-pitch effects. Keyboard players can enjoy fat, warm analog bass and lead tones with ample controls for hands-on tweaking, plus polyphonic PCM essentials like electric piano, brass and guitar. rolandus.com



5. SITTING IN

Alfred Music's *Sitting In: Jazz Piano* and *Sitting In: Blues Piano* method book and DVD-ROM packages allow piano players and keyboardists to virtually sit in with top-notch professional bands. The *Sitting In* series brings the band to the player through high-quality studio play-along recordings performed by live musicians. Each DVD-ROM includes MP3 backing tracks and demonstrations, as well as Alfred Music's exclusive TNT 2 software, which enables customization of audio tracks for practice. alfred.com



6. KEYBOARD ADVANCEMENT

Akai Professional's Advance Keyboard series—available in 25-, 49- and 61-key sizes—provides advanced manipulation of any virtual instrument. Designed to fuse the power of software instruments with the live playability of a keyboard workstation, the Advance Keyboard series transforms computer-based plugins into a hands-on playing experience. The keyboard surface features an integrated, high-resolution full-color 4.3-inch display, providing real-time control and feedback of any and all virtual instrument parameters. akapro.com



7. PROPHET RETURNS

The Prophet 6, the first Sequential product to be released in three decades, is a polyphonic analog synthesizer with all the qualities of the classic Prophet 5—true voltage-controlled oscillators, filters and amplifiers—plus studio-quality digital effects, velocity sensitivity, a polyphonic step sequencer and an arpeggiator. The result is pure, unadulterated analog tone with the stability and reliability of a state-of-the-art modern synth. davesmithinstruments.com



8. MULTI-DIMENSIONAL

ROLI launched an alpha version of Equator, a synthesis engine dedicated to multi-dimensional instruments. ROLI's Seaboard GRAND is a radically new instrument that reimagines the piano keyboard as a soft, continuous surface. The Seaboard's polyphonic pitch bend, vibrato and per-note dynamic changes are all available at the user's fingertips. Equator alpha will be available to all existing and new Seaboard GRAND customers free of charge. roli.com



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BE THE RHYTHM SECTION: MASTERY OF FORM AND HARMONY FOR HORN PLAYERS

BY REX RICHARDSON

Rex Richardson at the 2015 JEN Conference



SUZETTE NIESS PHOTOGRAPHY

Learning to improvise is a highly personal process. While there are various successful systems that have been developed over the years, I remain convinced that there is no one-system-fits-all approach. Nonetheless, I have seen clear patterns in the learning process that lead to widely accepted principles. One is that one's study can be divided into three distinct, albeit overlapping, areas: 1) theory or "book" knowledge; 2) transcription; and 3) the actual practice of improvising.

Transcription, in the broadest sense, is taking in information by ear. It can be as simple as grabbing a short lick off a record while practicing with your MP3 player or learning a pop melody by ear, or as complicated as taking down an entire orchestral score with nothing more than a recording to guide you. At any rate, in addition to training our ear, it teaches us what sounds good—licks, solo

architecture, the intangibles of sound, nuance, articulation, etc. Without this area of study, it's impossible to sound like one is playing in the language of jazz or any other distinct genre.

The act of improvising is so obvious as to be often overlooked, but one cannot master the process without ample opportunity to put it into practice in as many different contexts as possible (combos, solo, duet, big band, etc.). One can listen and transcribe all day for years and know the theory inside out, but never learn to raise their horn and "forget all that and just wail" (in the words of Charlie Parker).

Of the three areas of study cited above, mastery of harmony and form seems to be the most elusive for jazz horn players, especially brass players. The same challenges are posed to reed players, but the nature of their instruments seems more conducive to "vertical" (that is, chord-oriented) execution, and therefore, conception. But

all wind/brass players don't naturally tend to master command of form as quickly or to the same degree as rhythm section members.

The reason for this is pretty straightforward: Young horn players tend not to see the need. For a pianist or bassist to "blow the form" can be catastrophic, but on many tunes horn players can skate on the changes and survive, often fooling the casual listener. Therefore, there is simply less pressure on horn players to internalize form and to master the changes.

Furthermore, many young horn players tend to romanticize the notion of playing by ear. Many seem to think that if they have good enough instincts, they'll figure out great things to play no matter what the context. This may ring true for pre-bebop jazz, wherein the harmonic structure was usually pretty straightforward and predictable. But if we look at how the music has evolved, we have to ask: How can a musician navigate the

music of John Coltrane and Wayne Shorter—and the countless composers they influenced—without understanding the changes? I will contend that many tunes that have become standard repertoire (e.g., “Moment’s Notice,” “Speak No Evil,” “Giant Steps”) are simply out of reach without this knowledge. One will not find this gap in mastery with any of the greats, but for younger horn players, this realization often comes later than it should and entails significant catch-up work in this area, even long after other elements have been fairly well mastered.

The following exercises are in themselves nothing new or groundbreaking. However, this particular prescription of exercises in this sequence seems to go a long way toward helping horn players master this vital element of being a jazz musician.

Clearly, brass players tend to be most comfortable with linear, vocal-style melodies.

Therefore, given this predilection for the horizontal, let’s not start with chords at all, but rather with scales and modes.

1) Working with the bebop blues form, let’s take a look at a very simple mode pattern performed over this set of chord changes in the key of Bb (see Example 1).

