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**Record Companies & Schools** Jennifer Ruban-Gentile 630-941-2030 jenr@downbeat.com

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> > OFFICES

102 N. Haven Road, Elmhurst, IL 60126-2970 630-941-2030 / Fax: 630-941-3210 http://downbeat.com editor@downbeat.com

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# NOVEMBER 2015

#### **ON THE COVER**

#### 24 John Scofield Past Is Present

BY PHILLIP LUTZ

The superstar guitarist enlisted the help of Joe Lovano, his old friend and tenor saxophonist of choice, in recording *Past Present*—Scofield's most personal album yet.



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Cover photo of John Scofield and Joe Lovano shot by Jimmy and Dena Katz at Birdland in New York City. Info for this venue is at birdlandjazz.com.



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First Take > BY BOBBY REED

### **No Boundaries**

JAZZ EDUCATORS TODAY OFTEN DISCUSS THE IMPORTANCE of being able to play a variety of types of music. That advice isn't intended to downplay the importance of mastering the fundamentals of jazz and developing improvisational chops. But rather, it addresses the reality that it can be tough to make a decent living as a musician. Many working musicians nowadays are able to thrive because they have one foot firmly planted in the jazz world, but they're also flexible enough to play a session of pop, r&b, hip-hop or classical music.

In our October issue, in a feature on the University of Miami's Frost School of Music, the school's dean, Shelly Berg, said that one of his institution's goals is "to engender a culture of respect for all types of music." He also described the way that Frost's jazz and classical music majors frequently perform together.

For many working musicians today, it's all about ignoring boundaries, playing music that they love, following their creative pursuits, and tapping into multiple genres-all while being mindful of the need to pay the rent.

This issue of DownBeat spotlights a number of musicians who have the ability to play in a variety of settings and in multiple styles. Our feature on Erik Friedlander (page 38) is a fascinating look at a widely respected jazz improviser whose primary instrument-cello-is one that many listeners associate with classical music.

In his work as a bandleader and as a collaborator with a diversity of artists, including John Zorn, Friedlander has shown an adventurous spirit and opened people's ears to what a cello can do. His latest leader album, Oscalypso, is a tribute to one of his heroes, jazz cellist and bassist Oscar Pettiford. See our sidebar on page 40 for an overview of the intriguing yet tragically short life of this jazz icon.

In our Players section, we profile another important jazz cellist, Tomeka Reid (page 22). Her background in formal studies of the classical repertoire has greatly informed the genre-blending music that she makes today. Reid is an artist to watch, as evidenced by her impressive work as a bandleader and as a collaborator with ensembles such as the Roscoe Mitchell Quartet (see



page 46 for our review of the quartet's album Celebrating Fred Anderson).

Elsewhere in this issue, we catch up with pianist Aaron Diehl (page 30). Many jazz fans know him for his work with singer Cécile McLorin Salvant, but he's also an exciting leader whose latest album, Space Time Continuum, has helped raise his profile. Journalist Allen Morrison got a firsthand look at how classical music has informed Diehl's musical perspective. During the interview, which took place in Diehl's home, the pianist illustrated many of his points by playing examples on his Steinway. (Diehl graciously gave DownBeat a three-hour interview, and we didn't have room for all the terrific material in our print edition, so we will post a longer version of this feature on our website in October.)

Drawing from multiple genres can lead artists down intriguing paths as they pursue the muse. One wouldn't automatically associate a jazz icon like John Scofield with country music, but in our cover story (page 24), he talks about how his forthcoming project will nod to that genre and possibly include such high-profile collaborators as bassist Steve Swallow, drummer Brian Blade and keyboardist Larry Goldings. We look forward to that. After soaking in the music on Scofield's tremendously powerful, deeply heartfelt album Past Present-featuring contributions from tenor sax titan Joe Lovano-we simply can't get enough Sco. DB

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#### Chords ි Discords

#### **Fighting an Epidemic**

Kudos to Paquito D'Rivera for taking on the epidemic of over-amplification ("Alfred Nobel and the Invention of the Microphone," June). I constantly encounter musicians in clubs or small concert spaces being amplified as if they're playing large concert halls or stadiums. Here in Baltimore we have a great, intimate 75-seat concert venue called An die Musik. I have played there several times with unamplified clarinet, saxophone and piano, and everyone in the audience can hear those instruments just fine. Yet just about every other piano or horn player has chosen to be amplified there.

I understand that guitarists, and often bassists, need amps. But I hope that presenters and musicians will heed Paquito's warnings and turn down the volume or even eliminate the microphones and amps entirely. Our ears—both aesthetically and physically—need the relief.

BOB JACOBSON BALTIMORE

# Paquito D'Rivera

#### **Redd Defense**

I am writing to express my disagreement with Bob Doerschuk's 2-star review of Freddie Redd's *Music For You* (July). Doerschuk negatively portrays the economy of Redd's playing. Redd has never been one to sacrifice expression for the sake of displaying his virtuosity, so to say that he plays "very sparely" misses the point. As a pianist who has been working at his craft for so long, Redd has pared his playing down to the essentials. Thus, what Doerschuk calls a "painfully cautious" opening to "Cherokee" comes across as a thoughtfully playful way to begin a song that is otherwise uptempo.

Doerschuk's statement that Redd sounds "at times a bit lost" is preposterous. This album is a program of well-trodden standards and a Reddpenned blues, and a player of Redd's caliber and experience easily knows his way around these standards and many more. His knowledge of the tunes shines through in his comping. Rather than "distract" the listener, as Doerschuk states, the way that Redd touches upon the melody of a tune behind his bandmates' solos, like on "There Will Never Be Another You" or "All The Things You Are," enriches the performance.

Deerschuk also criticizes the way that the songs are structured, citing the way that the trio approaches the tunes as proof that this album "is about looking back, maybe a little wistfully." While the trio may not break new ground in using a general formula of theme/solos/trading/ theme, it is a classic, artistically valid formula. Furthermore, Doerschuk's focus on music that Redd made 50 or 60 years ago indicates that it is Doerschuk who appears to be looking back, while ignoring Redd's progression as an artist and unfairly giving short shrift to his latest album. About the only thing that Doerschuk gets right is his praise for bassist Jay Anderson and drummer Billy Drummond. Both play at a high level throughout.

I hope that Doerschuk's wrongheaded review doesn't dissuade anyone from picking up *Music For You*. It is a warm, engaging album by a master pianist, and it deserves to be heard.

JUSTIN VARGO JVJAZZ@LIVE.COM

#### **Roney's Ratings**

In the June Blindfold Test with Wallace Roney, the fact that he gave ratings of <sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub> star to 2 <sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub> stars to seven out of the 11 tracks says more about the reviewer than the music being reviewed. Talk about a tough audience! Mr. Roney reminds me of a teacher I had in high school: He wouldn't give you an A grade if you were Albert Einstein.

DENNIS WATSON MACOMB, MICHIGAN

#### Sounding Off

Thank you for the review of the Brecker Brothers' album *The Bottom Line Archive*, which was recorded live in 1976 (Historical column, September). I caught that band many times back in the day; they were on fire!

Also, regarding that issue's cover story, I still don't understand why some folks dig Ornette Coleman. His playing always sounded "off" to me. I would rather listen to Jackie McLean, James Spaulding, Charles McPherson, or most of all, Eric Dolphy!

STEVE SICILIANO MRSTEVENYC@GMAIL.COM

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#### Kendrick Scott's Ethos of Unity

Ithough many contemporary musicians shy away from political themes in their work, drummer-composer Kendrick Scott is not one of them. *We Are The Drum* (Blue Note), Scott's fourth album as a leader, addresses themes of racial and social injustice. The impressive program was influenced by hip-hop, electronic music and Miles Davis' groundbreaking '60s quintet. Scott's bandmates in his quintet Oracle are saxophonist John Ellis, keyboardist Taylor Eigsti, guitarist Mike Moreno and bassist Joe Sanders.

Scott has worked as a sideman with saxophonist Charles Lloyd, trumpeter Terence Blanchard and vocalist Luciana Souza. Additionally, he is in the supergroup Our Point of View with keyboardist Robert Glasper, trumpeter Ambrose Akinmusire, tenor saxophonist Marcus Strickland, guitarist Lionel Loueke and bassist Derrick Hodge.

#### Why did you title your new album We Are The Drum?

The album isn't a drum-centric record, but I wanted to create an ethos of togetherness. And what better way to bring people together than a drum? That's what the drum circle was created around, that communal aspect. And in the times we are living in, anything we can do to embrace common themes that unite us and make us more empathetic, I want to bring that to light.

#### A lot of music being made today doesn't reflect or address the important changes happening in society.

We need to create discussions to change things. Every record I have made is something I want to do in my life. *The Source* was about going back to the source to understand what's inside of me. *Reverence* was about paying homage to the masters who taught me. *Conviction* was about being OK with myself. *We Are The Drum* is about embracing those around me. If we can create a dialog, the ins and outs of compromise will make themselves known. But without dialogue nothing will change.

#### There is so much contrast on *We Are The Drum* thought-provoking songs bordered by tracks with actual drum solos, which is something many drummer-bandleaders shy away from.

I have shied away, too, for so long. But the title track needed to be *bold*. We play the melodic content forward, backward and in different time signatures. That signifies how in everything that is happening around us, we can look at things from many different angles; it's similar to the empathy it takes to be in a drum circle, and to play the drum. [Nigerian drummer and social activist] Babatunde Olatunji had a saying: "I am the drum, you are the drum, and we are the drum." And the climax of the track is the drum solo.



#### You're a very graceful drummer. How do you maintain that musical composure?

I use a visual concept. Think of a tango dancer, and how the man's right hand holds the woman's back. I think of myself as that right hand. Guiding and pushing and pulling but never taking away from the beauty of what the dancer is doing. Being graceful is also a reflection of how you live your life. Papa Jo Jones, Max Roach and other great drummers were also very graceful people. —*Ken Micallef* 

#### Riffs )



**Carter Gets Personal:** In+Out Records has released *My Personal Songbook*, an album featuring bassist Ron Carter with the WDR Big Band. The result of a January 2013 collaboration between the DownBeat Hall of Fame inductee and the Germany-based ensemble, the CD marks the first recording of Carter's original compositions performed by an extended orchestra ever released. <u>roncarter.net</u>

Jazz on the Briny: The Blue Note Jazz at Sea Transatlantic Crossing, which departs from New York City on Oct. 29, will feature Natalie Cole, Robert Glasper, Derrick Hodge, Lionel Loueke, Marcus Strickland, Kendrick Scott, Keyon Harrold, Derrick Hodge and others in live performance during seven nights aboard the Queen Mary 2. Its destination is Southampton, England. Blue Note Records President Don Was will sail along and participate in a Q&A session. Two Blue Note Transatlantic Crossings are scheduled for next year: A westbound crossing leaves Southampton on Aug. 1, 2016, and an eastbound crossing departs New York on Oct. 26, 2016. <u>cunard.com</u>

Whale of a Show: Live From the Blue Whale, a weekly 30-minute television series showcasing artists from the realms of jazz, blues, hip-hop, funk and soul, began airing Sept. 20 on the All Music Television Network. Produced by Frederick Smith Jr. and hosted by jazz radio personality LeRoy Downs, the show features interviews and performances captured at the Blue Whale in downtown Los Angeles and at festivals around the globe. allmusictelevision.net

Tribute Projects: Two noteworthy tributes to historic jazz figures were released this fall. Reedist Oran Etkin's salute to Benny Goodman, *What's New? Reimagining Benny Goodman* (Motéma), features the leader on clarinet, bass clarinet and saxophone, pianist Sullivan Fortner, vibraphonist Steve Nelson, drummer Matt Wilson and vocalist Charenée Wade. Saxophonist Rob Reddy honors Sidney Bechet on *Bechet: Our Contemporary* (Reddy Music), with support from trumpeter John Carlson, trombonist Curtis Fowlkes, violinist Charlie Burnham, cellist Marika Hughes, guitarist Marvin Sewell, bassist Dom Richards and drummer Pheeroan akLaff. <u>motema.com; robreddy.com</u>

#### Washington Proves It Caught ) at San Jose Jazz Summer Fest

A RECURRING TROPE IN THE GLOWING media coverage of 34-year-old Los Angelesbased tenor saxophonist-composer Kamasi Washington's three-disk opus, *The Epic* (Brainfeeder), a 17-song recital performed by a jazz dectet, 20-piece choir and 32-piece orchestra, is the backstory that the leader—whose Q score has spiked after playing saxophone for and writing string arrangements on Kendrick Lamar's hit album *To Pimp A Butterfly*—conceived and executed this completely realized project without, as Chris Barton wrote recently in the Los Angeles Times, "first being vetted by the music's vaunted New York City gatekeepers."

Washington's noon concert on Aug. 9 at the San Jose Jazz Summer Fest was an opportunity for critics from both coasts to gauge whether Washington's ensemble, The Next Step, was prepared, per Brainfeeder's hyperbolic mission statement, "to remove jazz from the shelf of relics and make it new, unexpected, and dangerous again."

After witnessing Washington's presentation of five original compositions from *The Epic*, which contain a congeries of references drawn from folk- and dance-oriented progressive jazz, it was hard to imagine that he himself cosigns the jazz-as-relic premise. He's a formidable improviser informed as much by Charlie Parker, Gene Ammons, Eddie Harris and Teddy Edwards as John Coltrane, Pharaoh Sanders, Wayne Shorter and Joe Henderson.

Additionally, he's a programmatic composer in the manner of Gerald Wilson—a mentor and frequent employer during a decade-long apprenticeship—incorporating into his works details and Afrocentric gestures that to this newcomer evoked, among others, the Arkestras of Sun Ra and Horace Tapscott; mothership-oriented post-James Brown '70s funk and soul bands; and contemporary hip-hop.

Washington writes for a close-knit cohort of generational contemporaries who operate collectively and thoroughly understand his intentions. Several are highly trained instrumental virtuosos who operate in multiple musical spheres—for whom jazz is one flavor among many—and who treated their solo opportunities in San Jose more as set pieces than responses to the moment.

Washington led a scaled-down edition of his band—Ryan Porter, trombone; Cameron Graves, piano; Miles Mosley, bass; Lyndon Rochelle and Tony Austin, drums; and Patrice Quinn, vocals.

The first selection, "Askim," opened with a big invocational chord. Quinn intoned a mantra, then unisoned with Washington and Porter over a rolling vamp that brought forth memories of Pharoah Sanders' cusp-of-the-'70s collaborations with Leon Thomas. On the album version, the choir and orchestra frame a guitaristic bass solo with cinematic grandeur; this iteration opened with Porter's trombone solo. Washington started with a lyric motif out of the Coltrane-Sanders playbook, and, in the manner of those instrumental heroes, built to formidable intensity while remaining true to the melody, before scaling down.

"Change Of The Guard" followed an "Impressions" form. It was a staunch, anthemic line, propelled by Graves' fourths and Rochelle's and Austin's tightly synchronized switchoffs between swinging and precise-to-the-micron drum-bass beats. Graves uncorked a charismatic, relentless solo that explored Chick Corea's refraction of McCoy Tyner's language.

After announcing the first two titles,



Washington hesitated. "I'm trying to decide which song we're going to play," he said, before settling on "Cherokee." Over a beat that seemed a hybrid between reggae and J Dilla, Quinn sang the lyric in half-time, focusing on the perspective of the "brave Indian warrior," an emphasis cosigned by intimations of Hugh Masekela's "Grazing In The Grass" in the horn backgrounds. Quinn's reading was soulful and persuasive, reminiscent of June Tyson's function back in the day with Sun Ra.

Quinn launched "The Rhythm Changes," featuring metaphysical lyrics ("Somehow, no matter what happens, I am here. ... Our love, our beauty, our genius; our work, our triumph, our glory; I won't worry what happened before me—I am here."). The lyrics seemed to encapsulate one aspect of Washington's vision, and yet he interpolated a Bird-centric "Anthropology" quote midway through his solo.

It will be interesting to track how this individualistic artist continues to balance the jazz bona fides that give him flexibility to move freely within other genres and the showier colors of his palette, and if Brainfeeder continues to position him as a Hollywood superhero who will uplift jazz from its purported aesthetic doldrums. —*Ted Panken* 

#### Pianist Joey Alexander Wows Newport Jazz Festival Crowd

**HAVING TURNED 12 JUST SIX WEEKS BEFORE HIS APPEARANCE AT** the 2015 Newport Jazz Festival, piano prodigy Joey Alexander is the youngest musician to play at George Wein's annual gathering of the jazz elite. In two separate venues—the new indoor Storyville Stage and under the tent outdoors at the Quad Stage (before a *60 Minutes* camera crew)—the miraculously gifted Alexander wowed festivalgoers with his sheer command of the instrument along with his uncanny sense of dynamics and harmonic/ rhythmic sophistication.

Alexander's grasp of Thelonious Monk's masterwork "Round Midnight," which he performed solo at the Quad Stage, was hard to fathom coming from a little boy who appears to have never stayed up past midnight. Alexander further won over the Quad Stage crowd with a version of Monk's "Think Of One," per-



Ra.

formed as an interactive duet with his regular bassist, Russell Hall.

Earlier in the day, Alexander had woven his spell at the Storyville Stage, performing tunes from his Motéma debut, *My Favorite Things*, including an astounding version of John Coltrane's "Giant Steps," a rhythmically inventive take on "It Might As Well Be Spring," a thoughtful arrangement of the title track and an interpretation of Billy Strayhorn's "Lush Life" with drummer Ulysses Owens Jr. providing a relaxed "Poinciana" groove underneath.

Caught >

Born in Bali, Indonesia, Alexander was drawn to piano at age 5 while watching his father play at home. He began absorbing the music from his father's CD collection, which included classics by Monk, Duke Ellington and Dizzy Gillespie. By age 6 he had figured out how to play Monk's "Well You Needn't," and by age 7, as he explained, "I got really serious with the piano."

The family subsequently moved to Jakarta, where he interacted with other jazz musicians and eventually met Herbie Hancock, who encouraged him. Alexander began to make inroads at international piano competitions, and word of this "boy genius" had spread to the States in 2014, following a succession of appearances in New York City and New Jersey, including the Jazz Foundation of America's "A Great Night in Harlem" gala at the Apollo.

This year's Newport gig was preceded by a whirlwind of major publicity, including a segment on *The Today Show* and a feature on *NBC Nightly News*.

"For one so young and who grew up in Indonesia, he has a musical adult's feeling for the jazz beat, rhythm and harmonies," said Wein, founder and producer of the Newport Jazz Festival. "It is awesome to think what he might be doing musically in eight or nine years if he continues to grow and is not just satisfied with what he is doing now."

Meanwhile, Alexander is constantly honing his craft. "I always want to prove myself, and get better every time I play," he said. "There's a lot to work on. I'm still learning how to swing. And I'm always working to improve my harmonies and rhythms and, of course, technique and feel." —*Bill Milkowski* 

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#### **Allyson Makes Rodgers & Hammerstein Swing**

any a jazz vocalist has interpreted the songs Richard Rodgers composed in collaboration with Lorenz Hart, which produced standards like "My Funny Valentine," "Lover" and "Have You Met Miss Jones." But when singer-pianist Karrin Allyson and Motéma Music President Jana Herzen recently tried to identify a jazz vocalist who had recorded an entire album of the masterworks Rodgers wrote with his second major writing partner, Oscar Hammerstein II, they came up empty.

That distinction now belongs to Allyson, whose Motéma debut album, Many A New Day (Karrin Allyson Sings Rodgers & Hammerstein), is a full-fledged collaboration between the singer and the dream-team duo of Kenny Barron on piano and John Patitucci on upright bass. They tackled familiar songs like "Oh, What A Beautiful Mornin" (Oklahoma), "Happy Talk" (South Pacific) and "Hello Young Lovers" (The King and I), but also the gorgeously melodic "Something Good" (from The Sound of Music). The album was co-produced by Allyson and Michael Leonhart (Donald Fagen, Mark Ronson/Bruno Mars).

Allyson may be the perfect singer to reinterpret Rodgers & Hammerstein for a modern, jazz-aware audience: It's the combination of her Midwestern girl-next-door sincerity (she was born in Great Bend, Kansas); her emotional availability, which lets her fully inhabit the great Hammerstein lyrics; and the refined jazz sensibility that lets her explore the possibilities of swing inherent in a great Rodgers melody.

Through more than a dozen albums, most of them on Concord, Allyson has sung everything from American Songbook classics to vocalese versions of Bobby Timmons' "Moanin" and Wayne Shorter's "Footprints."

DownBeat spoke to Allyson at her Upper West Side apartment in New York City.

#### Why did you want to record an album of Rodgers & Hammerstein tunes?

It just seemed like it was time. I was watching a PBS *American Masters* documentary about Oscar Hammerstein. I was struck by how principled he was, how he infused his songs with his beliefs, and how he stood up for things that weren't so popular in the McCarthy era. I love Hart's lyrics, too, but the Hammerstein lyrics speak to me more.

#### In high school, you were cast as Nelly Forbush, the lead character in *South Pacific*, a show that broke ground in musical theater by addressing racial prejudice.

I was thrilled to play Nelly. In our high school version [at Holy Names High School in Oakland, California], it was doubly poignant for the audience, because the actor who played [the male lead] Emile de Becque was an African-American guy, and here I'm a white girl, and we kissed on stage it was a big deal! Oddly enough, my then-boyfriend was black, but Emile was gay [*laughs*]. We were all friends, so it didn't matter.



#### Why did you decide to record the new album with just piano and bass?

I've long been a fan of Kenny Barron; his playing is so elegant and soulful—exactly what I wanted for this project. I originally thought of doing it with *just* Kenny. But Kenny wanted a bass player, and I had worked with John before on my CD *Ballads: Remembering John Coltrane*. I had two rehearsals here in my apartment with Kenny, then one with both Kenny and John. We tried not to over-rehearse or do anything to death. If we didn't like a [version], Kenny would say, "Hey, it's jazz. Let's move on." Then we recorded the whole project in two days.

#### How did you select the songs and come up with the arrangements?

I investigated verses to songs. I sat at the piano with songbooks. ... I did all the arrangements; then Michael [Leonhart] helped me tweak them. I sketched them out, but once you get people like Kenny Barron and John Patitucci in there, they make them better than you can ever imagine. On "Surrey With The Fringe On Top," it was not my idea to do the verse—it was Kenny's. I suggested he play it, just instrumentally, up front. It came out so beautifully; that's what clinched it for me. There's also that half-step [modulation] thing in the verse that keeps going up—that was *my* deal.

#### Rodgers was well-known for his disdain of "creative" interpretations of his songs, yet they have inspired countless jazz versions. If he were still around, what would you say to him about your interpretation of his work?

I'd say, 'I sure hope I did it right' [*laughs*]. I would hope that he would have liked it.

#### Caught >

#### Reedists Fly High at Jazz em Agosto

**THE JAZZ EM AGOSTO FESTIVAL IS HELD EVERY AUGUST** on the beautiful campus of Lisbon's Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation. This year's edition took place over two long weekends between July 31 and Aug. 9, and the only drawback to the cool evenings at the festival's outdoor theater was the low-flying planes overhead, one of which I was on during opening night.

Finally arriving 13 hours late after airline delays, I looked down from the plane to see Mats Gustafsson's Fire! Orchesta on the large, tree-lined stage. I managed to arrive in time to catch the last 20 minutes of Gustafsson's Aug. 2 set. The 19-piece band featured a pair of vocalists (one of whom was the wonderful Sofia Jernberg) that gave a decidedly different voice to the Scandinavian jazz inferno.

Fortunately I was afforded another opportunity to hear Gustafsson play two nights later when he appeared with his wonderfully named Swedish Azz, a thoroughly contemporary ("slightly disturbed" is how he put it from the stage) band paying homage to Swedish jazz stars of the 1950s and '60s, including "Here Comes Pippi Longstocking" composer Jan Johansson and bari player Lars Gullin, as well as Quincy Jones, who spent considerable time in Sweden during the early part of his career.

If not faithful, it was nevertheless a loving tribute in the reverent-upending-of-tradition mold practiced by Otomo Yoshihide's "New Jazz" groups. Original themes and alien tones emanated from Dieb 13's turntables, while swing came in spurts from the sax and vibes. Turntables were a big part of the show, but co-leader Per Ake Holmlander's tuba and rarely seen cimbasso (a type of trombone with rotary valves) kept the music anchored in its origins.

The festival also hosted two other exemplary saxophonists: John Butcher and Henry Threadgill. Butcher appeared with the Lisbon-based RED Trio. Their 2011 collaboration, *Empire* (No Business), struck serene moods with



understated noir surprises. At the festival, they were still willing to play to form, but with more heated intensity. Butcher's tenor overtones melded well with Rodrigo Pinheiro's ringing piano.

Butcher plays his best when couched beyond (or below) the extreme. But he has buckets of technique. One of his most memorable passages involved him playing blurred glissandi over the trio's driving staccato, and he made a strong showing on soprano in an extended duo with bassist Hernani Faustino, a highlight of the set.

Trumpeter Wadada Leo Smith presented the European concert premiere of his "Great Lakes Suites," leading a stellar quartet with Threadgill, bassist John Lindberg and drummer Marcus Gilmore (rather than DeJohnette, who played on the album version released by TUM last year). Despite the quartet's high-profile personnel, this collaborative set wasn't about star soloists. The music was broad and deep and occasionally sparkling, befitting the huge bodies of water for which the pieces are named. —*Kurt Gottschalk* 

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#### Subradar Expands Reach

It's hardly news that the marketplace for recorded music remains in a roiling state of flux. In the jazz world physical product remains crucial, but the shift to digital continually increases. While websites like Bandcamp have allowed artists to take digital distribution into their own hands, that decision requires commitment and upkeep. Many consumers today gravitate toward one-stop shopping; they don't want to constantly surf the web.

In theory the Internet should be beneficial to music on the fringes of the mainstream music business, such as jazz. However, the reality is that most artists and labels are drowned out by the big guns. "If you've tried discovering and finding new music online without knowing what you are looking for, you know that it can be an exhausting process," said Klaus Ellerhusen Holm, a Norwegian reedist and composer who works in the bands Honest John and Ballrogg, among others.

Five years ago he began brainstorming for a solution. "At the time streaming was becoming increasingly popular in Norway, and most people who knew the business model realized that it's a lost cause if your music isn't played in extreme amounts," he said. "The options at the time provided zero exposure for genres like free-jazz, noise and contemporary composed music, as well as offering very low returns to the labels and artists." So he came up with subradar.no, an attractive website specializing in music that has often been pushed to the margins. "By skipping intermediaries such as digital distributors and contacting the labels directly, we were able to offer a significantly higher return than other options."

Inspired by a website devoted to mountain biking, Holm created a vibrant portal for improvised and experimental music, running in-depth interviews, posting video content and sharing artist profiles. With invaluable assistance from web designer Jonas Howden Sjøvaag and fellow musician and web programmer Erlend Slettevoll, he launched subradar.no in September 2012. Since then the site has expanded slowly but steadily. It now boasts a catalog of more than 500 albums on more than 60 labels. Thanks to generous terms— Subradar takes 20 percent of the sale for each album, which generally retail at 10 euros (plus an additional 11 percent for Norwegian labels to cover local copyright bureaus Tono and NCB)—the website has attracted a diverse array of imprints from all over the globe.

"When we first started I had to contact all the labels, since we were new and nobody had heard of us," Holm said. "Now the situation has changed. Every month there are new labels getting in touch that want to collaborate."

Particularly impressive is the fact that he has forged agreements with labels that previously demonstrated little interest in making their catalogs available for digital consumption, including Leo, FMR and Emanem. "From a curatorial perspective it's only me deciding what to feature," Holm said. "I don't have to like the music personally as long as it fits the profile of Subradar."

Martin Davidson, the taciturn owner of Emanem—one of the oldest and most important free-improv labels, with a roster that includes Derek Bailey, Steve Lacy and Evan Parker—has been utterly disinterested in digital formats. "I never had time to deal with downloads, but Klaus kept nagging me," he said. "Eventually I decided to show his terms to some people, and they all said they are very good. Also, some people who knew him said he was an excellent fellow. So I decided to sign up with him, and I send him a few items as time permits." Holm said that the 70 or so Emanem titles on Subradar rank among the website's top sellers.

Still, the operation remains a labor of love for Holm. "Managing the website could be a full-time job, but I have to handle it in my spare time between tours and other work. On a long-term basis, I hope to make an arrangement where I'm able to take out a small compensation for my work, but all of the technical solutions, the platform, servers, upload program, and other content has to be financed in a normal fashion."

#### **Ystad Offers Big Names, Bold Singers**



THE SWEDISH CITY OF YSTAD HAS BECOME A PRIME SPOT ON THE European jazz festival circuit. The city's now six-year-old festival struck a harmonious balance of setting and sound July 29-Aug. 2.

The festival, which is run by the fine Swedish pianist Jan Lundgren as artistic director, flourished in a strong, diversified mode, carefully mixing established American artists with Swedish talents and some tasty surprises-such as the stunning pairing of Portuguese vocalist Maria João with iconic Brazilian guitarist Guinga in an ancient church setting.

There were famous names and crowd-pleasers, such as bassist Richard Bona, Robert Glasper's acoustic trio and a duo of Kenny Barron and Dave Holland-the pinnacle of the five-day affair and the festival's closing act.

Lundgren lends his impressive musical hand to the program, but subtly. This year, he paid tribute to the late Swedish piano legend Jan Johansson-a Bill Evans-ish player with a passion for embracing the Swedish folk songbook, who died in a car accident in 1968 at age 37.

Later in the festival, Lundgren also marshaled a centennial tribute to Billie Holiday, with saxophonist Harry Allen and Danish guitarist Jacob Fischer accompanying venturesome Norwegian vocalist Karin Krog.

Female singers were a focus this year, as was the emerging culture of strong female instrumentalists. Formidable German saxophonist Nicole Johänntgen (last year's artist-in-residence) led her dynamic and sensitive all-female "Sofia Project" at the central Hotell Continental.

The international ensemble Worlds Around-commissioned by the festival-featured current New Yorkers Tineke Postma on saxophone and Linda Oh on bass, as well as trumpeter Susana Santos Silva, pianist Simona Premazzi and flexible drummer Michaela Østergaard-Neilsen. The group performed inventive originals by all, and was a festival highlight.

Vocalist Dianne Reeves gave a sampling of her remarkable versatility in a concert with the nimble Swedish Norrbotten Big Band, while Swedish/ Russian singer Viktoria Tolstoy went refreshingly minimal in a symbiotic duo with bassist Mattias Svensson.

Special notice goes to the amazing Swiss vocalist Diana Torto, whose role in the impressive Ewan Svensson New Project set a high standard for precise and passionate scatting.

Young singer Linnea Hall delivered a program of mostly standards with a hypnotic clarity, bolstered by the understated directness of Italian pianist Emanuele Maniscalco. Their version of "I've Grown Accustomed To Her Face" was one of the most ethereal moments of the festival, a thing of enigmatic magic that opened in rubato and faded out on a wistful piano phrase. -Josef Woodard



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#### Players >

#### **NICK FINZER** *Revitalizing the Heritage*

rombonist Nick Finzer, 27, keenly recognizes the ebbs and flows of the jazz idiom. He appreciates its fluidity as pop music melds into the straightahead language of the jazz legacy. But he's taken a different road for revitalizing the heritage of jazz for the modern age.

"I don't want to abandon the tradition," said the tall and slender Finzer, who plays his instrument with a combination of fat-sound power and rich lyricism. "I want to continue to swing, which really wasn't in the air for my generation. But hiphop wasn't part of my influence. I want to keep jazz alive by incorporating sounds and emotions that are part of today."

That flies true on his spirited second album, *The Chase* (Origin), where swing dominates and his 10 original compositions sway with curves and flow with colors. "All of these songs have a story behind them, and I wanted to capture a specific feeling," Finzer said. "For my first record [2013's *Exposition*], I used a more academic approach, controlling the musicians who played the music. This time, there's less of me and more of my group. Like Duke Ellington, who wrote with a range of emotions, I write music for the members of the band. That serves the emotion I was going for, and the sessions were more relaxed and free-flowing. The focus was on passion and energy, versus technical execution."

A Rochester, New York, native who went to Eastman School of Music and earned a graduate degree at Juilliard, Finzer was mentored by Wycliffe Gordon, whom he met after hearing him perform as a high school junior. "My mother forced me to go up to him after his concert and introduce myself," he recalled, sipping a Coke at the Hungarian Pastry Shop in the Morningside Heights neighborhood of upper Manhattan, close to where he has lived since arriving in New York in 2010. "He was friendly and asked me if I had my horn. It was in the car. I remember it was in February when the temperature gets to 10 degrees below zero. So I went out to get my trombone, but I had to wait a while for it to warm up before I could play for him. He was great. He invited me to New York to take lessons and later he wrote music for me and my band. He helped me with my Juilliard audition, and he always comes to my shows and gives me pointers."

A fan of bandleader Maria Schneider's music, Finzer would sell her namesake orchestra's CDs at her annual Thanksgiving shows at the Jazz Standard. That's where he established a friendship with bandleader and arranger Ryan Truesdell, another important figure in his artistic development. "Ryan allowed me the opportunity to play with his band," Finzer said. "He became another sounding board, and he also opened the door to Gil Evans' music for me— [showing] how the orchestration has a passion behind it, beyond the notes."

Both of Finzer's albums feature the same lineup—reedist Lucas Pino, guitarist Alex Wintz, bassist Dave Baron, drummer Jimmy Macbride with the exception of pianist Glenn Zaleski joining in for *The Chase*. Some of the more dynamic tunes on the album showcase Finzer with his longtime friend Pino in the front line—doing a trombone-bass clarinet dance through "Search For A Sunset," weaving bone-sax conversations on the catchy "Spheres Of Influence" and speeding together through the rollicking title track.

Finzer points out that the title track was written with Pino in mind. "There are tons of guys who play tenor and bass clarinet, but Lucas adds the color," he said. "Lucas is someone who pursues the highest level of musicianship, improvisation and harmony. It's inspiring to see. So this song is about what it takes to pursue music in New York, to pursue the goals and dreams, to pursue the tradition of jazz. It's a rocky road, traveled at a fast pace with shifts of being uneasy and not settled."

"Nick's music has really evolved," said Pino, leader of the unconventional No Net Nonet, which includes Finzer. "He stills works on technique he's an excellent trombonist—but the further away we get from school, we are digging deeper into our lives to discover what it means to be an artist. That's where Nick is. He's confident being himself musically. He's taking risks. His compositions are very thoughtful. He's thinking about the tradition and the art form as well as his colleagues. That motivates me. He forces me to keep pace so I won't get left behind."

While Finzer is only playing a few dates to support the release of *The Chase* due to his band members' busy schedules, he's not idle. A few days after our conversation, he's heading to Australia as a sideman with pianist Scott Bradlee's immensely popular New York-based Postmodern Jukebox show of pop covers performed in a quasi-jazz style.

There's also an increasing demand for programs from the education-based Institute for Creative Music (ifcmusic.org), which Finzer co-founded and for which he serves as artistic director. The institute presents tours and workshops with young musicians to teach them how to improvise, as well as lessons on teamwork and technology. "We focus on improvisation in general with jazz bands, choirs, classical performers, rock bands," Finzer said. "We teach students how to take it to the next level." —Dan Ouellette

#### Players > SULLIVAN FORTNER 'Just Being Who I Am'

Sullivan Fortner's life changed in Indianapolis on March 28, when he won the American Pianists Association's Cole Porter Fellowship competition over a high-profile, high-talent peer group: Kris Bowers, Emmet Cohen, Christian Sands and Zach Lapidus. His victory raised the thorny question of what the 29-year-old New Orleans native did that the other musicians didn't.

"I felt the competition was Sullivan's to lose," said pianist Fred Hersch, who teaches Fortner and Cohen privately, and has also worked with Bowers. "Sullivan has a quiet command of the material and the piano, never just for display. His improvisations are organic and risky, and he has the pianistic resources and intelligence to tell good stories. As much as I respect the others, he's a notch more spontaneous—a notch better."

Hersch's assessment was echoed by Etienne Charles, who has worked extensively with Fortner, Bowers and Sands. "Sullivan seemed the most comfortable," the trumpeter said. "Like Kris and Christian, he's interactive; he'll immediately flip an idea upside-down, to show you his perspective on your ideas. He develops solos in the style of a two-part invention, as though each hand is a different musician and then they become a band."

Fortner had a modest response to the victory. In his view, the result "depended on how the judges felt that day." He added, "Maybe I won because I played as I normally play. My concept of music isn't about competition. It's just being who I am."

These qualities animate Fortner's impressive leader debut, *Aria* (Impulse!), on which he uncorks thematically fluid solos, suffused by what Charles described as an innate *joie de vivre*, on five originals and five interpretations.

He has honed his formidable be-yourself muscle over six years with trumpeter Roy Hargrove. "Roy teaches the piece by ear, and he expects me to have it a month later—even if we don't play it," Fortner said a few days after returning to New York from a European tour with Hargrove.

Fortner's style began to take shape during preadolescence, when he played piano and accompanied the choir at King Solomon Baptist Church in New Orleans, where his mother was choir director. The "jazz bug bit" at New Orleans Center of the Creative Arts after the late Clyde Kerr Jr. exposed him to Erroll Garner's *Concert By The Sea.* Even though Fortner's classmates included such future jazz stars as Jon Batiste, Trombone Shorty and Christian Scott, he performed primarily in church, playing jazz mostly with outcat elders Kerr and Kidd Jordan.

Later, while studying at Oberlin Conservatory of Music, professors Gary Bartz and Billy Hart offered a bird's-eye view of New York's hardcore cutting edge. Fortner graduated in 2008, then entered the master's degree program at Manhattan School of Music, where Jason Moran focused him on solo piano playing as a way to expand conceptual scope.

