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APRIL 2016

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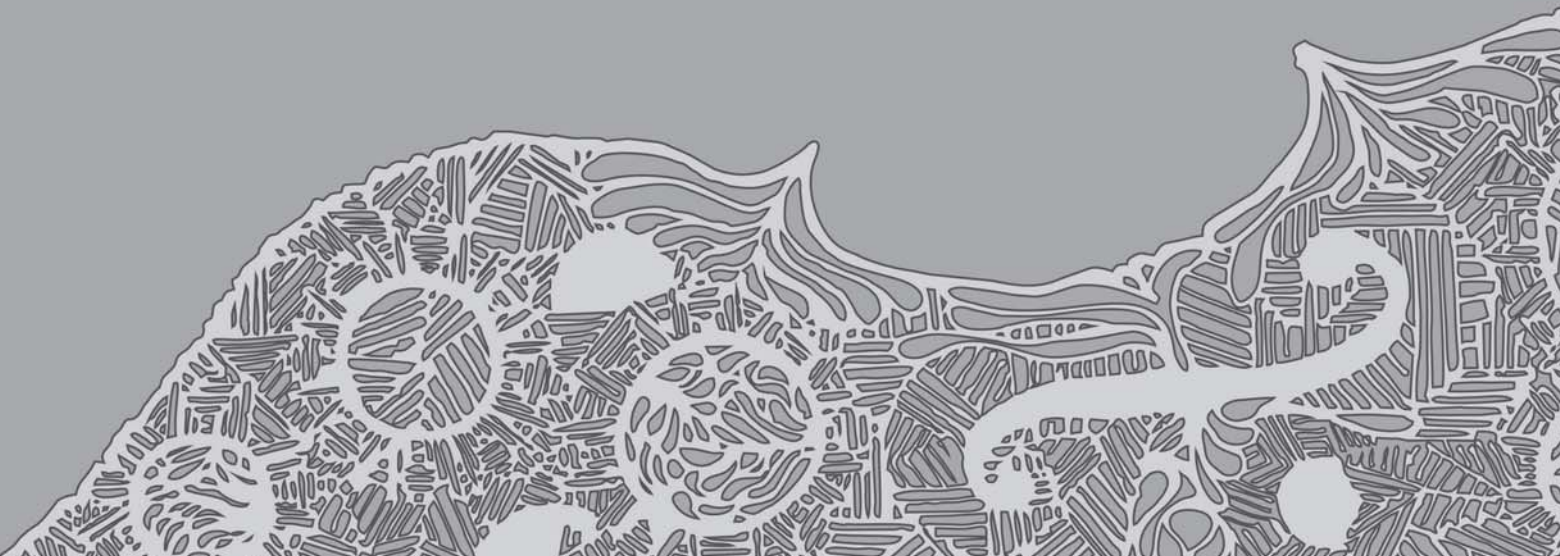
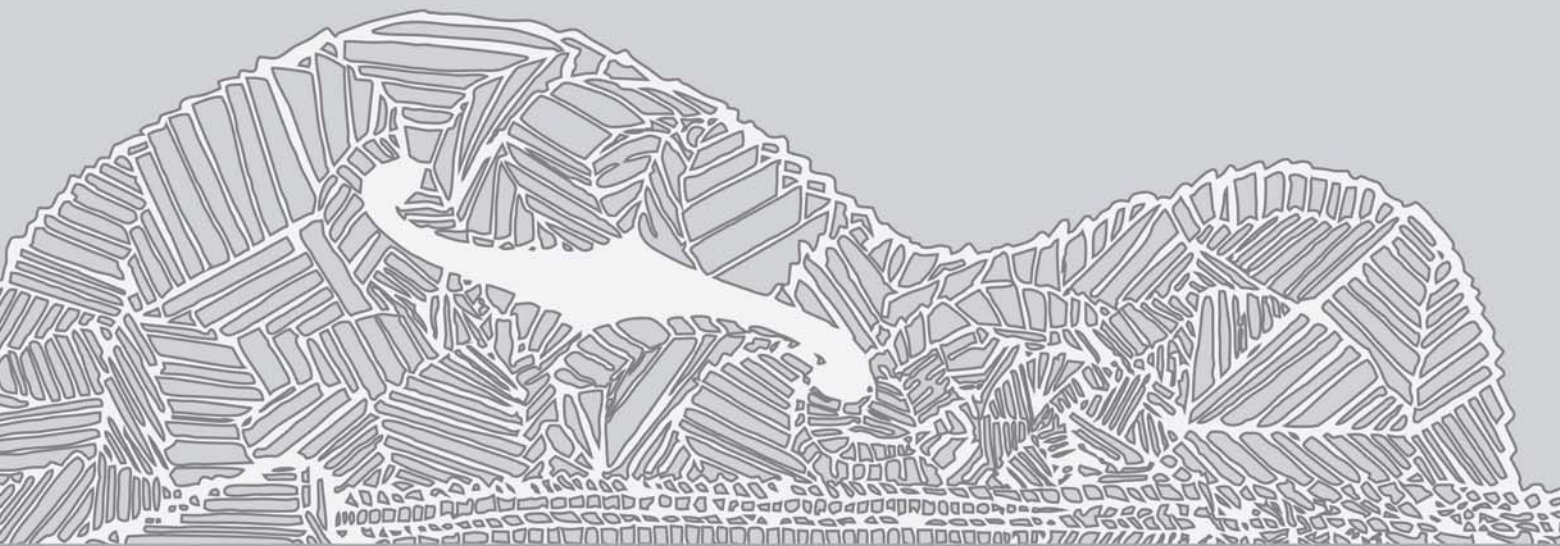
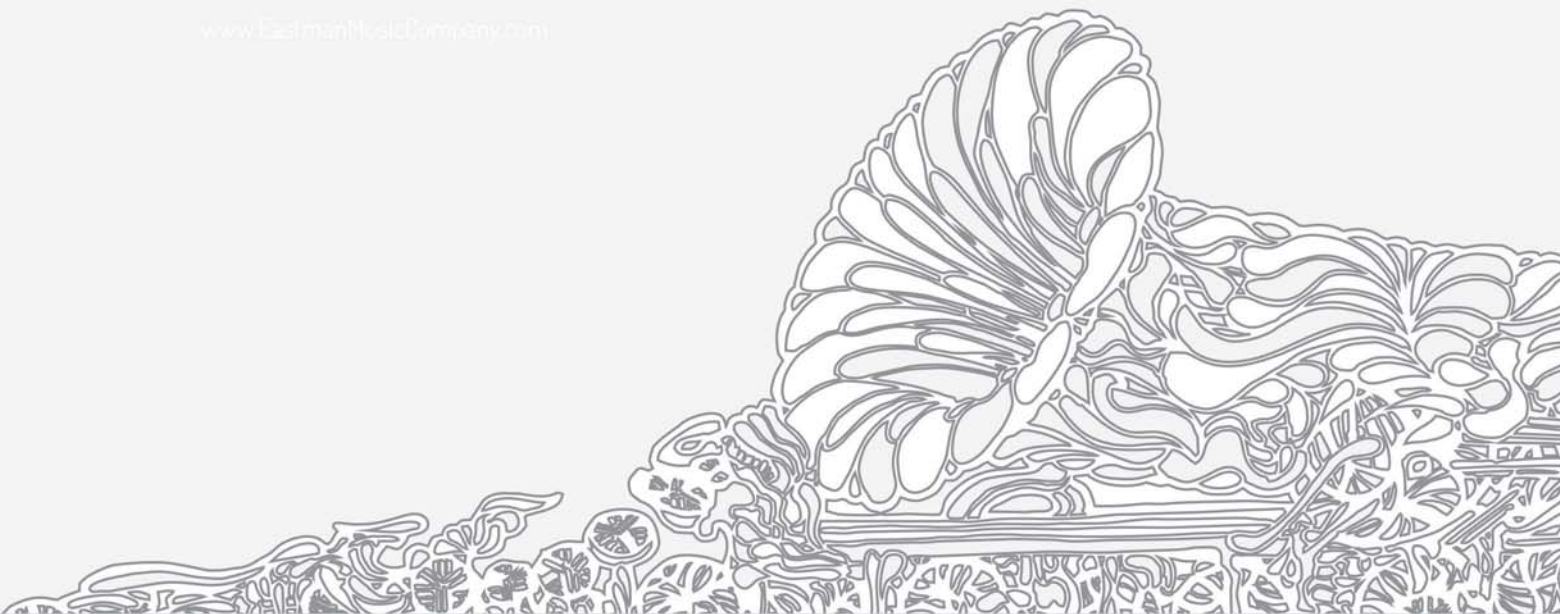