Figuring out what mode fits each chord is not always a naturally intuitive process, and in the case of some, you’ll find a number of options for the “default” associated mode. It doesn’t matter so much; if you have doubts you can consult a number of great references (my favorite is Mark Levine’s *The Jazz Theory Book*) and simply choose a particular mode for these chords for any particular permutation of the exercise.

Before applying this pattern as a practice exercise, make sure you are comfortable with each of the modes: Play from root to root out of time and without regards to meter. If you want to use more than one mode on a given chord (such as diminished half-whole and phrygian dominant for the flat-nine chords), you can plug in one or the other on different run-throughs. Furthermore, take the time to “work out” on each mode—work it into patterns and find melodic content.

When you feel that your command of the modes is solid, put them into the context of this exercise and play them with a metronome. Remember that this is about internalizing harmonic rhythm rather than memorizing a series of licks to play over the form. (That’s where transcription comes in!)

2) Next, check out this arpeggio-based harmonic rhythm pattern (see Example 2).

To master/memorize this exercise, make sure you are totally comfortable with the chord structure first. As with the modes, play them out of time, root-to-seventh (or to flat ninth in the case of G7(b9)) until it is comfortable and easy to do so. Then, learn to play this pattern with a metronome.

In truth, whether one starts with the modes or the arpeggios is immaterial. If one has trouble interpreting chords, start with the modes. If chords are easy, start with them and then move to the modes, because you’ll be plunging right into harmonic rhythm rather than melodic concerns.

3) After mastering these exercises to the point that they can be played fluidly and consistently in

EXAMPLE 1

EXAMPLE 2

EXAMPLE 3

BRASS SCHOOL

Richardson performs as a soloist with the Croatian Radio and Television Jazz Orchestra in 2013.



DINKO BAZULIC PHOTOGRAPHY

at least a few keys, it's time to apply some improvisation. However, we should not plunge straight into unfettered improv. Rather, let's put some rules in place. First, we'll remove the dimension of melody and deal only with rhythm (see Example 3).

One can execute this with any chord tone (roots, thirds, fifths, sevenths). Next, one can use voice-leading, e.g., thirds-to-sevenths (see Example 4).

4) Next, we'll focus on a very simple melody

and remove the dimension of rhythmic freedom: We'll play walking bass lines consisting of quarter-note rhythms (see Example 5). Think like a bass player: When not soloing, his or her job is to outline the harmonic rhythm with clarity and groove. Triads and simple, step-wise structure are great starting points; transcription is also very instructive in this case. How many trumpeters transcribe bass lines? I do.

5) After this, try improvising more freely,

without these carefully prescribed restrictions. However, be aware of the roadmap and stick to the harmonic rhythm. Also, try to play with such harmonic clarity that one could transcribe the chord progression based on your unaccompanied solo.

It will almost certainly feel awkward to be "thinking" while you improvise, but that's all part of the process. The end goal is to have the harmonic structure and sense of form internalized completely, beyond memorization. At that point, you revert back to playing by ear—except what you play by ear is the chord progression and the proper form.

Record yourself frequently through all of these steps. When you listen back to your improvisations, ask the following questions: Are you "generating" the changes in your solo by playing with obvious clarity and consistency? Could someone transcribe the changes based on hearing your unaccompanied solo? Do you like the melodic/rhythmic content? If not, what would you change?

6) A really helpful step is to practice most of these exercises with a partner, especially steps 3–5. You can't always conjure up a great rhythm section when you need to practice, but you might find it pretty easy to grab another horn-player friend. Practice playing bass lines and chord-tone rhythmic patterns to "comp" for each other. Then, practice trading, but not the way we usually do in a combo setting; rather, trade off playing bass lines and improvising. You can do this for choruses, eights, fours, etc.

Most horn players are surprised by how difficult this is at first. It's like working on sight-reading by playing duets: You can't stop and practice in the middle without causing a train wreck, and it really highlights any weaknesses in your playing. However, like most skills, it gets easier with time, and the upshot is a natural internalization of the form and harmonic roadmap of whatever you are practicing.

7) Repeat all of these steps many times, with as many tunes and types of forms as you can, in all 12 keys. This last element is very important: Learning tunes and patterns in various keys gives you greater understanding of them, almost like converting a painting into a three-dimensional sculpture.

Finally, try to enjoy the process. There will be some frustrating moments, but that's all a healthy part of the learning curve. Stick with it, be demanding but patient, and you will find good results. **DB**

Rex Richardson is a veteran of Joe Henderson's quintet and tours globally as a soloist and clinician in classical and jazz contexts. He is Professor of Trumpet and Jazz at Virginia Commonwealth University and International Tutor in Trumpet at the Royal Northern College of Music in the U.K. His two most recent recordings are *Blue Shift*, co-led by saxophonist Steve Wilson, and *Bugles Over Zagreb*, with the Croatian Radio and Television Jazz Orchestra. Richardson celebrates 20 years as a Yamaha Performing Artist this month.

EXAMPLE 4

EXAMPLE 5

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Pictured with his Power Bell Alto in Vintage Copper finish

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Photo by Jen B Photography



Building Elements of Improv Into Rote Practice

HAVE YOU EVER EXPERIENCED PRACTICING a harmonic or rhythmic idea and having it not show up in your improvising for months, or years, or at all? I know the answer—a resounding yes.