Fortner describes his core principles as "a belief in swing, the power and the majesty of the blues and the importance of the language as a means of communicating from a band perspective." He cites advice from pianist Rodney Kendrick, who initially recommended him to Hargrove and to Jean-Philippe Allard, head of the Impulse! label.

"Rodney told me that in order to really play this music, you've got to dig through the corny stuff," Fortner said. "Dig through hype—people telling you what's hip, things that don't connect emotionally. I'm very patient and I try to take in as much as I can. If I'm trying to understand something, I'll spend a lot of time on it. I won't leave until I get a firm enough grasp." —Ted Panken



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lassically trained cellist Tomeka Reid doesn't mind when she plays octaves that are slightly out of tune. That wasn't always the case. But nowadays, she plays the cello with a great degree of freedom, and the result might be funk, jazz or chamber music.

Elements of multiple genres are blended into the pieces she composed for her namesake quartet's self-titled disc on the Thirsty Ear label. The new album—recorded with bassist Jason Roebke, drummer Tomas Fujiwara and guitarist Mary Halvorson—is the product of a recent surge in Reid's self-confidence.

"I play and sometimes it's crazy," Reid said at a coffee shop in Chicago's Woodlawn neighborhood. "Sometimes it's melodic, sometimes it's rhythmic and sometimes I might try to approach some bebop line and get pissed off I can't do it. But then I discover, 'I like that sound—how can I use it?""

Reid's musical discoveries began when she was growing up outside of Washington, D.C. As a late starter in a French immersion elementary school, songwriting provided a safe space where she didn't have to worry about saying the wrong word in a foreign language.

"Music was my little world I created," Reid said. "I got this other girl to sing with me and we had a tape recorder. We'd go to a room in the library and cut our demo. I was 8 or 9 years old."

Reid's inventive impulses gradually were suppressed when she began playing cello and studying the classical repertoire at the University of Maryland. After she started investigating jazz, Reid met flutist Nicole Mitchell, who convinced her to move to Chicago in 2000. There Reid found a network of supportive musicians. Mitchell and singer Dee Alexander showed her new improvisational possibilities, and drummer Mike Reed encouraged Reid to become a leader. When she joined the Association for the Advancement of Creative Musicians, the organization reignited her imagination.

"The AACM provides a platform to try out things," Reid said. "I came from school where it was, 'You have to *study* composition!' No—if you hear a song [in your head], write a song."

In addition to composing material for her quartet, Reid writes songs for various combinations of strings in the trio Hear In Now, where her percussive attack complements the work of violinist Mazz Swift and bassist Silvia Bolognesi.

On the quartet disc, Reid spontaneously intertwines her lines with those of Halvorson.

"I like Mary's approach, so I give her license to do as she pleases," Reid said. "I like the smoothness of the cello against her crunchy sound, but I can do that, too. So we can have crunchiness together."

On Aug. 20, Reid conducted the AACM's Great Black Music Ensemble for the premiere ofher 10-song suite *In Spite Of, We Thrive* at Chicago's Millennium Park. This ambitious piece, which includes sitar and oud arrangements, reflects her views on unjustified police killings and the Black Lives Matter movement.

Reid took part in a different AACM-affiliated concert when she joined saxophonist Roscoe Mitchell's quartet for a performance at Chicago's Constellation on March 27. That set—featuring Mitchell, Reid, bassist Junius Paul and drummer Vincent Davis—is documented on the album *Celebrating Fred Anderson* (Nessa).

"Roscoe just goes for it, and you have to go for it, too," Reid said. "Being recognized by an AACM elder like that is awesome: It makes me feel that I'm on the right path and I have to keep working hard." —Aaron Cohen

## Players > JIM CAMPILONGO Blending Genres

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im Campilongo's Brooklyn apartment is packed with the tools of his trade. Classic Martin, Gibson and Fender guitars from the 1950s through the '70s hang on a wall. Thousands of vintage, well-played vinyl records fill a cabinet. And a home audio system that would have been considered high-end back in the day—Klipsch speakers, McIntosh preamplifier, Dynaco amplifier, Dual turntable—is positioned among comfy overstuffed furniture.

While he might appear to live inside a timewarp, Campilongo's guitar playing is no more retro than, say, the music of Hank Mobley, Max Roach and Sonny Clark.

"Some people say I'm retro, but I just don't want to buy a useless piece of crap that's going to be broken in a year," Campilongo said. "I use tube amps. I play an old '59 Telecaster that's lasted a long time. I don't feel that I have a retro aesthetic; it's not some Brian Setzer romanticism for a different era. It's really just being smart. I love records and tube amps and old guitars that are worn and have history. What should I play, a Paul Reed Smith? It's a no-brainer."

Campilongo's ninth album, *Last Night, This Morning* (Blue Hen), showcases exciting, swinging electric guitar interplay. The sly-sounding, joyfilled album features his band the Honeyfingers, which includes guitarist/co-producer Luca Benedetti, pedal/lap steel guitarist Jonny Lam, gypsy jazz guitarist Roy Williams, bassist Dave Speranza and drummer Russ Meissner.

"I think my music is unique," Campilongo said. "It's not country, swing or blues, though it draws on all those things. My music swings, but it isn't Bob Wills. The album has counterpoint, and there's music that recalls an improvised Bach piece, 'Little Song.' The opening track, 'Billy's Bird,' is highly influenced by Speedy West and Jimmy Bryant just for its unhinged quality. But it's not a business-card record; I'm not doing Wes Montgomery or Freddie King or Ennio Morricone, like some guitarists have. The familiar thread running through [this album] is my songwriting."

Recorded, mixed and mastered to tape, *Last Night, This Morning* features Benedetti's arranging and production work. Benedetti explained the collaborative nature of the sessions: "On 'Freaky Dreiky,' I'm harmonizing Jim's melody in the A sections and Jonny and myself created interplay during the bridge around Jim's part. [For] the harmonies, counter-parts and tonal/technical decisions, Jim and I were both there for 100 percent of the process."

The array of recordings that have influenced Campilongo's writing and guitar style is lengthy and diverse. "I spent a lot of time on Santo & Johnny's 'Sleepwalk' 20 years ago," he recalled. "I played it like Buddy Emmons, like Wes Montgomery, then like Chet Atkins. I did that with Django Reinhardt, too. Roy Buchanan's first album is a favorite. Speedy West and Jimmy Bryant's *Country Cabin Jazz*. Howard Roberts' *H.R. Is A Dirty Guitar Player*. I love John Lennon's guitar playing on *Plastic Ono Band*.

"I wore out Miles Davis' Agharta. I listened to [Davis'] On The Corner for a year straight. Now I'm listening to [classical guitarist Andrés] Segovia on Decca, which feels similar to John McLaughlin's playing on 'Double Image' [from the Davis album *Live-Evil*]. It feels good to hear Santo & Johnny, and it feels good to hear Miles Davis. It's all great, pure music." —Ken Micallef

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#### JOHN SCOFIELD JOHN SCOFIELD JOHN SCOFIELD JOHN SCOFIELD S

BY PHILLIP LUTZ · PHOTO BY JIMMY & DENA KATZ

fter a brutal winter, the Ides of March held the promise of spring this year as John Scofield stepped into a Connecticut studio to record *Past Present* (Impulse!). The guitarist carried a ream of handwritten lead sheets, and the record date offered the opportunity to work through them with his old friend and tenor saxophonist of choice, Joe Lovano.

The two musicians, both in their early 60s, had led lives that often intersected as they built careers, raised families and confronted tragedies, most recently the death in 2013 of Scofield's son Evan from cancer at age 26. As Scofield and Lovano met that March day nearly two years later, time had not healed the wound. No one expected the recording session to do so.

Joe Lovano (left) and John Scofield at Birdland in New York City on Aug. 19.

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But the encounter was fruitful on its own terms. Evan's spirit lived on in his father's songs one, "Mr. Puffy," takes its title directly from his nickname, which alludes to the side effects of medical treatment—and as the session unfolded, the past and the present made beautiful music, starting with that song.

"Right before we recorded it, Joe looked at me and went, 'This one's for Evan, right?" Scofield recalled, suppressing a tear as he sat in the Manhattan offices of the Universal Music Group in August. "It just killed me, the way he played the melody. He was singing a song for my boy."

The song, written while Evan was alive, is classic Scofield: one of complex emotion rendered simply, lilting and light one moment, dark-hued the next. With Lovano's filigreed lines looping heavenward, it became an otherworldly ode—a

statement of hope that only hinted at the heartbreak to come.

"In the moment of expression like that, when you channel people and events and things in your life, a lot of love comes through," Lovano said over drinks before a set in August with his quintet Us Five at Birdland in New York.

The stuff of life and love suffuses the album: The tunes "Get Proud" and "Enjoy The Future!" are affirmations inspired by Evan's rhetoric, while "Hangover" was inspired by lyrics penned by Scofield's wife, Susan, who also came up with the album's title. Much of the album's music was written while Evan was undergoing treatment and living in the Scofields' Katonah, New York, home with his partner, Ursula Rose Strauss. Even today, Evan's presence remains so powerful that it has rendered the concept of time meaningless, Scofield said, quoting William Faulkner: "The past is never dead. It's not even past."

Among the album's highlights is "Slinky," a wiry bit of funk built, Scofield said, on an oblique nod to "Take Five." Another standout cut is the title track, whose insistent bass line—the piece's dominant feature, in Larry Grenadier's hands holds, for Scofield, intimations of both early rock and Count Basie.

Similar intimations, Scofield said, drew him to Lovano's playing from their first encounters casual sessions that became meetings of minds in search of an aesthetic amid the ferment of early '70s Boston.

"Joe had a big impact on me when I met him," Scofield said. "I've always been a student of the saxophone; it's maybe *the* jazz instrument—tenor sax, right?—and it's similar in range to the guitar. When I went to Berklee, I met all these kid saxophone players right at the time Mike Brecker appeared on the scene. He had this huge impact on them, playing so much horn with a great, tough sound, but very virtuosic. And I loved it, too.

"But then I heard Joe, and what I heard in his playing wasn't as impacted by that. Joe had these roots that sounded like the old jazz records I had. Joe had this in his playing even when he was playing Dewey Redman stuff. I related to that."

The two 20-something musicians started spending time in Lovano's loft in the Allston section of Boston. They transformed the building, a factory by day, into a nighttime venue for eager jammers who were, to one degree or another, destined to make their marks, among them pianist Kenny Werner, drummer Jamey Haddad and saxophonists Steve Slagle and Billy Drewes.

"We were all just trying to get it together and play good," Scofield said. "It wasn't really the older guys—they would tell you what they wanted—but my contemporaries that I was daily trying to play with. And we all taught each other by example.

"It was, 'Wow, all of a sudden you sound good. I want to do that."

What they wanted to do was make their way to New York. Gradually, Scofield and Lovano did just that—the guitarist through associations with Gerry Mulligan and Billy Cobham, the saxophonist as a player in bands both big (Woody Herman, Mel Lewis) and small (Paul Motian). Scofield, whose profile had been raised after three years with Miles Davis, nominally employed Lovano in those early years.

Scofield had first met Davis on a quiet night at the Brecker Brothers' Greenwich Village club, Seventh Avenue South, where the guitarist was playing with saxophonist Dave Liebman's band. Liebman introduced Scofield to Davis, who, sporting his signature oversized glasses and fur coat, was holding court, having made a grand entrance, entourage in tow.

"Miles said, 'You sound good,'" Scofield recalled. "I said, 'Miles, this is the greatest thing that's ever happened to me, getting to meet you." To which Davis responded—but in saltier language—that Scofield should shut up.

That abbreviated colloquy summed up their relationship until about two years later, when Davis, well into his early '80s comeback, was seeking a guitarist to join Mike Stern in the band. He called on Scofield, who was quickly swept up in the Davis machine, ultimately playing on four albums—*Star People, Decoy, You're Under Arrest* and a film score, *Music From Siesta*—before the association ran its course.

"That changed everything," Scofield said. "I had been struggling on the scene in New York, like everyone, trying to get it happening. But Miles had this other level of fame from any other jazz musician. All of a sudden everybody knew who I was."

One who took notice was producer Bruce Lundvall, who signed Scofield to the Blue Note label; in 1990, Scofield released his first album on it, *Time On My Hands*. The album—with Lovano, bassist Charlie Haden and drummer Jack DeJohnette—provided entrée for Lovano, who had been emerging as a leader on the smaller Soul Note label, to Blue Note as well.

"It brought me into that scene," Lovano recalled. "Right at the time that John asked me to do those things, Bruce Lundvall approached me." The approach led to *Landmarks*; also released in 1990, it proved the first of Lovano's 25 Blue Note

albums as a leader. On it, he was joined by Werner, Marc Johnson on bass, Bill Stewart on drums and John Abercrombie on guitar.

After Landmarks, Lovano released several guitar-less albums while pivoting back to the Scofield-led vehicles Meant To Be (1991) and What We Do (1993). On those albums, Stewart joined by bassists Johnson and Dennis Irwin, respectively—replaced DeJohnette. Thus began an association for the drummer that has lasted to Past Present.

Many of the traits that characterize *Past Present* have their roots in the Scofield-Lovano working dynamic that was established years ago. In conversation, Scofield expressed a reluctance to focus on any similarities that tie the periods together, an attitude he regarded as common to his profession.

"As jazz musicians," he said, "we don't want to say that anything is the same because when you're playing the same things over and over you're not inspired. But there are probably way more elements that are the same than there are that are different."

The overriding constant may be the manner in which the texture, tone and intonation of Scofield's guitar and Lovano's horn blend, each inhabiting the other's space so thoroughly that, together, they create what Scofield called a "combined sound." Lovano, interviewed separately, copped to "a third sound."

"Sound is about your approach in music," Lovano explained. "And the sound that comes together from John and I is a very intimate world. It's about breathing, it's about following the sound of each other's flow. And whatever composition we play, that underlying factor is always there."

The intimacy of their front-line relationship has been unwavering over the years, even as they formed other quartets, most memorably, perhaps, ScoLoHoFo, with Dave Holland on bass and Al Foster on drums, followed by a group that included Matt Penman on bass and Matt Wilson on drums.

But change on some level will happen, and it has been apparent in a heightened ease of execution. "We're getting more expressive, faster," Lovano said. "For this recording, we had three days in the studio. The first day was supposed to be a rehearsal, where we were running through tunes. But we were recording, and we got some takes right away. It was a matter of playing together and creating the music within the music.

"But what's really evolved with John and I is that every time you play leads to the next time you play. There's a foundation and things get stronger, and it's usually in the spaces, hearing each other and trying to breathe together more deeply. It's not about how much you play, it's about how you shape the music together."

The process of shaping—and reshaping—the music has over the years been an organic one, Scofield said. "It's not like, 'OK, now we're going to approach it differently.' But we've expanded our

'THE IDEA OF PAST PRESENT COMES FROM THAT IDEA: MUSIC IS REALLY TIMELESS, AND THE WHOLE THING OF TIME—YOU START TO WONDER WHAT THE HELL IT IS.'

vocabularies. I can't tell for myself, but I can tell with Joe. He's freer than ever."

That freedom, he said, is evident in Lovano's ability to build narrative flow over the most unexpected of harmonic twists and turns, never losing the plot but rather adding his own twists and turns to it, creating a kind of multiplier effect.

"Some of these tunes do not have standard chord progressions," Scofield said. "They're a little bit different. But the first time he played them, he was absolutely free on them. It didn't sound like 'free where there are wrong notes'—he never plays a wrong note. But it sounded absolutely free."

Developing that degree of expressive capacity, Lovano argued, is a natural progression. "The more you play your instrument," he said, "the freer you get on your instrument. What do I mean by free? To be able to execute your ideas in a free-flowing manner in all keys and all tempos. To feel the beat: No matter what the tempo, all tempos are in it. And whatever key you're in, all keys are in that.

"Through the years, that's been a deep study of mine, and John and I come together in a real natural way in that approach."

Freeing a phrase to go where it will is central to Scofield's musical identity, both in his playing and his writing, according to Steve Swallow, one of the guitarist's early influences and a frequent collaborator. (Swallow was teaching at Berklee back when Scofield arrived, and in July he played bass to Stewart's traps in Scofield's trio at Birdland.)

"What I love about John's songs is they sound and feel inevitable and organic," Swallow said, "but when you take them apart and look at their components, they're full of quirky phrases that have their own interior logic but refuse to fit within the usual boxes.

"I think this is a reflection of the lessons he's derived from his own playing. What that implies to me is a willingness to let every phrase find its own destiny, to let every phrase unwind until it's said what it needs to say."

Scofield has a penchant, displayed throughout *Past Present*, for fashioning phrases of three, five or seven bars and deploying them in what some might regard as odd places. But "they don't feel odd to me," said Stewart, whose ability to interpolate within the spaces Scofield has created lends them an air of inevitability.

Another of Sc

Scofield's penchants—one, Stewart suggested, that might reflect Swallow's influence—is for succinct writing. "No extra notes, no excess," he said. "The pathways through the songs are very clear."

The clarity of Scofield's compositions is noteworthy in part because, by his own account and that of Swallow, he is not, by temperament, ideally suited to the writing game.

"I might not have gotten into composition but for Steve," Scofield said of Swallow. "I had written

something and he said, 'That's pretty good, you should be a composer.' And he bugged me—still does: 'What do you have that's new? What else do you have?'"

In the early years, Swallow said, Scofield was clearly more player than writer. "He was restless and antsy, the prototypical player on the move, looking for the next jam session and the next drummer and the next opportunity to stay up late and play all night. It was a stretch for him to sit down and focus on the page.

"It wasn't so much that I encouraged him. I nagged him to put the pencil on the paper."

Even today, Scofield does not put pencil to paper as a matter of habit. "I go for long periods without writing," he said. "I feel I have to do that. It's too painful. I need to regroup, play my guitar and check out other music before I come back and write."

For inspiration, Scofield will check out the music of earlier periods. "The thing that I like about music is that it really is history," he said. "Any good music I think is way rooted in the past, especially jazz music, where we're improvising. The longer you do it, the more you improvise things coming from your past, and the guys we learn from were also improvisers getting things from their past.

"The idea of Past Present comes from that

#### JOHN SCOFIELD / PAST IS PRESENT



idea: Music is really timeless, and the whole thing of time—you start to wonder what the hell it is. Here we are, these guys—we've played together for years and know each other from decades ago—and it's just the *now* that counts. But the now wouldn't be the now without all that other stuff."

Scofield's respect for that other stuff is revealed in a curiosity about the vernacular that extends beyond the newest new thing. Over the past decade, he has delved deeply into the music of Ray Charles, with *That's What I Say* (Verve), and gospel, with *Piety Street* (Universal Classics), along the way revisiting his particular brand of fusion, with *Überjam Deux* (EmArcy).

On the first two of those albums, he variously enlisted an impressive lineup of practitioners associated with New Orleans, including Dr. John, Aaron Neville, George Porter Jr. and Jon Cleary. On the third, he recruited Israeli guitarist and sample-meister Avi Bortnick.

Such projects hark back to a youth of eclectic exploration in suburban Connecticut. "By the '70s, I had already been learning to play bebop," he said, "but before that, as a kid, I had been part of folk music—just looking at a guitar and learning D and G and C chords. Along with that, I was researching the blues. And that led me to checking out bluegrass and some classical guitar."

His choice of instrument, he said, helped determine his destiny as an artist of wide-ranging tastes. "If I had been a trumpet player, it would have been, 'There's classical and there's jazz.' But with guitar, you can listen to Segovia and Doc Watson and Robert Johnson and Tal Farlow—and you do if you're serious about it." The latest manifestation of that exploratory impulse is a project focused on country music. Still in the early planning stages, Scofield has selected his bandmates for the upcoming recording sessions: Larry Goldings on piano (and possibly organ), Brian Blade on drums and Swallow on bass. His plan for treating the songs is, at this point, less clear, save for one thing: "I want to stretch on them."

Scofield has been quietly circling country music and its variants for years. While it may be hard to imagine an artist with a predilection for idiosyncratically shaped phrases focusing on a genre known for adherence to conventional form, he has occasionally introduced country tunes into his sets, such as George Jones' 1962 hit "A Girl I Used To Know."

On Past Present, "Chap Dance" is notable for what Scofield termed a "faux Western quality." Its title, he said, derives from the conventional image it conjures of Rodgers & Hammerstein's musical Oklahoma!—"Broadway dancers dressed up in chaps and cowboy hats"—though Scofield's pitch-warping proclivities might, in this context, strike some ears as ironic.

"The funny thing is," he said, "jazz and Broadway and all this music has taken from the Western cowboy. It's in there, from Aaron Copland to Ornette Coleman." He might also have mentioned Sonny Rollins' 1957 classic *Way Out West*, which includes Johnny Mercer's "I'm An Old Cowhand."

Scofield, Swallow said, has passed along country-music compilations to him. And Scofield has discussed with him an approach to vocabulary, one avoiding the language of bebop and playing down embellishment in general. All of which, Swallow ventured, suggests a plan to interpret the music in a "remarkably straight" manner.

Scofield, he suggested, was drawn to country's "element of direct statement, a willingness to say simple things clearly. And I think his immersion in that music is a logical step in his development. It's probably true of many prodigies—and he was a prodigy—that the project of growing up in his art has been a process of subtraction more than one of addition."

Scofield echoed that sentiment, viewing the process of subtraction as a necessary counter to the occupational hazard of overplaying. "I've had to work at whatever chops I have," he said. "So I worked on them and sometimes I went over the line a bit and played too much. It's a jazz musician's disease. I may do it a lot, but it's always a balancing act.

"If you just play pretty, you're running the risk of losing a really important element that's available to you as a jazz musician, which is to slam it. But if you just slam it—if you're losing the song—what's the point of being there?"

Tellingly, he has carried out a conspicuous act of subtraction for *Past Present*, laying aside his pedals and playing through an old Fender amp. That dovetails with an ongoing attempt, in the wake of tragedy and in the presence of an old friend, to shake off artifice and tell the story of a life, unadorned.

"I hope it's getting more honest and more simple," he said of that story. "More to the point, anyway. That's what I'm striving for."

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# AARON DIEHL The Well-Tempered DIELEN MORRISON • PHOTO BY STEVEN SUSSMAN

aron Diehl is in his comfort zone, seated on the piano bench in the tastefully appointed living room of his Harlem home. Before him is his pride and joy, a 5-foot, 7-inch 1986 Steinway model M that he recently purchased.

Strewn around the room, within easy reach, are well-thumbed books of print music: Art Tatum transcriptions, Béla Bartók's *Mikrokosmos*, a Thelonious Monk fakebook. We're talking about his development as a jazz pianist, so the conversation turns to one of his greatest yet most unusual inspirations: *Mister Rogers' Neighborhood*.

"One of my earliest introductions to jazz was through that program," Diehl says, referring to the sparkling, virtuosic piano of Johnny Costa, who was the late Fred Rogers' longtime musical director on the children's TV series, which aired nationally in the United States from 1968 to 2001. "I think about this today, that we had children's programming on TV where you heard jazz. [Costa] just had this amazing technique and facility like Art Tatum. At one time, I thought, 'This *must* be Art Tatum.' I went as far as to email the people at Pittsburgh Public TV to ask if it was Tatum; they told me it was Costa and sent me a CD of his music." Later, Diehl's first jazz piano teacher in Columbus, Ohio, included Costa on a list of piano greats to whom his 14-year-old charge should be listening.

Diehl admires and continues to be inspired by Fred Rogers on another level. He shows his guest a YouTube video from 1969 of Rogers melting the heart of a skeptical U.S. senator, gently persuading him to support an increase in funding for educational programming for children. The video has been viewed more than 2 million times. Diehl explains its appeal this way: "It's just that the guy appears so unassuming, and his demeanor could be misconstrued as soft and weak. He presents his argument in a very cool, collected and respectful fashion. To be able to win someone over like that senator in the space of—what, six minutes?—it's an incredible lesson in temperament."

Diehl's cultivation of a calm temperament, it turns out, is one of the keys to his singular artistic voice. He has become a model of pianistic poise and self-mastery.

The classically trained Diehl is known for many things: his impeccable technique; his mentorship by Wynton Marsalis, who famously took him on a European tour with his septet when the younger man was only 17; his sartorial style; his abilities as a private pilot, sometimes flying himself to gigs; and especially for his role as accompanist and musical partner to his close friend, singer Cécile McLorin Salvant.

Aaron Diehl at the 2014 Litchfield Jazz Festival in Connecticut

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Diehl, 30, is one of the leading exponents of a school of jazz piano that seeks to incorporate the entire tradition, from Jelly Roll Morton to Duke Ellington to Thelonious Monk and beyond, enrich it with references to the classical piano repertoire and use it all to compose forward-looking music.

His fourth CD, *Space Time Continuum* (Mack Avenue), is his breakout set. Diehl had become known as a "finesse" player—a word not always used as a compliment. Recorded with his longtime trio of bassist David Wong and drummer Quincy Davis, the new album confirms the arc of his development: from a neo-traditionalist with spectacular technique, through a kind of chamber jazz vibe, to something earthier and more original—all without sacrificing the finesse. He has found a way to combine his many classical and jazz influences, and compose music that's simultaneously traditional *and* modern.

Davis has noticed a change in Diehl in the last few years, a move away from perfectionism. "When we first started playing, I could see how sometimes he was overanalyzing," the drummer says. "He's at a point now where he can let go and enjoy himself more. He's not thinking as much."

The new album is intergenerational by design, including guest-starring roles for the legendary Benny Golson, who plays tenor saxophone on two tracks, and baritone saxophone master Joe Temperley. It also features younger, rising players like tenor saxophonist Stephen Riley, trumpeter Bruce Harris and vocalist Charenée Wade.

Golson met Diehl in 2006 when the iconic saxophonist had been commissioned by The Juilliard School to compose a work for the school's centennial, to be performed by the Juilliard Jazz Orchestra. Diehl was the pianist. "He had it together when he was a senior at Juilliard," Golson remembers. "I had written things to be played in a certain way. But I noticed that on occasion he added some things I had *not* written—and they were gems. Aaron has a high quality of imagination. He has something to say. And now he's moving along at the speed of light."

At a recent three-night stint at Ginny's Supper Club in Harlem, Diehl featured Golson and bassist Buster Williams on Friday, Temperley on Saturday and Marsalis on Sunday. The trumpeter played with tremendous force, daring the younger players to step up their game. Both as accompanist or trading solos with the master at breakneck tempos, Diehl proved himself to be a player of the first rank, an apprentice no more. Diehl, who was interviewed by DownBeat at his home, often illustrated his comments with musical examples on his Steinway.

#### Wynton Marsalis brought you on a European tour by his septet when you had just graduated high school. You once said you never understood exactly why he did that. You've spent a lot of time with him since then—did you ever ask him?

No, I haven't. Maybe I should; maybe I'm afraid to ask him. I think what Wynton sees in everyone that he's cultivated and nurtured is *potential*. He recognized my passion for music, even if the raw materials weren't yet developed [*exhales*]. I didn't know *what* I was doing.

There were nights when ... they would look at Wynton, like, "Why did you bring this kid out here?" I was incredibly stressed, and sometimes depressed. I told Wynton a couple of times that I was gonna go home. And he's like, "OK, go home." [*laughs*] He was using reverse psychology on me. "OK, quit! We can have somebody else come out on the road." And then I was like, "I don't want to quit." Somehow he knew that I was very serious about playing music, and he wanted me to see what it was really like to be out on the road, playing with first-class musicians. It was a sacrifice for him—it certainly wasn't my playing.

#### Who was the first major jazz musician you met in person?

Ahmad Jamal. I was at a concert of his in Columbus. He was cordial, very approachable. I wasn't that intimidated, because at the time I didn't realize how important he was. At that time, I was heavily into Oscar Peterson. My first jazz teacher, Mark Flugge, helped turn me on to other pianists. He had a very diverse palate.

At Juilliard, we had an assignment to transcribe Jamal's live album *At The Pershing*. I had to learn all those piano parts. That was the beginning of Jamal's influence on me in a very serious way. The way he used dynamics; he had these roaring chords, but also ... [*he illustrates at the keyboard with a delicate single-note line in the right hand*]. Then he'd leave some space, then ... [*he follows with a fortissimo chordal fusillade*]. He is a master of space and dynamics, and both of those things are so valuable.

If there was one person who has consistently been an influence on my piano playing, it would be Duke Ellington, and that happened because of Todd Stoll [former director of the Columbus Youth Jazz Orchestra, currently vice president of jazz education at Jazz at Lincoln Center]. In a lot of ways, Todd is why I'm sitting here. [Diehl relates how, as a member of that youth orchestra, he was able to compete in JALC's Essentially Ellington national high school jazz band competition, where he came to the attention of Marsalis.]

#### Do you think all jazz pianists should study classical music—and classical technique—alongside jazz?

I'm not saying that in order to be a great jazz musician you have to be a great classical pianist first. But I am saying that it makes things easier when you can get around the instrument, and you have some idea of how to approach the various hurdles. There are so many timbres you can get out of the instrument. [He demonstrates, playing a fortissimo passage from the Romantic era, then some delicate French impressionism, then some percussive Bartók.] In Beethoven and Chopin, there are so many sounds that you can get [plays a bit of Chopin's "Revolutionary Etude"]. That was a little sloppy, but to execute that [piece] well, you have to develop your left hand. That's a big issue with a lot of students playing jazz-they don't have a left hand. They think the left hand is just for comping. To be able to play stride, or a piece of classical music that involves left-hand linear development-it's almost impossible for them because they have no facility in that hand. And if you don't practice that stuff all the time, you lose it.

#### Earlier, you cited the cool temperament of Mister Rogers. Why is temperament so important to you?

The older I get, the more I realize the importance of maintaining an even temperament not getting too emotional, focusing on the task at hand. You don't want to make a business deal based on your emotions. It's like Warren Buffett said: The stock market has no emotion. It doesn't care if you're angry or you're happy. You can't treat it as an emotional entity. I think that's something we can all learn from greats like Hank Jones, or Mr. Golson, or Joe Wilder. They all knew how to carry themselves. Even if they were pissed off, they found a way to express it where you didn't know they were angry. It's like what Mister Rogers said: Yes, being angry is a natural emotion, but it's really a question of how you deal with it.

#### Controlling emotions and channeling them manifests itself in your playing. You've been cited for your restraint as a player, respecting silence and not being overly flashy.

I've had some conversations with Marcus Roberts, who has always encouraged me to let go a little bit. He said, "You have so much finesse, Aaron, more finesse than when I was your age. But sometimes it's a little too thoughtful or perfect." To be able to take that risk, dive in there and get your hands dirty—I always think about that. There's a huge part of me that's thinking about perfection. I have to fight that urge, to try to live in the moment, reach for something that I might be hearing, and not second-guess myself. DB

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# Dee Dee Bridgewater **NEW ORLEANS STATE OF MIND** By Josef Woodard | Photography by Greg Miles

ee Dee Bridgewater has been circulating around the world, and in various ways, has been *about* the world, for decades.

She's an innately wandering spirit, and an emissary for the universal power of music, jazz and otherwise. The eminent jazz singer, also a star of musical theater and master vocalist in big band settings (going back to her youthful days with the Thad Jones–Mel Lewis Orchestra in the early '70s), lived in France for nearly a quarter century. She has recorded projects honoring her African ancestry (*Red Earth*) and the art of French chanson (*J'ai Deux Amours*), along with earnest but highly personalized tributes to jazz royalty—Ella Fitzgerald (*Dear Ella*) and Billie Holiday. Her 2009 release *Eleanora Fagan* (1915– 1959): To Billie With Love From Dee Dee won a Grammy for best jazz vocal album.

Strangely enough, in 2015, Bridgewater found herself in the clutches of a sort of "homecoming" to a place where she has never lived—New Orleans. The birthplace of jazz is a natural lure for all who have jazz in their blood. The result is *Dee Dee's Feathers* (OKeh/Sony Music/DDB Records), an enthralling, entertaining and profound album recorded in collaboration with the Crescent City cultural force Irvin Mayfield, and his adroit New Orleans Jazz Orchestra.

Released 10 years after Hurricane Katrina ravaged and redefined the city, the album finds Bridgewater diving deep into New Orleans culture, with trumpeter/ bandleader/educator/civic booster Mayfield as her comrade, facilitator and eager guide. The program bustles with the joyous, festive and ribald spirits the city is known for, and it refreshes many classic and anthemic tunes associated with the city, but it also conveys serious messages.

When asked about the merger of a deeply rooted New Orleans native and an impassioned outsider, Mayfield said, "Dee Dee is living proof that New Orleans is as much an idea as a place, and jazz is an idea." The trumpeter and Bridgewater have taken these ideas—and the essence of an iconic American musical city—on tours of four continents in the past year.

In late August, Bridgewater invited Mayfield to a special occasion in her present hometown of Los Angeles, where she moved a year ago to be with her ailing mother. The event was held in the intimate Clive Davis Theater of the Grammy Museum. It was her home field, twice over: a short drive from her home, and a hearth for the threetime Grammy award winner. She was being honored with a special event there known as "The Drop," where she was interviewed—alongside the dapper Mayfield by moderator Scott Goldman. Then she gave a concert featuring songs from the new album.

The singer's magnetic and magnanimous personality made the venue seem more intimate *and* more sprawling than it actually was. The pair told the twisting story of the album's serendipitous birth, going back to early encounters when Bridgewater was invited to perform with the Minnesota Orchestra when Mayfield served as the organization's Artistic Director of Jazz, and her adventures sitting in at Mayfield's Jazz Playhouse club on Bourbon Street. "That's the only city in the world where I go and bogart somebody else's gig," she quipped at the Grammy Museum. "Is it in the air? In the water? There's something about the energy there that I feel in my soul."





When Mayfield, an avowed fan of the now 65-year-old Bridgewater, invited her to perform at the groundbreaking of his new work-in-progress, the Jazz Market, she suggested they work up a recording to commemorate the connection. That "casual" album, recorded in Esplanade Studios, turned into her first new album in five years.

During the Grammy Museum set, the pair and their band touched on key tunes from the album, including Harry Connick Jr.'s wry ode to lust, "One Fine Thing," "Big Chief" (a duet with Dr. John on the album) and her sassy reworking of "St. James Infirmary." They also called up Mayfield's re-harmonized take on "What A Wonderful World."

Two weeks before the Grammy Museum evening, Bridgewater sat down for a long, reflective lunch interview at a hip eatery in the Los Feliz area of Los Angeles. Arriving in her flower-print dress and floppy hat finery, she was surprised to learn that the special of the day was the Mini Fried Oyster Sandwich, in honor of "National Oyster Day," according to the waiter. "Get the fuck outta here," she laughed. Even here on this day, way out west, an apropos New Orleans spirit was in the air.

At the time, a week before the U.S. release of the album, Bridgewater was home between legs of touring Europe, and she was high from the reaction abroad, where the album had been released earlier. She enthused that "it's the first time I can say we are truly making a joyful noise. You see the transformation in people's faces. It's like it soothes the people. It's an experience. That's what each concert turns into, with people saying, 'Oh my God, we're going to New Orleans.'"

Among her 16-album discography, and especially since 1995's Love And Peace: A Tribute To *Horace Silver*, Bridgewater has often ventured into concept-driven projects. Part of that tendency may circle back to her sense of theater, even in jazz mode, and the importance of a thematic, cohesive core in an album—or "putting on a show."

"I have always thought of myself as an artist first," she says. "I don't ever want to repeat myself. I can't stand doing the same thing. I constantly need to challenge myself, to put myself into some new musical setting."

Dee Dee's Feathers will help advance a truer view of the richness of the musical loam within the New Orleans aesthetic. Apart from sophisticated arrangements and her own distinctive way with owning whatever song she takes on, Bridgewater also delves into some experimental terrain on the title track and "Congo Square," channeling her ability to call up various voices, in a hypnotic, layered effect.

Mayfield remembers those moments in the studio when Bridgewater organically tapped into the legacies of the Black Mardi Gras Indians, the energies connected to the historic meeting place Congo Square, and other New Orleans sources in the course of her improvised vocals. "We didn't have to have any deep conversations about this," he said. "We collaborated on it and she went and recorded it. I said, 'Why don't you go back and do some more parts on it?' Hearing her sing with herself, I wish you could have been in the studio to witness that. It sounds amazing on a record, but it's amazing all by itself."

Her relationship with the youngish NOJO players operates on a level playing field, but also comes tinged with her natural mentorship instincts attached. "I'm enjoying being at the age that I am and working with young musicians, and being able to share experiences that can turn a light on for them. I love that. That happened with Ambrose [Akinmusire, the trumpeter with whom she worked in the Monterey All-Star band in 2013] and, of course, Theo Croker, who I produced [for his album *AfroPhysicist*], and his whole band.

"That happens with the musicians in NOJO, too. I recently told them, 'Listen gentlemen, I am from the jazz world. We don't play the same thing twice. You guys are going to have to come to the table. You cannot be lazy with me and play the same solos. That does not work. To the drummer [Adonis Rose]—who I love—I said, 'Adonis, you gotta change this stuff up for me. I need you in my ass. I need that in my *butt*. I've got to feel it.' They're saying, 'Dee Dee, I never knew I could play like that.' So it's a beautiful experience, and I'm also realizing the influence that I can have."

Mayfield confirms that Bridgewater has had an emboldening effect on his 13-year-old NOJO. "From a leadership standpoint," he says, "you can never make an orchestra like someone or appreciate someone or follow someone. Whether it's a symphony orchestra or a big band, they are only going to follow the true leader, the true conductor. And Dee Dee Bridgewater is the real deal. We see it every night. These guys will follow her wherever she goes, because she is the ultimate leader."