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DOWNBEAT

APRIL 2016

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A full-length portrait of Brian Lynch, a man with glasses and a goatee, wearing a dark suit, a dark shirt, a dark tie, and a grey fedora. He is holding a silver trumpet in his left hand. The background is a dark, textured wall.

Brian Lynch Depends on Yamaha.

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Brian Lynch, Grammy Award winning
Trumpeter/Composer/Bandleader

A stylized, handwritten signature of Brian Lynch in white ink.

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Hear Brian on his upcoming Hollistic MusicWorks release, *Madera Latino: The Latin Side of Woody Shaw*, featuring an all star trumpet lineup including Yamaha Artists Sean Jones and Michael Rodriguez.

www.4wrd.it/BLDB

Photo credit Nick Ruechel.

APRIL 2016

Inside

ON THE COVER

22 **Miles Ahead** *Troubled Genius*

BY ALLEN MORRISON

Don Cheadle's gritty portrayal of a drug-addled, gun-wielding Miles Davis is the most anticipated jazz film in decades, with a soundtrack featuring the work of Robert Glasper, Keyon Harrold and a host of other prominent musicians.



Don Cheadle (left) is Miles Davis and Ewan McGregor portrays a journalist in the film *Miles Ahead*.

Cover photo of Don Cheadle as Miles Davis in the film *Miles Ahead*. Photo by Brian Douglas, Courtesy of Sony Pictures Classics

Brian Douglas, Courtesy of Sony Pictures Classics

FEATURES

28 **Esperanza Spalding** *Inviting 'Emily' Out To Play*

BY PHILLIP LUTZ

34 **Arturo Sandoval** *A Life of Gratitude*

BY FRANK ALKYER

40 **Julian Lage** *The Jazzman Cometh*

BY BILL BEUTTLER

SPECIAL SECTION

75 **Brass School**

76 **A Latin Jazz Perspective on Woody Shaw**

BY BRIAN LYNCH

82 **Master Class**

BY KENNY CRANE

86 **Pro Session**

BY KIRK GARRISON

88 **Transcription**

Steve Davis Trombone Solo

90 **Toolshed**



48 Marlene VerPlanck



48 David Bowie



51 Jim Rotondi



57 Cyrille Aimée

DEPARTMENTS

8 **First Take**

10 **Chords & Discords**

13 **The Beat**

18 **Players**

Michael Wollny
Román Díaz
Camila Meza
Eric Platz

45 **Reviews**

94 **Jazz On Campus**

98 **Blindfold Test** Roy Hargrove



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**ARUÁN ORTIZ TRIO
FEAT. ERIC REVIS AND
GERALD CLEAVER
HIDDEN VOICES**

Aruán Ortiz: Piano
Eric Revis: Bass
Gerald Cleaver: Drums

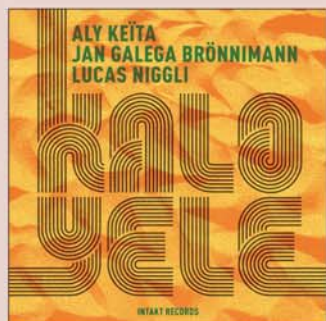
Intakt CD 258



**ANGELIKA NIESCIER
FLORIAN WEBER
NYC FIVE**

Angelika Niescier: Saxophone
Ralph Alessi: Trumpet
Florian Weber: Piano
Christopher Tordini: Bass
Tyshawn Sorey: Drums