It's something that has happened to all of us. If you're the type of improviser who regurgitates a lot of prefabricated lines, it's perhaps less of a problem. But if your goal is to make every solo unique, to constantly find new ways of expressing yourself or to simply relinquish conscious control of your improvising, then the problem becomes a monumental source of frustration.

In my opinion, the problem is largely one of data storage. Brain scans have shown that the parts of the brain that light up when you practice by rote are different from the parts that light up when you improvise. It's my belief that the skills gained by rote practice are somehow stored differently from improvisational skills. Your job is to get the information stored in a place where it can be accessed and seen as related to improvisation. This article is intended to show you a couple of tools that make it easier and faster to incorporate new concepts and musical ideas into your improvising. This is not a scientific paper (to say the least), but

it's a reflection of my own experience.

Whenever you create an improvised line, you're making decisions, and decision-making differentiates an improvised line from a preconceived, rote phrase. Even at slow tempos, these decisions have to be made very, very quickly. Improvising a jazz solo is a task largely done by the subconscious because one's conscious mind just isn't fast enough.

When a musical idea pops into your head, it's common to assume that you simply thought of it, and we even say things like, "Hey, I just had an idea ..." or, "It just came to me." Nothing of the sort occurs, regardless of how it appears.

What actually happens is that your subconscious slaps a bunch of information together at lightning speed, tinkers with it, measures its musical effect and then presents you with a completed phrase to be played. You really don't do anything but play what is presented to you.

That's how you improvise, and the goal of practicing is to provide your subconscious with more raw material to choose from when it's creating lines for you.

There's only one problem: A lot of practice tends to be verbatim repetition, and the uncon-

scious can take a very, very long time to integrate information that is learned in a rote fashion. Of course, when it finally gets everything connected, even rote exercises get modified and worked into your vocabulary, eventually becoming a part of fresh and creative soloing. But until the subconscious is able to do this cross-referencing, any information you've learned by rote will only be heard in the practice room or consciously inserted into solos verbatim.

So, can we shorten the process? Are there ways to practice that will teach the subconscious to be creative with the materials you're practicing? I'll answer for you: Yes. I know it can be done because I've done it.

An obvious remedy is to put an element of improvisation such as decision-making into your rote practice. For example, if you practice running diatonic triads, randomize the direction of each unit. In the key of C major, rather than playing a C major triad up, D minor down, E minor up, F major down, G major up, etc., give each triad a random direction, like up-up-down-up-down-down, and so forth. Do the same with intervals, diatonic or not.

Including a simple decision like this removes

an exercise from the rote category and gets it stored in a place where it's readily accessible when soloing. Plus, the subconscious gets the idea that the structures within the exercise are to be improvised with. A win-win.

Another issue is the difficulty of getting new harmonic concepts into your soloing and in the right context. I will give you a routine that helped me, but first a little information about the nature of the subconscious mind.

The subconscious is certainly handy to have around—you couldn't drive or ride a bicycle without it. It's unimaginably powerful, yet in many ways it resembles a 4-year-old child. It only learns the phrases you show it and only the contexts in which you place them. It doesn't always automatically create cross-relationships among data or establish generalized rules or organization. The subconscious must be shown uses for new information and that it is to be integrated with previously learned material. Merely understanding that a new concept is related to an older one doesn't get it.

Now, admittedly, comparing the subconscious to an actual 4-year-old is an oversimplification, but it's a useful concept. For one thing, if you maintain the mental image of teaching a 4-year-old, it's less tedious when you have to repeat obvious concepts or make obvious connections.

And here's that routine: Suppose you want to learn what a tritone substitution sounds like and how and where to use it. You find a good phrase, maybe from a transcribed solo, and then do a little rote practice to get it memorized, play it in 12 keys and so forth. At this point, there's practically no chance of this phrase showing up in your jazz vocabulary, mostly because there's no musical context for the phrase, and no decisions to make about its structure or direction.

To make the phrase usable, you first need to transpose it to the right key and insert it verbatim into a solo line over a chord progression. Continue improvising on either side of the phrase, and make sure you only insert it once per chorus, always in the same location. After 10 or 12 choruses, your subconscious gets the idea that this phrase belongs in a solo, and it stores the information accordingly.

And don't worry about playing a good solo. I guarantee that improvising this way will sound contrived and/or boring, but it doesn't matter. You're just teaching a child, remember?

Next, your subconscious has to be shown that the phrase can be used in all other appropriate places within the tune as well. So, one at a time, you plug in the phrase at any other locations where it fits the progression and do the same as you did before—improvise on either side of it for 10 choruses or so.

By now, your subconscious knows that this phrase can be used in improvisations, but only over this particular chord progression. So, next you have to insert the phrase into solo lines played over a couple of other tunes as well. See what I mean by tedious?

Now you've reached the point where you might use the phrase now and then, but only when it's played verbatim. It's still just notes. What you do next is introduce changes to the phrase while improvising around it. Begin with small changes: Start the phrase a beat earlier, leave off the first three notes, change the order of a couple of notes, alter the shape, resolve out of the phrase earlier, etc.

By the time you've done all this, your subconscious will not only consider the information in the phrase to be part of your language, it will also know what this information sounds like and that it is to be varied. Your subconscious will then start using it to cook up some stuff you never heard before.