A scan of Bridgewater's bio reveals a portrait of a multifaceted individual: the Grammywinning jazz singer, the Tony-winning musical theater actress-singer, a radio personality (on NPR's *JazzSet with Dee Dee Bridgewater*) and a producer, whose latest success was her work with trumpeter Croker. But at the center of the circuitous story, life as a jazz vocalist has always been a natural byproduct and goal.
Born in 1950 as Denise Eileen Garrett in Memphis, Tennessee, she was raised in Flint, Michigan. After studying at Michigan State and University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, she toured the Soviet Union, married trumpeter Cecil Bridgewater and began her four-year stint with the Thad Jones–Mel Lewis Jazz Orchestra, a seminal lesson in the art of working with a big band now one of her strong suits.

In her early big band singer days, though, she was lured into the more lucrative world of musical theater and a role as Glinda (the Good Witch of the North), which earned her a Tony Award in 1975. "When I had the opportunity to do *The Wiz*, I said, 'Let me jump ship. I think I could have a longer career and one that would be more financially rewarding than just being a jazz singer.' I had traveled all over the world with the Thad Jones-Mel Lewis Orchestra, and I was being paid \$30 a concert. I thought, 'Is this it?' We were doing clubs and a few concert dates. I had a daughter (Tulani, now her manager—or "daughter-ger," as Dee Dee puts it) and was trying to think more long-term.

"Leaving and going to do *The Wiz* for the two years I did, and the other shows I did after that, was probably one of the best things I could have ever done. There was also the acting side of it, as well. I feel like it has rounded me out, as a performer and as an artist. It gives me an edge over a lot of my contemporaries. Now, what has happened is that a lot of the younger singers that I've been kind of mentoring are starting to take acting classes. They're getting into the whole experience of being free on the stage.

"There is Cécile McLorin Salvant, who is very theatrical," she says. "Then there's Cyrille Aimée, and I'm about to start working with another young jazz singer. I have been eyeing her, and I would like to produce this young lady. Her name is Jazzmeia Horn. I'll be working with her when we do our [*New Orleans Masquerade*] show at the Apollo [on Oct. 31]. She is extraordinary because she is a dancer, a singer, a fashion designer—she does all her clothes—and she is amazing onstage. She is fluent in Spanish, so she sings in Spanish and in English. And she's a real jazz singer."

Bridgewater's current L.A. period comes after having lived here during the late '70s and early '80s, yet another chapter in her multifaceted and unpredictable life. She says plainly that "L.A. drove me out of the United States. After L.A., I moved to France. I was really in the whole TV-film side of stuff and the celebrity stuff. My husband was a pretty well-known black director named Gilbert Moses. We got up into all of that b.s. and it ended up a very, very hurtful experience when we split up.

"Since I moved back, I've been seeing a psychiatrist for the first time. In the first session I had with him, I told him that every time I go out, I have panic attacks. He said, 'You should look at it as a healing process. You've come back to heal.' That changed my whole perspective of being here. I feel like it's good that I'm back. I needed to have closure on that period of my life."

Ask Bridgewater about her state of mind at this mature and fully vibrant stage of her musical

story, and she will relate matters of deep cultural roots and an essential creative philosophy as she goes ever forward.

"What I have decided to do is to just embrace my nomadic life," she says, with a hearty laugh. "I recently did my DNA through [the website] AfricanAncestry.com and found out that, on my mother's side, we are 100 percent descendant of a Nigerian tribe called the Fulani, which is a nomadic tribe that found its way up through North Africa, going north on the west coast. They ended up in Mali; and then in Mali, the Fulani are called the Peul.

"When I went to Mali, when I was trying to find out my ancestry before it became affordable through DNA, the Malian people said, 'You are a descendant of the Peul. You are nomadic and your way of singing jazz is like the griots, where you sing a story and then you ad-lib.' That's what the griots do. They take the griot songs, many of which are on my *Red Earth* CD, in which they sing a traditional song and then they ad-lib, honoring today and their history, and then they go back to the traditional song. When I did that project, and when we were touring it, the musicians sat me down one day and said, 'You know, Dee Dee, you are a modern griot.' I found that very, very interesting.

"All I'm trying to do is to stay connected to the invisible force, to listen to the spirit, to not move unless I'm feeling led to move. I'm trying to learn how to be still and not be afraid."

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# **ERIK FRIEDLANDER**

# SALUTING THE 'MOZART OF JAZZ'

## By Bill Milkowski • Photo by Rachel Stern \_

ellist Erik Friedlander's spacious SoHo loft is centrally located near many of the venues he has played over the years as a ubiquitous figure on New York's so-called "downtown" scene. It's also a fairly short walk to the Village Vanguard, where he played with the Bar Kokhba Sextet during John Zorn's weeklong engagement in February.

A frequent Zorn collaborator, Friedlander has also worked with a wide variety of artists ranging from Laurie Anderson, Courtney Love and Alanis Morissette to Dave Douglas, Marty Ehrlich and Joe Lovano. And he has led adventurous improvising outfits, including Chimera (with bassist Drew Gress, clarinetist Chris Speed and bass clarinetist Andrew D'Angelo) and Topaz (with alto saxophonist Andy Laster, bassist Stomu Takeishi and percussionist Satoshi Takeishi). For his latest album, the downtown denizen dips into another bag entirely in paying tribute to the bebop bassist and pioneering jazz cellist Oscar Pettiford (1922–'60) on *Oscalypso* (Skipstone Records).

Accompanied by saxophonist Michael Blake and longtime collaborators Trevor Dunn on bass and Michael Sarin on drums, Friedlander swings persuasively on Pettiford classics like "Bohemia After Dark," "Tricotism" and the buoyant title track, demonstrating a facile pizzicato technique in the tradition of the instrumentalist-composer-bandleader who was regarded as the successor to Jimmy Blanton and heralded as "the Bird of the bass."

"Saluting Pettiford has been in my blood for years, since I first heard him play," said Friedlander, who won the Miscellaneous Instrument category in this year's DownBeat Critics Poll. "He's like The Man for me. When I look back into jazz history, he's the one who is a model for me: He wrote music so beautifully, he put the cello at the center of the band and he led the band from the cello. That is a model that I respect and find inspiring.

"So it's always been waiting to happening," he said of his Pettiford tribute. "I just needed to let the music sit with me. It was just a matter of when it was the right time to do a tribute to him. I'm 55 now, and felt like I was ready to take on this music with a kind of maturity—as opposed to 20 years ago, when I would've tried to muscle it or overwhelm it with chops. Now I have the restraint to let it shine."



Friedlander, who has become a Pettiford scholar in recent years, raved about the structure and logic of Pettiford's lines, exemplified by such lesser-known tunes as "Pendulum At Falcon's Lair," "Cello Again" and "Cable Car" (co-written with Sonny Clark). As Friedlander put it, "His plucked, pizzicato lines are so hip. And they're so clear, like crystal. He's like the Mozart of jazz."

Joining Friedlander on the front line for this labor of love, blowing tight unison and harmony lines on those tricky Pettiford heads, is saxophonist Blake, who brings a distinct old-school quality to the proceedings in his tone and attack on the instrument (a quality also showcased on his own 2014 leader project for Sunnyside, *Tiddy Boom*). "The reason that Michael's on the record is that his sound and his approach are just so right for the record," said the cellist. "You can kind of hear the history in his playing. It's not completely modern, it's got echoes of tradition, and his approach is so in the pocket. And yet, it is a new feeling, and harmonically he kind of stretches you a little bit. So he was the right guy."

Blake said he was excited to be involved in the Pettiford project for several reasons. "I had been yearning to record some specific music from the bebop lexicon," he said. "I love playing unison lines with cello and tenor, and I love the way O.P. and saxophonist Lucky Thompson [who recorded a well-known version of 'Tricotism' with

Pettiford] hook up. Having recorded the music of Lucky Thompson a few years ago [on 2013's The World Awakes], I have always enjoyed that collaboration: The way their voices interweave and engage with both the harmonic structures and melodic motives is iconic. Both of the players have that wonderful ability to play modern jazz but still retain their own old-school personality. So when Erik started working on this music with me, Michael and Trevor, I was thinking we might find a similar sort of blend but with our own characteristics still intact. I think we succeeded because the tunes don't sound like re-creations-more like new interpretations. Erik put a lot of thought into the arrangements and the feel of each piece, many of which are reductions. So that helped strip away some of the expectations we all had approaching these works. He was very careful about what instruments played on what sections, and he broke the quartet up into different duos and trios, like on our version of 'Tricotism.'

"I think his style really shines through in this music as you hear both his incredible bowing, which is just so lush, but also his interesting pizz work," Blake continued. "Either way, he keeps surprising us with which one he'll choose. Using either technique, he always swings hard, steering the music along like a bassist might. Erik plays with heft and really attacks phrases. I like that as a saxophonist because it is more in the nature of the instrument in jazz to play with some bite. Especially when dealing with some of Pettiford's more sentimental themes, Erik dug in and found

### **Remembering 0.P.**

Born on Sept. 30, 1922, on an Indian reservation in Okmulgee, Oklahoma—his mother was Choctaw and his father was half Cherokee and half African American— Oscar Pettiford began singing in the Pettiford Family Band as a boy, alongside his father, his piano-playing mother and 10 brothers and sisters. The family moved to Minneapolis when he was 9 years old and he soon began performing around the Midwest. Pettiford picked up bass at age 14 and began developing his own system of playing the instrument that involved a strong melodic concept as well as a muscular approach to covering the bottom end.

Frustrated by his lack of gigs, Pettiford gave up playing the bass by age 19 and took a day job but was later encouraged to return to music by veteran bassist Milt Hinton, who came through Minneapolis with Cab Calloway's band in 1942. Two months later, Charlie Barnet hired young Pettiford, and by May 1943 he made the leap to the Big Apple, where he began playing with saxophonist Coleman Hawkins. His brilliant melodic bass solo on Hawkins' hit recording of "The Man I Love" was an indication of things to come from the young bassist.

In November 1943, Pettiford and Dizzy Gillespie co-led the first bebop band on 52nd Street at the Onyx with tenor saxophonist Don Byas and drummer Max Roach. By 1945 Pettiford was recruited by Duke Ellington to follow in the footsteps of the great bassist Jimmy Blanton, who had died in 1943. Pettiford remained in the Ellington Orchestra for three years, and by the end of 1948 had performed at the Three Dueces with Miles Davis and Kai Winding and also at the Clique Club with trumpeter Fats Navarro, saxophonists Dexter Gordon and Lucky Thompson, vibraphonist Milt Jackson, pianist Bud Powell and drummer Kenny Clarke.

In February of 1949, Pettiford joined Woody Herman's Second Thundering Herd, where he started utilizing the cello as a visual gag, though he soon became smitten by the "little" instrument. He remained in Herman's band for five months and the following year joined a sextet co-led by drummer Louie Bellson and trumpeter Charlie Shavers.

Between 1953 and 1956, Pettiford played with such great pianists as Bud Powell, Phineas Newborn, Horace Silver and Thelonious Monk, appearing on Monk's first three Riverside albums (*Thelonious Monk Plays The Music Of Duke Ellington*, *The Unique Thelonious Monk* and *Brilliant Corners*). From '56 to '57, Pettiford led his own big band, and in early 1958 he played on Sonny Rollins' trio outing for Riverside, *Freedom Suite*, with Max Roach.

By September 1958, Pettiford had relocated to Copenhagen, Denmark, where he performed with saxophonist Hans Koller,



guitarist Attila Zoller and either fellow expatriate Clarke or Jimmy Pratt on drums. That year, Pettiford was involved in an auto accident that fractured his skull. He returned to the scene, playing with a metal plate in his head. From late 1959 until 1960, Pettiford performed with Stan Getz's quartet at the Montmartre Club in Copenhagen.

Pettiford made his last public performance on Sept. 4, 1960, at an art exhibit in Copenhagen. The following day, he was taken to a hospital. He had contracted a virus similar to polio, and he fell into a coma. Pettiford died on Sept. 8, 1960, at age 37. *—Bill Milkowski*  new meaning to his melodies, giving them more meat. And the way he plays through changes is ear-opening. The lines are bluesy, too, and so well suited to the bebop vocabulary we all have absorbed that you just think, 'Hey, this cello is totally normal in jazz. Right?"

In researching the life of his hero, Friedlander found that Pettiford had a dark side. "He had a drinking problem and he'd get into fights," Friedlander said. "He was underappreciated and he felt like he didn't get the recognition that he deserved for being part of the whole 52nd Street scene. He wanted the same kind of star treatment that Dizzy and Bird got and just couldn't understand why it wasn't happening for him. So he carried a chip on his shoulder about that. But you could see how antipathy could develop if he's writing a lot of the tunes and they're playing them and he doesn't get the credit that he thinks he should get. I'm always struck by the dichotomy between his personality—which could be difficult and dark—and the music, which was written so optimistically and buoyantly and with such positivity."

Friedlander previously saluted Pettiford on his 2008 album *Broken Arm Trio*, which contained originals inspired by the music of O.P. But for this recent tribute, he avoided taking any great liberties with Pettiford's music. "I felt like it was the right time to do a record of completely all covers and just really make it a tribute instead of making it so much about my interpretation or my music. I felt like the tunes needed to be coming from a place that Pettiford could recognize and feel comfortable with."

Regarding his hero's penchant for the cello, Friedlander said, "Pettiford was passionate about the instrument. And while it is true that he wasn't a schooled cello player, I would contend that it is with Pettiford that we cellists have the first truly great jazz player and composer to lead a band from behind the cello.

"The cello seemed to touch something inside of him," he continued. "He named one of his twin daughters Cellina, the other Celesta, and he named his son Cello. In fact, there's a picture of Pettiford holding his infant son on the cover of his posthumously released album *My Little Cello.*"

The fact that Friedlander was born in 1960, the year that Pettiford died, and that he plays a Swiss bass built in 1922, the year that Pettiford was born, further cements the seemingly cosmic connection between the two. But while the Pettiford project was a crowning achievement in his career—he plans to perform the music with his *Oscalypso* quartet on tour this year— Friedlander already has another project in the works that comes from an entirely different place than this tribute to the bebop legend.

"This life that I'm in is basically a continual process of trying to keep myself interested in following my nose," said Friedlander. "In between *Nighthawks* and *Oscalypso*, I released *Illuminations*, which is a solo record with a chamber vibe. And my next one is a trio with Satoshi Takeishi on percussion and Shoko Nagai on piano and accordion in which I experiment with electronics for the first time. Pedals are new for me. I'm just starting to use them now. I always thought that these pedals put too much of a vibe on it, but some of these new things are cool. I'm using a looping pedal in a way to create textures. It's interesting. So I'm always trying to change. Joe Lovano used to tell me, 'Keep 'em guessing, Erik. Keep 'em guessing.' I've taken that advice to heart."

Bassist Trevor Dunn, who first recorded with Friedlander on the 2001 album *Grains Of Paradise*, agreed that the cellist does indeed keep 'em guessing. "One thing I've always appreciated about Erik is that he doesn't fit into the mold of what a 'downtown' musician is supposed to be," Dunn said. "He has his foot in the pop world, film music, classical music, as well as the improvised music scene. He works with engineers like Scott Solter who experiment with unconventional techniques, which I find more adventurous than what most 'jazz' [recordings] apply.

"Erik also balances between being a bandleader and a sideman, which, as I know from experience, is a difficult thing to do. He has learned the language of John Zorn, for example, and is able to decode and interact with that, but also lead an almost straightahead project such as this Pettiford band, or write a pile of bluesy, country-esque tunes for his quartet Bonebridge. This is akin to being multilingual, and Erik speaks them all fluently."

Dunn added, "I can tell from working with Erik that he has a diverse listening palette. His influences are genuine, and he's not going to bring something to the table that he does not believe in. That's also refreshing. No bullshit. Aside from all that, he is a pleasure to tour with. He's got 'road chops' and that is *major*."

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Mary Halvorson Meltframe FIREHOUSE 12 040121 \*\*\*\*1/2

One of many things that I admire about Mary Halvorson's playing is how the essence of the guitar hovers near the surface, poking through from time to time. Eugene Chadbourne did something similar when he performed solos on an amplified rake. *It's a box with strings*, Halvorson's music reminds her listeners, *which makes it almost infinitely malleable*.

Great courage is required to make that statement while playing music written by Duke Ellington, McCoy Tyner, Carla Bley, Ornette Coleman and Oliver Nelson. But as a faithful student of Anthony Braxton, she understands that paying homage can also mean being true to yourself, and these 10 rather concise tracks tell you enough to know that Halvorson is her own woman. That's not to say she's completely individualistic. Whether in the context of a band or solo, the ghosts of so many other guitarists peer over her shoulder.

On these tracks, Halvorson alternately finesses and roughs up the melodies, but she never decorates them with romantic overtones. Even Bley's classic "Ida Lupino" is interpreted without the pathos that it sometimes evokes. To hear exactly how she can melt the frame, listen to the distortion outburst towards the end of Tyner's "Aisha," otherwise quite delicately rendered with swelling volume and precise picking that coaxes the melody out of hiding.

Nelson's "Cascades" is also given a metallic interpretation, which suits the flowing lines perfectly. On Coleman's "Sadness," she uses a slide to drift in and out of unison with a sustained note, manually approximating an effect she sometimes achieves with pedals. Her version of "Cheshire Hotel" by Nöel Akchoté is one of *Meltframe*'s high points; you hear her willfully change direction, actively reframing her fellow improvising guitarist's stately theme.

It's already been a treat hearing how Halvorson has evolved over the last decade, and if this is a sort of tally of where she is on the instrument, the next 10 years should be equally edifying. —John Corbett

Personnel: Halvorson, guitar.

*Meltframe:* Cascades; Blood; Cheshire Hotel; Sadness; Solitude; Ida Lupino; Aisha; Platform; When; Leola. (43:26)





#### Orrin Evans The Evolution Of Oneself SMOKE SESSIONS 1507

Pianist Orrin Evans has been evolving for quite a while now. From his Criss Cross albums to his Posi-Tone projects, the pianist has conspicuously worked out ideas about flux and flow, and with each new development, his eloquence advances. But the fruits of that labor have never been bundled together with the kind of impact that emerges on *The Evolution Of Oneself*, his second disc for Smoke Sessions.

Here, it's Christian McBride and Karriem Riggins pinging the bandleader with nuanced provocation. The deep swing of "Tsagli's Lean" is enhanced by Evans' decision to throw a series of melodic fragments into the mix. Seemingly chop-

#### Pat Metheny/Jan Garbarek/ Gary Burton/SWR Big Band Hommage À Eberhard Weber ECM 2463 \*\*\*1/2

Those sentimental for the '70s will welcome this reunion of ECM power-players paying tribute to the still-living but inactive Eberhard Weber. ECM was a distinctly upscale and ascetic voice in an unruly and angry time, a European sanctuary of introspection and austerity from the decade's obsessive pursuit of vulgarity. It was bassist/composer Weber who helped create that loose weave of classical, chamber jazz and ambient world music that lived on the edge of the jazz world, placing the mark of ECM on many of its players.

No ECM artist embodied that mark more dependably than Jan Garbarek, who has also been Weber's closest collaborator. His swooping soprano lines glide over an almost invisible orchestral outline on "Résumé Variations," and then trade phrases with a sequence of recorded Weber bass lines. Garbarek's eerie chill has a particularly dry, Nordic bite to it, not unlike snapping off icicles and feeling them stick to your fingers.

The big piece of the program is "Hommage," a 31-minute orchestral commission by Pat Metheny, who aggregates a series of Weber's solo recordings into a kind of suite. Scoring in layers of soft brass, Metheny paces the material through a variety of textures and tempos, starting with a muted, pillowy fanfare and then creating a subtle tension py, they coalesce through playful insight. The syncopated accents of "Jewels & Baby Yaz" take him to a similar spot, a place where each clipped piano phrase dusts off the welcome mat for its follow-up.

*Oneself* is a long read at 18 tracks. Yet there's focus in all that gear-shifting, and each performance is enticing enough to defend its inclusion.

"Autumn Leaves" is all about esprit, owing as much to Ornette Coleman as to Erroll Garner; "Wildwood Flower" is an expressive abstraction marked by a hymn-like essence. "Iz Beatdown Time" is built on grace and silence, but has a glitchy heart.

Evans refracts "All The Things You Are" three different ways, proving how nu-bop is nourished by a range of styles from trad-jazz to avant-garde. With a tip of the hat to both Grover Washington Jr. and the Carter Family, Evans proves that flaunting latitude and bending orthodox grammar can serve his music well.

Daring and adept when he burst onto the New York radar in the late '90s, Evans is now a revered ace. His evolution isn't over, but at this particular juncture, it's a blast to watch him map the artistic coordinates between blues, force and motion. —*lim Macnie* 

The Evolution Of Oneself: All The Things You Are (Prelude); For Miles; Genesis II (Interlude); Autumn Leaves; Wildwood Flower; Sweet Sid; Genesis II (Interlude); Jewels & Baby Yaz; Iz Beatdown Time; Spot It You Got It; Genesis III (Interlude); Feb 13th; A Secret Place; Ruby Red; Tsagli's Lean; Professor Farworthy; All The Things You Are (Springtime Feathers); All The Things You Are. (78:21)

Personnel: Orrin Evans, piano; Christian McBride, bass; Karriem Riggins, drums; Marvin Sewell, guitar (13); JD Walter, vocals (18).

Ordering info: smokesessionsrecords.com



between the rhythm's subliminal urgency and vibraphonist Gary Burton's more languid solos.

The final six minutes focus on bassist Scott Colley as the accompaniment grows a bit minimalist, then more or less evaporates. It's a thoughtfully assembled collage of light ideas, all quite lovely, smartly arranged and very well played. It's also somewhat bland. —John McDonough

Hommage À Eberhard Weber: Résumé Variations; Hommage Touch; Maurizius; Tübingen; Notes After An Evening. (69:48) Personnel: Pat Metheny, guitar, Jan Garbarek, soprano saxophone; Paul McCandless, English horn, soprano saxophone; Klaus Graf, alto saxophone; Ernst Hutter, euphonium; Gary Burton, vibraphone; Scott Colley, Eberhard Weber (recorded sequences only), bass; Danny Gottlieb, drums; SWR big band; Helge Sunde, conductor.

Ordering info: ecmrecords.com



Eric Alexander The Real Thing HIGHNOTE 7278

Just having Eric Alexander around is a comfort. I mean, George Coleman is still with us, but Sonny Stitt and Gene Ammons and Dexter Gordon and Johnny Griffin and ... well, make your own list. They're all gone, so who else is going to play tough, swinging, sweet, soulful tenor with relaxed self-confidence in the grand old style?

That said, Alexander's third album for HighNote, though more attractive than his sleepy debut, *Touching*, doesn't match the exuberance and animation of the second one, *Chicago Fire*. That may be because it lacks a thematic focus, but I suspect it's something more subtle. Pianist Harold Mabern rarely rises to his usual creative self, and Alexander's casual, unpretentious manner—usually an advantage in these days of over-thought music—feels almost offhanded from time to time.

Things don't feel right from the first track, a Bobby Caldwell cover that lends the disc its name. The band lands in an in-between groove that never quite jells. That's not to say there isn't plenty of solid music here.

Guitarist Pat Martino, who plays on three tracks with Alexander's longstanding quartet, is a big part of that plenty. On drummer Joe Farnsworth's slow 'n' sexy blues "Pure Pat," Martino joins Alexander on the melody and sparkles on eighth-note lines during rhythm section breaks. The two also trade some fine fours on Mabern's jaunty "The Chief."

Likewise, Alexander navigates the bossa rhythms of "Little Boat" with relaxed élan; his melodic ingenuity on the leaping changes of his tune "For George And Trane" are masterful; and his chuffing low-register warmth on "Sleep Warm" is all romance, swing and soul.

The prolific saxophonist, who claims almost 40 records to his name, has matured to the point where even a not-entirely-satisfying effort like this is still worth returning to. Keep 'em coming, Eric.

The Real Thing: The Real Thing; Pure Pat; Summertime; The Night Has A Thousand Eyes; Little Boat; For George And Trane; Sleep Warm; The Chief. (53:43) **Personnel:** Alexander, tenor saxophone; Pat Martino, guitar (2,

3, 8); Harold Mabern, piano; John Webber, bass; Joe Farnsworth, drums.

Ordering info: jazzdepot.com

<sup>-</sup>Paul De Barros

The BOX				
Critics	John McDonough	John Corbett	Jim Macnie	Paul de Barros
<b>Mary Halvorson</b> Meltframe	**	****½	****	****
<b>Orrin Evans</b> The Evolution Of Oneself	***	****	****	***½
Metheny/Garbarek/Burton Hommage A Eberhard Weber	***½	***	***½	****
<b>Eric Alexander</b> The Real Thing	****	***½	***	***

#### **Critics' Comments**

#### Mary Halvorson, Meltframe

Don't panic. That blast of clawing abrasion, solo static and turntable whiplash is by choice, perhaps to bridge the beauty/ugly duality. But ugly is still ugly. Less so are the Dali-esque bends in pitch and dynamics and zithery virtuoso flourishes that tweak the ear here and there. —John McDonough

Her first solo album spotlights the lyricism that's always pumped blood through her experimental romps. Those trademark textural gambits come into play, and the strong melodies ("Ida Lupino") provide a great framework. —Jim Macnie

Halvorson has created an original guitar style that usually depends on her own compositions, so this solo outing on others' tunes is a refreshing break. Ranging from the startling distortion of Oliver Nelson's "Cascades," through sitar-like microtones on Ornette's "Sadness," a heartbreakingly glacial take on Ellington's "Solitude" and a dry, near-acoustic strum on Roscoe Mitchell's "Leola," Halvorson is a pure improviser who takes the listener to new states while never letting one forget the essential *guitarness* of her music. —Paul de Barros

#### Orrin Evans, The Evolution Of Oneself

This is mostly a smart, cohesive but fairly standard trio set with a few jokers in its deck. "Wildwood Flower" steers a sharp detour into rural backcountry territory and finds some unexpectedly pungent paths. But Walter's vibrato-less vocal at the end is downright creepy in its androgyny. Some dazzling McBride on "Tsagli's Lean," though. —John McDonough

Mixed programs can ask a lot of the audience, who have to make their way through the juxtapositions. This one is diverse in the extreme, but great at its nucleus. Not sure the interlude fragments work—they break up an already patchwork-like selection—and vamp tracks like "Iz Beatdown Time" are a bit less magnetizing, but there's so much juice and brainpower, it's invigorating. — John Corbett

Autobiographies of musical influence are fraught with pitfalls—among them the mix of disparate genres and potential listener indifference—but fiercely talented keyboardist Evans keeps things lively and coherent here, from his oblique spin on bebop ("All The Things You Are") to standards ("Autumn Leaves"), hip- hop ("Jewels & Baby Yaz") and country music ("Wildwood Flower"). But the album is too long and the electronically remixed interludes imply a superstructure that isn't really there. —Paul de Barros

#### Metheny/Garbarek/Burton/SWR Big Band, Hommage À Eberhard Weber

The series of individual moments that flourish and explode is impressive, but it's the blend of sounds and coordination of approaches that make these pieces stack up to a cohesive whole. —Jim Macnie

I applaud the collegial and human impulse behind this project, celebrating and supporting a fellow musician when he's incapacitated. Weber's importance in the ECM legacy is indisputable, though he's less known than friends like Garbarek and Metheny; this portrait captures his attention to hue and tune, featuring recorded shards of his bass playing, which you either like or really don't. —John Corbett

Collaborations between live musicians and archival tape often come off as gimmicky, but thanks to Pat Metheny's exquisite sense of compositional form and gracious respect for Weber's music, the half-hour centerpiece of this project is nothing short of elegant. While the music occasionally becomes solemn and grand, the short pieces ("Tübingen," "Notes After An Evening") are lovely. —Paul de Barros

#### Eric Alexander, The Real Thing

Alexander puts some swing back into the music in this remarkably unaffected fling. The tempos are alive and alert, keeping the musician skipping in a lively step. With "The Chief," Mabern offers that rarity in jazz today: an original composition that actually seems to be composed of something. —John McDonough

Reminds me of an early '60s Prestige session, with too much reverb on the horn. Everyone sounds terrific, especially Martino and Mabern (check the opening to his "The Chief" for flinty brilliance). Alexander is weighty and buoyant—and always on the mark. —John Corbett

Sometimes it's so straight it sounds pat. But Alexander's "normal" teems with such vitality that it's hard to turn away. Sometimes you can actually hear his commitment ghosting the quartet's interplay. —Jim Macnie





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#### Amir ElSaffar & Two Rivers Ensemble Crisis PI RECORDINGS 159 \*\*\*\*\*/2

The lion's share of Amir ElSaffar's *Crisis*—the trumpeter's third release with his New York-based Two Rivers Ensemble—features his "Crisis Suite," commissioned by the Newport Jazz Festival and unveiled there in 2013. ElSaffar was born and bred in the

Chicago area to an Iraqi father and American mother, but he traveled to the Middle East to study with masters of *maqam*; moreover, he composed his *"Crisis Suite"* while living in Egypt for a year during the convulsions of the Arab Spring.

Opening with roiling flourish by drummer Nasheet Waits, the "Crisis Suite" unfolds with arrangements textured like some ornate aural carpet, threaded with the *buzuq* lute of Tareq Abboushi and fiery oud of Zafer Tawil as well as Carlo DeRosa's dark acoustic bass and the serpentine saxophone of Ole Mathisen.

The intense energy of *Crisis* reflects today's heightened emotional stakes for anyone linked to the Middle East and its torments. Then there is ElSaffar's individual trumpet sound, its keens, smears and melodic arabesques evoking *muezzins*, sirens and cries in the night. ElSaffar has referred to the kinship between the heterophony of *maqam* and that of Cecil Taylor, as well as to the links between the blues and Arabic traditions. One hopes that the trumpeter can continue to explore these cultural commonalities. *—Bradley Bambarger* 

Crisis: Introduction—From The Ashes; The Great Dictator; Taqsim Saba; El-Sha'ab (The People); Love Poem; Flyover Iraq; Tipping Point; Aneen (Weeping); Love Poem. (67:00)

Personnel: Amir ElSaffar, trumpet, vocal, santur, Carlo DeRosa, bass; Nasheet Waits, drums; Ole Mathisen, tenor saxophone, soprano saxophones; Tareq Abboushi, buzuq; Zafer Tawil, oud, percussion. Ordering info: pirecordings.com

#### Luciana Souza Speaking In Tongues SUNNYSIDE RECORDS 1410 \*\*\*\*

In 10 previous albums straddling the worlds of Brazilian music and jazz, vocalist Luciana Souza has plumbed the depths of Brazilian pop, explored the American songbook, written her own engaging songs and set the poetry of Pablo Neruda to music. In this long-awaited follow-up to 2012's *Duos* 



*III* and *The Book Of Chet*, Souza cuts language loose, launching a cross-cultural musical conversation with a supergroup consisting of West African guitarist Lionel Loueke, Swiss harmonica virtuoso Grégoire Maret, Italian bassist Massimo Bialcoti and American drummer Kendrick Scott.

On seven of the nine tracks, Souza vocalizes wordlessly over a United Nations of rhythms: there are uptempo jams over a funky Afro-pop feel and somber instrumental ballads. The only lyrics she chooses to sing are two poems by songwriter/poet Leonard Cohen (from his collection *The Book of Longing*), which she has set to exquisite music.

Loueke's guitar style, combining the folkloric with the funky, is especially strong in the sprightly "At The Fair," "Straw Hat" and "Filhos De Gandhi," which are replete with jaunty, fingerpicked runs. Maret contributes inventive chromatic commentary throughout. Drummer Scott exercises meticulous control over complex polyrhythms, and bassist Bialcoti offers sturdy, almost subliminal support.

Souza explores the full range of her creative impulses here. The visionary, startling result—a genre-bending conversation among master musicians— sounds like nothing Souza has done before. —*Allen Morrison* 

Speaking In Tongues: At The Fair, Hymn; Straw Hat; Split; Filhos De Gandhi; A Pebble In Still Water; Free At Last; A.M.; No One To Follow. (47:35)

Personnel: Luciana Souza, vocals; Lionel Loueke, guitar, vocals; Grégoire Maret, harmonica; Massimo Biolcati, bass; Kendrick Scott, drums, percussion. Ordering info: sunnysidezone.com

#### Blue Buddha Blue Buddha TZADIK 4010 ★★★★½

Unfettered free-jazz sessions are a dime a dozen, but every once in a while, a recording stands out. *Blue Buddha* is one of them. Tenor saxophonist Louie Belogenis, trumpeter Dave Douglas, bassist Bill Laswell and drummer Tyshawn Sorey—a cast assembled by John Zorn—exude a positive energy that is hard to resist.



Belogenis is the driving force. The seven fully improvised pieces are infused with his longtime practice of Buddhism. But make no mistake: The music is far from serene. "Purification" surges to a climax, while "Wrathful Compassion" is ferocious and direct, playing with widespread misconceptions about Buddhist teachings. Belogenis has clearly been influenced by the New Thing, and has worked with at least two of its major figures: drummers Rashied Ali and Sunny Murray. His intense and passionate playing commands attention.

Facing Belogenis, Douglas engages in stimulating call-and-response sequences. His playing provides stark contrast to the saxophonist's howling. Sorey, the youngest in the group, shows all the qualities of a veteran, reaching for the brushes when most drummers would opt for bombast. Finally, Laswell's singular bass sound—alternately spacey and throbbing—produces a contemplative hue that suggests a profound sense of mysticism.

—Alain Drouot

Blue Buddha: Purification; Double Dorje; Renunciation; Truth Of Cessation; Wrathful Compassion; Diamond Vehicle; Lineage. (57:36) Personnel: Louie Belogenis, tenor saxophone; Dave Douglas, trumpet; Bill Laswell, bass; Tyshawn Sorey, drums.

Ordering info: tzadik.com

## Roscoe Mitchell Quartet Celebrating Fred Anderson

Reedist, composer and bandleader Roscoe Mitchell has always trusted in his own vision. He takes the AACM's emphasis on creating new, original music as immutable gospel, and it is a major sign of respect that Mitchell has paid homage to the great Chicago tenor saxophonist Fred Anderson on this bracing new effort.



Recorded live in March 2015 at Constellation, a creative music venue in Chicago, the album finds Mitchell essaying two of Anderson's most indelible themes—"Bernice" and "Ladies In Love"—as well as two original compositions.

<sup>4</sup>Song For Fred Anderson" is more like an epic incantation, with Mitchell delivering ferocious circular breathing on sopranino as the rest of his band—cellist Tomeka Reid, bassist Junius Paul and drummer Vincent Davis, all beneficiaries of Anderson's mentorship—churns out roiling, scalding rhythms. The piece salutes Anderson's quiet intensity with nearly 20 minutes of meticulously focused gravity.

The lyric take on "Bernice" finds Mitchell's terse alto tenderly caressed and cajoled by Reid's thoughtful, fleet counterpoint. "Hey Fred" is another burner, with Mitchell moving to soprano.

The reedist sits out on "The Velvet Lounge," which delivers a moody, sustained string interaction, while the album closer "Cermak Avenue" merges some walking string lines, swinging cymbals and impressively halting sopranino, pushing the ideas of Anderson's jazz forward. *—Peter Margasak* 

Celebrating Fred Anderson: Song For Fred Anderson; Bernice; The Velvet Lounge; Hey Fred; Ladies In Love; Cermak Road. (70:03)

Personnel: Roscoe Mitchell, alto saxophone, soprano saxophone, sopranino saxophone; Tomeka Reid, cello; Junius Paul, bass; Vincent Davis, drums. Ordering info: nessarecords.com



#### Arturo O'Farrill and the Afro Latin Jazz Orchestra *Cuba: The Conversation Continues* MOTÉMA RECORDS 179

#### \*\*\*\*½

A Cuban recording project that began as a showcase for Arturo O'Farrill's Afro Latin Jazz Orchestra and a bevy of Cuban musicians took on a deeper meaning when President Obama announced that the United States would seek to normalize relations with Cuba.

Originally, the album would have been a celebration and revitalization of the seminal meeting between Dizzy Gillespie and Chano Pozo in 1947, a meeting that began a wider acknowledgement of Cuban music.

In fact, O'Farrill's idea behind the two-disc *Cuba: The Conversation Continues* was to strengthen the relationship and bond laid out by Gillespie and Pozo nearly 70 years ago.

Politics aside, *The Conversation Continues* feels like a seminal album. The rich harmonic and compositional ideas emanating from O'Farrill's disciplined but fun ensemble take on greater depth with stylistic and compositional contributions from Cuban artists.

On an album full of rich Afro-Cuban music and exceptional soloists—the orchestra's David DeJesus on soprano saxophone and guest Michael Herrera on alto saxophone play with dizzying frenzy—the unadorned voices of Cuban singers Renee Manning and Cotó carry even more gravity.

On "Vaca Frita," the turntable scratching of guest artist DJ Logic—known for his collaborations with the jazz trio Medeski, Martin and Wood—adds a new tonal color to the dialogue with the big band, showing that O'Farrill and his collaborators continue to expand their horizons.

Five American composers and four Cuban composers contributed tunes to *The Conversation Continues*, including O'Farrill's drummer son, Zack, and Cuban-American percussionist Dafnis Prieto. But all the compositions fit together to form a consistently rich sound.

O'Farrill, a Grammy Award-winning pianist, contributes two tunes, one of which is the sprawling "Afro Latin Jazz Suite," a commission by the Apollo Theater to commemorate the 65th anniversary of "Afro-Cuban Jazz Suite," an influential Latin jazz composition penned by O'Farrill's father, the Cuban-born percussionist Chico O'Farrill.

Where his father used Charlie Parker, the younger O'Farrill uses Bird-devotee Rudresh Mahanthappa. The song, which also features Jim Seeley on trumpet and Roberto Quintero on percussion, is thrilling and evocative, propelled by the alto saxophonist's uninhibited and sometimes frenetic playing.

—Jon Ross

**Cuba:** The Conversation Continues: Disc One: The Triumphant Journey, The Afro Latin Jazz Suite, Movement I: Mother Africa; Movement II: All Of The Americas; Movement III: Adagio; Movement IV: What Now?; Guajira Simple; Alabanza; Blues Guaguancó. (53:05) Disc Two: Vaca Frita; Just One Moment; El Bombón; Second Line Soca (Brudda Singh); There's A Statue Of Jose Marti In Central Park. (38:17)

Personnel: Arturo O'Farrill, piano; Ivan Renta, tenor saxophone, soprano saxophone, clarinet, flute; Peter Brainin, tenor saxophone, flute; David DeJesus, alto saxophone, soprano saxophone, flute; Alejandro Aviles, alto, clarinet, flute; Jason Marshall, baritone saxophone; Seneca Black, Jim Seeley, John Bailey, Jonathan Powell, trumpet; Tokunori Kajiwara, Frank Cohen, Rey David Alejandre, trombone; Rafi Malkiel, tombone, euphonium; Earl McIntyre, bass trombone; Gregg August, bass; Vince Cherico, drums; Tony Rosa, Carlos Maldonado, Adel Gonzalez Gomez, percussion; Jesus Ricardo Anduz, trumpet; Carlos "Hueso" Arci, Maria Gomez Matos, guiro; Alexis Bosch, piano; Bobby Carcasses, vocals; "Cotó" Juan de la Cruz Antomarchi, tres, vocals; DJ Logic, turntables; Antonio Duverger, bongos, marimbula; Michel Herrera, Rudresh Mahanthappa, alto saxophone; Yasek Manzano, Adam O'Farrill, trumpet; Antonio Martinez Campos, bata; Renee Manning, vocals; Zack O'Farrill, drums; Roberto Quintero, maracas; Michelle Rosewoman, piano.

Ordering info: motema.com

### Tigran Hamasyan Luys i Luso

Tigran Hamasyan's ECM debut is an extraordinary exploration of 5th-20th century sacred music from Armenia, his homeland. This personal requiem is a selection of sharakans (liturgical songs), hymns and chants which finds new and dramatic expression through Hamasyan's improvisational imagination and the committed performances of Armenia's leading choir.



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Dan Wilensky Made In Portland POLYGLOT 28744 \*\*\*\*

Throughout his career, saxophonist Dan Wilensky has been a busy studio musician and session player. He has an endless number of credits as a sideman, and since 2010 has recorded four CDs as a leader. Made In Portland draws upon his years of expertise, and features some of Oregon's top local musicians.

One soon appreciates why Polyglot is the name of the label. There is no shortage of variety on this disc. Each of the 14 songs, including seven Wilensky originals and a free improvisation, has its own plot.

"Sweet 16," a funky 16-bar blues, is a joyful opener that includes some wailing guitar from

#### Edmar Castañeda World Ensemble Live At The Jazz Standard ARPA Y VOZ \*\*\*\*

Edmar Castañeda plays the Colombian harp, a folk instrument adapted from the harps brought by the Spanish to South America during their period of conquest. The instrument is about 5 feet tall and lacks the pedal and string count of the classical harp, but in Castañeda's hands, the instrument sings.

Castañeda's technique is astounding, producing the sound of a piano, steel pan, mandolin, electric guitar and even sitar. With a band that includes a number of New York City jazz greats, he blends folkloric music and free-jazz into a dizzving whirlwind of sound.

The album opens with "Cuarto De Colores," which introduces Castañeda's intricate harp work. After a few bars, he generously lays out to let the band introduce themselves. Itai Kriss takes an extended flight on the flute, and Grégoire Maret contributes a sublime harmonica solo. The tune ends with a primal pandero solo by Sregio Krakowski, who produces complex textures out of this simple hand-held Brazilian frame drum. "Double Portion" alternates Brazilian baião rhythms with uncontained free-jazz excursions.

Other highlights include a playful trombone solo from Marshall Gilkes, reggae-like piano effects from Pablo Vergara and a galloping interDan Balmer. Three singers are featured on one song apiece. Anandi Gefroh's "I Wish You Love" and Rebecca Kilgore's "What'll I Do" are straightforward and relaxed. But most memorable is Laura Cunard's "In The Cool Of The Evening." Here, she is joined by eight musicians functioning as an Afro-Cuban jazz band, and the rollicking results are memorable.

"Like Jack" is a medium-tempo swinger that has soulful tenor playing from Wilensky, who at times recalls Stanley Turrentine. "What Is This Thing Called Love?" is taken slower than usual and given Latin rhythms that inspire an excellent solo from trombonist John Moak. "Let's Talk" is a wandering two-minute free conversation between Wilensky, Moak and trumpeter Levis Dragulin, and "My Slice Of Paradise" features strong spots for pianist Dan Gaynor and Wilensky on alto. The New Orleans groove of "Longhair," which features some Rollins-esque tenor from Wilensky, concludes the CD.

Made In Portland is strong a sampling of the prodigious jazz talent to be found in Portland. -Scott Yanow

Made In Portland: Sweet 16; I Wish You Love; Like Jack; What Is This Thing Called Love?; What'll I Do?; Northwest State Of Mind; Ancient Grace; Let's Talk; In The Cool Of The Evening; My Slice Of Paradise: Béla Baby: Laughter In The Rain: Longhair. (53:49) Personnel: Dan Wilensky, tenor saxophone, soprano saxophone (2), alto saxophone (6, 10), flute (2, 4, 5, 9); Dan Balmer, guitar; Dan Gaynor piano; Bill Athens, bass; Michael Raynor, drums; Israel An-noh, percussion (2, 4, 9, 10); Levis Dragulin, trumpet (4, 5, 8, 9, 12); John Moak, trombone (4, 5, 8, 9, 12); Anandi Gefroh (2), Rebecca Kilgore (5), Laura Cunard (9), vocals. Ordering info: danwilensky.com



lude from Castañeda played on the harp's bass strings.

The album's highlight is "Jesús De Nazareth." Castaneda's harp technique here is full of bluesy bent notes, spiraling single-note runs, hammered-on chord clusters and rippling figures that sound like steel pan. The acoustic bass playing behind Castañeda's solo is actually the harpist accompanying himself by plucking the instrument's bass strings. -i. poet

Live At The Jazz Standard: Cuarto De Colores: Entre Cuerdas: Jesús De Nazareth; Double Portion; Carrao Carrao; Zamir Blues. (64.02)

Personnel: Edmar Casteñada, harp; Grégoire Maret, harmonica; Marshall Gilkes, trombone; Itai Kriss, flute; Shlomi Cohen, soprano saxophone; Pablo Vergara: piano; Rodrigo Villalon: drums; David Silliman, percussion; Andrea Tierra, vocals; Tamer Pinarbasi, kanun; Sregio Krakowski, pandero.

Ordering info: edmarcastaneda.com



**Enrico Rava Quartet with Gianluca** Petrella Wild Dance FCM 2456 \*\*\*\*

Trumpeter Enrico Rava, the éminence grise of Italian jazz, has retained his vitality in part by turning to younger musicians to play in his bands. Wild Dance documents the latest of those groups, recorded after the musicians had been touring together for two years. There is some continuity, as bassist Gabriele Evangelista worked with the trumpeter on earlier recordings, and trombonist Gianluca Petrella, who joins the front line on most tracks, is one of Rava's most celebrated disciples (prominent players Stefano Bollani and Giovanni Guidi are other recent vets of his groups).

But this effort marks the trumpeter's first recording with guitarist Francesco Diodati and drummer Enrico Morello, and they've developed a strong rapport together, marking Wild Dance an exciting salvo in the latest chapter of Rava's career.

The album covers a broad range, opening with the meditative, ethereal drift of "Diva" (an older tune by the trumpeter), where the leader crafts sensual, smoky lines over restrained rhythm-section patter and billowy chords and arpeggios from Diodati. The ballad "Don't" is one of the tracks with Petrella, who brings some nice friction to the graceful swinger with a gorgeously pensive melody; his fleet unison lines with Rava on high-velocity bebop tracks like "Infant" and "Cornette" are exhilarating.

Rava has employed a string of great pianists, but Diodati acquits himself nicely with his chordal presence on guitar-comping, filling out space with dusky arpeggios and noisy washes. The young rhythm section drives the music with impressive restraint, and the fluidity at play on "Improvisation" shows how strong the group's bond has become. But the album's highlights belong to the horns, whether it's Rava tangling with Petrella on the stunning "Not Funny" or unfurling lines of pure light on "Overboard." -Peter Margasak

Ordering info: ecmrecords.com

Wild Dance: Diva: Space Girl: Don't: Infant: Sola: Not Funny: Wild Dance; F. Express; Cornette; Overboard; Happy Shades; Monkitos; Improvisation; Frogs. (66:48)

Personnel: Enrico Rava, trumpet; Francesco Diodati, guitar; Gabriele Evangelista, bass; Enrico Morello, drums; Gianluca Petrella, trombone

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### Jazz / BY JOHN EPHLAND

# **Clean Feed's Diverse Roster**

Dre Hocevar Trio's Coding Of Evidentiality (Clean Feed 325; 52:25 \*\*\*\*) plays like one piece of music, with varying moods. The unity of this quartet can be mesmerizing, the players moving in and out as one. The sound of the instruments keeps you close to the action, with a dynamic range that compels in subtle ways. Bram De Looze's piano evokes Circle-era Chick Corea, but with a more nuanced, less syncopated touch. Lester St.louis' cello playing is transparent, whether plucking or bowing even as he seems to take over, as he does with "Cello Interlude No. 1" leading into an eventually rambunctious "Second Portrait Of The Exemplary ...... " The Slovenian Hocevar's drumming is tasteful (he was a student of Michael Carvin), and sound artist Sam Pluta's electronics are equally astute.

#### Ordering info: cleanfeed-records.com

OZO's A Kind Of Zo (Shhpuma 017; 64:52  $\star \star \star \star$ ) pairs the classical Paulo Mesquita (think Samuel Barber) and indie-popish Pedro Oliveira (Peixe.Aviao, Old Jerusalem) on prepared piano and prepared drums, respectively. They string eight originals across a minimalist, impressionistic soundscape that's murky, ethereal and probing. On "String Strip," Mesquita's alternating heavy chords and light sequences are a beautiful mesh, instilling an innocence and charm that keeps company with the dark clouds. The patterns can suggest a pulse with hypnotic repetitions, angelic pianisms and dreamy chords. Oliveira mixes lots of pedal work with echo-y clanks and pitter-patters on the haunting "Parallel," while "Lens Flare" offers a heavy backbeat and Jerry Lee Lewis-style chord-hammering. The insistent title track is piano overload. Watch for a mysterious, unlisted track 9 on this disc from Clean Feed sublabel Shhpuma. Ordering info: shhpuma.com

Chicago bassist Jason Roebke's Every Sunday (Clean Feed 339; 58:34 **\*\*\***) is a quiet affair. Consisting of three improvised compositions recorded live at Chicago's Hungry Brain last December, the album opens with Roebke's measured, conversational playing. He's joined by the exploratory, single-line guru Matthew Schneider on guitar and the equally sympathetic Marcus Evans on drums. The 23-minute "Every Sunday" rolls out as a rumbling, rambling medium-tempo number. Evans' selective snare attacks and bass drum bombs couple nicely with Schneider's Jim Hall-like rhapsodies. Throughout, Roebke's unobtrusive bass is the dancing cement, guiding the listener seamlessly from track to track. The 20-minute quietude of "So Big" sneaks up on you like a cat looking for a leg to rub, while "For Jimmy Woode" points to both tradition and more subdued, intuitive aroup cohesion not to mention swing

#### Ordering info: cleanfeed-records.com

LAMA + Joachim Badenhorst's *The Elephant's Journey* (Clean Feed 331; 45:07 ★★★½) is a "reading" of a novel by Portuguese Nobel Prize winner José Saramago. Eight tunes—seven from Portuguese bassist/leader Gonçalo Almeida, one by drummer Greg Smith—maintain



a recognizable structure with some tight arrangements, however oblique or "outside." Susana Santos Silva's bright, sensitive trumpet and flugelhorn are defining sounds here, complemented by guest Badenhorst's alternately brooding and chortling clarinet and bass clarinet. The two lock horns on the fiery, propulsive "The Gorky's Spy." "Don Quixote" reflects the quartet's dreamier side, and features Silva's measured lines, Almeida's thematic plucks, Badenhorst's plaintive horn and Smith's ethereal electronics.

Ordering info: cleanfeed-records.com

Portuguese bassist Hugo Carvalhais' Grand Valis (Clean Feed 330; 44:44 ★★★★½) combines the spirit of an avant-garde church service with the feel of improvised jazz. Organist/ keyboardist Gabriel Pinto's sound permeates 10 compositions (nine from Carvalhais, and a shared credit with Pinto on the prickly "Digitalis") with a leavening, otherworldly sound. The other highlight, apart from some tasteful, well-placed violin from Dominique Pifarély, is Jeremiah Cymerman's electronic manipulations, with the leader adding his own electronics to the gravity-defying techno of "Amigdala Waves" and the minimalist mystery of "Zebra." Veering from puckish jazz counterpoint (the lively "Decoding Maya") to classical arias ("Holographic Maya"), Grand Valis defies all categories. Ordering info: cleanfeed-records.com

Piano is everything on Eve Risser's Des Pas Sur La Neige (Clean Feed 323; 64:55 \*\*\*\*). Minimalist to an eloquent extreme, Risser's three pieces tap the imagination of the listener ready for new ways to hear an old instrument. The gentle plodding of the title track-right and left hands independently serving each other-features probing bass notes dancing with searching upper-register jabs and taps. The chordless forward motion of this piece creates an uncertain, mysterious sense of urgency, with the piano suddenly becoming a mesmerizing Gamelan-like percussion instrument as we enter "Des Pas Sur La Ville." Serenity returns with the angelic "La Neige Sur La Ville," a 36-minute opus. A delicate, sustained left hand mingles with surprising, alternately relaxed and dancing right-hand sheens, pops and scrapes. Time suspended, Risser's patient esthetic is preeminent.

DB

Ordering info: cleanfeed-records.com



#### Donald Vega With Respect To Monty RESONANCE 1023

The essence of pianist Monty Alexander is his *feel*. Strong chops and eminently playable songs are part of the picture, too, but there's something harder to define that makes him so distinctive and enjoyable: It's his optimism, if that's not too enigmatic. Hearing Alexander, you walk away feeling more upbeat than you did before.

Fellow pianist Donald Vega gets that. In the liner notes to *With Respect To Monty*, Vega admits that Oscar Peterson is his "main man." But Vega channels Alexander's buoyancy on these tracks, all of them written by or associated with Alexander, skimming along with the groove rather than dig-

#### Don Braden Luminosity CREATIVE PERSPECTIVE 3003

On his latest disc, Don Braden gets personal. *Luminosity* is a wonderful 10-track program featuring songs inspired by memorable moments in the saxophonist's life. The resulting album is like a musical scrapbook. As Braden turns the pages, he makes good memories sound great.

In the liner notes, Braden makes clear that he is thankful for the music in his life. The saxophonist decided to pursue a full-time career in jazz while he was an engineering student at Harvard, and that sense of appreciation is palpable on this disc. Here, he appears with longtime collaborators the Organix Quartet (Dave Stryker on guitar, Kyle Koehler on organ and Cecil Brooks III on drums), as well as two guest artists—the silk-toned trumpeter Claudio Roditi and the vivacious alto saxophonist Sherman Irby.

The group coalesces nicely to bring Braden's remembrances to life. On "The Time We Shared," a swaggering soul tune, Stryker crafts terse, heart-stirring phrases that frame the poetry of Braden's emotive sax solo—fitting, as the song was inspired by a poem written by one of Braden's students. On "Jive Turkey," which was written for a student band Braden worked with New Jersey, Brooks' athletic groove captures the song's sense of fun and exploration.

Listeners might be surprised to hear "A Whole New World," from Disney's animated film *Aladdin*, on this disc, but it, too, has a personal ging deep into it à la Peterson.

Vega also pays attention to details in his arrangements. When guitarist Anthony Wilson kicks off the swaggering solo section on "Renewal," stating the theme in octaves, Vega and bassist Hassan Shakur join on a rhythm lick in the background. After that, Shakur plays a perfectly timed solo fill. It's all done without flash or fanfare, but the thought they put into planning this part creates an agreeable impression.

Similar details add luster on ballads. Quarternote accents delineate the bridge on the bluesy "3000 Miles Ago," while also serving as pickup notes into the tune "Compassion." But more impressive is "The Gathering," with its clustered triplet passage during the bridge.

But pull back from this close perspective and the album loses its impact. Fresh ideas pop up now and then—the second-line strut at the end of "You Can See," the Satie reverie that begins "Sweet Lady"—but even here, while the playing is tight, it never ignites. Vega's bluesy crunched thirds, crisp lines and occasional two-handed tremolos all seem appropriate. But an occasional surprise in the second half of the solo could have raised the temperature. Smooth works best with a little bit of sizzle. —Bob Doerschuk

With Respect To Monty: Eleuthera; 300 Miles Ago; Compassion; Slippery; Consider; Mango Rengue; Renewal; You Can See; Sweet Lady; The Gathering. (62:41)

**Personnel:** Donald Vega, piano; Anthony Wilson, guitar; Hassan Shakur, bass; Lewis Nash, drums.

Ordering info: resonancerecords.org



connection for Braden. "When my daughter was little, I watched [the film] many times with her and was consistently moved by the beauty and optimistic tone of this song," he says in the liner notes. Here, he plays the tune on flute. It's a breezy, uptempo waltz that retains all the awe and wonder of the original, while adding a refreshing dose of swing. The album closes with Herbie Hancock's "Driftin," a tune that Braden says "makes me smile every time I hear it." *Luminosity* will have the same effect on you.

-Brian Zimmerman

Luminosity: Luminosity (First Steps); Jive Turkey (West Side); Bud Powell; Do Love Me Do; The Time We Shared; I Could Write A Book; Chelsea Bridge; Walkin' The Walk; A Whole New World; Driftin'. (60:31)

**Personnel:** Don Braden, tenor saxophone, flute (9), alto flute (4); Kyle Koehler, Hammond B-3 organ; Dave Stryker, guitar; Cecil Brooks III, drums; Claudio Roditi, trumpet (7); Sherman Irby, alto saxophone (10).

Ordering info: donbraden.com

MIHO HAZAMA TIME RIVER

Time River continues Hazama's work with her distinctive 13 piece band m\_unit, a hybrid of jazz big band and classical chamber ensemble, allowing the composer to draw upon the entire breadth of her influences. In addition, the band is joined by accordionist Gil Goldstein and saxophonist Joshua Redman for memorable guest appearances. The album features eight striking. Hazama originals along with an unexpected arrangement of Magdalena, a song by the prog rock band A Perfect Circle.



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### Blues / BY FRANK-JOHN HADLEY

# **Play 'Em Where They Lay**

Joe Louis Walker, Live In Istanbul (MVD Visual DVD 75050; 85:00 ★★★<sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub>) In 1995, Joe Louis Walker was the most exciting blues performer on the international circuit. On this DVD, he's taking on Turkey, where his Boss Talkers (sonic adventurer Tony Saunders plays electric bass) work the kinks out on opener "Can't Get You Out Of My Mind," then transform the concert hall into a hot-aired Turkish bath occupied by a young



audience that looks startled by the music's intensity. The sheer power of Walker's vocals and guitar work magnifies his confidence as he sweats his way through top-grade songs of hard experience like lke Turner's "You Got To Lose" and his own "Lost Heart." Penalized a half-star because of imperfect film production.

#### Ordering info: mvdvisual.com

Barrence Whitfield & The Savages, Under The Savage Sky (Bloodshot 230; 35:47 ★★★<sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub>) Boston transplant Barrence Whitfield's unwavering commitment to raw, pulverizing r&b reaches fabulously hysterical levels. His maniacal raving—indebted to Little Richard and Screamin' Jay Hawkins—has its match in original Savages guitarist Peter Greenberg's icepick-through-the cranium riffing. A dozen wild tracks—a grab bag of Greenberg-scribed peculiarities and new demolitions of obscure old material from the likes of Timmy Willis and Kid Thomas—suit an outrageous dance party that would have the Bride of Frankenstein and her date Jerry Lee Lewis gyrating to "The Claw" to the point of collapse.

#### Ordering info: bloodshotrecords.com

Nicole Willis & The Soul Investigators, Happiness In Every Style (Timmion 12001; **49:10** ★★★½) On her third album in a 1960s soul-blues-r&b groove, this Brooklyn native now living in Helsinki sings original tales of romantic security, hope and ruin like she meant every word. No matter that her strength of personality is slight compared to '60s royalty Aretha Franklin, Gladys Knight and Candi Staton, even second-level singers Mable John and Lorraine Ellison. Willis' composure is perfect for "Paint Me In A Corner," a minor triumph improved by a sparkling vibraphone and funk guitar; several more originals are nearly as enjoyable. Making a good impression, the Soul Investigators (five-piece rhythm section, five horns) no longer confine their lively yet muted retro sound to the Petri dish.

#### Ordering info: timmion.com

Andra Faye & Scott Ballantine, *Coulda Woulda Shoulda* (VizzTone AFSB 01; 46:34 ★★½) An easy chemistry of folk, blues and country exists between acoustic guitarist Scott Ballantine and ex-Saffire fiddler-mandolinist-bassist Andra Faye on their first collaboration. Unfortunately, the duo's consistently fine instrumental craft tends to be eclipsed by Faye's vocals, which show little instinctive kinship with the blues, and often come off as sultry and attitudinizing. Ballantine's lead vocal on a reordering of the old spiritual "Standing In The Need Of Prayer" has a more personal than postured point of view. They have good fun treating the catchy ditty "Blues For A Crappy Day." **Ordering info: vizztone.com** 

David Michael Miller, Same Soil (Food For The Soul 54:57 ★★★½) In western New York state, singer-guitarist-bandleader David Michael Miller recognizes Southern blues, soul and r&b just as assuredly as he puts his own spin on the genres to present a modern roots-music vision. "Doing Me In, Doing Me Wrong" belongs to Muddy Waters' Chicago, yet carries a surprisingly fresh spirit. "Go Them Blues" projects an aisle-dancing church rapture with pastor Miller packing a heaven-bound slide guitar that quotes an angelic Jimi Hendrix. These and nine more blues or mixed-genre songs are well-crafted and full of empathy.

Ordering info: davemillermusic.com

The Nightowls, Fame Sessions (Super Sonic Sounds 001; 31:37 ★★) Austin's little big band proves that recording on special American music turf, Muscle Shoal's FAME studios, is no guarantee of a good album. Despite walk-ons by legends Spooner Oldham and David Hood, this album sounds as if it could have been made anywhere. The central figure is Ryan Harkrider, whose vocals don't begin to encompass superior soul or soul-blues singing, lacking both churchy uplift and earthy sensuality. The band sticks with fair-to-middling in-house material.

#### Ordering info: wearethenightowls.com

Christian Collin, Spirit Of The Blues (C-Train; 52:35 ★★★½) Based in Chicago but not a Chicago bluesman per se, singer and guitarist Christian Collin pledges his craft to musical diversity on his second album. The results are convincing. Guitar-friendly shuffles, slow blues and other song types carry the auras of Johnny Winter, Chuck Berry, Muddy Waters, Memphis soul and southern rock. Everything coexists without blanketing the bandleader's agreeable personality. Jen Williams' supporting vocals are a nice touch. DB Ordering info: christiancollin.com



Jazz at Lincoln Center Orchestra Live In Cuba BLUE ENGINE 1 \*\*\*\*

Around the time that the U.S. State Department launched its jazz diplomacy program in 1955, the flow of influence between America and Cuba was at its peak. American fun-seekers threw their money around Havana and the country's beach resorts, and Cubans moved easily to Miami and New York, seeking employment, both on and off the bandstand.

Sixty years later, the U.S. and Cuba are still taking baby steps toward reconciliation, so in 2010, when Wynton Marsalis took the Jazz at Lincoln Center Orchestra to Havana for a multiday residency, it was big news indeed.

#### John Fedchock New York Big Band Like It Is MAMA 1048 \*\*\*\*

Few composers on the New York scene can make a big band swing like trombonist John Fedchock. His latest disc, *Like It Is*, sizzles from opening track to closing note, and even the ballads chug forward with a slow-burning momentum. Fortunately, nothing's too hot to handle for this 16-piece ensemble.

Thematically, this album is all about finding the common groove between past and present, with Fedchock's arrangements serving as a bridge between the "like it was" and the "like it is." His version of "You And The Night And The Music" features dense harmonies and aggressive brass refrains, filtering the standard through a modern prism.

Fedchock's compositions also play with the divide between past and present. The melody of "Havana," a breezy bolero, sounds as if it could have been written in 19th-century Cuba, but the solos are cutting-edge. The woozy blues of "Hair Of The Dog," however, is timeless.

Occasionally, Fedchock's accomplices will show off their individual dexterity. Barry Ries' trumpet flight on the title track burbles like a hot spring, and Gary Smulyan lays down a beast of a bari sax solo on Cedar Walton's "Ojos De Rojo."

The album closes with a touching homage to Clifford Brown called "Ten Thirty 30" (the title The two-disc recording of the orchestra's performance in Havana's Teatro Mella has a nostalgic aura—both in terms of the bulk of the music played and the enthusiasm displayed by the musicians and the audience. There is a slightly superfluous feel to the orchestra's performance of the Beny Moré bolero "Como Fue"—featuring hometown Havana hero Bobby Carcassés—but any semblance of paternalism is overshadowed by the joyous approach to the music.

The band also teaches subtle lessons about jazz history. The prime example is Vincent Gardner's arrangement of Thelonious Monk's "Light Blue," which emphasizes the advanced chord placement and uses high-pitched reeds to accentuate Monk's unique sense of whimsy.

Elsewhere, the program ranges from the playful (animal imitations on "Baa Baa Black Sheep") to the majestic (the closing "The Sanctified Blues"), with an overall spirit of celebration. Marsalis is always at his best when he is spreading the gospel of swing, and he certainly sounds like he is playing to the converted in Havana.

—James Hale

Live In Cuba: Disc One: 2/3's Adventure; Baa Baa Black Sheep; Inaki's Decision; Sunset And The Mockingbird; Como Fue; Dali, Light Bue; Braggin In Brass, (69:31). Disc Two: Limbo Jazz; Doin' Y(Our) Thing; Lleft My Baby; Bearden (The Block); Symphony In Riffs; Spring Yaoundé; Things To Come: The Sanctified Blues. (68:06) **Personnel**: Ryan Kisor; Wynton Marsalis, Marcus Printup, Kenny Rampton, trumpets; Chris Crenshaw, Vincent Gardner, Elliot Mason, trombones; Walter Blanding, darinet, soprano saxophone, theor saxophone; Victor Goines, clarinet, tenor saxophone, Sherman Irby, piccolo, flute, clarinet, alto saxophone; Ted Nash, piccolo, flute, clarinet, alto saxophone; De Temperley, bass clarinet, baritone saxophone; Da Timmer, piano; Carlos Henriquez, bass; Ali Jackson, drums. **Ordering Info: jazz.org/blueengine** 



comes from the trumpeter's Oct. 30, 1930, birthday). Fusing snippets of Brownie's compositions into a stunning whole, the tune is a prime example of Fedchock's finely calibrated writing style.

Bands sound better when they're playing Fedchock's music. Let's hope he makes more of it. —Brian Zimmerman

Like It Is: You And The Night And The Music; Like It Is; Never Let Me Go, Just Sayin'; Ojos De Rojo; Hair Of The Dog; Havana; Just Squeeze Me; For Heaven's Sake; Ten Thirty 30. (69:54) **Personnel:** John Fedchock, arranger, trombone; Mark Vinci, Charles Pillow, alto saxophone; Gary Smulyan, (1, 3, 4, 5, 6, 9), Scott Robinson (2, 7, 8, 10), baritone saxophone; Tony Kadleck, Craig Johnson, Scott Wendholt, John Bailey, Barry Ries, trumpet; Keith O'Quinn, Clark Gayton, trombone; George Flynn, bass trombone; Allen Farnham, piano; Dick Sarpola, bass; Dave Ratajczak, drum; Bobby Sanabria, percussion (2, 5, 7). Ordering Info: Johnfed.chock.com



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Composer and mandolin player Joseph Brent knows how to reinvest emotion harvested from heartbreak. The exquisite music that he composed for the ensemble 9 Horses's new release **Perfectest Herald** provides an aural storyboard of sorrow and renewal, making his own words ring true.

As stories are best recalled by their writers, Brent is also a member of the 9 Horses ensemble, whose name comes from a Billy Collins poem that uses the metaphor of a simple gift as a key to a deep emotional bond. Naturally, ensembles are built through relationships.









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#### Laszlo Gardony Life In Real Time SUNNYSIDE 4019 \*\*\*\*

Nearly 40 years ago, the Spotlite label put out three albums titled *Al Haig Meets The Master Saxes* that teamed the bop pianist with a variety of jazz's top saxophonists. *Life In Real Time* could have accurately been named *Laszlo Gardony Meets The Tenor Giants*. While all of the songs other than "Lullaby Of Birdland" are Gardony originals, the music has the feel of a lively jam session with a cadre of sax stalwarts.

While they may not top the jazz polls, reedmen Don Braden, Bill Pierce and Stan Strickland are among the top saxophonists of the past decades. Each has uplifted scores of CDs, including this one. Gardony, who clearly enjoys accompanying and inspiring the horns, mixes and matches the tenors throughout this spirited set, which was recorded live at Berklee College of Music.

"Bourbon Street Boogie" opens the program with a medium-tempo bluesy piece that is as danceable and catchy as one would expect from its name. Pierce plays a modern and explorative solo, while Braden's soulful wailing has hints of Stanley Turrentine. Gardony riffs à la Horace Silver before taking a rhythmic solo of his own.

"Breakout" begins with a three-minute improvisation from drummer Yoron Israel before it becomes an uptempo hard-bop tune that is a second cousin of "Impressions." It climaxes with free blasting by Braden and Pierce. "Gemstones," which features Pierce, has a modal groove worthy



of McCoy Tyner.

One of the highlights of the CD is a re-harmonized version of "Lullaby Of Birdland" that is both dissonant and witty. Braden's inventive solo will make some smile. Strickland's bass clarinet is well utilized on the melodic "Motherless Child" and the atmospheric "New Song." "The Other One" has some fresh chord changes for all three tenors to solo over, while "Out On Top" ends the CD as it started with an infectious New Orleans groove.

There is no lack of fireworks on *Life In Real Time*.

-Scott Yanow

Life In Real Time: Bourbon Street Boogie; Breakout; Gemstones; Lullaby Of Birdland; Motherless Child; New Song; The Other One; Out On Top. (76:59)

Personnel: Laszlo Gardony, piano; Bill Pierce, tenor saxophone; Don Braden, tenor saxophone; Stan Strickland, tenor saxophone, bass clarinet; John Lockwood, bass; Yoron Israel, drums; Ordering Info: <u>sunnysiderecords.com</u>

#### Mark Winkler Jazz And Other Four Letter Words CAFÉ PACIFIC 45125

\*\*\*\*

Whatever happened to West Coast cool? It's alive and well, judging by the recent output of singer, lyricist and all-around hepcat Mark Winkler. He's a laid-back song stylist whose swinging approach would not be out of place in the ring-a-ding-ding 1960s, and his latest album, *Jazz And Other Four Letter Words*, is a gas.

In the tradition of Dave Frishberg and Mose Allison, Winkler is a hip, crafty lyricist with a flexible baritone and dry-martini delivery. His songs have been recorded by artists like Dianne Reeves, Dee Dee Bridgewater and Jane Monheit (he recently wrote lyrics to four songs for her recent duo project with pianist David Benoit). One of the highlights in this well-chosen set is "Your Cat Plays Piano," which showcases his off-kilter sense of humor: "The thing I like the most/ Is when your cat plays piano/ Mostly on the black keys/ And I could swear he's a jazzer/ 'Cause he will not play the melody ...."

The title tune is a tongue-in-cheek defense of jazz from its critics, in which he recites the many "four-letter words" associated with it, including "Bird, Monk, Chet, Prez, Ella, Pops, Duke and Getz."

Winkler's passion for life, love and jazz emerges with some regularity from behind the easygoing hipster pose, including "I Chose The



Moon," a moving tribute to his life partner, and the closer, "Stay Hip," in which he offers the following sage advice to jazz fans: "Don't forget the ones who came before/ And the ones before that/ But keep your ears open to the latest hap'nin' cat." —Allen Morrison

Jazz And Other Four Letter Words: My Idea Of A Good Time; I'm Hip; Nice Work If You Can Get It; Your Cat Plays Piano; I Chose The Moon; Have A Good Time; I Wish I Were In Love Again; Jazz And Other Four Letter Words; I Never Went Away; In A New York Minute/The Great City/Autumn In New York; Stay Hip. (46:37) **Personnet**: Mark Winkler, Cheryl Bentyne (2, 7), vocals; Jamieson Trotter (1–8, 10), Rich Eames (9, 11), piano; John Clayton (2, 4, 7, 10, 11), Dan Lutz (1, 5, 6, 8, 9), bass; Jeff Hamilton (2, 4, 7, 10, 11), Mike Shapiro (1, 5, 6, 8, 9), bass; Jeff Hamilton (2, 4, 7, 10, 11), Mike Shapiro (1, 5, 6, 8, 9), bass; Jeff Hamilton (2, 4, 7, 10, 11), Mike Shapiro (1, 5, 6, 8), Walter Fowler, trumpet (6, 8); Bob McChesney: trombone (6).

Ordering info: markwinklermusic.com



John Wojciechowski Focus oRIGIN 82699 ★★★½

This date by saxophonist John Wojciechowski hangs in a tight classic '60s quartet formation, brimming with full-bodied horn work and assertive percussion. The leader penned seven of the 10 tunes and brought along three different horns to blow his way through them.

The album highlight is "Summon The Elders," an explosive statement full of dramatic entrances and freight-train drums honoring the muscle of trailblazers like John Coltrane and McCoy Tyner. Ushered in by an ominous two-minute drum solo, the band shows off their confident command.

Mike LeDonne AwwlRight! SAVANT 422148 \*\*\*

On AwwlRight!, Mike LeDonne demonstrates his deep knowledge of, love for and comfort with the organ idiom as practiced by exemplars from Jimmy Smith to Charles Earland. Working with the regular members of the Groover Quartet—the working ensemble he performs with at Smoke in New York City—and a pair of respected guests, LeDonne revels in crisp, bluesy, swinging music. The genre retains its fundamental charms, and the players engage in a spirit of playfulness, thus enlivening a program that offers satisfactions though no surprises.

The repertoire here depends on breezy, sociable melodies, taken mostly at a finger-snapping pace ("Mary Lou's Blues" is the one slow tune). LeDonne uses his instrument's reedy voicings for long-wending phrases and springy, juicy chords; guitarist Peter Bernstein's tonal clarity contrasts well with the organ's more complex timbres. Tenor saxophonist Eric Alexander wields his ax with forthright swagger, and drummer Joe Farnsworth keeps the tempo energized without any grandstanding. The benefits of working together regularly are evident as the Groovers attack "Never Can Say Goodbye" with considerable speed: It never flies apart.

Special guests Jeremy Pelt on trumpet and Bob Cranshaw on bass don't stand out. In the

Pianist Ryan Cohan straddles sparkles and explosions, piercing the upper range of the keyboard and rolling his octaves with frenetic abandon. Wojciechowski makes a grand entrance, aggressively fluttering his way into the spotlight at top speed. As drummer Dana Hall crashes relentlessly behind him, the saxophonist is raw and full of irrepressible confidence, stretching out on the lengthy performance.

The soprano saxophone gets to shine on the track immediately following but strays away from the Coltrane sound and into a reedier, more contemporary territory favored by soprano wizard Branford Marsalis.

The rhythm section retains their propulsion and Wojciechowski has no shortage of ideas, building an intricate formation over the swirling tune. The alto saxophone finally comes out for Thelonious Monk's "Evidence."

Hall and Wojciechowski trade punches early in this fast-paced rendition, with Hall displaying a four-limbed dexterity and the saxophonist weaving a punctual message. Regardless of register, Wojciechowski is brawny and unafraid to dig in, and his rhythm section is happy to knock down any obstacles that stand in his way.

-Sean J. O'Connell

Focus: Focus; Call Of The Kingdom; Summon The Elders; Ternary; Elegy; Twirl; Evidence; Divided Man; The Listener; In Your Own Sweet Way. (73:18).

**Personnel:** John Wojciechowski, soprano saxophone, alto saxophone, tenor saxophone; Ryan Cohan, piano, Rhodes; Dennis Carroll, bass; Dana Hall, drums.

Ordering info: originarts.com



bassist's case, that's natural: Cranshaw has always been a subtle, self-effacing player, and LeDonne is adept at walking his bass lines on the pedals. On trumpet, Pelt has a bright, clean approach that perfectly matches the Groovers. Virtuosity that's made to sound easy, ideas that refresh even as they cohere to convention, the conviction that jazz as it's long been is worth hearing—it's is even better than all right. —Howard Mandel

AwwIRight: AwwIRight: Love Don't Love Nobody; Never Can Say Goodbye; The Boss; Let It Go; Mary Lou's Blues; You Are So Beautiful; Hadley Joe. (55:48) **Personnel:** Mike LeDonne, Hammond B-3 organ; Eric Alexander, tenor saxophone; Peter Bernstein, guitar, Joe Farnsworth, drums; Bob Cranshaw, bass (1, 5); Jeremy Pett, trumpet (1, 5, 8).