It's a lot of work, but you actually learn things a lot faster this way.

To sum up: Rote practice—repeating cycles, unvaried scale patterns, playing phrases verbatim in every key, etc.—teaches you facility and basic knowledge of keys and progressions, but it can take years, decades even, to get new concepts and vocabulary into your improvising.

Inserting new material into an improvised context and making simple decisions part of every exercise makes it easier for the material to enter your jazz vocabulary. And it saves you many, many hours of frustration and head-banging.

And by the way, when you're banging your head against the wall, take some solace from the fact that there are thousands of people, myself included, banging away with you. DB

Jazz trumpeter John McNeil lives and records in New York. He has been a fixture on the New York jazz scene for 40-odd years (some of them very odd, according to him). He's currently a member of Hush Point, a cooperative quartet based in Brooklyn. The band recently released *Blues And Reds*, its second album on Sunnyside Records. McNeil says that he spends his time either playing the trumpet or staring blankly at the floor. We talked him into writing an article for DB in between the playing and the staring.

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Bob Brookmeyer (right) with Clark Terry



Bob Brookmeyer's Valve Trombone Solo on 'Hum'

THE LATE, GREAT VALVE TROMBONIST AND composer Bob Brookmeyer was by far one of jazz's most compositionally minded improvisers. His solo over his tune "Hum"—recorded by the Clark Terry-Bob Brookmeyer Quintet on the 1965 LP *Tonight* (Mainstream Records)—is a masterful example of compositional thinking while improvising. (The actual solo sounds one octave lower than the notes written on the page.)

Brookmeyer starts with small ideas and builds upon them in his phrasing. Overall, the melodic ideas in the first 32-bar chorus clearly present each eight-bar section as clear and distinct phrases. The first section (over C7sus) begins with a simple three-note gesture over two bars. As we see each variation (a', a''), the original motif is gradually developed with added pickups and extra notes, ending with an extended four-bar phrase (a'''). This section ends with three pickup notes into a motif starting the next eight-bar section (b).

This section's motifs seem like a variation of the previous eight bars, with slightly different contours and intervals. Brookmeyer has worked these similar ideas over 16 bars by now. The third section is in call-and-response with the arranged rhythm section break figures. Brookmeyer's style here gets a bit more raw, with the half-valve smear in bar 18 and the upward "doit" effect in bar 21. The last section of this chorus starts with a four-note gesture (d), repeated and moving up in half steps against the unchanging Eb7sus sound. This builds tension into the top of the second chorus.

The second chorus has a strong "4" feel. The four ascending quarter notes ending the last cho-

rus in bar 32 cross the bar line into the top of the new chorus and into a new two-bar motif (e), varied in bars 35–36.

Brookmeyer then begins a long eighth-note-driven phrase beginning in bar 37. Note the implied extra harmony imposed over this single C7sus region—Brookmeyer implies two secondary dominant chords in his lines (D7b9 and G7b9), arriving at the C7 sound in bar 39. This long phrase crosses the bar line into the next section. Motif/variation returns in bars 46–47 (f, f'). What Brookmeyer plays next is sheer genius: a two-bar ascending line (g), varied in bar 51 both up a half step and now as all eighth notes, finally returning to the D7sus on beat 4 of bar 51 leading into quarter-note triplets extending over the bar line into measure 53. Starting in bar 54, we get a three-note rhythmic gesture (h) as a three-against-four hemiola figure in various consecutive chromatic scale directions. This idea also crosses the bar line into measure 57.

In the last eight bars (Eb7sus), several variations of the motif that are reworked in bars 54–56 continue into bar 61, which shows a two-half-note idea (i), built upon/varied in measures 62–63 and ending with strong pickups into the top of the next chorus (Terry's solo). Brookmeyer's last note was his very first note, but now up an octave.

Brookmeyer's music is a beautiful balance of motivic development, groove, fun and storytelling. He was a true poet of jazz improvisation. **DB**

Pete McGuinness is a three-time Grammy-nominated jazz arranger, trombonist, vocalist and Professor of Jazz Arranging at William Paterson University in Wayne, New Jersey.

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Chorus #1:

1 C7sus a a' a''

5 a'' b

9 Db7sus b b' b''

13 b''

17 D7sus c c' (w/smear) (w/upward smear "doit") (Eb7sus) d

21 c' d

25 Eb7sus d d' d''

29 d'' d''' grad. cres.

Chorus #2:

33 C7sus e e'

37 (implies D7b9) (implies G7b9 dim. dom.) (C7)

41 Db7sus (mode/resolution delay) f f' f'' like M.8-9

45 f'' f'''

49 D7sus g g' g'' mp (g'')

53 (g'') h h1 h2 h3 mf f

57 Eb7sus h4 h5 (fragment) h6 h7

61 i i' i'' (C7sus) Grad. cres. f (to Clark's solo)

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For more than 30 years, I have played on a versatile Bach Stradivarius (B-flat, medium-large bore, standard weight). When I first played the Bach Stradivarius Commercial Trumpet, I felt a resounding confidence in my chops. The horn is exceptionally responsive and seems to resonate very well in all registers. After warming up a bit, I played a few three-octave scales, both slurred and articulated, and the quality of the tone in each octave was consistently centered and resilient. The intonation throughout seemed largely accurate. I repeatedly played some notes in all the valve combinations, and they invariably spoke rather well.