Ordering info: jazzdepot.com



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### Beyond / BY JOHN EPHLAND

# Ladies' Night

NERVO's Collateral (Ultra 93176: 54:00 \*\*1/2) represents the epitome of EDM in this all-women's column. (EDM stands for Electronic Dance Music, which could also include triphop, electronica. house music and ambient sound.) Every song on this CD is danceable, and the material is well produced. The reigning vibe here is no doubt an athletic one. That said. Australian DJ twins



Miriam and Olivia Nervo's 15-track album tends to be generic and repetitive-even derivative. The opener "Bulletproof," with guest artist Harrison Miya, suggests Phil Collins before the mesmerizing disco beat begins. A standout is the swinging yet subtle "Oh Diana." Best heard with headphones with or without a dance floor.

#### Ordering info: nervomusic.com

Similarly, Little Boots' Working Girl (Dim Mak 90219; 49:30 \*\*\*) is also true to the EDM style. The 14-track album distinguishes itself with creative touches, melodic invention and catchy choruses. The Debbie Harry voicings in "Help Too" recall '80s synthetic rock with more programmable, slightly more innovative beats and tempos. Little Boots (English DJ Victoria Christina Hesketh) has clearly spent time developing this music, as demonstrated by the romantic quality of her songs. "Desire" is sing-songy and fun, while "No Pressure" is slightly mysterious. Robust energy powers the driving "Get Things Done," and Little Boots' slight voice manages to balance the music's heavier, more chromatic forward pressure. Heard with headphones, delicate percussive and keyboard touches to tunes like "Taste It" and "Heroine" remind us that with a little studio magic. simplicity can be not only creative but transportive and seductive.

#### Ordering info: littlebootsmusic.co.uk

RighteousGIRLS is the real qualifier here, straddling the pop/indie divide. The duo claims that its sound is "rooted in classical idioms" yet "draws from other genres," and one of those genres is certainly pop. Their Gathering Blue (Panoramic/New Focus 03; 55:39 \*\*\*\*<sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub>) is revelatory. Flutist Gina Izzo and pianist Erika Dohi excel as instrumentalists, and the 13 originals on their latest album are a study in contrast. On the surface, they don't seem danceable, at least not in the typical sense. But from the dark notes and elliptical, frantic counterpoint of "GIRLS" to the elegiac, gravity-defying "Non-Poem I," the artistry is at times stunning. A number of guest spots

enliven the mood. On "Anzu," trumpeter Ambrose Akinmusire brings a kind of stillness to this expressive chamber-like piece. The three instruments exchange ideas in a captivating musical give-andtake, like dancing of a different sort.

Ordering info: newfocusrecordings.com

Irish singer/songwriter Róisín Murphy's Hairless Toys (Play It Again Sam 152; 50:00  $\star \star \star \star \star$  takes the EDM genre and makes hav with eight originals, the danceable and the tuneful songs like putty in her musical hands. Her subtle pop sheen is alluring, an invitation to the dance by way of the back door. On the peppy "Gone Fishing," the playful beat is sassy and dreamlike, with a bouncy rhythm that complements the melody instead of competing with it. Quietly compelling, Murphy's voice at times evokes a soft-spoken Dusty Springfield, even Aretha Franklin from a late-night-dance-party perspective. Murphy's pop moments are many, such as the fetching keyboard touches and lively attitude on the downright infectious "Evil Eyes." But rhythmically, the currents can get rough, as with the hearty, thrusting "Exploitation." Murphy's quiet voice works well in numerous settings, getting funky with "Uninvited Guest" and even displaying a country air with the languorous, sexv "Exile."

#### Ordering info: roisinmurphyofficial.com

Los Angeles singer/songwriter Shana Halligan delivers yet another variation of creative EDM with the restrained, slow funk of Back To Me (Plug Research; 56:30 \* \* \* \*). Fifteen cuts in all, the tantalizing "Something Real" combines a pop luster and a seductive plastic nature with pure, primal emotion. Halligan's singing holds in reserve but connects to some deep feeling. "Been Waiting" suggests real pain; its melodic invention and propulsive beat grab you by the ear, while "Take You Home," with its slow funk and sultry honesty, almost make you think this is a blues album in disguise. The slow-dance EDM crowd will love it DB

Ordering info: shanahalligan.com

#### Stephen Haynes Pomegranate NEW ATLANTIS 015 \*\*\*\*

It's tempting to describe trumpeter Stephen Haynes' music in terms of his long-term relationship with multi-instrumentalist Bill Dixon. It is true that Haynes' penchant for long tones and vigorous smears strongly resembles Dixon's brass voice, and that Haynes has a simibar capacity to suggest onespaces in the spe



lar capacity to suggest openness in the space between notes.

But *Pomegranate*'s success derives influence from more widely known bandleaders: Miles Davis and Duke Ellington. Each of the album's six pieces grows from bare scraps into deeply involved exchanges, much as Davis' music often did from his soundtrack for *Ascenseur Pour L'Échafaud* onward. And Ellington made hay by creating situations that elicited his musicians' individual strengths, just as Haynes does here.

This music reveals and capitalizes upon relationships, and some of its most exciting moments come from the sideways whirlpools induced by Joe Morris and William Parker's semi-private conversations. The album is also enriched by virtuosic idiosyncrasies, such as the West African sonorities that Morris gets by bowing his strings with a pick, the lung-busting tectonic rumbles of Ben Stapp's tuba or Hayne's own vocalized lines.

But no matter how unusual or intricate the playing, the compositions never feel like they're meant to put those qualities on display. Rather, they contribute to the totality of the album, which feels like a world unto itself, mysterious and complete. —Bill Meyer

**Pomegranate:** Sillage; Mangui Fii Reek (I Am Still Here); Pomegranate; Becoming; Crepuscular; Odysseus. (49:54)

Personnel: Stephen Haynes, cornets; Joe Morris, guitar, Ben Stapp, tuba; William Parker, bass, sintir, bass shakuhachi; Warren Smith, drums, percussion, marimba. Ordering info: newatlantisrecords.bandcamp.com

#### Will Herrington Solace SELF RELEASE ★★★½

Pianist Will Herrrington grew up in New Orleans, and he aspires to the great piano professors from the Crescent City. His latest record, *Solace*, is a collection of tunes in a mostly trio format with the piano front and center. His songs demonstrate a great range of vintage and modern touches,



willherrington

as well as plenty of New Orleans riffs to go around.

Most of the material here has a familiar, down-home sound, whether it's the gospel feel in "Waiting For A Train" or the rainy-day melancholy in "Bywater." Part of the appeal of Herrington's music is the density of his piano playing, which is thick with chords and melodic motifs. Much like the great New Orleans pianists James Booker and Henry Butler, his solos run up and down the keyboard in surprising, novel ways. Just when you think he's about to finish a phrase, he adds another idea or two.

Herrington clearly has the bluesy piano feel down pat, and the songs here are pretty and soulful, but the album could have benefited from some more variety. Special guest Ambrose Akinmusire adds some excitement, playing stirring, powerful trumpet on both "Elegy" and "Ballad Of Marie Laveau." For fans of New Orleans piano, this will be a welcome addition. Herrington can play, and he has Jon Cleary, Dr. John and Davell Crawford to thank for that. However, based on this record, his identity as a pianist seems built upon the formidable voices of others. For his next record, he should focus on strengthening his own. —David Kunian

Solace: Jockamo; Bywater; The Chief Speaks; Elegy; Waiting For A Train; Restoration; Don't You Come Struttin' In Here; Ballad Of Marie Laveau. (36:38)

Personnel: Will Herrington, piano; Jon Richards, bass; Andrew Boyle, drums; Ambrose Akinmusire, trumpet (4, 8); Kiel Feher, percussion (8). Ordering info: itunes.com

# MARK TURNER PLAYS RW REEDS



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#### **Terri Lyne Carrington** *The Mosaic Project: Love And Soul* CONCORD 37779 \*\*\*1/2

It is no small irony that contemporary r&b—a form that expresses emotional transparency—has become one of the most sonically artificial musical genres, filled with surging synths, electronically enhanced percussion and cushiony vocals.

Long gone is the bare sincerity of Aretha Franklin's Alabama-based recordings or Al Green's Hi Records heyday. Even the string-drenched excesses of Hugo & Luigi on Sam Cooke's RCA hits seem minimalist by comparison.





It's an approach that leaves little breathing room for originality, stressing craftsmanship over expression. That stated, when it's well executed, it's the sonic equivalent of an exotic cocktail—many flavors blended into a powerful drink. The effect may be the same as a shot of single-malt whisky, but there's more show involved.

Drummer Terri Lyne Carrington, a professor of percussion at Berklee College of Music, has delivered her share of single-shot potency; now, with her Mosaic Project, she's decided to delve into dense pop concoctions that feature a variety of her favorite female singers and as many as 13 musicians, including multiple keyboardists.

The first edition was a hit, winning a Grammy Award for Best Jazz Vocal Album in 2012. (Carrington also won a Grammy for Best Jazz Instrumental Album in 2014 for *Money Jungle: Provocative In Blue.*)

The second edition returns to the formula, deepening the blend with notable vocal appearances by Nancy Wilson, Valerie Simpson, Chaka Khan and nine other singers, including Carrington.

High points include the driving groove on Frank Sinatra's "I'm A Fool To Want You," which adds fuel to Khan's soaring vocal and Dutch-born, New York-based Tineke Postma's soulful soprano solo. Another standout: Wilson's smoky-voiced defiance of aging on the comparatively strippeddown "Imagine This." And the combination of Lizz Wright's dark alto voice and Ingrid Jensen's trumpet on the closing "When I Found You" is superb.

A notable low point comes courtesy of actor Billy Dee Williams (of *Star Wars* fame), who intones an inane remembrance of his discovery of Carl Jung on one of three disposable voiceovers.

Instrumentally, the level of craftsmanship is high, which means that the blend of musicians is seamless, and rather anonymous. At the conclusion of "So Good (Amazing)," when one of the two trumpeters on the track cuts loose with a short, stunning run, it draws an unbridled laugh from singer Jaguar Wright.

The listener might well react the same way to this brief glimpse of individuality.

—James Hale

The Mosaic Project Love And Soul: Come Sunday, I'm A Fool To Want You; For You To Love; So Good (Amazing); Somebody Told A Lie; Imagine This: Best Of The Best; This Too Will Pass; Can't Resist; You Just Can't Smile It Away; Get To Know You; When I Found You. (65:30)

Personnel: Terri Lyne Carrington, drums, vocals (9), background vocals, keyboards, guitar, bass, programming, percussion; Natalie Cole (11), Chaka Khan (2), Oleta Adams (3), Jaguar Wright (4), Nancy Wilson (6), Chanté Moore (7), Lalah Hathaway (6, 8), Paula Cole (10), Ledis (111), Lizz Wright (12), vocals; Tanya Darby (3–5, 7), Ingrid Jansen (8, 9, 12), Arnetta Johnson (3–5, 7, 11), Li rumpet, Merissa Magdael-Lauron, trombone (7, 12); Elena Pinderhughes, flute (3, 5, 9, 12), Grace Kelly (12), Tineke Postma (2), soprano saxophone; Tia Fuller, alto saxophone (1, 3–5, 7–9, 11, 12), flute (8, 9, 11); Melissa Aldana (3), Netta Raanan (4, 7), tenor saxophone; Geri Allen, piano (5); Army Bellamy, piano (1, 2), Frender Rhodes (2, 4), organ (2, 3, 5, 8–10), keyboards (17, 10); Lauren Fuller, piano (7, 11), keyboards (16); Valerie Simpson, piano (3), vocals (5); Helen Sung, Fender Rhodes (12); Valerie Simpson, piano (3), vocals (5); Helen Sung, Fender Rhodes (12), valerie Zimpson, piano (3), vocals (5), Holen Sung, Fender Rhodes (12); Valerie Simpson, piano (3), vocals (5), Helen Sung, Fender Rhodes (12), valerie J, Linda Taylor (1–10, 12), guitar; Meshell Ndegeocello (6, 11), Linda Taylor (1–10, 12), guitar; Meshell Ndegeocello (6, 11), Linda Taylor (1–10, 12), guitar; Meshell Ndegeocello (6, 11), Linda Santos (1, 3, 5, 9–11), percussion; DJ VaJ Jeanty, Ly ackground vocals; Billy Dee Williams (1, 5, 12) Spoken word; Zyra Pola (9, 11), Negah Santos (1, 3, 5, 9–11), percussion; DJ VaJ Jeanty, Ly ackground vocals; Silly Dee Williams (1, 5, 12) Spoken word; Zyra Pola (9, 11), Negah Santos (1, 3, 5, 9–11), percussion; DJ VaJ Jeanty, Ly ackground vocals; Silly Dee Williams (1, 5, 12) Spoken word; Zyra Pola (9, 11), Negah Santos (1), 3, 5, 9–11), percussion; DJ VaJ Jeanty, Ly ackground vocals; Silly Dee Williams (1, 5, 12) Spoken word; Zyra Pola (9, 11), Negah Santos (1), 3, 5, 9–11), percussion; DJ VaJ Jeanty, Ly ackground vocals; Silly Dee Williams (1, 5, 12) Spoken word; Zyra Pola (9, 11), Negah Santos (1), 3, 5, 9–11), per

Ordering info: concordmusicgroup.com

Universal Indians with Joe McPhee Skullduggery CLEAN FEED 328 \*\*\*1/2

The career of Joe McPhee was given new life by musicians half his age beginning in the mid-1990s, and he's embraced a generation of improvisers who recognize his special genius: a product of the original free-jazz movement who's always maintained a wide open set of ears, ready to joust with any and all comers.



*Skullduggery* comes from a live performance with the young European trio Universal Indians. Saxophonist John Dikeman is a Nebraska-bred rebel who took his flame-throwing talents to Amsterdam years ago, and his agile rhythm section consists of two exciting players from Norway: bassist Jon Rune Strøm and drummer Tollef Østvang. Together they make fire music for the post-everything present.

Naturally, McPhee quickly establishes the tone on "Yeah, And?," launching loose-limbed interactions built from sour harmonics, rough scrapes and gut-wrenching screams. Dikeman favors meaningful dialogue over pedal-tothe-metal overdrive, and there are moments of sheer tenderness on "Dewey's Do." Much of the credit should go to Strøm and Østvang—bandmates in several other ensembles such as All Included and Friends & Neighbors—who add color and texture on the most thorny, free-ranging passages, but embrace propulsion and groove when called for. They give McPhee and Dikeman a lot to work with, and the horn men take full advantage. —*Peter Margasak* 

Skullduggery: Yeah, And?; Dewey's Do; Skullduggery; Wanted. (53:16)

Personnel: Joe McPhee, saxophones, pocket trumpet; John Dikeman, saxophones; Jon Rune Strøm, double bass; Tollef Østvang, drums. Ordering info: cleanfeed-records.com

#### Sammy Figueroa Imaginary World SAVANT 2151

Afro-Latin percussionist Sammy Figueroa's fourth album as a leader is a silken ride of simpatico grooves, stylized ethnic rhythms and nimble soloing in terrain as breezy and burning as a Miami sunset. Much of the album's kinetic flow is owed to drummer David Chiverton, who brings a streamlined attack to every track. His



sparse fills and punchy funk patterns hold the music together as Figueroa adds spice and texture above. *Imaginary World* also features the great Brazilian guitarist Chico Pinheiro, who brings his lovely textural picking to Figueroa's slick Latin mix.

Figueroa told liner notes writer Fernando Gonzalez that he "was tired of the macho posturing, the showing off" inherent in many Afro-Latin albums. To that end, *Imaginary World* percolates with the kind of simmering lowkey intent that, while edgy and hard-hitting, never stoops to animalistic chest-pounding. In a way, it's the West Coast cool equivalent to East Coast hard-bop. The music never loses its composure amid its arid pulse. Opener "Bittersweet" is an example of this album's hybrid funk and Latin brew. Chiverton displaces pianist Silvano Monasterios' piano solo like a 20-limbed octopus as Figueroa charges ahead. The title track is a subtle blowout. The groove is as light as air, with Chiverton and Figueroa cautiously stoking the rhythm furnace. A breakdown follows, drums and percussion driving harder as the song nears climax, again and again. —*Ken Micallef* 

Imaginary World: Bittersweet; Waiting For You; He Didn't Know; Flow Of The Universe; The Jumping Blue Jay; Imaginary World; Alegria; Mysterious Energy; Cuidado. (50:40) **Personnel:** Sammy Figueroa, percussion; Silvano Monasterios, piano; Gabriel Vivas, bass; Troy Roberts, saxophone; Alex Pope Norris, Cisco Dimas (1), trumpets; David Chiverton, drums; Chico Pinheiro, quitar (5 8)

Ordering info: jazzdepot.com

# IAN HENDRICKSON-SMITH PLAYS RW SAXOPHONES

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## Historical / BY BILL MEYER

# Singers and the Seashore

In every life-long career, there are ups and downs. For **Abbey Lincoln**, 1980 lay somewhere in between the peaks and valleys. She wasn't making records, and her acting career had wound down. But receptive American jazz clubs and European tours still afforded her the opportunity to do what she did best: sing.

Sophisticated Abbey (High Note 7280; 55:06 ★★★½) is drawn from a March 1980 stop at San Francisco's Keystone Korner. Audiophiles might object to the high-end distortion, which adds a bit of grain to her voice, but her singing is just fine. She projects boldly over the journeyman accompaniment of pianist Phil Wright, bassist James Leary and drummer Doug Sides. Lincoln was not an improviser: her focus was on the lvrics of her songs and the way they fit into her understanding of her place in the world. Aside from the self-

penned humanistic anthem "People In Me," the set list here takes a step back from the civil rights and identity concerns that were so much a part of the music in the years during and immediately after her marriage to Max Roach. Instead she sings about love, solitude and coping with other people's perceptions, and pays homage to her enduring spirit guide, Billie Holiday. Selections by Donny Hathaway and Stevie Wonder reveal her strong instincts for selecting the best that the times had to offer, but she sounds strongest on a haunted reading of Henry Mancini's "Whistling Away The Dark." **Ordering info:** jazzdepot.com

Rough recording is amongst the issues that assail **Billie Holiday: Banned From New York City Live 1948–1957 (Uptown 2781/2782 55:48/59:01;**  $\star \star 1/2$ ), but it's not the double CD's worst problem. The sensationalistic title sets a tone that pervades the collection's thick, generously illustrated booklet. The sad details of Holiday's problems with drugs, men and the law are well known; do they really need to be trotted out one more time? Don't read the words, folks, just look at the pictures. Perhaps the prurience is a strategy to confer an impression of worth upon a rather dubious collection of tracks, some of which have been released before and others that probably should not have been, at least not under Holiday's name.

There's a whole set by the Red Norvo All Stars, who toured with Holiday but performed separately. There are tracks marred by distortion and tape speed glitches. There's a lot that must be gotten



through to get to Holiday's singing, and it is the glimpses into her artistry that keep this collection from being rated even lower.

Ordering info: uptownrecords.net

The '50s were a time when jazz was much closer to the day's popular music than it is now. Despite the disastrousness of her circumstances, Holiday had considerable star power right up to the time of her death. It was also a time when a semi-bootleg live set by a piano trio could be a best-selling record that moved 225,000 units the year of its release. **Erroll Garner's The Complete Concert By The Sea (Sony Legacy, 59:48/41:08/58:04 \* \* \* \*)** expands an LP that originally ran 40 minutes into a triple CD that now lasts two hours longer. The first two discs reproduce the complete concert; the third offers the original LP plus a 14-minute-long interview with the pianist, bassist Eddie Calhoun and drummer Denzil Best.

What made Garner popular is not hard to hear on performances like "Night And Day," one of the 11 added tracks. Others have plumbed it for depths of loneliness and yearning; Garner's piano playing blazes with such joy that it might as well be "Singing In The Rain." He's not shy about displaying his virtuosity, using two hands to make his keyboard do the work of a big band.

But no matter how fancy things get, they're also ingratiating, and a determined sonic upgrade has bridged some of the original recording's distance.

#### Yelena Eckemoff Everblue L&H 806151 ★★★

Born in Moscow, pianist Yelena Eckemoff received extensive classical training, took time off to raise a family and eventually became interested in playing jazz, especially after she moved to the United States in 1991. Her 2010 trio set, *Cold Sun*, included drummer Peter Erskine and won her some national attention.



Listening to *Everblue*, it is difficult not to think of the ECM label and the type of music that the company released in its early years. Like on many ECM recordings, Eckemoff's music blurs the line between melody and improvisation, and between individual solos and ensemble interplay. The music sets an introspective atmosphere rather than introducing catchy themes and passionate individual heroics.

The pianist utilizes two members of Jan Garbarek's quartet of the 1970s—bassist Arild Andersen and drummer Jon Christensen—who excel at playing this type of atmospheric music. Tenor saxophonist Tore Brunborg emphasizes long tones and quiet, emotional playing, just as Garbarek has throughout his career. The quartet performs eight originals by the pianist along with two by Andersen. None of the individual pieces stand out by themselves, instead serving as a type of suite that segues easily from one performance to the next. Only "Man" has a bit of heat, but otherwise the music's passion bubbles beneath the surface. —*Scott Yanow* 

Everblue: Everblue; All Things, Seen And Unseen; Waves & Shells; Skyline; Sea-Breeze; Prism; Man; Abyss; Ghost Of The Dunes; Blue Lamp. (64:10) Personnel: Yelena Eckemoff, piano; Tore Brunborg, tenor saxophone; Arild Andersen, bass; Jon Christensen, drums.

**Jeff Hackworth** *The Heart Of The Matter* BBM 1007

Ordering info: landhproduction.com

★★½

Beefy-toned tenor saxophonist Jeff Hackworth starts the party with his "Big Bad Boogaloo," and soon after, standard organ quartet fare ensues.

Funky drummer Vincent Ector and organist Kyle Koehler percolate, and Dizzy Gillespie alum Ed Cherry contributes classy guitar solos. Hackworth has a rubbery, joyous

sound and plays strongly on the beat, no doubt why tenor legend Houston Person endorses him.

But sometimes his righteous timing can be a little cloying, and too often he cleaves to the rails when he should be running free. Still, Hackworth has a scrabbly, playful side to his technique that isn't otherwise pedantic.

His ballad playing doesn't necessarily go anywhere but offers honest vulnerability as it should on a title like "Fool That I Am," which has an arpeggiated coda riff reminiscent of Bennie Wallace. "3rd Avenue Blues" is a leisurely skate in waltz time, and another Hackworth original, "Sweet Tea," is quietly compelling, though the solo falls short. On the title cut, Hackworth's phrases are a little blunt, but heartfelt nonetheless. The closer, Osvaldo Farrés "Tres Palabras," carries a similar melody to "Besame Mucho," and underscores the yearning in Hackworth's palette, characterized by rangy playing in both low and high register. In many ways, Hackworth's approach is buoyant and disarming, but these particular ears crave more negotiation between the cracks of the rhythm. —*Michael Jackson* 

The Heart Of The Matter: Big Bad Boogaloo; Fool That I Am; That Old Black Magic; 3rd Avenue Blues; September Song; Sweet Tea; The Heart Of The Matter; Mr. Gentle And Mr. Cool; Tres Palabras. (60:02)

Personnel: Jeff Hackworth, tenor saxophone; Ed Cherry, guitar; Kyle Koehler, organ; Vincent Ector, drums. Ordering info: jeffhackworth.com

# DAVID SÁNCHEZ Plays RW REEDS



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#### JACQUES LESURE CAMARADERIE

Camaraderie, the latest release from Jacques Lesure, features the guitarist in a soulful collaboration with Eric Reed, Warren Wolf and Willie Jones III and performing standards including "Sunny," Milt Jackson's "SKJ" and debuting original works by Lesure. \*\*\*\* —DownBeat, October 2015





Dick Hyman House Of Pianos ARBORS JAZZ 19445 \*\*\*

Temperamentally and aesthetically, pianist Dick Hyman is a progressive and an archivist, a specialist and a generalist. His fascination with grafting European classical music onto jazz improvisation—once the preoccupation of George Shearing and a badge of hipness among collegiate enthusiasts—has become anomalous in our times. His love for and mastery of stride piano was always tempered by his scholarly grasp of the idiom.

In this live set, recorded in Madison, Wisconsin, at the celebrated concert space/retail outlet Farley's House of Pianos, Hyman unfurls all these elements of his artistry in a setting that invites close and critical consideration. The only surprise here is his inclusion of three Thelonious Monk compositions, a catalog from which he has scarcely drawn previously.

Hyman turns the opening track, "Send In The Clowns," over and over like an extraordinarily perceptive child pondering the symmetries of a seashell. Right from the top, he references blues, folk and exotic modal music in articulating the theme.

From there, he gambols through the tune, playing it as a breezy waltz, changing major sevenths to minor and back. He quotes impishly from "Waltz For Debby" and "Jesu, Joy Of Man's Desiring" and eventually slows the song down, letting a cascade of thirds flutter from the top to the middle of the keyboard.

From the insider's joke of not hitting a stride pattern until nearly four minutes into "Sweet Georgia Brown" to the theme-and-variations methodology that guides his 11-minute examination of "All The Things You Are" and even the "Beat The Clock Theme," which he wrote for the ancient TV show and of course performs with brevity here, *House Of Pianos* proves that falling from fashion is not at all the same as fading in value. —*Bob Doerschuk* 

House Of Pianos: Send In The Clowns; Sweet Georgia Brown; Yesterdays; Blue Monk; Ugly Beauty; Beat The Clock Theme; All The Things You Are; Theme From The Purple Rose of Cairo; Misterioso; Take The 'A' Train. (58:00)

Personnel: Dick Hyman, piano.

Ordering info: arborsrecords.com



#### **ENIGMATIX / ROBERTO MAGRIS**

"Pianist Roberto Magris takes on the challenge of modern jazz by producing a stellar new sound on the creative *Enigmatix*, featuring a tad more of his improvisational skills, compositional diversity and excellent musicianship in delivering another outstanding outing affirming his reputation as one of the finest piano men in the world." *—Edward Blanco* (All About Jazz, July 16, 2015)



#### Michael Blum Commitment SELF RELEASE

Winner of DownBeat's 63rd Annual Critics Poll in the Rising Star–Guitar category, Michael Blum is only 21 years old, yet he shows the skill and maturity of a veteran. His sophomore album, *Commitment*, is an album of smartly chosen standards and original material.

New listeners may be discouraged by *Commitment*'s opening tracks, "Pick Yourself Up" and "Here's That Rainy Day." Though Blum's vocals are pleasant in these songs, you really want to hear his guitar. You have to wait for the third track, bassist Jim Stinnett's "Dark Snow," before that request is granted, and even then you must wade through a long electric bass solo to get there.

Finally, Blum delivers with sweet, rounded notes that recall Johnny Smith and a broad melodic sense that brings to mind both Kenny Burrell and Barney Kessel (though the overly loud bass detracts from Blum, who is squashed to the right channel).

The odd sonic approach continues in Blum's "Houston," where the guitarist's solo follows a turn by saxophonist Fred Haas. Blum is a crafty, dark-hued accompanist, but shouldn't his guitar be front and center? Blum smokes a dulcet solo here, with Wes Montgomery-style chordal jumps augmenting his fluid picking.



Other highlights: Blum burns though Bird's "Kim," performs gracefully on "Like Someone In Love" and scorches a clean solo on "Mr. P.C."

Though Blum's stellar guitar playing is anything but highlighted on *Commitment*, it rises above the sonic muck often enough to point to an exceedingly bright future.

-Ken Micallef

**Commitment:** Pick Yourself Up; Here's That Rainy Day; Dark Snow; Houston; Kim; How Deep Is The Ocean; Redwood; Like Someone In Love; Stutter Step; Mr. P.C. (54:21)

**Personnel:** Michael Blum, guitar, vocals; Jim Stinnett, acoustic bass; Grant Stinnett, electric bass (5); Brad Smith, piano; Fred Haas, saxophone.

Ordering info: michaelblumguitar.com

Antonio Hart Blessings JAZZ LEGACY 1501023 \*\*\*1/2

Baltimore-born Antonio Hart has served significant dues as lead alto in the revered bands of Dave Holland, Dizzy Gillespie and Jimmy Heath. As a consequence of such serviceable skills, his CDs as a leader are rare. *Blessings* sprints hard out of the gate with Bobby Floyd's driving organ work and call-and-response riffing on Jack McDuff's "Rock Candy."



The quartet sounds big thanks to the tight unison of Hart's alto and Yotam Silberstein's guitar—they share a nice simpatico and often complete each other's phrases. The leader's flame-throwing but succinct first solo, despite its coiled bop syntax, unleashes a fiercely gruff tone and some crowd-pleasing r&b devices.

There is much to please fans of the genre with four Hart originals amidst hoary chestnuts "Shiny Stockings" and "Speak Low." The trio's take on "The End Of The Love Affair" is curious. The choice ballad is usually taken at a cathartic clip, but Hart opts for smeary bathos that suggests he may be feeling the real sentiment of the lyrics. Light refreshment occurs afterward with engaging soprano on Stevie Wonder's "I Can't Help It"—with Hart drilling some questing lines. His hyper-bluesy "Last Train To Overbrook" tips away from the smooth-jazz vibe he establishes earlier on the disc.

—Michael Jackson

Blessings: Rock Candy; I Can't Help It; A Hole In The Flute; Speak Low; Down And Up; Mo Dak; The End Of The Love Affair; Shiny Stockings; Last Train To Overbrook; Like My Own. (57:75) Personnel: Antonio Hart, alto saxophone, soprano saxophone; Bobby Floyd, organ; Yotam Silberstein, guitar; Steve Williams, drums. Ordering Info: Jazzlegacyproductions.com

#### Anthony Strong On A Clear Day NAïVE 624571 ★★½

Stevie Wonder's "Higher Ground," Michael Jackson's "Don't Stop Till You Get Enough" and Bill Withers' "Use Me"—as finger-snapping swing? Well, why not? That's the case being made on the latest disc from British vocalist/ pianist Anthony Strong. And to that end, the singer is relentless.



His voice is bright and vibrant, and so are his piano chops. And you can't argue with the arrangements on this album, Strong's fourth as a leader and first for big band. His approach serves him well on standard swingers like the title track or "What Is This Thing Called Love." And at the bridge of "Whatever Lola Wants," the singer loses his head in a dementia of swirling reeds. But the pop fare can be less convincing. Elvis Costello's "Baby Plays Around," for example, sounds like diluted Sinatra, and even a standard like "The More I See You" feels weighed-down. To be fair, "Don't Stop Till You Get Enough" has an infectious Afro-Latin groove, and there are some standout solo spots throughout, including Nigel Hitchcock's blistering alto on "Nothing Like You." Of the handful of Strong originals (written with Guy Mathers), "That Kind Of Guy" pops with Louis Prima-like jump. If anything, Strong makes the case that it might possible to swing a little *too* much.

—Jon Garelick

**On A Clear Day:** On A Clear Day; Whatever Lola Wants; As Time Goes By; Nothing Like You; Unforgettable; The More I See You; Higher Ground; Baby Plays Around; That Kind Of Guy; When It Moves You; Don't Stop Till You get Enough; Use Me; What Is This Thing Called Love?; The Outgoing Administration. (48:39)

Personnel: Anthony Strong, piano, vocals; Tom Farmer, bass; Sebastien De Krom, drums, percussion; Andy Greenwood, Tom Walsh, Adam Chatterton, Graeme Flowers (solos 7, 8), trumpets; Simon Marsh, James Gold, Jon Shenoy, Pete Long, Nigel Hitchcock (solo 4), saxophones; Paul Nathaniel, baritone saxophone; John Stokes, Callum Au, Chris Traves (solo 9), trombones; Barry Clements, bass trombone; Gareth Lockrane, flute, piccolo; Billy Adamson, guitar, Emma Stockton, Janine Johnson, backing vocals Ordering info: nalve.fr IT'S TIME TO SWITCH...



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### BOOKS / BY HOWARD MANDEL

# **Big Horn, Big Heart**

In 1981 Sanford Josephson interviewed composer-improviser, arranger and baritone saxophonist Gerry Mulligan at home in Darien, Connecticut, for a magazine article, which he adapted for his 2009 book Jazz Notes: Interviews Across the Generations. For Jeru's Journev. his second book. Josephson gained access to the man's recorded autobiography from his widow, plunged into Jerome Klinkowitz's video documentary Listen: Gerry Mulligan, conducted

40 interviews and dug deep into articles, reviews and interviews concerning the handsome, charismatic perfectionist who from 1943 to his death in 1996 changed the image of his instrument and helped usher in the cool school.

The resulting 180-page (plus notes and index) volume from The Hal Leonard Jazz Biography Series is a clear and easily readable narrative, covering its subject from his birth in Queens Village, New York, through his family's peripatetic relocations, his entry into the 1940s big band world and evolution into an innovative jazz musician whose work endures as significant and enjoyable.

Mulligan was not exactly a child prodigy, though he caught the jazz bug in his early teens and quit high school to write charts while touring with multi-instrumentalist Tommy Tucker's "sweet" band. Tucker found the teenager's arrangements too jazzy, so Mulligan left to work with Elliot Lawrence, musical director of WCAU in Philadelphia. In 1946 he joined Gene Krupa's band in New York City.

Originally Mulligan played second chair alto sax. But he was impressed by the bari's ability to add contrary motion in ensembles due to its broad register and flexible timbres. Swayed by players including Skip Martin and Harry Carney, Mulligan sold his other horns to concentrate on the big one. Eventually he'd also be heard on soprano sax, clarinet and piano.

Josephson is good at tracking Mulligan's connections leading up to the 1949–1950 recording of *The Birth Of The Cool* nonet. That album, though not released until 1957, was a major post-bop development. Mulligan's arrangements of six of its 12 songs (he composed three) are notable for their subtle harmonization, polyphony, counterpoint and economical means of achieving these effects.

He had already been recognized as a distinctive melodicist for his ability to improvise songlike counterpoint in spontaneous interplay with trumpeter Chet Baker (starting in 1952) and valve trombonist Bob Brookmeyer (in 1954). Backed only by bass and drums, these partners established an airy



modernism attractive to broad audiences, and secured Mulligan's reputation for decades to come.

Josephson details these developments by quoting extensively from his sources, seldom commenting himself on the saxophonist's music or his provocative personal life. Though described as introverted, Mulligan was catnip to women and had several relationships including two brief marriages before he met actress and chanteuse Judy Holliday in the mid-1950s. The couple collaborated on songs for a Broadway musical until Holliday's death from cancer in 1965. Subsequently he lived with actress Sandy Dennis, and in 1974 met Contessa Franca Rota, an Italian photographer, who became his wife and manager.

Mulligan was also addicted to heroin early in his career; he claimed to have kicked the habit in the late '50s with a two-week hospital stay. Josephson reports but doesn't sensationalize these aspects of the musician's life. Indeed, he's neither judgmental nor inquisitive about the internal or emotional experiences of his subject beyond mentioning Mulligan's temper, ego and occasional frictions with sidemen. There's a lot of testimony in Jeru's Journey from those sidemen, as well as players who admire Mulligan's accomplishments though they may not have known him. Everyone speaks of his singular talents, some call him a genius, yet Josephson is largely silent on his own thoughts on Mulligan's prodigious output, though he'd heard the baritonist often, starting in 1968.

The author's distance from the man hampers this book's impact more seriously than a few factual errors (Mulligan did not take the first solo on the TV broadcast of Billie Holiday's "Fine And Mellow"; a bari player called "Leo Parks" is probably Leo Parker; Miles and Quincy Jones did not get together in 1991 to memorialize Gil Evans' music), which careful editing might have corrected. There's information here about Gerry Mulligan's ambitions and motivations, joys and sorrows, and movement within a larger context, but in capturing Mulligan's life and music, *Jeru's Journey* is just a start. **DB Ordering info: halleonard.com** 



Various Artists Revive Music Presents Supreme Sonacy, Vol. 1 REVIVE/BLUE NOTE 002345302 \*\*\*

Revive Music began life as a specialty concert promoter, eventually establishing an online magazine to promote its eclectic stable of artists. Now, in partnership with Blue Note, Revive is stepping into the recording world with *Supreme Sonacy*, *Vol. 1*, its first multi-artist compilation.

Though it pulls together work across a wide stylistic spectrum, *Supreme Sonacy* is surprisingly unified aesthetically. This is partly due to Brian "Raydar" Ellis, whose brief remixes of each artist's work create an electronic, beat-driven thread that helps tie everything together.

The project's has many standout moments. Igmar Thomas and Marc Cary weave between breezy fusion and knotty, complex riffing; Ray Angry's heavy piano pounds through his own sort of spiritual jazz;. Terry Slingbaum channels David Axelrod with his orchestral jazz take on Ravel; and Harpist Brandee Younger's playing has the calm lines, openness and balance of a Japanese tea room.

Many of these artists are just beginning to cut sessions as leaders, while others are well established. This disc positions them all as part of a coherent movement, or at least as a group whose collective talents could generate a lot of interesting jazz in the future. —Joe Tangari

Supreme Sonacy, Vol. 1: A Supreme Welcome (Intro); Trane Thang/Pinocchio; All Aboard (Raydar Ellis Remix/Interlude); Let's Wait Awhile; Let's Wait Awhile (Raydar Ellis Remix/Interlude); The Procrastinator; Playing Catch Up (Raydar Ellis Remix/Interlude); Dorothy Jeanne; I For My DJ (Raydar Ellis Remix/Interlude); Dorothy Jeanne; I For My DJ (Raydar Ellis Remix/Interlude); Suite: Awareness & Revolution; Celebration of Life Suite: Awakening; Drop Confett Then We Jetti (Raydar Ellis Remix/ Interlude); A Wally's Good Night. (58:11)

Personnel: Raydar Ellis (1, 3, 5, 7, 9, 11, 14), Christie Dashiell (4, 5), Nadia Washington (12), Paul Poindexter (15), vocals Igmar Thomas (2, 3), Keyon Harrold (4, 5, 8, 9), Maurice Brown (8, 9), trumpet; Marcus Stickland (2, 3, 4, 5), Troy Roberts (6), Chelsea Baratz (10, 11), Chris Potter (12, 13, 14), tenor saxophone; Casey Benjamin (6), Jaleel Shaw (8, 9), alto saxophone; Anne Drummond, flute (10, 11); Maria Im (6), Stephan Fillare (6); Matt McBane (6); Ada Pasternak (6), violin; Terry Slingbaum, mandolin, violin (6, 7); Maria Jeffers (6), Jody Redhage (6), cello; Brandee Younger, harp (10, 11); Handclap Jenkins (5); Louis Cato (2, 3), Kyle Miles (4, 5), Vicente Archer (6), Ben Williams (8, 9), Dezron Douglas (10, 11), James Genus (12, 13, 14), Burniss Earl Travis III (13), bass; Justin Brown (2, 3), Charles Haynes (4, 5), Mark Colenburg (6), Justin Brown (2, 3), Charles Haynes Rhodes (2, 3); Christian Sands (4, 5), Lidat Djangirov (6); Masayuki Hirano (6), Kris Bowers (8, 9), Ray Angry (12, 13, 14), keyboards; The Council of Goldfinger, choir (13); Ordering Info: revive-music.com

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 James Brandon Lewis

 Days Of FreeMan

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 ★★★½

Though this is only his second studio album, saxophonist/composer James Brandon Lewis already has a thoroughly developed conceptual approach to building a record. In this case, Lewis reaches back to his formative years growing up on Freeman Street in Buffalo, New York, listening to hip-hop supplied by his older brother and talking to his grandmother, whose voice appears on several interstitial tracks across the album.

Lewis seems to prefer a trio format, and recruited former Prime Time bassist Jamaaladeen Tacuma and drummer Rudy Royston (Bill Frisell,

#### Joel Harrison 5 Spirit House WHIRLWIND 4673

If music is a language, then guitarist Joel Harrison is a polyglot. His influences are wide-ranging and disparate—Duke Ellington, Charles Ives and Jimi Hendrix are among his idols—and the timbres he coaxes from his electric guitar range from squeaky clean to grimy and harsh. On his latest disc, *Spirit House*, the guitarist appears with a talented quintet whose strength comes from its diversity of voices.

Just how eclectic is this quintet? For starters, it features an electric bassoon. Like Harrison, bassoonist Paul Hanson knows how to manipulate his instrument to fit the context of a song, sounding rich and warm on the ballad "Sacred Love," and reedy and bright on the pulsing "Left Hook." Ascending trumpeter Cuong Vu has an equally malleable style. On the title track, he climbs the range of his instrument with a soft, flute-like tone. But on "An Elephant In Igor's Yard," he produces hoarse, abrasive shrieks that rip through the song's dense fabric.

Harrison himself is a library of sounds and textures. His gentle touch is evident on songs like "Johnny Broken Wing," an eternally optimistic ballad that opens with a washed-out, dreamy guitar passage. But on the opening track, he distorts his tone into something more sinister, sounding almost like a musical buzz saw. His sonic experiamong many others) to provide the rhythmic foundation for his thoroughly modern tenor explorations. The three play together ferociously, generally springboarding off simple themes into wide-open improvisation. The extremes of their range of are placed nearly back-to-back, with only a brief interlude standing between the sludgy rock jam "Lament For JLew" and Lewis' re-imagining of Don Cherry's "Bamako Love," which is the most supple sax lead on the album.

These trio songs are sequenced together with the aforementioned interludes, generally featuring Pearl Lewis speaking while samples of the band are processed into soundscapes around her. These offer some textural variety; it would be interesting to hear Lewis further refine this conceptual framework to more thoroughly marry the two approaches into a cohesive whole. The title track comes closest, incorporating a loose, clever freestyle verse by rapper Supernatural and pivoting to an outro that overlays Pearl's spoken word. It's a tantalizing glimpse of how powerful this could be if it were slightly more concise and unified. As it stands, there's plenty to like, and Lewis continues to show great promise as a leader. —Joe Tangari

Days Of FreeMan: Foreward; Brother 1976; Of Dark Matter; Black Ark; Break I; Days Of FreeMan; Bird Of Folk Cries; Break II; Wilson; Lament For JLew; Break III; Bamako Love; Boom Bap Bop; Steelo; Break IV; Able Souls Dig Planets; Speaking From Jupiter; Unarmed With A Mic; Epilogue (Brother 1976). (62:21)

**Personnel:** James Brandon Lewis, saxophone; Jamaaladeen Tacuma, bass; Rudy Royston, drums; HPrizm, sound designer (1, 5, 8, 11, 15); Pearl Lewis, vocal, narration (1, 5, 6, 8, 11, 15); Supernatural, vocals (6).

Ordering info: okeh-records.com



mentation is endless, and definitely worth a listen.

Throughout, drummer Brian Blade adds fierce, rumbling drum fills with precision, and bassist Kermit Driscoll holds everything together with a sweet, glowing tone. Bravo to Harrison for blending such distinct voices into a unified whole—even if those voices, like Harrison's career, are ever-evolving. —*Brian Zimmerman* 

**Personnel:** Joel Harrison, guitar, voice (5); Cuong Vu, trumpet; Paul Hanson, bassoon, electric bassoon; Kermit Driscoll, bass; Brian Blade, drums, voice (5).

Ordering info: whirlwindrecordings.com



#### Shemekia Copeland Outskirts Of Love

Alligator 4966  $\star \star \star \frac{1}{2}$ 

As the preeminent blues singer of her generation, Shemekia Copeland might be content to rest on her laurels. But she's found the blues identity to be limiting. Blues-based rock is the delivery system she prefers. Returning to her first label, Alligator, after nine years away, she demonstrates a strong gift for detailing emotional drama.

Honest as the day is long, Copeland fashions a resolve to have love win out over evil when singing the words to "The Battle Is Over." Strong-voiced and straight-talking like Koko Taylor, the thirty-something singer stakes out fierce resistance to wickedness on a stirring makeover of "Devil's Hand," originally performed by her guitar-playing father, Johnny Clyde Copeland. Picking up steam on "I Feel A Sin Coming On," she confidently taps into the same currents of sacred-secular confliction that vexed the song's original vocalist, soul-testifier Solomon Burke.

Copeland has spent many Sunday mornings in a gospel church, and she gets to the emotional nub of Jesse Mae Hemphill's "Lord, Help The Poor And Needy." Alvin Youngblood Hart's vocals mirror the sincerity of Copeland's as they dig into the moral fiber of "Cardboard Box," an intelligent, socially conscious tale written by her manager John Hahn with help from Ian Siegel. (Copeland and Hart should do a whole album together.)

Hahn and producer-guitarist Oliver Wood's routine rockers "Outskirts Of Town" and "Crossbone Beach" are salvageable only because of Copeland's ability to invest banal lyrics with power. Her version of ZZ Top's "Jesus Just Left Chicago" (longbeard Billy F Gibbons plays guitar) will pique the interest of fans of that Texan trio. *—Frank-John Hadley* 

Outskirts Of Love: Outskirts Of Love; Crossbone Beach; Devil's Hand; The Battle Is Over (But The War Goes On); Cardboard Box; Drivin' Out Of Nashville; I Feel A Sin Coming On; Isn't That So; Jesus Just Left Chicago; Long As I Can See The Light; Wrapped Up In Love Again; Lord, Help The Poor And Needy. (43:17)

Ordering info: alligator.com

Spirit House: An Elephant In Igor's Yard; Old Friends; Left Hook; Johnny Broken Wing: Some Thoughts On Kenny Kirkland; You Must Go Through A Winter; Sacred Love; Spirit House; Look At Where You Are. (55:47)

Personnel: Shemekia Copeland, vocals; Oliver Wood, guitar, background vocals; Jano Rix, drums, percussion, keyboards; Lex Price, bass; Billy F Gibbons, guitar (9); Alvin Youngblood Hart, guitar, vocal (5); Robert Randolph, steel guitar (2); Will Kimbrough, guitar (1, 3, 4, 6, 7, 10); Pete Finney, pedal steel (6); Matt Glassmeyer, horns (3, 7); Jason Eskridge, background vocals (4, 7, 8); Eric Fritsch, organ (1); Mike Poole, percussion (9).



Powerhouse In An Ambient Way CHESKY 372 \*\*\*\*

In An Ambient Way, erroneously listed as performed by a group called Powerhouse, was, in fact, delivered by the Wallace Roney Quintet. Performed in "a large church with huge arched ceilings and a two second echo," according to the late reedist Bob Belden's liner notes, the atmosphere was designed to evoke the sonic equivalencies heard in the studio where Miles Davis originally recorded *In A Silent Way* in 1969, at Manhattan's 30th Street Studios, a setting also referred to as "The Church."

The album was recorded as part of Chesky Records' "Binaural+ Series," which uses specially callibrated microphones built into a "dummy" human head. This practice is meant to replicate for the listener the experience of sitting in front of the band.

The core material, difficult to revisit with any authenticity, is played in the spirit of the original recording, but with a 21st-century vibe. Strong playing comes from Roney, especially, who sounds like he's been set free. But in truth, everyone seems at home in this rarefied setting. Belden, on soprano and flute, characteristically dips in and out, while the rhythm section burns.

Keyboardist Kevin Hays resonates on his funky Fender Rhodes, with bassist Daryl Johns and guitarist Oz Noy becoming one with the music. And drummer Lenny White is all up in it, clearly relishing the opportunity to play all-out.

It's not like the original. Not even close. Even Davis' live revisits over the years tended to sound less than ideal without the magic touches original producer Teo Macero proffered.

But that doesn't seem to have been the point here.

—John Ephland

In An Ambient Way: Shhh/Peaceful; In A Silent Way; It's About That Time; Early Minor; Mademoiselle Mabry; In A Silent Way (outro). (52:07)

**Personnel:** Wallace Roney, trumpet; Bob Belden, soprano saxophone, flute; Oz Noy, guitar; Kevin Hays, Fender Rhodes; Daryl Johns, bass; Lenny White, drums.



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# AURAL INFLUENCES

HOW THE JAZZ SAXOPHONE MASTERS AFFECT OUR PLAYING

# BY MILES OSLAND **PAGE 70**

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#### REED SCHOOL Woodshed > MASTER CLASS BY MILES OSLAND

# Aural Influences

How the Great Jazz Saxophone Masters Affect Our Playing

#### I'M SURE THAT YOU HAVE HEARD THE OLD ADAGE: "IT'S NOT WHAT

you play, but *how* you play it." When improvising, the *what* you play consists of choosing the right notes, licks, patterns, etc. The *how* you play is the soul, emotion and, most importantly, playing with correct style, which comes down to phrasing and articulation.

I've spent four decades transcribing solos of great jazz saxophone masters. By doing this, the *how* and the *what* of these influences have crept their way into my own natural way of playing. In this article, I have chosen to discuss the aural influence of four of my favorite saxophonists—Johnny Hodges, Cannonball Adderley, John Coltrane and David Sanborn—on my playing.

#### **Johnny Hodges**

The *what* (vertical vs. linear): Early jazz saxophonists were generally "vertical" players. In other words, a lot of the content in their lines and improvisations were arpeggiations of chords. Coleman Hawkins comes to mind (especially his famous "Body And Soul" recording) as primarily a vertical player. Lester Young was more of a fluid, or "linear," player. He achieved his fluidity with linear interpretations or embellishments/modifications based on the melody. Johnny Hodges was primarily a vertical player, but at times some real swinging linear lines would creep into his playing.

The *how*: When I transcribe, I transcribe not only the notes, but also glissandi, scoops, growls, use of vibrato, flutter tonguing, phrasing/articulation, etc. What makes a player's personal style and sound unique is how they phrase (articulate) their lines. Johnny Hodges' dark, soulful sound and especially his unique use of vibrato really make him stand out to me. He was also a master at the use of the scoop, and especially the glissando. He could slowly gliss up to an interval of a fourth or fifth and make it sound as smooth as a trombone slide. One of my favorite recordings that demonstrates his mastery of this effect is "Prelude To A Kiss." Hodges and his partner in crime in the Duke Ellington Orchestra, baritone saxophonist Harry Carney, both had very fast tongues, and would articulate many notes in a row. This is what really gave their improvisations that "old school" sound.

I've also discovered that a majority of jazz articulation patterns can be broken down into four categories of eighth-note phrasing cells. These patterns I like to call the "Basic," the "Turnaround," the "Cannonball" and the "Coltrane" (see Examples 1–4). As I stated earlier, the *how* of what you play is directly related to your phrasing and articulations.

In phrasing jazz eighth notes, it's the articulation in combination with the jazz feel that really makes a line swing. In cells of eighth notes, a line



tongue on notes that are to be articulated.

Example 2 is the Turnaround jazz articulation, which also involves cells of twos. Here you tongue downbeats and slur into upbeats (turned around from the Basic jazz articulation). The Turnaround articulation is shape-oriented and usually applied when the upbeats are lower in pitch than the surround-ing downbeats. When the Turnaround articulation is applied to this particular shape, it gives the upbeats a bit of a ghosted note effect. This effect occurs because you are naturally slightly articulating (accenting) the downbeats that are higher in pitch than the surrounding upbeats.

#### Julian "Cannonball" Adderley

The *what*: Since alto saxophone is my main horn, I'm highly influenced by Charlie Parker, as was Julian "Cannonball" Adderley. I have transcribed many of Bird's solos over the years, and memorized many of his "verses" in our Bible of the saxophone, the *Charlie Parker Omnibook* (Hal Leonard). But there's something about Cannonball that really draws me to him. Adderley is one of my favorite saxophonists to listen to and transcribe. His articulations, both from a verbal and performance standpoint, are precise and some of the cleanest on record. Influenced by Bird, Cannonball was a very linear player, with his lines fluidly navigating through the upper extensions of

is usually being phrased/articulated by groups of twos or threes. Take a look at Example 1. This is the Basic jazz articulation: phrasing in cells of twos by tonguing upbeats and slurring into downbeats. When using this articulation pattern, make sure the note that you slur into does not get cut off by the tongue coming back up too early to articulate the next upbeat. If this occurs, your phrasing will sound "ricky-tick." Jazz eighth-note phrasing is a legato articulation. Movement from one note to the next must match up perfectly with the application of a legato





#### **Example 5: Phrasing with eighth-note cells**



#### Example 6: Phrasing with 16th-note cells



the chords, but he could also get incredibly bluesy with the best of them.

The *how*: Example 3 is the Cannonball jazz articulation. Using this articulation, you are now phrasing in cells of threes. With this pattern, you have two notes that are tongued consecutively (downbeat/upbeat of beats 1 and/or 3). To make this pattern sound smooth, you have to make sure that the downbeats you tongue are *tenuto* and attached to the upbeats that you articulate. Using this articulation pattern in consecutive four-note cells places a natural light accent on beats 1 and 3. This fact naturally locks the player in with the rhythm section at fast bebop tempos.

#### **John Coltrane**

The *what*: John Coltrane used a unique harmonic concept that has come to be known as "Giant

Steps" changes, or the cycle of descending major thirds. Explaining this concept could take up an entire article on its own. To make a long story and theory lesson short: Within a four-bar phrase of "Giant Steps" changes, you will navigate through four major tonal centers. In the key of C, the four tonal centers begin with C, then descend a major third to Ab, descend a major third to E, then descend another major third back to C. Then you place the V7 before each major tonal center. So the complete progression in C would be (two beats each): C, Eb7, Ab, B7, E, G7, C. Pretty heady stuff, but that's just one part of what made the genius of John Coltrane.

The *how*: Example 4, the Coltrane jazz articulation, is another phrasing cell by threes. It's a lot like the Cannonball pattern, but displaced by two eighth notes. Much like the Turnaround jazz

articulation, the Coltrane pattern is usually applied when a certain shape occurs in the line. Example 4 is one of Trane's favorite patterns/shapes: 1-2-3-5. Like the Cannonball articulation pattern, you have two notes that are tongued consecutively (downbeat/upbeat of beats 2 and/ or 4). Make sure your articulations are smooth, or else the line begins to sound jerky. Another one of Trane's favorite shapes is 1-2-3-1. You can also practice Example 4 by applying the 1-2-3-1 pattern diatonically. With this shape, it would be better to use the Cannonball articulation pattern.

Look at Example 5. This is an excerpt from a fast bebop solo (quarter note equals 250 bpm) in the style of Cannonball. You can see that every eighth-note cell can be analyzed with either the Basic (B), Turnaround (TA), Cannonball (CB) or Coltrane (CT) articulation patterns. At this fast tempo, it's the articulation, not necessarily the feel of the eighth notes, that makes the line sound in the correct style.

#### **David Sanborn**

The *what*: David Sanborn is influenced by Cannonball. I think Gil Evans described it best when he said: "[Sanborn] has that 'haunting cry' ... a real 'sound innovator."

The *how*: Sanborn has a contemporary style, playing 16th-note patterns as compared to fast eighth-note lines; but because of his Cannonball influence, he often phrased these 16th notes with the articulation patterns that we have discussed. The 16th notes can be thought of as fast, straight, bebop-style eighth notes and articulated as such. Look at Example 6. This is an excerpt from a funky straight-eighth-note solo (quarter note equals 100 bpm) in the

style of Sanborn. Once again, the articulation of every note can be justified by one of the four articulation patterns. Depending on tempo, you can apply the same phrasing concept to double-time bebop licks.

Let me conclude by suggesting that neither Hodges, Cannonball, Coltrane nor Sanborn ever consciously thought about these phrasing patterns while improvising. Neither should you. But if you listen, transcribe and practice your scales, patterns and licks using these articulation patterns, hopefully they will find their way into your playing—if they're not already there.

Miles Osland is Director of Jazz Studies and Professor of Saxophone at the University of Kentucky. He travels the globe as a clinician and performing artist for Selmer (Paris) saxophones, JodyJazz mouthpieces and D'Addario Woodwind reeds.

## REED SCHOOL Woodshed > PRO SESSION BY BILL KIRCHNER

# Saxophone Modifications Inspired by Mother Necessity

**AS A CENTURIES-OLD PROVERB HAS IT,** "Necessity is the mother of invention." Or, as the seminal tenor saxophonist Lester Young is reputed to have said, "Necessity is a mother" (or something like that—it's probably an expurgated version).

Either way, I'm a case in point. From 1980 until March 1993, I made a comfortable living largely as a New York City-based woodwind doubler. I played soprano, alto, tenor and baritone saxophones, flute, alto flute, piccolo, clarinet and bass clarinet. In addition to a whirlpool of freelancing, I also led my own nonet, and as a composer-arranger-bandleader, I did well enough to place in this magazine's and another's International Critics Poll (as Talent Deserving Wider Recognition) several times.

All of this activity ceased when a neurosurgeon told me early in 1993 that I had a benign tumor on my spinal cord. It was on my breathing nerves, and if not removed it would kill me. So in March of that year I had surgery that "successfully" removed the tumor. However, the surgery left me with chronic pain, a severe limp and a crippled right hand. Since then I have had no feeling in that hand, and only two fingers (thumb and index finger) with any facility.

Needless to say, that brought my career as a player to an abrupt halt. Fortunately, I was able to fill the income gap with teaching (at the New School for Jazz and Contemporary Music, and later at Manhattan School of Music and New Jersey City University as well) and a newfound career as a jazz historian (including editing two books, producing and annotating CD reissue projects for numerous record labels, and producing and writing for National



Public Radio's Jazz Profiles series and WBGO-FM's Jazz from the Archives series).

But I refused to give up on playing. The soprano saxophone has always been my favorite instrument, and I found that even with a dysfunctional right hand, I was still able to cover its keys. Unlike with my other instruments, I could watch and see my hand press down the keys. So there was hope. A fine bassist, Sean Smith, started coming to my apartment, and the two of us played tunes together, just to get me back to playing.

I soon realized, though, that I needed additional help with that horn, so I went to a prominent New York City woodwind repairman, Perry Ritter, with my predicament. Ritter watched me play the soprano, quickly analyzed what I could and could not do with my right hand, and came up with some ingenious alternative solutions. Those included keys that I could play with my left thumb to press down the low C and E-flat keys (which, as all saxophonists know, are usually played with the right pinkie). He also came up with a right thumb key (my thumb was still usable) to facilitate playing a low D (and with it, the other low notes as well).

I should add that along with many other soprano players, I have always used a neckstrap. This takes the weight of the horn off of my right thumb—in

my case, a particularly urgent consideration.

By the end of the '90s, I was starting to play gigs again as a jazz soloist, including a duo concert at the Jazz Bakery in Los Angeles with pianist Alan Broadbent. It wasn't a perfect solution—I couldn't play written music, say, in a saxophone section with any precision. But as long as I had control over the music I was playing, and wasn't expected to play written music with 100-percent accuracy, I could go out and hold my own with first-rate players from New York and Los Angeles to Austria, Finland and Armenia.

I compare this to what Billie Holiday had to do vocally: altering the songs she sang to fit the limitations of her vocal range. Needless to say, my style as an improviser has changed somewhat, and it has been incumbent upon me to make a virtue out of necessity. My playing is now sparer than it was before surgery, but that's actually been a good thing. One of the best bits of advice I've ever gotten came a few years ago from my friend and erstwhile teacher, the great alto saxophonist Lee Konitz: "You can always simplify."

I also discovered that jazz has a history of instrumentalists who have had to modify their playing as the result of misfortunes. The best-known instance is guitarist Django Reinhardt (1910–'53), whose left hand was badly burned in a fire at age 18. As a result, he had to relearn the guitar with limited use


of his fretting hand. Two lesser-known examples are pianists Carl Perkins (1928–'58) and Horace Parlan, both of whom were affected by childhood polio. Perkins held his crippled left arm parallel to the keyboard. Parlan, whose right hand was damaged, has learned to use that hand in a unique way; like me, he has only two working fingers.

Also, the phenomenal multi-instrumentalist Rahsaan Roland Kirk (1935–'77) had his tenor saxophone and flute rebuilt after suffering a stroke in 1975 that paralyzed his right side. From then until his death, he was able to play each instrument using only his left hand.

Closest to my heart, though, is my "tumor brother," Israeli soprano saxophonist Yuval Cohen (of 3 Cohens, along with his siblings, clarinetist-tenor saxophonist Anat and trumpeter Avishai). To our mutual astonishment, Yuval and I discovered a few years ago that we both had experienced a similar affliction, surgery and resultant damage—in his case, to his left hand. As he recently told me, "I had stuff built on my soprano, because my left hand lost sensation and dexterity. So I have silver half-rings glued to all the left-hand keys, so I can place my fingers in the right place (helped by eyesight), and this way the fingers don't 'run away,' because the half-rings hold them in place."

But my journey was far from over. My right hand was slowly deteriorating, and I found that I needed additional alterations on the horn. As luck would have it, I discovered that a colleague of mine—an excellent jazz trumpeter named Danny Hayes (1946–2004)—was a mechanical wizard. So I spent hours with Hayes at his apartment, attaching wires to the keys in a primitive but functional way that improved upon Ritter's modifications. As soon as we found what worked best, I brought the horn back to Ritter, and he made Hayes' improvements permanent.

You can see the photos of my soprano (a Couf Superba II, manufactured by Keilwerth, that I've owned since 1977) and the changes that have been made on it. It's a one-of-a-kind instrument. I've recorded three full CDs with it post-alterations. Everything they say about necessity is true.

If you have a situation that in any way resembles mine, feel free to contact me at kirch@mindspring.com.

Bill Kirchner is a saxophonist, composer-arranger, bandleader, jazz historian, record and radio producer, and educator who lives in New York City. His latest CD is *An Evening Of Indigos* (Jazzheads).

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## Chris Potter's Tenor Sax Solo on 'Lament'

**CHRIS POTTER'S 2015 RELEASE IMAGINARY** *Cities* (ECM) has the saxophonist playing over a framework of piano, guitar, two basses and drums, augmented by vibraphone/marimba and a string section. On the album's first track, "Lament," Potter's solo makes use of chromaticism in an intensely emotional manner.

Though he does incorporate chromatic passing tones connecting scale degrees, as in bars 8 and 9 (F# between F and G in bar 8, E natural between F and E in bar 9), Potter tends to favor long strings of chromatics, at times running straight through them as in measures 29 (E up to Gb and back down) and 30 (from B all the way down to a low C).

Potter also uses other chromatic concepts. In measures 18–20, rather than running notes chromatically, he applies the same concept to triads. At the end of bar 18, he plays a descending Db triad, which is quite "in," as the underlying harmony is Dbmaj7.

Then, over the bar line he plays the same descending chord up a whole step, then up an additional half step, and then another half step, ending on F.

Potter does a similar thing at the end of bar 19, starting again on a descending  $D_{\flat}$  triad, but in this instance he moves up a half step to a D major triad on the downbeat (very "out" on the D $_{\flat}$ maj7) and continues in half steps through E $_{\flat}$  (less "out") and on to E natural (fairly "out"). He doesn't stop here, so the dissonant quality of the E against D $_{\flat}$ maj7 is tempered.

The next bar shows another interesting approach to chromatics. From just before the second beat through the middle of the last beat, we basically have a chromatic scale from a high C# down to F, but Potter doesn't just run down the notes in sequence. Instead, he moves around some simple intervallic ideas. We hear a whole step from the  $B_b^1$  at the end of the first beat to the C natural on the second beat, and then this idea is repeated, only inverted and up a half step (C# to B). Then he drops down to G and plays the same whole-step idea but fills it in with the passing tone in between (G–G#–A) and then repeats this idea

a whole step down (F–F#–G). This sequence produces all the notes in the chromatic scale from C# to F, but doesn't come off as just running down in half steps. Potter briefly revisits this idea on the third beat of bar 27, playing ascending half steps moved down a whole step.

In measure 30, there is a line that plays off this idea of moving a lick around. Starting with the high  $B_{\beta}$ , Potter plays  $B_{\beta}$ -F-E-Eb, or, thinking intervallically, down a fourth, down a half step and then down another half step. He then moves this lick down in whole steps. The first two,

with the emphasized  $B_{\flat}$ , F, Eb,  $A_{\flat}$  and  $D_{\flat}$ , fit very well over the  $D_{\flat}$ maj7, but the next two get increasingly "out." When the last group ends on an A natural, Potter moves straight into the descending chromatic line mentioned earlier, ending on a *C*, the seventh of  $D_{\flat}$ maj7, which anticipates the fifth of F major in the next measure.

In essence, Potter uses this type of chromaticism to move outside the harmonies but in a manner that is logical and creates a means of relating these "outside" pitches to the chords, producing tension-and-release in a very stirring manner. DB

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



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## **P. Mauriat Le Bravo 2005 Soprano** *Well-Centered Tone, Comfortable Play*

P. Mauriat has completed its intermediate-level Le Bravo 200 series of saxophones with the introduction of a soprano model. Opening the case, I met an impressive-looking two-piece soprano with a bronze body (also available in yellow brass) in a stylish matte finish, complete with pearl key touches and leather pads with metal resonators. Two neck options immediately caught my eye: straight and curved/bent styles. A quick look at the instrument's keywork revealed a high F-sharp key, front high-F key, neckstrap hook and adjustable thumb rest.

First, I went with the straight neck, as I am used to my straight, one-piece Selmer Mark VI. My soprano has no neckstrap hook or front high-F key, so these offerings were of special interest to me. I added my Selmer D mouthpiece, Vandoren Java red box #3 reed and got right down to playing.

I found the keywork very comfortable, consistently low and well placed. The keys were definitely ready to move and keep up with me. The instrument's response was excellent, especially in the lower register. The more time I spent playing the horn, the more I relaxed and felt at home—especially with the location and feel of the palm keys, which on any unfamiliar horn can be hard to get used to.

The Le Bravo 200S had a well-centered and pleasing tone of its own. I noticed it is a bit lighter and has less projection power than my Mark VI. I was able to achieve excellent intonation with my regular soprano setup in place, with octaves and overtones nicely lining up, pitch-wise.

The 200S came with a comfortable neckstrap that didn't get in the way of my hands—even with the straight neck—and stayed securely snapped to the well-located hook. Good design choices.

Next, I switched to the curved neck and discovered I was very comfort-

able with this option. The instrument was well-balanced by the strap and the different body angle created no problems for me—it felt natural. With the curved neck in place, it seemed the higher notes responded more easily. I quickly decided that I preferred to play the 200S this way. During further play-testing, I discovered that by opening the G-sharp key, the front high E, F and F-sharp spoke more clearly and easily—a technique that's known to be effective on many saxophones. I enjoyed several hours of playing the Le Bravo 200S, and I emerged from the play-test session quite impressed with the saxophone.

The 200S comes with a P. Mauriat "trekking" case—a large, roomy container with a separate, secure groove for both necks and plenty of storage space. Included were a starter mouthpiece, ligature, cloth, neckstrap and shoulder strap for the case itself.

If you are looking for a good option in a soprano, this is one to consider. The Le Bravo 200S shows many fine qualities at an MSRP of \$2,249. —Bruce Gibson

Ordering info: pmauriatmusic.com

## Sopranoplanet Open Sky 2 Deep Chamber, Quick Response

oe Giardullo of Sopranoplanet has developed a new model of soprano saxophone mouthpiece called the Open Sky 2. Designed for ease of play and quick response, the Open Sky 2 has a special chamber that is narrower and deeper than most other soprano mouthpieces. According to Giardullo, this long, deep chamber has an effect on both the way the mouthpiece sounds and the way it responds to the player.

In play-testing the Open Sky 2 on my curved Yanagisawa soprano, I was able to get a focused but detailed sound, and the response was immediate.



Blowing on this piece was a rewarding experience from the very beginning. Things only got better as I began to experiment with the various nuances the piece makes available to the player, thanks to the presence of lots of harmonic partials and a wide dynamic range.

The Open Sky 2 went a long way in making the soprano-playing experience more enjoyable and less of a pain. That meant that I was able to rely more on the instincts I have developed on alto, tenor and bari. With a relaxed feeling in my chops, I made the horn sing expressively, freely moving from smooth-and-silky territory into a more aggressive approach and back again. I could make it whisper seductively, ring out with a full tone or push it into a growling rage—just by making subtle changes to the airstream.

"It is as if it's fuel-injected," Giardullo said of the piece, which was inspired by the grace and ease of the late Grover Washington Jr.'s soprano sound. "The sports car analogy was vivid in my mind, and the end result is [a mouthpiece] as quick, rich, finely tuned and agile as a Ferrari."

The Open Sky 2 lets you do all this while maintaining firm control over your intonation. While some soprano mouthpieces are so wide open that you feel like you're never really sure where the center of pitch is, and others so narrow that you're frequently struggling to "correct" pitch disagreements between octaves, the Open Sky 2 keeps you safely in the proper lanes of pitch.

The Open Sky 2 has the power to liberate your soprano chops. Give it a good, long blow, and you might discover that you have access to sounds you never imagined before. —*Ed Enright* 

Ordering info: sopranoplanet.com

seles of set

Launched under the Seles brand from Henri Selmer Paris, the Axos saxophone provides a full sound, and natural feel. Axos features a mini-rib construction - making it light and quick to respond. It has leather pads with metal resonators, and the Axos ships with a S80 C\* mouthpiece as well as a lightweight backpack case. The Axos is ideal for the advancing student and ensemble work, as well as for jazz, popular and classical repertoire.

> "I have played and performed on the new Axos model, and I can definitively say that the ergonomics and sound of the horn are spectacular!"

> > - Miles Osland Director of Jazz Studies, University of Kentucky



"Axos puts out what I put into it! It gets a very good and powerful sound. It takes whatever you can give it. It's got a good fat sound!"

> - John Helliwell Supertramp

## Seles Axos Alto Saxophone

Selmer Paris Tone, Mechanical Reliability

he Axos alto saxophone is the latest entry in the SeleS range of instruments from Henri Selmer Paris. This sub-brand, which also includes the Presence clarinet, was launched last year to accommodate more affordable price ranges and make quality instruments accessible to players who want something that's better than a student horn but isn't prohibitively expensive.

These days, with prices of some new saxophones reaching as high as \$15,000, there's a definite need for something more reasonable among advancing students and semi-pros who simply don't have that kind of dough. There is a wide range of price points to shoot for when bringing a new saxophone to market.

> In creating the SeleS range, Selmer Paris streamlined its manufacturing process and standardized certain horn-crafting procedures. The company also invested in new manufacturing tools in order to optimize production time, and began doing more outsourcing with external industrial collaborators. This all translates to more modern, more efficient methods of making instruments using recent technological innovations, result

ing in consistency of quality and considerably lower prices.

The Axos alto saxophone is assembled at the Selmer factory (the same facility where all Selmer Paris saxophones have been made since 1922) in Mantes-la-Ville, France, and all the parts are ultimately French-made. With a street price of just over \$4,000, it is in the same price range as certain Yamaha and Yanagisawa alto models that do well among students who are getting serious about their playing.

"For the advancing high-schooler, it's definitely where they want to go," said Bob Lichty, Category Manager of Saxophones at Conn-Selmer, which distributes SeleS in the United States. "That's something that they can carry with them all through college if they need to."

The Axos has a mini-ribbed (or post-to-body) construction, resulting in a lightweight frame that is quick to respond. The horn is made with the same metals as other Selmer Paris saxophones, and it has a Selmer signature bore that can be immediately identified by its rich harmonics and roundness of sound.

A lighter socket makes the instrument a little more free-blowing than what you might expect. It has a light, colorless lacquer, which gives it a brighter tone than some Selmers. There is a minimum amount of engraving on the horn—by no means ornate, but enough to give it a classy look. Leather pads with metal resonators round out the profile.

I found the adapted keywork on the Axos felt especially comfortable under my fingers. It has great mechanics, so getting around on the instrument was a piece of cake.

I played two big band sets on the Axos using two different mouthpieces. The first set, I used my preferred mouthpiece for playing the 2nd Alto book—a hard-rubber Couf Artist model. I found that I blended well with the Mark VI players in the section, not just in terms of tone, but also intonation-wise. The lead alto player was especially attentive to dynamics, and I was able to keep up with him every step of the way, even amid drastic changes in volume. There was one point where an arrangement called for the altos

to play unison high F's at mezzo-forte, and the Axos nailed it perfectly with no clash of tone or disagreement of pitch. When it came time for sax section solis, I found I could cruise along quickly and accurately without hitting any bumps in the road, thanks to the horn's excellent keywork. In general, I felt like I fit in nicely playing this ax.

On the second set of the gig, I switched to my Claude Lakey hard-rubber mouthpiece, which is more suitable for lead playing and expressive soloing. This really brought out the responsiveness and brightness of the Axos, which came in handy when it was my turn to solo over the band. It showed me that the Axos is capable of taking a lead role, with plenty of tones at your disposal depending on what setup you choose.

In a separate practice session, I put a metal Brilhart Level-Air on the Axos and discovered a whole new area of modern, edgy power-alto tones suitable for contemporary styles. With the proper setup, this saxophone would definitely do well in the horn section of a loud rock band or r&b outfit.

From its clean and solid-sounding high end down to its fat, full low notes, the Axos is one of those saxophones that sounds great and responds well over the entire range of the horn. Low notes are especially sweet, and the middle register is nice and round. Altissimo came easily on the Axos; I enjoyed popping out full-sounding, in-tune high G's in particular.

The Axos has a lot going for it, most of all the Henri Selmer Paris heritage that's behind it. It might not have the high-end appeal of the company's premium professional saxophones, which have been preferred by top artists around the world for decades. But it should definitely satisfy the needs of a lot of players and students who need an accurate, reliable alto in their arsenal.

The Axos comes with a classic Selmer S80 C-star mouthpiece, neckstrap and a convenient backpack-style case. —*Ed Enright* Ordering info: conn-selmer.com



## REED SCHOOL TOOIShed > GEAR BOX

## 1. Reeds on Reserve

D'Addario Woodwinds has expanded its Reserve Saxophone Reed line with the addition of D'Addario Reserve Soprano and Tenor Saxophone Reeds. The premium reeds each feature seven strengths, ranging from 2.0 to 4.5, including a special 3.0+ (3.25) quarter strength. D'Addario Woodwinds has also introduced a line of accessories that includes a protective reed guard and premium cork grease. The reed guard has a grooved surface that prevents reed warping, and its soft elastomer cover will securely hold any assortment of B-flat and E-flat clarinet reeds or soprano and alto saxophone reeds. The all-natural cork grease provides and retains lubrication to keep corks at their best and prevent them from breaking down. **More info: woodwinds.daddario.com** 

## 2. Vintage Appeal

Vandoren's V16 line of metal tenor saxophone mouthpieces has been revamped to appeal to a wider range of players. The new exterior shape and interior design of the V16s evoke the sound of famous metal tenor mouthpieces of years gone by, with two additional chamber offerings: a Medium chamber for players seeking the 1950s jazz aesthetic, and a Large chamber for players preferring the 1940s sound. The existing models are still available, now renumbered to a simpler system, akin to the Vandoren ebonite line as well as popular vintage mouthpieces. More info: vandoren.com

## 3. Microfiber Cloth

The Premium Microfiber Cleaning Cloth from JodyJazz is designed to help keep mouthpieces and instruments clean and dry. The specially formulated microfiber cloth preferred for its light weight, super-absorbency and rapid drying properties—will safely remove fingerprints and oils from metal, wood, hard rubber and plastics. With 100,000 fibers per square inch, the material is softer than silk yet extremely durable. The cloth features a graphic design incorporating an image of the JodyJazz DV mouthpiece and the company's familiar logo. **More Info:** JodyJazz.com

## 4. Inspired Setup

Légère has launched the Inspiration mouthpiece-reed combination, designed by Austrian mouthpiece craftsman Nick Kückmeier. The mouthpiece is machined to deliver a dark, warm tone and to allow for quick articulation and precise intonation when used with Légère premium synthetic reeds. The Inspiration setup requires less power from the player up front while delivering more power to the instrument. Each Inspiration package for B-flat clarinet and alto saxophone includes a matte-finish mouthpiece, a Rovner (North America) or BG (outside North America) ligature, a Légère Signature or Classic reed, a mouthpiece cap and a mouthpiece cushion. **More info: legere.com** 

## 5. 3-Horn Fakebook

Sher Music Co.'s most popular fakebook, *The Real Easy Book, Vol. 1*, is now published in an expanded edition with three horn parts, each on their own separate page. Produced in conjunction with the Stanford Jazz Workshop, the three-horn edition includes harmony parts for every melody and background horn lines to be played underneath soloists. Several shout choruses are also included. The three-horn arrangements, by pianist Larry Dunlap, create a fuller and more varied professional combo sound. Each part is simple enough for beginning improvisers to play. At 172 pages, the book is available in C, B-flat, E-flat and bass clef versions. More info: shermusic.com



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**Wayne Shorter Quartet** Featuring Danilo Pérez, John Patitucci and Brian Blade MAY 27

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# DOWNBEAT 2015-'16 FALL/WINTER

## TUCSON JAZZ FESTIVAL HEATS UP

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## **UNITED STATES**

This treble clef denotes a corresponding ad in this guide.