The horn I specifically played was a model LT1901B. It had a lacquer finish that beautifully showcases two shades of the horn's brass and bronze. (The instrument is also available in a silver finish.) The bell and the top part of the valve casing have a slightly deeper red shade than the golden hue of the leadpipe and tubing, giving it a very sophisticated presence. The trumpet had a medium-large 0.459-inch bore. (A 0.462-inch large-bore option is also available.) I felt the airflow to be very similar to my own Bach. The bell on this horn is a bronze #1, reflected by the "1B" in the model name. It is actually based on the initial bell design by Vincent Bach. This 5-inch, lightweight bell has a French style, flat bead at the end. This allows the trumpet to exude more vibration, giving the player more control, particularly with notes between close partials. This quality is crucial to professionals who need to have the confidence that their

horn will respond when called upon in a multitude of playing situations, especially soft, delicate passages. The instrument is also noticeably lighter in my grip than a standard Bach, which some players find as a comfortable convenience. One downside, of course, is that with any lightweight bell, even minor knocks or bumps can cause denting and bruising.

Another feature of the Bach Stradivarius Commercial Trumpet is the absence of the two braces on the tuning slide and leadpipe. This change helps maximize reverberation of the instrument, and along with the bronze bell, allows the horn to answer the call when blowing in the upper register. The braces between the leadpipe and the bell and valve casings are the same as the familiar Bach Stradivarius, as is the mouthpiece receiver. The recognizable pearl valve caps and trim are a signature of the Bach line. The pinky ring and third-valve slide ring are also the same, but the first-valve slide has a circular ring mounted on an angle. I find this to be thoroughly more comfortable than the traditional "U"-style finger ring. The valves appear to have a similar construction both inside and out. They react quite readily under my fingers.

The Bach Stradivarius Commercial Trumpet actually ships with two tuning slides. One is the standard "D" shape, or square shape, that most players associate with the Bach Stradivarius. The other is a "C" shape, or rounded, single-radius shape. Both offer some unique flavors to the horn's sound and the overall playing experience. The square slide affords a bit more resistance and a sound that is a little crisper, which would be more pleasing to play in a jazz combo, a brass quintet or with an organ at church. The rounded slide is more open for situations that require a voluminous amount of air, like playing lead in a big band or show. Having these two well-fitting slides available absolutely adds to the versatility of the horn. Another welcome feature is the inclusion of a second water key. There is an Amado water key on both the tuning slide and the third valve slide.

A review of this horn would not be complete without a mention of its retro case. Although brand new, the case has the look and feel of the old Mount Vernon Bach, but it's a little taller, much like a double trumpet case. The inside is loaded with rich memory-foam to cradle the trumpet and keep it well protected. There is ample room for mutes and accessories as well as an attached, zippered pouch for the extra tuning slide. There is also a small cubby with a lid that has a molded mouthpiece holder and some room for oil and extras.

Overall, I really enjoyed the way this horn played. It responded impeccably well, and the sound was full in the middle registers and had fluid zing for the high notes. It really delivers as a Bach and offers the flexibility that today's commercial player requires.

—Dave Ruth

Ordering info: conn-selmer.com



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Denis Wick Tuning Products

Locked in, Tuned up

Denis Wick has released three related products designed to keep instruments perfectly in tune, whether in the practice room or onstage.

First up is the DW9007, a three-in-one metronome, tuner and tone generator. Compact and easy to use, it features a large-format, well-lit screen that can be seen clearly even in the dark or when situated several feet away. Play a pitch in tune, and the entire screen changes color from orange to green as if to say, Bingo! You're right on the money.

The tuner works at pitches from A=430 up to A=450 and transposes for C, F, B-flat and E-flat instruments. Combined with a metronome and tone generator, it makes for a handy practice tool for any instrumentalist. As a brass player, however, I find it especially useful onstage. That's because it includes a pickup that can be clipped onto the end of a horn's bell and plugged directly into the tuner. Sensing the pitch directly from the vibrations of your instrument, it gives an accurate reading no matter how much stage noise may be present.

The pickup cord is just a few feet long, so it's only useful if you have a music stand close by. Providing the same benefit as the pickup but offering more freedom of movement, Denis Wick has another new product, the DW9021 wireless pickup. This consists of a small transmitter that clips onto your instrument and communicates wirelessly with a small receiver that can be plugged into the DW9007 tuner—or, for that matter, any tuner that has a socket for a jack plug.

Like the pickup included with the tuner, the wireless pickup directly monitors the vibration of the instrument. It isn't a microphone, so it does not react to ambient sounds, only to the pitch the instrument is playing. One major convenience: The transmitter can be clipped anywhere on the instrument, not necessarily on the bell. In my case, I put it discreetly on the bell brace of my trombone, where I can't even see it. All I see is the tuner before me on my music stand, monitoring my pitch and only my pitch, thanks to the wonders of Bluetooth-type technology.

Before trying this product, I wasn't always inclined to use a tuner on stage, but on one recent gig, I found it to be a lifesaver. I was playing in a loud band on

an especially boomy stage, and the soundman equipped the horn section with headphones rather than stage monitors. The headphone mix was awash in bass, so I decided to ditch the phones. In a less-than-ideal sound situation, the tuner and wireless pickup reassured me that my intonation was in the ballpark.