## Angel City Jazz Festival Los Angeles, California Sept. 25–Oct. 11

The theme for this year's Angel City Jazz Festival is "Listen!" The goal is to unite musicians and fans through the act of purposeful listening. The festival presents a diverse collective of up-and-coming artists, well-known veterans and innovators who represent the forefront of today's jazz scene. **Lineup:** Jen Shyu with Ambrose Akinmusire, Yosvany Terry with Baptiste Trotignon, Lucian Ban & Mat Maneri, Motoko Honda & Vanessa Anh Vo, Mark Dresser, Miguel Atwood Ferguson, The Empty Cage Quartet. angelcityjazz.com

## Oregon Coast Jazz Party Newport, Oregon Oct. 3–4

The Oregon Coast Jazz Party, now in its 12th year, follows the "jazz party" format, which means that the musicians appear in different combinations called "sets" during the three-day festivities. Fans can expect multiple sets from renowned jazz stars, nightcap performances and educational presentations.

Lineup: John Clayton, Gary Smulyan, Piano Duo: Bill Charlap/Renee Rosnes, Gilbert Castellanos, Larry Fuller, Alvester Garnett, Holly Hofmann, Mike Horsfall, Alan Jones, Marilyn Keller, Bill Mays Inventions Trio with Alisa Horn and Marvin Stamm, Ryan Meagher, Reinhardt Melz, Frank Potenza, Mary Stallings, Katie Theroux, Bobby Torres, Tom Wakeling, Mike Wofford, Rickey Woodward.

oregonjazzparty.com

## Les DeMerle Amelia Island Jazz Festival Fernandina Beach, Florida Oct. 4–11

Now in its 12th year, the AIJF will take place

at various locations in historic Fernandina Beach on beautiful Amelia Island, which is close to Jacksonville. Artistic Director Les DeMerle presents world-class jazz in numerous styles, including swing, bebop, modern, Dixieland, big band and Latin jazz. Lineup: Larry Coryell, Kevin Mahogany, Trio Caliente, The Dynamic Les DeMerle Little Big Band with vocalist Bonnie Eisele, Navy Band Southeast's TGIF Brass Band, Les DeMerle Jazztet with vocalist Bonnie Eisele. ameliaislandjazzfestival.com

## Duck Jazz Festival Duck, North Carolina Oct. 9–11

The 9th annual Duck Jazz Festival presented by PNC is situated between sound and sea on the Outer Banks of North Carolina. A jam session and other events at Duck businesses lead up to a full day of jazz at this free, non-ticketed festival. Lineup: Maceo Parker, Bria Skonberg Quintet, The Monitors, The Mint Julep Jazz

Quintet, The Monitors, The Mint Julep Jazz Band, First Flight High School Jazz Band. duckjazz.com

### Earshot Jazz Festival Seattle, Washington Oct. 9–Nov. 18

Critical acclaim as "Seattle's most important annual jazz event" is just one of the many accolades this festival has received. This exciting festival brightens up the rainy fall nights with shows in venues throughout the city. The program includes jazz masters, important innovators, bright local stars and a special focus on Seattle hero Wayne Horvitz at 60.

Lineup: Wayne Horvitz, Brad Mehdau Trio, Wayne Shorter Quartet, Charles Lloyd Quartet, Anat Cohen, Hugh Masekela, Seattle Symphony Orchestra with special guest Bill Frisell, Kris Davis Trio, Myra Melford's Snowy Egret, Somi, Chris Potter Trio, Jacob Fred Jazz Odyssey, Pedrito Martinez, Tomeka Reid/Nicole Mitchell/Mike Reed, Larry Fuller Trio, Scott Amendola Band with Nels Cline and Jenny Scheinman. <u>earshotjazz.org</u>

## Pittsfield City Jazz Festival Pittsfield, Massachusetts Oct. 9–18

The 11th annual Pittsfield City Jazz Festival takes place in various venues in downtown Pittsfield. In addition to the region's top big band, the festival presents top female instrumental and vocal performers, a new entry in the Jazz Prodigy series, and the annual jazz crawl, which features performances in restaurants and lounges throughout downtown Pittsfield. **Lineup:** Randy Brecker, Frank Vignola, Greg Hopkins Jazz Orchestra. **berkshiresjazz.org** 

## Sun Valley, Idaho Oct. 14–18

Fans at the 26th annual edition of this diverse festival will hear many styles of music: contemporary jazz, swing, vintage jazz, blues, cabaret, Western Swing, big band, zydeco and gypsy jazz. There's also an amateur dance competition. Lineup: After Midnight, Sun Valley Jazz All Star Big Band, Barnhart-Midiri Quartet, Blue Renditions, Blue Street Jazz Band, Bob Draga & Friends, Boise Straight Ahead, Brianne Gray & The Jake VP Band, Bruce Innes Trio, Casey MacGill & His High 5, John & Kristy Cocuzzi, Cornet Chop Suey, Ellis Island Boys, Gator Nation, Gonzalo Bergara Quartet, High Street, Ivory & Gold, Jacob Miller & The Bridge City Crooners, Jerry Krahn Quartet, Joe Fos Trio, Lisa Kelly & JB Scott with Jeff Phillips and Friends, Kyle Rowland Blues Band, Kings of Swing, Midiri Brothers Sextet, PBJ (Paul Reid, Brian Casserly & Jim Lawlor), Pieter Meijers Quartet with Brady McKay, Gary Ryan, Ellie

Shaw, Sherri Colby's Racket Makers & Friends, Side Street Strutters Jazz Band with Meloney Collins, Sun Valley Jazz All Stars, Sun Valley Jazz Marching Band, Titan Hot 7, Tom Hook & NOLA Rhythm & Blues, Tom Rigney & Flambeau, Stephanie Trick, U.S. Coast Guard Dixie Band, We Three, Yale Whiffenpoofs, Yve Evans. sunvalleyjazz.com

## Clearwater Jazz Holiday Clearwater, Florida Oct. 15–18

The 37th annual celebration is a collaboration between the Clearwater Jazz Holiday Foundation, City of Clearwater, Ruth Eckerd Hall and the Clearwater Jazz Holiday Jazz Force. The festival presents jazz, blues, jam bands, funk, r&b, fusion and more. **Lineup:** Poncho Sanchez & His Latin Jazz Band, Buddy Guy, Gladys Knight, The O'Jays, Sheryl Crow, The Avett Brothers, Gloria West & The Gents, James Suggs Quintet with Dave Stryker, Langhorne Slim & The Law, Big Sam's Funky Nation, Mindi Abair & The Boneshakers, Phill Fest, The Quebe Sisters, Jack Wilkins Blue & Green Project, REH/CJH Youth Jazz Band. **clearwaterjazz.com** 

## Rehoboth Beach Jazz Festival Rehoboth Beach, Delaware

Now in its 26th year, this diverse jazz program is held across five venues in Rehoboth Beach, Lewes and Dewey Beach. Attendees can enjoy the beautiful beaches and the variety of entertainment at local restaurants and bars.

Lineup: Al Jarreau with Marc Antoine & Steve Cole, Fourplay, BWB (Rick Braun, Kirk Whalum & Norman Brown), Gerald Albright, Peabo Bryson, Bettye LaVette, Boney James, The Sax Pack (Jeff Kashiwa, Steve Cole & Kim Waters), Nick Colionne, Euge Groove, Brian Simpson, David P. Stevens, Art Sherrod Jr. & The Sounds of Soul Sessions, Stanley Jordan with Marc Antoine, Alex Bugnon, Matt Marshak, Pieces of a Dream with Eric Roberson & Kim Waters, Four80East with Art Sherrod Jr., Urban Jazz Coalition featuring Jeff Kashiwa & Selina Albright, Gerald Veasley, Chielli Minucci with Chris Farr & Tommy Campbell, Chuck Loeb, Nathan East & Eric "Erro" Roberson.

rehobothjazz.com

## Texas Jazz Festival Corpus Christi, Texas Oct. 16–18

Featuring three stages in Hertitage Park, the Texas Jazz Festival is celebrating its 55th year of showcasing jazz musicians from around the country as well as local talent.

Lineup: Kirk Whalum, Marvin Stamm, Kyle Turner, Bayou City Brass Band, Tom Braxton, U.S. Air Force Band of the West. texasjazz-fest.org

## Festival Miami Miami, Florida

## Oct. 16-Nov. 6

The University of Miami Frost School of Music hosts Festival Miami on its picturesque Coral Gables campus in comfortable and intimate venues including the newly renovated Maurice Gusman Concert Hall and the Weeks Center for Recording and Performance. **Lineup:** Terence Blanchard, Ben Folds, Freda Payne, Black Violin, Frost Wind Ensemble, Joey DeFrancesco, Simone Dinnerstein, Raquel Sofía, Charles Castlemam, Gonzalo Rubalcaba, John Easterlin, Natalia Lafourcade, Cyrille Aimée, Richard Todd, Joel Smirnoff, Christopher O'Riley.

miami.edu/frost/index.php/festival\_miami

## Edgefest Ann Arbor, Michigan Oct. 21–24

The 19th annual Edgefest will explore new music created by trumpeters, cornetists and flugelhorn players. As always, the festival will also present some of the most creative multi-instrumentalists on the scene today. As in past years, Edgefest reaches out beyond the concert hall with Fringe at the Edge performances, public discussions, workshops and school residencies. The community is invited to attend all educational and Fringe events free of charge. **Lineup:** Taylor Ho Bynum & Tomas Fujiwara, Derek Worthington's Arbor Composers Collective, RDM, Rob Mazurek, Lina Allemano, Andrew Drury, Fred Lonberg-Holm & Piotr Michalowski, Mark Kirchenmann's Big Fun, Peter Evans, Tim Berne's Decay, Ken



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## February 18-28 | pdxjazz.com



Kozora, Joe McPhee's Survival Unit III, Leimgruber/Demierre/Phillips. <u>kerrytownconcerthouse.com/index.php/ events/edgefest</u>

## Otis Taylor's Trance Blues Jam Festival

## Boulder, Colorado

Fans can join acclaimed blues artist Otis Taylor for the extraordinary Trance Blues Jam Festival. The festival encourages and inspires people to be active participants. The point is to create music together. The trance jam is where fans get to live their musical dreams.

Lineup: Otis Taylor, Javina Magness, Ron Miles, Cassie Taylor, Paul & Jessica Rogalski, Erica Brown, Anne Harris, Larry Thompson, Vieux Traore, Todd Edmunds, G'Jai, "MJ" Merrian Johnson, Jack Gaffney, Daniel Sproul, Taylor Scott. trancebluesfestival.com

## Exit O Jazz Festival Cape May, New Jersey Nov. 6–8

Since its debut in 2012, the Exit 0 Jazz Festival has drawn world-class musicians and music aficionados alike. During the festival weekend, Cape May is transformed into a jazz village as fans and musicians make their pilgrimage to the little town by the sea to witness first-rate performances from established artists, exciting new artists and local favorites.

**Lineup:** Jazz at Lincoln Center Orchestra with Wynton Marsalis, Bettye LaVette, Terri Lyne Carrington's Mosaic Project: Love & Soul, The Skatalites, Davina & the Vagabonds, PhillyBloco, Pat Martino Trio (with horns), Buster Williams, Marc Cary's "Harlem Sessions" All-Stars, Shai Maestro Trio, Oran Etkin Quartet, Larry McKenna & Bootsie Barnes, Gal Holiday & The Honky Tonk Review.

## <u>exit0jazzfest.com</u>

### TD James Moody Jazz Festival Newark, New Jersey Nov. 7–15

For the fourth year, the TD James Moody Jazz Festival, one of the largest gatherings of jazz fans on the East Coast, presents a lineup of the country's best musicians. This festival, held in the New Jersey Performing Arts Center, features concerts, panel discussions and workshops. Ticket holders to the Nov. 9 concert, "The Real Sinatra Songbook," can attend a preconcert discussion with Sinatra historian Charles L. Granata and other experts. The Sarah Vaughan International Jazz Vocal Competition takes place on Nov. 15. Lineup: Tony Bennett with Antonia Bennett, Judy Carmichael Trio with Harry Allen, Dorado Schmitt & The Django Festival All-Stars, Christian McBride with Bruce Hornsby, Bill Charlap, Dianne Reeves, Sharon Jones & The Dap-Kings, T.S. Monk Sextet, "The Real Sinatra Songbook" with Ken Peplowski, Kevin Mahogany, Sue Raney & Tom Wopat. njpac.org

### JazzFest at Sea Cruise leaving from Miami, Florida Nov. 11–21

This cruise presents traditional jazz, classic jazz, swing and other styles. The MSC





Ryan Truesdell and the Gil Evans Project Bob Mintzer Big Band Michael Davis, Trombone Donny McCaslin, Saxophone Scott Wendholt, Trumpet Collegiate groups from across the country

> Tickets on sale December 1, 2015 elmhurst.edu/jazzfestival

Divina departs from Miami and heads to the Southern Caribbean for 10 nights. Attendees have their choice of performances each evening of the cruise, and there are afternoon sessions during the days at sea. **Lineup:** Houston Person, Bucky Pizzarelli, Allen Vache, Warren Vache, Butch Miles, Paul Keller, Banu Ginson, John Cocuzzi, Mike Pittsley, John Allred, Randy Reinhart, Bob Leary, Danny Coots, Kristy Cocuzzi, Tardo Hammer, Charlie Silva, Yve Evans. **jazzfestatsea.com** 

### Frank Morgan Taos Jazz Festival Taos, New Mexico Nov. 18–21

This is a four-day tribute to alto saxophonist Frank Morgan (1933–2007), who called Taos home. The festival celebrates his life and music with events throughout Taos, featuring musicians he connected with or influenced during his career. The festival includes a screening of N.C. Heikin's documentary *Sound of Redemption: The Frank Morgan Story*.

Lineup: George Cables Trio, Grace Kelly Quintet, Lorca Hart Trio, others. taosjazz.org

### Winter Jazzfest New York City Jan. 8–10, 2016

Since launching as a one-day festival in 2005, Winter Jazzfest has expanded to multiple days and numerous venues, showcasing hundreds of artists and attracting thousands of attendees each year. In 2015 the festival featured more than 100 groups and 400 musicians in 10 venues while welcoming more than 7,500 attendees. Set against the historic backdrop of New York's Greenwich Village, the festival extends the rich jazz heritage of the downtown neighborhood. The festival offers an intimate, energized environment for audiences to experience today's diverse and thriving jazz scene.

Lineup: Last year's festival featured JD Allen, Ambrose Akinmusire, The Cookers, Dave Douglas Quartet, Robert Glasper, José James, Lionel Loueke Trio, David Murray, Rudresh Mahantathappa, Arturo O'Farrill, Kendrick Scott Oracle, Nicholas Payton Trio, Marc Ribot & The Young Philadelphians with strings, Catherine Russell, SFJAZZ Collective, Tyshawn Sorey, Ken Vandermark. winterjazzfest.com

## **Tucson Jazz Festival Tucson, Arizona** Jan. 14–24, 2016

The HSL Properties Tucson Jazz Festival draws thousands of people from across the country to historic downtown Tucson. This year's guest of honor is saxophonist Jimmy Heath, who will perform with the Tucson Jazz Institute's Ellington Band. The festival's first weekend includes a high school jazz band invitational. On Martin Luther King Day (Jan. 18), there is a free outdoor "jazz fiesta" downtown on two stages, featuring Latin and straightahead jazz.

Lineup: Jimmy Heath, Snarky Puppy, Monterey Jazz Festival on Tour (Ravi Coltrane, Terence Blanchard, Patti Austin, Gerald Clayton, Joe Sanders & Justin Brown), Poncho Sanchez & His Latin Jazz Band, Lizz Wright, Byron Stripling with the Tucson Symphony Orchestra, Kenny Werner Trio, Kermit Ruffins, Nir Felder, The Rad Trads, King Solomon Hicks, Jon Weber, the Tucson Jazz Institute's Ellington Band, Arthur Vint & Associates, Mike Eckroth, Arthur Migliazza, La Voz de Tres, Larry Redhouse Trio. tucsonjazzfestival.org

## The Jazz Cruise Cruise leaving from Fort Lauderdale, Florida Jan. 17–24, 2016

For the past 15 years, the Jazz Cruise has been dedicated to straightahead jazz. The cruise has become one of the most important events in the jazz world, uniting fans and artists from around the globe for a week at sea. This year's cruise will include tributes to Joe Williams, Cedar Walton and Eddie Higgins.

Lineup: Kenny Barron Trio, Dee Dee Bridgewater, Kurt Elling, Christian McBride, Charles McPherson Group, Marcus Miller, Dianne Reeves, Anat Cohen, Avishai Cohen, Wycliffe Gordon, Alonzo Bodden, Randy Becker, Houston Person Quartet, John Pizzarelli Quartet.

thejazzcruise.com

## Miami Beach Jazz Festival Miami, Florida Jan. 25–30, 2016

The third annual MBJF will present jazz from around the world. Attendees will see groups from Israel, Latvia, France, Germany, Venezuela, Cape Verde and more. The educational program offers a weeklong academy, hosting international students, in addition to the annual student competition. Several concert series and kick-off events precede the main dates.

**Lineup:** Daniel Zamir Quartet, Mayra Andrade, C4 Trio, Markus Gottschlich Trio, Sinkope, Joe Carter Trio, Marialy Pacheco. <u>miamibeachjazz.com</u>

## Berklee High School Jazz Festival Boston, Massachusetts Feb. 6, 2016

Berklee College of Music hosts its High School Jazz Festival at the Hynes Convention Center in Boston. The annual festival, which is free and open to the public, is the largest event of its kind in the United States. Big bands, combos and vocal jazz ensembles will perform and compete throughout the day. Additionally, there will be performances by Berklee College of Music faculty, tours of Berklee's campus and open jam sessions.

Lineup: Past performers include Jason Marsalis, Delfeayo Marsalis, Snarky Puppy, Aubrey Logan, Gregg Bissonette, Abe Laboriel.

festival.berkleejazz.org

## Newport Beach Jazz Party Newport Beach, California Mid-February 2016

Now in its 16th year, the Newport Beach Jazz Party features top jazz artists in a luxury resort setting at the Newport Beach Marriott Hotel & Spa. The festival features outdoor poolside sessions during the day and concerts in the ballroom at night, plus Saturday and Sunday champagne brunches. Artists perform in various mix-and-match settings, including duos, trios, quintets and big bands.

**Lineup:** Past performers include the Clayton-Hamilton Jazz Orchestra, Alan Bergman, Johnny Mandel, Sammy Nestico, Byron Stripling, Ken Peplowski, Houston Person. <u>newportbeachjazzparty.com</u>

## Portland Jazz Festival Portland, Oregon Feb. 18–28, 2016

The Portland Jazz Festival is a multivenue series of jazz events. Nationally and regionally supported as a cultural tourism initiative in celebration of Black History Month, the festival presents internationally recognized jazz masters alongside local jazz musicians. This year the festival will be celebrating the 90th anniversary of John Coltrane's birth.

**Lineup:** Charles Lloyd, Ravi Coltrane, Dianne Reeves, John Scofield, Geri Allen, Marquis Hill, Pat Martino, Joe Lovano, Orrin Evans, Kenny Barron Trio, Reggie Workman, Gary Peacock Trio, JD Allen, Alan Jones, Andrew Cyrille, Nicole Glover, Gary Bartz, We Four (Javon Jackson, George Cables, Peter Washington & Jimmy Cobb), Brian Blade & The Fellowship Band, Sonny Fortune Quartet, Bobby Torres, Alicia Olatuja, Jeff Baker, Spanish Harlem Orchestra, Azar Lawrence, Dan Balmer. pdxjazz.com

## Lionel Hampton Jazz Festival Moscow, Idaho

**February 24–27, 2016** Held at the University of Idaho, the 49th annual festival will be a four-day celebration that inspires students, teachers and audiences with more than 800 student performances, 90 workshops and master



SABIAN.com/hh

## FALL/WINTER FESTIVAL GUIDE 2015-'16





classes, world-class main-stage acts, after-hours jam sessions in restaurants, and opportunities to visit with renowned musicians and educators in an intimate indoor setting.

**Lineup:** Monty Alexander Trio, Ignacio Berroa Quartet, Dee Daniels Trio, Lionel Hampton Jazz Festival Big Band with special guest Warren Wolf.

uidaho.edu/jazzfest

## **Elmhurst College Jazz Festival**

Feb. 25-28, 2016

Every February, the best college jazz bands in the country converge on the Elmhurst College campus for three days of performances and education. Bands take turns performing for some of the greatest names in jazz, who offer critiques and award a variety of honors. The professionals cap off each night of the festival with a rousing performance of their own. The 49th annual edition of the festival will feature Ryan Truesdell, who has won acclaim for his live and recorded performances of Gil Evans' arrangements.

Lineup: Ryan Truesdell's Gil Evans Project, Bob Mintzer Big Band, Michael Davis, Scott Wendholt, Donny McCaslin. elmhurst.edu/jazzfestival

## San Jose Jazz Winter Fest San Jose, California Feb. 27–March 8, 2016

Winter Fest is the "cool" counterpart to San Jose Summer Fest, presenting jazz talent that pushes the art form forward. In addition to Grammy winners and up-and-coming players, the festival places a spotlight on education with student band performances. **Lineup:** Past performers include Vijay lyer, Robert Glasper Experiment, José James, La Santa Cecilia, Thundercat, Moses Sumney, Miguel Atwood-Ferguson. sanjosejazz.org

### French Quarter Festival New Orleans, Louisiana April 7–10, 2016

The French Quarter Festival presents more than 2,000 musicians on 23 stages, 60 food vendors from well-known local restaurants and countless special events. This is a spicy, exciting showcase of Louisiana food, music and culture.

Lineup: Kermit Ruffins, Little Freddie King, Irma Thomas, The Dixie Cups, Allen Toussaint, Jeremy Davenport, New Birth Brass Band, Leroy Jones' Original Hurricane Brass Band, Hot & Brass Band, The Original Pinettes Brass Band, Treme Brass Band, Rockin' Dopsie & The Zydeco Twisters. fgfi.org

## Next Generation Jazz Festival Presented by Monterey Jazz Festival Monterey, California April 8–10, 2016

Each spring, more than 1,300 of the nation's top student musicians come to the Next Generation Jazz Festival. One of the most inclusive festivals in the country, the festival welcomes middle, high school and collegiate big bands, combos, vocal ensembles and conglomerate bands. From over 130 groups, the very best win a spot at the Monterey Jazz Festival in September.

**Lineup:** Past performers have included ensembles from throughout California, as well as Texas, Florida, Massachusetts and Canada.

## montereyjazzfestival.org

### New York City Jazz Festival New York City April 8–11, 2016

Held at the world-famous Apollo Theater, this festival gives instrumental and vocal jazz ensembles the opportunity to perform as part of a ticketed daytime performance, receive comments from a panel of vocal and instrumental jazz experts, have a private clinic with one of them, and attend an evening performance of select professional and amateur musicians. This year's guest clinicians are Jennifer Barnes, Duane Davis, Jeff Jarvis, Greg Jasperse and Pete McGuinness. This year's festival will feature The Real Group, a groundbreaking vocal ensemble from Sweden.

Lineup: The Real Group. Previous performers include New York Voices and Bob Mintzer. <u>mcp.us/new-york-city-jazz-festival</u>

## Knox-Rootabaga Jazz Festival Galesburg, Illinois April 14–16, 2016

Knox College and the Galesburg community host three days of concerts and workshops. The festival is held in the birthplace of Pulitzer Prize-winning writer Carl Sandburg and is named for his 1922 children's book, *Rootabaga Stories*. On April 14, there will be a Faculty & Friends Combo concert featuring Knox College's jazz faculty members and professional jazz musicians from central Illinois.

**Lineup:** Knox Jazz Ensemble with Brian Blade & The Fellowship Band, Matuto, Knox Alumni Big Band, Rootabaga Kids. <u>knox.edu</u>

## Eau Claire Jazz Festival Eau Claire, Wisconsin April 22–23, 2016

Founded in 1967, this festival is held on the University of Wisconsin–Eau Claire campus. It will include more than 100 regional schools competing, as well as community events, concerts by headliners and guest artist master classes.

Lineup: Last year's festival featured Terell Stafford and Ignacio "Nachito" Herrera. eauclairejazz.com

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## **Tucson Jazz Festival Aims To Build on Initial Success**

ourism is a \$2 billion-per-year industry in Tucson, one of the major engines driving the economy of Arizona's second-largest city. But the flow of visitors often slows to a trickle in January, despite the region's temperate weather. How could the city boost tourism in those down times each year? In 2014, Tucson Mayor Jonathan Rothschild proposed a solution: jazz.

He approached Yvonne Ervin, a Tucsonbased jazz presenter, about establishing an annual jazz festival in January. "When the mayor asked me to do this, I was kind of dubious," Ervin recalled. Nevertheless, she formed a board and appointed Jeff Haskell, a retired professor of jazz at the University of Arizona, as artistic director. Then she got moving.

"It went amazingly well," she said. "We started raising money, and we got HSL Properties in as our title sponsor. We have amazing support from the community."

The inaugural edition of the HSL Properties Tucson Jazz Festival took place Jan. 16–28, 2015, bringing in 10,000 attendees and breaking even on its investment. Ervin had hoped 15 percent of the audience would come from out of town; instead, visitors constituted 28 percent.

The closing act, legendary songwriter Burt Bacharach, was the festival's most popular act—a sellout. Other headliners included the Robert Glasper Experiment, vocalist-guitarist Allan Harris and organist Joey DeFrancesco, who played the festival's opening night with his quartet and the festival's guest of honor, drummer Jimmy Cobb.

"The crowd was enthusiastic, the place was packed and everyone was energetic," DeFrancesco said. "It was only the first year, but you could see that people were working really hard to make everything happen."

The success of the festival's debut, especially in terms of tourism, virtually guaranteed a second edition in 2016. It is scheduled for Jan. 14–24 at seven venues located mostly in downtown Tucson.

The festival hub is co-located at two historic theaters on Congress Street, the Fox Tucson and the Rialto. Between them, the two venues will host six of the festival's 11 events. Snarky Puppy, vocalist Lizz Wright and New Orleans trumpeter Kermit Ruffins will perform at the Rialto. New York brass-band/blues-rock hybrid The Rad Trads and Poncho Sanchez's Latin Jazz Band will appear at the Fox, which will also host the Tucson Jazz Institute's Ellington Band, featuring this year's guest of honor, saxophonist and NEA Jazz Master Jimmy Heath. Opening that show will be pianist Kenny Werner's trio, offering a tribute to Erroll Garner.

"We don't do any smooth jazz," Ervin said of the festival's artistic principles. "Other than that, we try to come up with a balanced program. We have partnerships with UA Presents [the performing arts producer for the University of Arizona] and the Tucson Symphony Orchestra,



so we work with them in figuring out who might fit into the festival."

The university will host two events in 2016. Pianist Jon Weber presents his "115 Years of Jazz Piano" at UA's Crowder Hall, while the Monterey Jazz Festival on Tour—an all-star sextet with Patti Austin, Ravi Coltrane, Terence Blanchard, Gerald Clayton, Joe Sanders and Justin Brown—performs at Centennial Hall. As for the TSO, they will perform at TCC Symphony Hall behind trumpeter Byron Stripling.

Ervin also emphasizes a strong local component. "We like to bring in what I call 'our hometown kids done good,'" she said. "This year we're bringing in Mike Eckroth to open for Poncho. And we're also bringing in Arthur Vint for his CD release party." Arthur Migliazza, a young Tucson native, will open for the Rad Trads.

In addition, on Jan. 18 (Martin Luther King

Day), the festival will present an all-day free concert of local artists on two stages downtown. The smaller stage will offer straightahead jazz; the larger will be focused on Latin jazz.

In striving for future growth, Ervin hopes the festival will continue to draw tourists from throughout the United States—and from other countries. "Last year, 24 percent of the [attendees] from out of town came from the Midwest," she said. "But we're trying to bring in some more business from Mexico, so we're working with the Mexican Consul here this year."

The festival is not only an asset to tourists but also to a community that is not often regarded as a jazz hotbed. "It's great to see a new festival in Arizona," said DeFrancesco, who lives in Phoenix. "People are excited that the new festival is happening, and I hope it continues for a long time to come." —*Michael J. West* 

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- Emily Sierra Foto con su PowerBell Alto Saxophone - AS4240BC



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## **Jazzdor Turns 30 in Style**

here's nothing quite like a milestone anniversary to raise a jazz festival's profile. Although the Jazzdor Festival in Strasbourg may not be as famous in the States as other French festivals—such as Jazz à Juan or Jazz in Marciac its 30th anniversary is certain to generate a wave of international media attention. This year's edition (Nov. 6–20) boasts a strong lineup that includes pianist Jason Moran, jazz supergroup James Farm and saxophonist Archie Shepp's Attica Blues Big Band.

The mission of the festival is closely tied to the host city's geographical location. The seat of the European Parliament, Strasbourg is located at the crossroads of Europe. It is also the capital of Alsace, a region that the French and the Germans fought over for centuries. In light of these considerations, the festival has maintained a strong focus on European jazz in general and on German artists in particular.

For the 30th edition, Jazzdor has commissioned French reedist Louis Sclavis to present a new project aptly called the "Jazzdor Quintet." It will feature a new rhythm section and spotlight the return of an early collaborator, violinist Dominique Pifarély. A frequent guest at Jazzdor, Sclavis relishes the possibilities the festival offers. "They are playing the European card, which is essential," he said. "Today, there are less exchanges and platforms to meet musicians [from other countries] than 10 or 15 years ago. Hopefully, the festival can help revive those exchanges."

This sentiment was echoed by German pianist Michael Wollny. "The German and French scenes are still quite separate, and Jazzdor creates opportunities for both the musicians and audiences to find out more about contemporary jazz from our neighbors," he said. "[Because] Strasbourg is really close to the German border, audiences literally mix." Wollny will perform at Jazzdor with bassist Christian Weber and drummer Eric Shaefer, his trio mates on his new ACT album, *Nachtfahrten*.

The festival's inaugural edition in 1986 was held at L'Ange d'Or, a café featuring live entertainment. (In that era, music enthusiasts who lived outside of Paris had to rely on what the French call *cafés-concerts* to hear jazz on a regular basis.) One of the musicians who performed was an up-and-coming pianist named Philippe Ochem. In 1989, he became the festival's director and, since then, he has overseen and orchestrated its evolution with performances all over Strasbourg and in underserved communities.

At the time, the Jazz d'Or Festival took its name from the venue, but organizers quickly realized it needed to be tweaked. "The name is associated with L'Ange d'Or [Golden Angel], but only people from Strasbourg could understand the nod," said Ochem. "Moreover, we did not like the 'golden' connotation. This is the reason we dropped the apostrophe and made it one word. It also sounds like the English word 'door,' which underlines the openmindedness of the festival."

The programming aims to challenge the audience without being radical. "Our goal is to present the jazz of today and musicians who create new forms," said Ochem. Some evenings will feature carefully curated pairings. Wollny will open for a quintet co-led by up-and-coming saxophonist Émile Parisien and legendary pianist Joachim Kühn another French-German collaboration. "Wollny perpetuates the European jazz piano tradition and is deeply influenced by Kühn," Ochem said. "It is as if the two musicians belong to a family, and we strive for these types of connections."

Among the other program highlights, Ochem is quick to single out French pianist François Couturier, who will put his own spin on the music of classical composer Pergolesi. "This will be the opportunity to revisit the Baroque repertoire," Ochem said. "We want to show that jazz musicians do not have to find their vocabulary in the jazz tradition alone."

Ochem is also delighted to present Moran, whose career he has followed for years, as well as tenor saxophonist Mark Turner, whose lack of recognition in France he laments. Other performers in the Jazzdor lineup include acclaimed New York-based pianist Kris Davis, who will perform with her quintet in Europe for the first time, and pianist Richie Beirach (now based in Germany), who will give a rare solo recital.

The importance of such a homegrown festival cannot be overstated. "The sustainability of [Jazzdor] proves that this music is important and has a cultural and even societal role to play," Sclavis said.

Fortunately, Jazzdor has been immune to the recent cuts in government funding that have created extreme challenges for many jazz festivals. "In 2013, the Ministry of Arts and Communication awarded us the SMAC [Scène de Musiques Actuelles] certification, which provides our financial bedrock," Ochem explained. "We can also count on the city's unwavering support. Strasbourg still allocates 25 percent of its budget to the arts."

With its enthusiastic fan base, strong programming and secure budget, the Jazzdor Festival is ready to celebrate its landmark birthday in style. —*Alain Drouot* 

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## Dairy Farm Jazz Festival Draws Cream of the Crop

n 1996, acclaimed reedist Paquito D'Rivera received a phone call from Argentinean jazz pianist Jorge Navarro on behalf of Francisco Yobino, the proprietor of Lapataia, a manufacturer of dairy products, known particularly for its *dulce de leche*. The preceding January, Yobino had produced a festival (then called Festival de Jazz en el Tambo) on the farm where his business is based: Finca El Sosiego, which is about 15 kilometers from Punta del Este, an upscale Uruguayan beach resort. Navarro relayed the message that Yobino wanted D'Rivera to perform at the 1997 event and help organize it.

"It was hard to understand what he was trying to tell me," D'Rivera recalled with a chuckle. "A guy who has cows and he wants to do a jazz festival? But I spoke with Francisco on the phone, and I've helped him organize these festivals almost every January since then."

The 20th anniversary edition of the Festival Internacional de Jazz de Punta del Este (still held at the Finca El Sosiego) runs Jan. 6–10. Yobino and D'Rivera have booked pianists Makoto Ozone, Harold Mabern, Tardo Hammer, Helen Sung, Manuel Valera, David Feldman and Alex Brown; guitarists Peter Bernstein, Lula Galvão and Nicolás Mora; trumpeter Diego Urcola; saxophonists Eric Alexander, Grant Stewart and Idriss Boudrioua; trombonists James Burton and Steve Davis; bassists John Weber and Popo Romano; and drummers Jimmy Cobb and Pipi Piazzolla. Among the highlights will be an 11-piece band modeled on Dizzy Gillespie's United Nations Orchestra, and a duo

performance by Ozone and D'Rivera.

D'Rivera's Gillespie-centric Pan-American orientation fits naturally into the cultural matrix of Uruguay. The democratic country has produced important tango musicians, is receptive to influences from Brazil (which adjoins its northern border) and is home base of the rhythmically stirring Afro-Uruguayan genre candomble. Additionally, Gillespie played a consequential role in Yobino's personal path to jazz. Born in Buenos Aires in 1939, he became an enthusiast at age 16 through Oscar Peterson recordings and was inspired by witnessing Gillespie's big band in his hometown on their epochal 1956 South American tour. In 1985, Yobino moved to Uruguay to launch Lapataia, and quickly grew the business, milking his cows to the accompaniment of John Coltrane's Crescent and augmenting the dairy business with ecotourism options and a restaurant with photographs of his jazz heroes on the walls.

Yobino spoke to DownBeat in Spanish over the phone, his remarks translated by Urcola, who has played at the festival every year since 1997. Yobino said he initially thought of the festival as a way to augment his business with cultural events that would, as Urcola put it, "give tourists another option than just to go to the beach." Lapataia supported the festival until a few years ago, when Yobino sold the farm, its manufacturing plants and its products. Now, Urcola said, Yobino "knocks at doors and windows, trying to get support from individuals, businesses and government."

In 1995, before D'Rivera came on board,

Yobino heard Gerry Mulligan play in Buenos Aires, and extended an invitation. "His wife was worried about the venue," Urcola said. "When [Yobino] sent pictures, Gerry agreed to go, but he was already sick and [ultimately] couldn't come."

Mulligan was one of a handful of invitees not to play in Punta Del Este. "Every year [Yobino] tries to bring important musicians," Urcola said. "For most of the artists who *haven't* come, it's because the festival can't afford them. [Yobino] used to go to New York every couple of years to talk to people, but now people call him. They want to go back."

A short list of stellar performers who have played the festival during the past two decades includes James Moody, Clark Terry, McCoy Tyner, Michael Brecker, Roy Haynes, Bebo Valdés, Toots Thielemans, Joe Lovano, Christian McBride and Kenny Garrett.

The excellent programming and professional presentation have made the festival an influential regional presence. Yobino noted that a 10-yearold festival in Providencia, Chile, takes inspiration from his work, and that music presenters in southern Brazilian cities like Porto Alegre and Florianópolis have asked for advice.