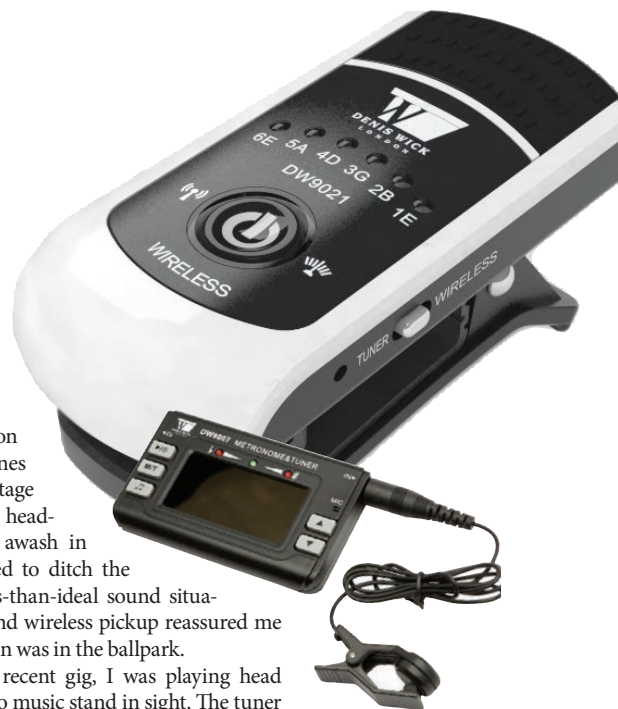
On another recent gig, I was playing head charts and had no music stand in sight. The tuner would be hard to see if I placed it on the floor, so I opted not to use it. Instead, I turned to another new Denis Wick product, the DW9006 clip-on tuner. This is just a simple, practical tuner that can be clipped onto the bell of a horn for fast and accurate pitch readings. It features a bright blue screen that clearly indicates the pitch and intonation.

Designed especially for brass instruments, the clip-on tuner can also be used for all types of saxophones. It transposes for B-flat and E-flat band instruments and for F horns and D trumpets. And, like the wireless pickup, it reads your instrument's pitch only, without being affected by ambient noise.

I enjoy the clip-on tuner for its simplicity and ease of use, and I use it in situations where I want a quick reading of my intonation without any fuss. When I have a music stand in front of me, I'll spend a few more seconds hooking up the DW9021 wireless pickup to the DW9007 tuner, and the visuals are more appealing. The products complement each other, and it's nice having all three on hand to use depending on the situation.

—John Janowiak

Ordering info: bit.ly/dwtuner



Hal Leonard Trumpet Studies

Miles Classics to Classic Rock

Studying jazz solo transcriptions has always been one of the better ways to hone improvisation skills. The newest jazz title from Hal Leonard provides an unparalleled opportunity to study and play along note-for-note with 50 of your favorite Miles Davis solos.

The *Miles Davis Omnibook* has been put together beautifully. With an eye-catching iconic print of Davis on the cover, sturdy comb binding, easy-to-read engraved printing and spot-on transcriptions, the book follows in the footsteps of the popular Charlie Parker and John Coltrane Omnibooks. It is available for B-flat, C, E-flat and bass clef instruments, affordably priced at \$19.99.

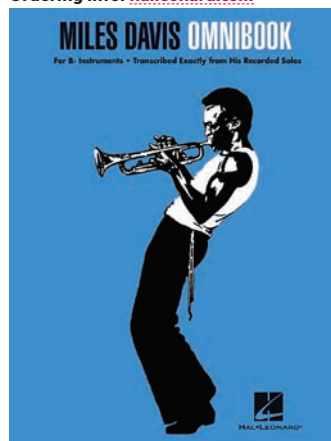
The titles for each chart cite the specific album and track for each solo. The book includes the head of each tune, rehearsal marks and chord progressions. Davis originals and his famous takes on standards are included, with some solos appearing in print for the first time ever.

As a jazz educator, this book is going to be a valuable tool for teaching jazz history, theory and improvisation. The ability to compare and contrast the solos of Davis provides a window into his development as an artist, not to mention remarkable insight into his role as an innovator. I will be using this book to show my jazz students how solos played by Davis contain a brilliant sense of direction and artistic use of space, and display a stylist approach that defines an unmistakably unique sound. But perhaps the most important aspect of this book for me is the way it illustrates the evolution of the note choices Davis made and how those selections helped to redefine the jazz idiom several times over the course of his career.

Hal Leonard has also debuted four volumes in its new Trumpet Play-Along series: *Vol. 1—Popular Hits*, *Vol. 2—Trumpet Classics*, *Vol. 3—Classic Rock* and *Vol. 4—Great Themes* (MSRP: \$16.99 each). The publisher has created an online music library that allows you to access the professionally recorded tracks from your laptop or handheld device by streaming or download. The tracks give players the option to listen to the sound-alike recordings and then play along using the separate backing tracks.

—Mike Pavlik

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Berklee Global Jazz Institute's Marco Pignataro (left) at a workshop during the 2014 Dominican Republic Jazz Festival

GABRIEL RODES

BGJI Students Serve as Jazz Ambassadors

TWO EDITIONS OF THE GLOBAL JAZZ

Ambassadors, a shifting ensemble consisting of students at Berklee College of Music's Global Jazz Institute (BGJI), impressed at the recent editions of the Panama Jazz Festival and the Dominican Republic Jazz Festival.

In Panama, the septet of French vibraphonist Simon Moullier, Bostonian tenor saxophonist Gregory Grover, Italian guitarist Tommaso Gambino, Korean pianist Ga Young, Korean bassist Seungho Jang, Israeli drummer Noam Israeli and Brazilian percussionist Nêgah Santos joined acclaimed alto saxophonist Miguel Zenón for a dynamic concert. In the Dominican Republic, a sextet including Gambino, Israeli and Santos—as well as trombonist Michael Wang, tenor saxophonist Edmar Colón and bassist Alex Gasser Londoño—offered a kinetic, exploratory investigation of five open-ended pieces by Joe Lovano, a BGJI faculty member.

In Panama, Matt Marvuglio, a flutist who is dean of Berklee's Professional Performance Division, noted that BGJI—a master's degree program for 30 students who pass an audition—has already impacted the conservatory.

"Before [BGJI], Berklee had a reputation for the scalic, chordal approach, the geometrical side of playing music," said Marvuglio, to whom Artistic Director Danilo Pérez and Managing Director Marco Pignataro have reported since the institute started in 2010. "It's created a strong experiential education component to jazz education that Berklee hasn't had before. It's created a brand with the term 'global jazz,' and brought Berklee more into the global scene. 'Global' also means all-encompassing—we have students who play harmonica, harp and cuatro, which you wouldn't see in other programs."

"I see the first five years as a period of solidifying the curriculum, seeing how programs work, measuring results from the students," Pérez said. "We've affected the way human development through music [has gained] more importance in the whole school. The way we teach is completely the way I learned with the masters."

The BGJI model has students interact with modern masters like Pérez, Lovano, John Patitucci, Kenny Werner and George Garzone, who perform several week-long residencies each semester. Pérez compared the process to the tough love mentorship he received as a just-graduated-from-Berklee apprentice in New York City a quarter century ago, recalling how Jon Hendricks and Dizzy Gillespie had him figure out unfamiliar songs by ear on the bandstand.

"They would challenge you, and there was pressure," Pérez said. "Dizzy could show me up in two seconds. That's an experience we give the students, which very few programs can address on a constant basis."

In culling the 30 students who earn admission from several hundred candidates who apply, Pérez looks for—and is attracting—"individualistic improvisers who really want to study Afro-American music, who have curiosity about social responsibility and development." He continued: "There is a practicum. But if you play well and don't really care about your peers, the dynamic isn't good for us. Our message is human development, human transformation through music."

The students play in hospitals, prisons, schools and nursing homes. "Do they have the potential to become a leader?" Pignataro asked rhetorically. "By the time we make these trips, all the training has been done. These students really are the program's ambassadors." —Ted Panken



Poncho Sanchez

KIRA GEIGER

Conguero Lecture-Demo: Prior to his performance at the Lied Center for Performing Arts in Lincoln, Nebraska, on Jan. 15, conguero Poncho Sanchez and Francisco Torres (trombonist/musical director in Sanchez's Latin Jazz Band) led a lecture/demonstration with percussion students from the University of Nebraska—Lincoln. Sanchez instructed students on the origins of the conga drum, provided a brief history of Latin jazz and demonstrated popular Latin rhythms, citing many of his influences, including Cal Tjader and Chano Pozo.

liedcenter.org

Pride of Denton: The University of North Texas One O'Clock Lab Band, directed by Jay Saunders, will appear as a headliner on April 24 at the 35th Annual Denton Arts & Jazz Festival in Denton, Texas. The band will perform at 7 p.m. on the Jazz Stage, followed by trumpeter Randy Brecker at 9 p.m. The UNT One O'Clock Lab Band was established in 1946. Over the course of its long history, the band has received six Grammy nominations for its recordings. jazz.unt.edu/oneoclock

Jazz Immersion: San Jose Jazz will present the Summer Jazz Camp June 15–26 at Valley Christian Schools Conservatory of the Arts. A two-week learning lab, the camp is designed for middle and high school students and offers all-day immersion in every aspect of jazz—from theory to performance. Each student participates in a small ensemble and a big band, and one advanced ensemble will be chosen to play on the main stage of the 2015 San Jose Jazz Summer Fest, Aug. 7–9.

sanjosejazz.org/summer-jazz-camp

Research Fellowship: The Ella Fitzgerald Charitable Foundation—JEN Research Fellowship is intended to provide opportunities for a serious educator/student/music historian to conduct a directed research project associated with the archival collections at the Smithsonian National Museum of American History in Washington, D.C. The project will be allowed up to two years for final completion. A presentation of the project will take place at the Smithsonian Institution as well as at the Jazz Education Network (JEN) Conference. Submissions are due March 31; grant awardees will be notified by May 1. jazzednet.org/fellowship

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Warren Wolf

Nicknamed “The Cyborg” for his impeccable chops and muscular attack by his good friend and frequent employer Christian McBride, Baltimore native Warren Wolf has demonstrated on his Mack Avenue albums *Wolfgang* and *Warren Wolf* that he is his generation’s avatar on the vibraphone, his primary instrument. (He also plays marimba, drums and piano). This is Wolf’s first Blindfold Test.

The Cecil Taylor Quartet

“Toll” (*Looking Ahead!*, 1958, Contemporary) Taylor, piano; Earl Griffith, vibraphone; Buell Neidlinger, bass; Denis Charles, drums.