"It's been a hard job to keep it going, but Francisco does it because he loves jazz," Urcola said. "He has never tried to program pop music to get people to come—just the music he likes, at as high a level of possible. His reward is the privilege of putting it together, to bring the musicians here and give them an opportunity to play. It's never to make money." —*Ted Panken* 



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## INTERNATIONAL



This treble clef denotes a corresponding ad in this guide.

## AghaRTA Prague Jazz Festival Prague, Czech Republic Sept, 23–Nov,14

This festival is held in the Lucerna Music Bar and the AghaRTA Jazz Centrum, a jazz club housed in the basement of a building constructed in the 1400s. The festival's lineup mixes European and American acts. Lineup: Steve Gadd Band, St. Germain, Divinity Roxx, Electro Deluxe, Laco Deczi Cellula New York, The Souljazz Orchestra, Dean Brown Band. agharta.cz

### Barcelona Voll-Damm Jazz Festival Barcelona, Spain Sept. 26–Dec. 11

Held since 1966 and lasting almost eight weeks during the fall, this is the longest running and the only privately run festival in Spain. With the great pianist Chucho Valdés as godfather and co-artistic director alongside Joan A. Cararach, the festival presents plenty of Cuban music, true masters of jazz and a special focus on female vocalists.

Lineup: Diana Krall, Chucho Valdés, Chick Corea, Maria Schneider Orchestra, Buika, Neneh Cherry, Cécile McLorin Salvant, Stacey Kent, Gonzalo Rubalcaba, David Virelles, Children of the Light: Danilo Pérez/John Patitucci/Brian Blade, Paquito D'Rivera, Béla Fleck, Ambrose Akinmusire, Kurt Rosenwinkel, Mark Turner, Stefano Bollani, Fatoumata Diawara & Roberto Fonseca, Iron & Wine, Becca Stevens, Selah Sue, Havana D'Primera, Uri Caine, Marc Ribot, Antonio Sánchez, Melissa Aldana, others.

barcelonajazzfestival.com

## Angra Jazz Festival Angra do Heroísmo, Portugal Oct. 1–3

One of the main cultural events of the Azores Islands for the last 14 years, this festival has hosted a number of the world's most important jazz musicians. Angrajazz takes place at the Centro Cultural de Angra do Heroismo, which is set up as a large jazz club, holding 550 people and hosting double concerts each night. Spend time outside the festival discovering the beautiful Teceira Island and the city of Angra do Heroismo, a UNESCO World Heritage Site.

**Lineup:** Gregory Porter & Band, Jeff Denson Trio + Lee Konitz, Orquestra Angrajazz with Ricardo Toscano, René Urtreger Trio, Sexteto De Jazz De Lisboa, Tord Gustavsen Ensemble. angrajazz.com

## Hong Kong International Jazz Festival Hong Kong, China Oct. 1–4

The Hong Kong International Jazz Festival has become one of the significant international events in jazz. This year's festival features more than 40 musicians from 13 countries. The theme of the festival revolves around integration, inclusion and "a world without discrimination," with an optimistic look toward the Hong Kong of tomorrow. This year's festival presents musicians from Hong Kong and Taiwan on the same stage.

**Lineup:** Pasquale Stefano East-West Quintet, Hristo Vitchev, Luo Ning Trio, Bianca Wu with Sylvain Gagnon Quartet, Veronica Nunes and Ricardo Vogt, Brazil Ernesto Jodos Trio, Pentatonic Jazz Fusion Band, Swing Brosse System, Nate w/ The Wong Way Down, Dock in Absolute. hkijf.com

## Jeonju Sori Festival Jeonju, South Korea Oct. 7–11

Jeonju International Sori Festival is a global music festival centered on exquisite Korean vocals and music. The festival covers a wide array of genres, from fringe styles to global music to master performances by some of the world's most recognizable voices. Lineup: Richard Galliano Sextet, Ana Alcaide, Gotrasawala Ensemble, Rhythm in Bronze, Muzykanci, The Outside Track, Arttrio Volnitsa. Claire Memory Orchestra. Pradeep Ratnayake, Barbara Furtuna, Hasan Hujairi, Song Changsik, Yang Heeeun, Jang Pilsun, Kang Jeongsuk & Lee Saenggang, Park Dalnim & Seo Youngho, Yu Seulgi, Lee Seonghyeon, Kim Daeil, Ahn Eeho, Lee Jisuk, Kang Gyoung-a, Kim Soyoung, Kim Semi Yun, Jongho Choi, Jinsuk Ju Soyeon. sorifestival.com

## Jarasum International Jazz Festival Gapyeong, South Korea

## Oct. 9–11

Jarasum International Jazz Festival, held on a beautiful island in Gapyeong, celebrates its 12th edition this year. More than 10 stages will be set up throughout the picturesque surroundings, with a mountain, river and fields nearby.

Lineup: Richard Bona, Spyro Gyra, Paolo

Fresu/Omar Sosa/Trilok Gurtu, Roberto Fonseca Trio, Céline Rudolph & Lionel Loueke, Nik Bärtsch's Ronin, Klaus Doldinger's Passport, Badi Assad, Igor Butman & The Moscow Jazz Orchestra, Juan Carmona Septet, Dieter IIg Trio, Farmers Market, Wolfgang Haffner Quartet, Tin Men and the Telephone, Pascal Schumacher, Daniel Zamir Quartet. jarasumjazz.com

### Stockholm Jazz Festival Stockholm, Sweden Oct. 9–15

The Stockholm Jazz Festival – one of Sweden's oldest festivals and one of Stockholm's biggest cultural events – formerly had its home on the island of Skeppsholmen. This year's festival presents famous jazz stars and up-and-comers, with a program that includes straightahead jazz, the avant-garde and everything in between. Each day ends with a vibrant late-night jam. Stockholm is often called the "Venice of the North" for its culture, architecture and history.

Lineup: Chick Corea & The Vigil, Lizz Wright, Feya Faku Quartet, Bill Frisell, Kaori Nishijma GMC Special Trio, Maria Fausts Sacrum Facere, Lighthouse, Dave Douglas Quintet, Andreya Triana, Acid Mothers Temple & The Melting Paraiso U.F.O., Rickie Lee Jones & Stockholm Art Orchestra, Patrik Bowmans Ambivalent, Alice Russell. stockholmjazz.com

## DølaJazz-Lillehammer Jazz Festival Lillehammer, Norway Oct. 15–18

This DølaJazz-Lillehammer Jazz Festival has been a performing outlet for Scandinavian artists for more than 30 years. The intimate, laid-back atmosphere in various venues around the city attracts locals and tourists alike.

Lineup: Carol Kvande, Arve Henriksen/Audun Kleive/Mats Eilertsen/Jan Gunnar Hoff, Hatch, Ohio, Per Mathisen Trio, Helge Lien/ Mats Eilertsen/Øystein Arnes Vik/Håkon Asse, Magnolia Jazz Band, Lizz Wright, Arild Andersen Sextet, Broen, Knut Anders Sørum, Eberson Funk Ensemble, Halvard Kausland/Helle Brunvolls Kvartett. dolajazz.no

## Skopje Jazz Festival Skopje, Republic of Macedonia Oct. 15–18

Established in 1982, the Skopje Jazz Festival is one of the leading music events in the Republic of Macedonia. In previous years, the lineup has included all jazz styles and performances by the most famous American and European jazz artists, representatives of Latin American and African music, as well as the best Macedonian jazz musicians. **Lineup:** Craig Taborn, James Blood Ulmer, Gregory Porter, Gianluca Petrella Cosmic Renaissance, Joachim Kühn, Avishai Cohen Trio, Soweto Kinch, Colin Stetson/Sarah Neufeld, Angles 8. skopjejazzfest.com.mk

### <u>3K0pjejazzie3t.com.mk</u>

## Canterbury Festival Canterbury, United Kingdom Oct. 17–31

Canterbury Festival is a multi-arts festival that takes place in and around the city of Canterbury. The festival attracts more than 60,000 people of all ages to free and



ticketed events, drawn from across Kent, London and the South East. With over 200 events in two weeks, there is something to suit everyone—jazz, classical music, contemporary dance, visual arts, comedy and drama. There are also lectures and walks around the city.

**Lineup:** Georgie Fame & Sons, Hotfoot Specials, Kenny Ball Junior & His Jazzmen, Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment, Sam Corkin & David Knotts, Sadio Cissokho & The Golden Kora Band, Craobh Rua, Texas, Si Cranstoun, Anoushka Lucas Quartet, The Vagaband.

canterburyfestival.co.uk

### JazzUV International Festival Xalapa, Veracruz, México Oct. 21–25

The annual JazzUV International Festival presents a wide variety of musicians, multidisciplinary artists, writers and national and international jazz acts. After six editions, it has become one of the most important festivals in the Mexican jazz scene, creating great expectations at the international level, due to the high quality and innovation in its musical and educational components. Lineup: Gary Bartz, Peter Bernstein, Kurt Rosenwinkel, Francisco Mela, Rafael Alcalá with Pablo Menares, Melissa Aldana & Guillermo Barrón, Gerald Cannon, Concierto Xalli Big Band, Alain Brunet & Akpé Motion with Alonso Blanco, Pablo Menares, Disco Emiliano Coronel with Axel Tosca, Giovanni Figueroa, Ilán Bar-Iavi & Guillermo Barrón. uv.mx/festivaljazzuv

### Akbank Jazz Festival Istanbul, Turkey Oct. 21–Nov. 1

One of the longest-running festivals in Turkey has reached a milestone, celebrating its 25th year. In honor of the anniversary, this friendly festival will present a full program.

**Lineup:** John Scofield & Joe Lovano, Manu Katché, Susanne Sundør, Bill Frisell Music for Strings, Squarepusher. **akbanksanat.com** 

## Guinness Cork Jazz Festival Cork City, Ireland Oct. 22–26

Ireland's largest jazz festival attracts

hundreds of musicians and thousands of fans each fall to Cork City, where music is presented in 60 venues.

Lineup: Marcus Miller, Cassandra Wilson, Darius Brubeck Quartet, The Stunning, Grace Kelly, Peter King & Urban Jazz, Umbra, Gogo Penguin, Savina Yannatou, Phil Ware Trio & Peter Bernstein, New Irish Jazz Orchestra, Gary Numan, The Drifters, Booka Brass.

guinnessjazzfestival.com

## Baloise Session Basel, Switzerland Oct. 23–Nov. 12

For the past 30 years, major stars have been coming to this popular Swiss boutiquemusic festival and have left audiences with unforgettable memories. Visitors are not only thrilled by the big stars, but also by the many newcomers at the festival. The event attracts 20,000 visitors, thanks to its diverse range of music styles, including jazz, blues, pop, rock, singer-songwriter, soul, funk and world music.

Lineup: Trombone Shorty, Allen Toussaint Quartet, Gregory Porter, Iggy Pop, Randy Newman, The Roger Cicero Jazz Experience, Tori Amos, Rebecca Ferguson, James Arthur, Sarah Connor, Bastille. baloisesession.ch/en

## Bologna, Italy

## Oct. 26-Nov. 26

Bologna Jazz Festival's 10th edition will be longer than ever, stretching 32 days and featuring a vast array of artists. The festival will be held in major theatres and jazz clubs in Bologna and the surrounding towns. Lineup: Brad Mehldau Trio, Ron Carter, Kenny Garrett Quintet, Children of the Light: Danilo Pérez/John Patitucci/Brian Blade, Gary Bartz Quartet, Marcos Valle, Miguel Zenón Quartet, Mark Turner Quartet, Nasheet Waits, Kamasi Washington, Christian Scott Quintet, Enrico Rava New Quartet, Terence Blanchard & The E-Collective, James Farm: Joshua Redman/ Aaron Parks/Matt Penman/Eric Harland, Ray Anderson's Organic Quartet, Sylvie Courvoisier-Mark Feldman Duo, Tim Berne, Buster Williams Quartet, Rob Mazurek (São Paulo Underground & Black Cube SP), Gregoire Maret-Kevin Hays 1+1,

Eumir Deodato Group, Volcan: Gonzalo Rubalcaba/Jose Armando Gola/Horacio "El Negro" Hernandez/Giovanni Hidalgo. bolognajazzfestival.com

### **Deutsches Jazzfestival Frankfurt** Frankfurt am Main, Germany Oct. 29-31

One of the oldest running jazz festivals in the world (founded in 1953) is known for presenting one-of-a-kind projects. The whole festival is transmitted live on radio (hr2-kultur) and partially video-streamed online at concert.arte.tv/de.

Lineup: Michael Mantler & hr-Bigband featuring Peter Brötzmann: "The Jazz Composer's Orchestra Update," Vincent Peirani & Emile Parisien, Great Black Music: AACM@50, AACM Vocal Ensemble, AACM "Now" Generation, Jack DeJohnette Trio featuring Roscoe Mitchell & Matthew Garrison, "Jazz From Hell": hr-Bigband plays Zappa, Mark Turner Quartet, HOPE with Alfred23Harth & Chris Cutler, Contrast Trio. jazzfestival.hr2-kultur.de

### **Tampere Jazz Happening** Tampere, Finland Oct. 29-Nov. 1

Every year, the Tampere Jazz Happening presents the top names of international jazz as well as pioneers of the future. Now 34 years old, the four-day festival is renowned for its warm atmosphere and open-minded approach to modern jazz. The festival presents high-profile Finnish musicians as well as world-renowned performers on concert stages and in intimate club settings until the wee hours.

Lineup: Ginger Baker Jazz Confusion, Paolo Fresu/Omar Sosa/Trilok Gurtu, Carla Bley "Trios," Maria Faust Sacrum Facere, The Young Mothers, Colin Stetson & Sarah Neufeld, David Murray Infinity Quartet featuring Saul Williams. tamperemusicfestivals.fi/jazz/en

### Wangaratta Jazz & Blues Festival Wangaratta, Victoria, Australia Oct. 30-Nov. 2

Venture to Victoria's high country to enjoy live music from some of the world's finest jazz and blues artists and discover the rich experiences the region offers. Stroll friendly streets to find music in new spaces, visit bountiful valleys and beautiful places. Across four days and nights, the city will jump to the sounds of jazz and blues, from more than 300 musicians in over 80 concerts on the main program. Lineup: Dave Douglas Quartet, Aaron Choulai Trio, Canned Heat, Alex Hahn & The Blue Riders, Alister Spence Trio, Blow, Black Jesus Experience, Chris Cody Quartet, Dave Goodman Quartet, David Friesen, Geoff Bull & The Finer Cuts, Hammerhead, Linda Oh Quartet, Joe Camilleri & The Voodoo Sheiks. wangarattajazz.com

### **Roma Jazz Festival** Rome, Italy November

Founded in 1976, the Roma Jazz Festival presents an outstanding array of Italian, European and American acts.

Lineup: Last year's lineup included Dave Holland & Kenny Barron, Enrico Rava, Dee Dee Bridgewater, 3 Cohens, Fabrizio Bosso, Franco D'Andrea. romajazzfestival.it



The Master Musicians of Jajouka Deutsches Jazzfestival Frankfurt a at the 2014

## **Dominican Republic Jazz Festival** Santiago, Sosua, Puerto Plata, Cabarete, **Dominican Republic**

Nov. 4–8

The Dominican Republic Jazz Festival, presented by the Ministry of Tourism, is a free cultural event held annually on the north coast, featuring the world's best jazz artists. Providing more than culture and entertainment, the festival foundation FEDUJAZZ conducts music education workshops for youth of the Dominican Republic.

Lineup: Pedrito Martinez Group, David Sánchez, Big Band Conservatory of Santo Domingo with Javier Vargas featuring special guests Jim Kelly, Jim Ogden & Jason Camellia, Roy Assad Trio, Manuel Tehama, Berklee Global Jazz Institute with Marco Pignataro, Josean Jacobo, John Patitucci, Mario Canonge Trio, Pengbian Sang & Retro Jazz, Student Loan String Band. drjazzfestival.com

## Jazzmandu: Kathmandu Jazz Festival Kathmandu, Nepal Nov. 4–10

Jazzmandu, the Kathmandu International Jazz Festival, will present musicians from across the world for a week of performances in spectacular venues across this historical city. Lineup: Gabacho, Cadenza Collective, Yaite Ramos, Kane Mathis, Banda Magda, Kjetil Husebø, Julie Saury Trio. jazzmandu.org

## **Berlin Jazz Festival** Berlin, Germany Nov. 5-8

The Berlin Jazz Festival begins its second half-century by taking a step into the future and asking the question: What is jazz today, and what will it become? This year's program reflects the continued development of a music whose influence is increasingly felt far beyond its own borders, presenting artists united by a single characteristic: the desire to move forward. Artists in the 2015 program represent many generations and 30 nationalities.

Bleckmann, Cécile McLorin Salvant, Miguel Zenón Quartet, Charles Lloyd's Wild Man Dance Project, Diwan der Kontinente, Giovanni Guidi Trio, Tigran Hamasyan Trio, Dylan Howe's Subterraneans, Laura Jurd's Dinosaur, Julia Kadel Trio, Lumen Drones, Louis Moholo-Moholo Quartet, The Necks, Paal Nilssen-Love's Large Unit, Vincent Peirani's Living Being, Plaistow, Splitter Orchester + George Lewis, The Keith Tippett Octet.

berlinerfestspiele.de.

### Leverkusener Jazztage Leverkusener, Germany Nov. 5-11

Founded nearly three decades ago, the annual Leverkusener Jazztage festival has become one of the largest cultural events in Germany. More than 20,000 people flock to Leverkusener for an eclectic event that draws artists from a variety of genres and countries.

Lineup: John Scofield & Joe Lovano Quartet, Yellowjackets, Mike Stern Band featuring Dennis Chambers, The Bad Plus, Marcus Miller, Avishai Cohen, WDR Big Band featuring Richard Bona, Philipp Poisel, Avery Sunshine, Sophie Hunger. leverkusener-jazztage.de

## Jazzdor Festival **Strasbourg, France**

Nov. 6-20

For its 30th anniversary edition, Festival Jazzdor, which is one of the main music events in the north of France during the fall, will welcome almost 30 bands in 15 different venues around Strasbourg.

Lineup: Jason Moran, Archie Shepp, Michael Wollny, Joachim Kühn, Julia Hülsmann, Michel Portal, Louis Sclavis, Mark Turner, Joshua Redman, Polymorphie, Plaistow, Christophe Imbs trio, Auditive Connection, Eve Risser White Desert Orchestra. jazzdor.com

**Padova Jazz Festival** Padova, Italy Nov. 9-14

The 18th edition of the Padova Jazz Festival will

feature major artists in the town's main theater and up-and-coming bands in jazz clubs. Lineup: Last year's lineup included Medeski-Scofield-Martin-Wood, The Swallow Quintet, Plankton, Rosario Giuliani "Images," Phil Robson Organ Trio, Jaques Morelenbaum Cello Samba Trio. padovajazz.com

### EFG London Jazz Festival London, United Kingdom Nov. 13-22

The annual EFG London Jazz Festival is one of the United Kingdom's landmark music events. It has long been acclaimed for showcasing a heady mix of talent from around the world. Widely acknowledged for delivering world-class artists and emerging stars, the festival continues to take jazz to a massive audience.

Lineup: Hiromi, Dave Holland, Kamasi Washington, Kurt Elling, Jamie Cullum, Terence Blanchard, Andy Sheppard, Maria Schneider Orchestra, Arild Andersen, Average White Band & Kokomo, Béla Fleck & Abigail Washburn, Cassandra Wilson, Cécile McLorin Salvant, James Farm: Joshua Redman/Aaron Parks/Matt Penman/Eric Harland, Jarrod Lawson, Ice-T, Manu Katché & Ibrahim Maalouf, Marcin Wasilewski, Melody Gardot, Miroslav Vitouš, Nik Bärtsch, Phronesis. efglondonjazzfestival.org.uk

### Festival de Jazz de Montevideo Montevideo, Uruguay Nov. 18-21

Performances take place all around Montevideo, with the Teatro Solís as the main venue. The festival presents two days in an outdoor venue at Plaza Matriz and shows with jam sessions in local restaurants and bars. The festival also includes educational workshops.

Lineup: Stefano Bollani, Mario Laginha Trio, Xan Campos Trio, Samy Thiebault Quartet, Banda Sinfónica de Montevideo. jazztour.com.uy

## Vilnius Mama Jazz Festival Vilnius, Lithuania Nov. 20-23

The Vilnius Mama Jazz Festival, which offers a variety of jazz styles, has been held in the capital since 2002. The lineups have included everything from all-star projects to contemporary post-bop, live sound for silent cinema and arrangements of Led Zeppelin's music. Quality, originality and relevance are the unifying factors defining the diversity of festival programs.

Lineup: Previous lineups have included Chick Corea, Wayne Shorter, Bill Evans, Medeski Martin & Wood, Bill Frisell, Marcus Miller, Christian McBride, Dave Douglas, Brian Blade, Chris Potter, The Bad Plus, John Scofield, Robert Glasper, Jean Luc Ponty. vilniusmamaiazz.lt

### **Riviera Maya Jazz Festival** Playa del Carmen, México Nov. 26-28

Held since 2003, the Riviera Maya Jazz Festival presents three consecutive nights of music under the moonlight. Lineup: Zawinul Legacy Band, Zappa Plays Zappa, Phil Perry, Allan Holdsworth, Gino Vannelli, Sheila E., Dirty Loops, T'orus,

Tio Gus, Resorte, Guacamole, Hendrik Meurkens with Gabriel Espinosa. rivieramayajazzfestival.com/2015

## Christmas Jazz Festival Tallinn, Estonia Nov. 28-Dec. 12

Jazzkaar is the biggest jazz festival of the Baltics, held in Tallinn (the capital of Estonia), and the same organizers present this Christmas Jazz Festival. This an intimate, friendly, two-week international event with concerts and programs held in concert halls, clubs and churches.

Lineup: Vijay Iyer Trio, Antonio Sanchez & Migration, Ana Moura, Manu Delago, Kellylee Evans, others. jazzkaar.ee

## Havana International Jazz Festival Havana, Cuba Dec. 13-2

The Havana International Jazz Festival will allow fans to experience the world's best jazz. During the 31st edition of this globally renowned celebration of Latin music, attendees will see jazz greats from scores of nations. The Havana Jazz Festival Tour is designed for participants to get an overview of island culture, history and nature. Lineup: Past lineups have included Arturo O'Farrill, Chucho Valdés, Roy Hargrove. jazzcuba.com

## **Umbria Jazz Winter Orvieto**, Italy

## Dec. 30-Jan. 3. 2016

The festival has built a strong reputation among tourists, thanks to a combination



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www.festival.com.uv

franyo@festival.com.uv



of warm hospitality and first-class music in Umbria, a city rich in history and art. The program will include new musical encounters between artists as well as innovative projects. The goal is to create a musical mix that will appeal to longtime fans of jazz as well as new fans.

Lineup: Allan Harris, Paolo Fresu, Kurt Elling, Romero Lubambo, Lewis Nash, Steve Wilson, Rosario Giuliani, Jarrod Lawson. umbriajazz.com

## Ø Festival Internacional de Jazz Ø de Punta del Este

## Finca El Sosiego, Punta Ballena, Punta del Este, Uruguay

Jan. 6–10, 2016

The festival has been held since 1996 in the middle of the countryside, surrounded by a natural environment. It features musicans from all over the world in an easygoing setting sharing special moments among themselves and the audience. Barbecues and special meals are also included.

Lineup: Paquito D'Rivera, Diego Urcola, Makoto Ozone, Jimmy Cobb, Harold Mabern, Peter Bernstein, John Weber, Eric Alexander, Grant Stewart, Steve Davis, James Burton, Tardo Hammer, Helen Sung, Manuel Valera, Manuel Valera Sr., Alex Brown, David Feldman, Idriss Boudrioua, Lula Galvão, Pipi Piazzolla, Popo Romano. Email: festival@festival.com.uy Website: festival.com.uy

## Panama Jazz Festival Panama City, Panama Jan. 11–16, 2016

For 13 years, the Panama Jazz Festival has shown a deep commitment to Panama's culture, society, tourism, economy and education. This year, the festival will honor the contributions of jazz pianist and composer Randy Weston. The festival is the most important annual event for the Fundacion Danilo Pérez, which aims to positively transform society through music. The 4th Annual Latin America Music Therapy Symposium is presented in conjunction with the festival.

Lineup: Randy Weston, Rudresh Mahanthappa, Dave Douglas, David Murray/ Geri Allen/Terri Lyne Carrington, Dominique Eade, Danny Rivera, others. panamajazzfestival.com

## Winter Jazz

### Prøehallen, Valby, Copenhagen, Denmark February 2016

Winter Jazz is a nationwide music festival that takes place in February each year. The festival spans 17 days featuring more than 450 concerts, 100 venues and 25 independent organizers from all across Denmark—from Aalborg, Aarhus, Odense and Esbjerg to the historic jazz capital, Copenhagen. The combination of the festival's length and the countrywide aspect makes Winter Jazz an opportunity to meet international stars on tour as well as up-andcoming Danish artists.

**Lineup:** Last year's lineup included Benjamin Koppel, Aske Jacoby, Thommy Andersson, Peter Nilsson, Eythor Gunnarsson, Tomas Franck, Daniel Franck, Alex Riel, Ole Kock Hansen, Hugo Rasmussen, Frands Rifbjerg. jazz.dk

## Dubai Jazz Festival Dubai, United Arab Emirates Feb. 24–26, 2016

Held in the massive Dubai Festival City, this event attracts tens of thousands of fans each year. The nine-day festival brings jazz

and other genres to huge audiences but also provides a smaller, more intimate settling with its Jazz Garden performances.

Lineup: Past performers include Sting, John Legend, Jason Mraz, Santana, Jamie Cullum, Esperanza Spalding, Jools Holland, Yellowjackets, Mike Stern, Chico Freeman. dubaijazzfest.com

## Jakarta International Java Jazz Festival Jakarta, Indonesia March 4–6, 2016

The 12th edition of the three-day jazz festival will present top jazz musicians from around the globe as well as Indonesia's best talent. **Lineup:** Past lineups have included Jamie Cullum, Natalie Cole, Snarky Puppy, Roy Ayers, Bobby McFerrin, Chris Botti. javajazzfestival.com

## Cape Town International

## Cape Town, South Africa April 1–2, 2016

Now in its 17th year, the festival is famous for delivering a star-studded lineup. Affectionately referred to as "Africa's Grandest Gathering," the Cape Town International Jazz Festival is the largest music event in sub-Saharan Africa. This South African-produced event is held at the Cape Town International Convention Centre. **Lineup:** Last year's lineup included the Gerald Clayton Trio, Gavin Minter Septet, AI Jarreau, Basia, Naima Mclean, Cannibal Ox, Mike del Ferro Trio featuring. Tony Lakatos, Madala Kunene.

capetownjazzfest.com



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## Jazz On Campus >



## Charlap Builds on Tradition at William Paterson

**BILL CHARLAP HAS ALWAYS SEEMED LIKE** the consummate jazz insider—from his showbiz parents to his suave piano accompaniment of iconic artists like Tony Bennett and Houston Person to his marriage to pianist Renee Rosnes. On Sept. 1, Charlap assumed another insider role in the jazz world, becoming the fifth director of the jazz studies program at William Paterson University in Wayne, New Jersey.

Vacant since the 2013 death of Charlap's predecessor, Mulgrew Miller, the position has an illustrious history: The first three directors were Thad Jones, Rufus Reid and James Williams.

In his new role, Charlap will direct six of the program's 24 small jazz groups, host peer and faculty critiques of student performances, and participate in other campus activities. Plus, he'll maintain a busy schedule as a performer/recording artist. (His CD with Bennett, *The Silver Lining*, was released by RPM/Columbia on Sept. 25.)

"The role of director has always been held by a high-profile musician, and this school has a really intelligent, diverse faculty, so I'm very honored to take on this position," Charlap said. "Ilove teaching."

"All of our directors are connected by the respect they have garnered from all parts of the jazz universe," said David Demsey, coordinator of the jazz studies program. "Bill is very much in that tradition. Not only is he one of the world's great pianists, but he's also a remarkable music historian and theorist. He also has a wonderful way of communicating to young musicians like equals. I feel like we're getting five people in one with him."

Demsey noted that connecting the past to the present is a cornerstone of jazz studies at William Paterson: "Our program is based on the reality of what jazz is today in New York, but we aim to give students the foundation to find out who they are and build their own voice."

Charlap, 48, said his background-growing

up as the son of composer Moose Charlap and vocalist Sandy Stewart, and attending New York's High School for the Performing Arts—taught him the importance of experiential education.

"It's important to be in an atmosphere of ongoing learning," Charlap said. "My goal in this new role will be to give students as full a box of tools as possible, but also to help guide them to the center of their personal musical beings. I want them to discover how repertoire develops and understand how—no matter what style you play in—you're building on the foundation that others laid down for us."

William Paterson offers a bachelor of music degree in jazz studies and performance. There are also bachelor's degree options that combine jazz with sound engineering arts, music management, music education and classical performance. Its master's degree program offers tracks in performance or arranging.

"Everything here is about performing," Demsey said. "We play what we study."

It was that hands-on approach that inspired trumpeter Clark Terry (1920–2015) to donate a treasure trove of manuscripts, recordings, memorabilia and instruments to the university. He made the decision in 2007, fully intending his archives to be used as a teaching tool.

"Clark told us he wanted his music out on music stands, and he wanted his trumpets to be passed among the trumpet section," Demsey said.

The university is also the repository for extensive materials from former directors Jones and Williams, and it is now organizing the archives of saxophonist Michael Brecker (1949–2007).

"It's like a small Smithsonian collection," Charlap said of the school's various archives. "Having those scores and other materials available to students really helps bring the music alive for them." —James Hale

## School Notes >



Manhattan Concerts: Among the highlights of the Manhattan School of Music's 2015–'16 performance season, the MSM Jazz Orchestra will perform a 50th anniversary tribute to Herbie Hancock's *Maiden Voyage* on Oct. 22, under the direction of Justin DiCioccio. Vocalist and MSM alumna Jane Monheit (BM '99) will celebrate the Frank Sinatra centennial in concert with the MSM Jazz Orchestra on Nov. 13. Bobby Sanabria leads the MSM Afro-Cuban Jazz Orchestra in a program of funk music on Nov. 5. <u>msmnyc.edu</u>

Judge Barron: Pianist Kenny Barron will serve as a judge, performer and mentor for the 2015 American Jazz Pianist Competition, which will be held Nov. 13–15 on the campus of Florida Institute of Technology in Melbourne, Florida. Barron will give a solo concert performance at 7:30 p.m. on Nov. 13 in the Gleason Performing Arts Center. In addition, he will lead a master class from 5:30 to 6:30 p.m. on Nov. 15. As a competition judge, Barron will be joined by Per Danielsson, associate professor of jazz piano at the University of Central Florida, and pianist/vibraphonist Christian Tamburr, artist-in-residence at the Florida Institute of Technology.

americanjazzpianistcompetition.org

Shew Schedule: Trumpeter/educator Bobby Shew performed in concert with the Elmhurst College Jazz Band in Elmhurst, Illinois, on May 29, the night before the college awarded him an honorary degree during its 144th commencement ceremony. This fall, Shew will appear at the Midwest Trumpet Festival at Pittsburg State University in Pittsburg, Kansas, on Oct. 10–12. Shew will perform with the Charlie Christian Project at Outpost Performance Space in Albuquerque, New Mexico, on Nov. 12. pittstate.edu/department/ music/midwest-trumpet-festival.dot

Weston in Residence: The New School for Jazz and Contemporary Music has named pianist Randy Weston as its first Artist-In-Residence, for the 2015–'16 academic year. On Oct. 13, Weston and Abdellah El Gourd will present the traditional music of Morocco. On Nov. 17, Weston and Senegalese master drummers will perform a tribute to Senegalese drummer, composer and bandleader Doudou N'Diaye Rose. A symposium on African drums and a closing concert will take place in the spring. necmusic.edu

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## Blindfold Test > BY TED PANKEN

## Joe Locke

Joe Locke, 56, is a generational avatar of vibraphone expression. His expansive 2015 release, *Love Is A Pendulum* (Motéma), is his 34th album as a leader or co-leader. This was his first Blindfold Test.

## **Bobby Hutcherson**

"I Am In Love" (*Mirage*, Landmark, 1991) Hutcherson, vibraphone; Tommy Flanagan, piano; Peter Washington, bass; Billy Drummond, drums.

Someone influenced by Bobby Hutcherson. Oh, it *is* Bobby! He's playing very signature lines. It sounds like it's in a recording studio, but he's so in the moment he's playing like it's a gig. This is the album Bobby made with Tommy Flanagan, Billy Drummond ... and the bass player sounds great ... it's Peter Washington. I love this period, which started in the '70s, when Bobby got into playing structures that ascended and descended, parallel shapes that he'd climb up and down. He developed his own language, and it's coming through loud and clear. Many of us have been inspired and influenced by this combination of incredible harmonic depth and poetic playing. I didn't feel the vibes sound was recorded well.  $4\frac{1}{2}$  stars.

## Chris Dingman

"Same Coin" (Waking Dreams, Between Worlds, 2011) Dingman, vibraphone; Fabian Almazan, piano and Fender Rhodes; Erica von Kleist, flute; Mark Small, bass clarinet; Joe Sanders, bass; Justin Brown, drums.

The pianist reminds me of Ed Simon, though it's not. [On vibes], my first thought is Stefon Harris, who plays with a great sense of melody, like he's singing through the instrument. This player has that lovely quality, too, and a nice sound. I like the matching of flute, bass clarinet and vibes with the piano as a carpet underneath it—a lovely conception. The piano solo is beautiful. The vibes solo is terrific—an original voice and much sincerity.  $4\frac{1}{2}$  stars.

## **Stefon Harris**

"Thanks For The Beautiful Land On The Delta" (*African Tarantella: Dances With Duke*, Blue Note, 2006) Harris, vibraphone; Steve Turre, trombone; Anne Drummond, flute; Greg Tardy, clarinet; Xavier Davis, piano; Junah Chung, viola, Louise Dubin, cello; Derrick Hodge, bass; Terreon Gully, drums.

Stefon. *African Tarantella*? That melodic, singing expression I talked about with Dingman comes through loud and clear here. Not sure if there's a bass trombone, but the low end is palpable; the piece is emotionally resonant. Beautiful orchestration and arranging. There's a big, wide-open half-time feel—the drummer knows how to sustain that good feeling and not get in the way while keeping things interesting. I don't know if Terreon Gully had come on the scene then, or if it's Eric Harland. 5 stars. It's exciting to hear a vibes player who transcends the instrument, and makes music on those 37 cold bars. Stefon's playing has poetry and fire, intellectual rigor, and the blues are intact.

## **Dave Samuels**

"Resemblance" (*Tjader-ized*, Verve, 1998) Samuels, vibraphone; Eddie Palmieri, piano; Joe Santiago, bass; Bobbie Allende, Marc Quiñones, percussion.

Cal Tjader? It sounds like something I recorded with Eddie Palmieri when we re-did the *El Sonido Nuevo* album on KUVO in Denver. The vibes have crisp, precise, beautiful articulation like Gary Burton. A very strong linear improviser. Ah! Dave Samuels. That sounds like Eddie on piano. They're playing beautifully together. 4½ stars.

## Warren Wolf

"Annoyance" (Wolfgang, Mack Avenue, 2013) Wolf, vibraphone; Benny Green, piano; Christian McBride, bass; Lewis Nash, drums.

[*after 4 bars*] Warren Wolf. Warren's phrasing is beautiful. The combination of almost childlike consonance, and then little dissonances thrown in as though something is encroaching, is an interesting compositional device. Besides being a wonderful melodic improviser, Warren has the blues in his playing. His dazzling chops and speed impress people, but what hits me most



is his soulful delivery. Warren makes it sound easy, but if that were easy to do on the vibes, more people would do it. 5 stars.

### **Dave Holland Quintet**

"Amator Silenti" (*Critical Mass*, Dare2, 2006) Holland, bass; Steve Nelson, vibraphone and marimba; Chris Potter, tenor saxophone; Robin Eubanks, trombone; Nate Smith, drums.

I'll guess Dave Holland—and Steve Nelson—because of the instrumentation. It's a heartfelt, romantic track, showing a side of the quintet that I miss in some other writing for it. It goes from that very consonant, open, beautiful sound into the freeway, from the most inside to the most outside within a few minutes. Steve is the composer? [*after*] When he writes, it's a good one. You can tell they've made a lot of music together by the way they're dialoguing, speaking with one voice. I like the colors created by different instrumental combinations. Stunning, 5 stars.

## Jason Adasiewicz's Sun Rooms

"Bees" (Spacer, Delmark, 2011) Adasiewicz, vibraphone; Nate McBride, bass; Mike Reed, drums.

Jason Adasiewicz. I don't consider this avant-garde, but it represents an aesthetic that's thriving in Chicago. I'm not moved by him as a linear improviser, but I love what he does sonically. On this track, for example, he speeds up and slows down the motor for an aesthetic effect, which Matt Moran of the Claudia Quintet does. He's exploring textures in a cool way. It's valid to use all the possibilities at your disposal on an instrument whose possibilities are inherently—or ostensibly—very limited. I wouldn't go back to it to get my head right on any given day, but I appreciate it. [The fact] that I could identify it as Jason means he has a voice. 3 stars.

### **Dave Pike**

"Forward" (It's Time For Dave Pike, Riverside, 1961/2001) Pike, vibraphone; Barry Harris, piano; Reggie Workman, bass; Billy Higgins, drums.

Dave Pike. The Bud Powell of the vibes. *It's Time For Dave Pike*? So it's Barry Harris. One of the greatest bebop vibes records ever. I'm surprised I didn't know it at first, but this track didn't ring a bell. It doesn't get any better. Dave Pike is a great, eloquent bebop improviser, on the level of Sonny Stitt, but doing it on the vibraphone—and he sounds very different than Bags. 5 stars.

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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