The vibraphonist has the motor turned up high, like Milt Jackson. Bobby Hutcherson comes to mind. I’m trying to think who else played in an avant-garde style. Is the pianist Monk? Oh, it’s definitely not Monk. I’m enjoying the conversation between vibes and piano, having fun, creating different ideas, sharing riffs. The pianist is syncopated, playing a lot of stuff. The bassist and drummer are steady. It’s very free, not much chordal structure, not the typical II-V-I’s. I don’t recall hearing a melody, though there could have been one. Not my style, but it’s cool. 3 stars.

Roy Ayers

“Well, You Needn’t” (*West Coast Vibes*, Mighty Quinn, 1963/2006) Ayers, vibraphone; Jack Wilson, piano; Victor Gaskin, bass; Kenny Dennis, drums.

“Well, You Needn’t” by Thelonious Monk. Victor Feldman came to mind. The vibraphonist has the same type of mallets, they keep the motor at the same power ... everything was pretty much the same as I heard from Victor Feldman on records, so I’m surprised that it’s not him. It was great. I thought the drummer was going to fall off-beat for a minute, but he stayed right on. The piano player has great chops, right in the pocket. 4 stars. [after] I forgot that Roy used to swing a lot before he went to r&b and hip-hop. A true master.

Joe Locke/Geoffrey Keezer Group

“Naima” (*Signing*, Motéma, 2011) Locke, vibraphone; Keezer, piano; Mike Pope, bass; Terreon Gully, drums.

“Naima.” Joe Locke, with Terreon Gully, Geoff Keezer ... and is it Reuben Rogers? Terreon tunes his drums a certain way, and I’ve played with him many times. Joe sings a lot when he plays, which I don’t hear on this recording. But I started listening closely—he was moving up and down the instrument at ease, hitting all the notes accurately, with a warm sound, not a lot of attack, just mellow, which comes from his sticks. Grooving, pretty arrangement. Everyone’s playing the correct changes; they go in and out of two different key signatures without taking away from the song. Geoff is one of my favorites ever. 4 stars.

Jason Adasiewicz’s Sun Rooms

“Leeza” (*From The Region*, Delmark, 2014) Adasiewicz, vibraphone; Ingebrigt Haker-Flaten, bass; Mike Reed, drums.

I didn’t like what the vibraphonist was doing. There was a definitely a melody, but I didn’t understand the form, except when the vibraphonist made the hits with the bass and drums. When it returned to the swinging part, it seemed he’d just play anything. He kept the pedal down a lot, maybe on purpose, to create the sound and effect, but doing that makes everything ring together and creates a big clutter. Vibraphonists have to learn to control that so that each note has its purpose. 2 stars. [after] I used to think avant-garde was just noise, but I realized there’s a technique to it, and if you’re playing with the right people, you can make it sound musical.

Jason Marsalis Vibes Quartet

“Blues Can Be Abstract, Too” (*In A World Of Mallets*, Basin Street, 2013) Marsalis, vibraphone; Austin Johnson, piano; Will Goble, bass; Dave Potter, drums.

I can’t picture him playing this way, but Jason Marsalis is the only person who comes to mind. Jason is a good vibraphonist, though I like his drum-



ming a lot better. On this track, he didn’t take a break—he played and played, and stopped when his solo was over. Music and improv is like having a conversation—you’ve got to learn to give and take. The pianist did the same thing on his solo when they switched keys, showcasing his chops without saying something. The drummer was very influenced by Jeff Watts, down to how he tunes his drums. 2½ stars.

Buddy Montgomery

“Irregardless” (*A Love Affair In Paris*, Space Time, 2002) Montgomery, vibraphone; Donald Brown, piano; Robert Hurst, bass; Lenny White, drums; Miguel “Angá” Díaz, percussion.

That was swinging! It reminded me of something McBride would do. Definitely a newer person. Christos Rafalides? Chris Dingman? Who else would swing like that now? A lot of vibraphonists don’t play the blues nowadays. The vibraphonist’s sound was great. He took his time. He wasn’t flashy. He said what he had to say and got out of there. The conga player tuned his drums to go from low to high when the vibraphone solo started, though at a certain time he should lay out—you don’t want to hear too many what we call “doodle pops” over your solo. 3½ stars.

Bobby Hutcherson

“My Joy” (*Oblique*, Blue Note, 1967/2005) Hutcherson, vibraphone; Herbie Hancock, piano; Albert Stinson, bass; Joe Chambers, drums.

Bobby Hutcherson from the ‘60s. Was that McCoy Tyner? The pianist was digging in like McCoy. Bobby plays like a horn player. He’s on the upper register of the vibraphone, really hitting it hard, but he can also tone it down for the ballad setting, and play pretty, like Milt Jackson. He does decent four-mallet work on the vibes as well as marimba. On this particular track he’s really stretching out, reminding me of what Freddie Hubbard, or someone like that, would play on the trumpet. 4½ stars. [after] I’ve heard this recording, but it’s been a long time. I didn’t know Herbie would play so McCoyish. **DB**

The “Blindfold Test” is a listening test that challenges the featured artist to discuss and identify the music and musicians who performed on selected recordings. The artist is then asked to rate each tune using a 5-star system. No information is given to the artist prior to the test.

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