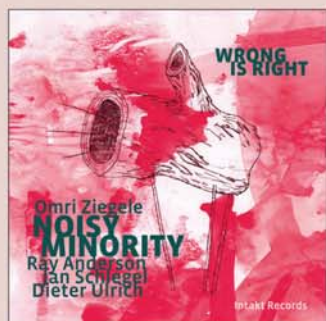
Intakt CD 263



**ALY KEÏTA
JAN GALEGA BRÖNNIMANN
LUCAS NIGGLI
KALO-YELE**

Aly Keita: Balafon
Jan Galega Brönnimann: Saxophone
Lucas Niggli: Drums

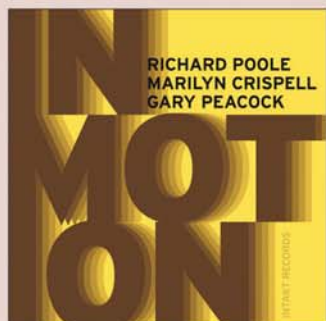
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**OMRI ZIEGELE NOISY MINORITY
FEAT. RAY ANDERSON
WRONG IS RIGHT**

Omri Ziegele: Saxophone, Voice
Ray Anderson: Trombone
Jan Schlegel: E-Bass
Dieter Ulrich: Drums

Intakt CD 262



**RICHARD POOLE
MARILYN CRISPELL
GARY PEACOCK
IN MOTION**

Marilyn Crispell: Piano
Gary Peacock: Bass
Richard Poole: Drums

Intakt CD 264

First Take > BY BOBBY REED



Drummer Allison Miller speaks during a PMC panel discussion at The NAMM Show on Jan. 22 in Anaheim, California.

Searching for New Drummers

THE WORLD NEEDS MORE DRUMMERS. That was a sentiment widely expressed at The NAMM Show, the music industry trade convention held in Anaheim, California. Every year, DownBeat reports on the incredible array of instruments and accessories that are unveiled at the event (see page 66), but The NAMM Show is more than merely a giant showroom for gearheads. It's also a place where musicians, retailers and manufacturers share ideas about improving music education and developing future generations of musicians.

During the event, the Percussion Marketing Council (PMC), a trade organization, held its annual all-membership meeting. Recognizing that there have been obstacles that prevent girls and women from pursuing drumming as a hobby or profession, the PMC presented a panel discussion titled Women in Percussion. Panelists offered tips to help retailers create a store environment that feels friendly and welcoming for all customers.

The panel also included inspiring testimony from two acclaimed musicians: Allison Miller, who leads the jazz band Boom Tic Boom, plays drums for TV's *The Meredith Vieira Show* and often tours with pop artists; and "Queen" Cora Coleman, a drummer, author and filmmaker who has worked extensively with Beyoncé and who performed with Prince at a little gig known as Super Bowl XLI.

Miller reflected on her path to becoming a professional musician. "I was coming up at the time when Terri Lyne Carrington was on *The Arsenio Hall Show*, and that made a huge difference for me, to see a female drummer on stage," she said. "As a young girl, all I wanted to do was see someone else who looked like me play the drums—and that was enough inspiration to continue."

Coleman offered advice and encouragement for teenagers who dream of making it in the music business: "I would say to a female the same thing that I would to a male: Be excellent at what you do. Love what you're doing. Whatever you're doing in life, do it with passion and purpose and intention."

Learning to play music can improve a child's life in countless ways. So if you know someone—a relative, neighbor or friend's child—who is interested in music, help that youngster connect with trusted people who offer lessons and instruments.

Whether you're a kid or an adult, there's a tremendous sense of fun and satisfaction that comes with grabbing a wooden stick and bashing a cymbal. Give it a try.

Great Artists



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Bill Dobbins

Drawing on over forty years of professional and academic experience, including eight years as principal director of the award-winning WDR Big Band of Cologne, Germany, and thirty-five years on the jazz studies faculty of the Eastman School of Music, world-renowned educator, composer, arranger and pianist Bill Dobbins offers his take on selected works of composers whose music represents a major contribution to jazz.



Composers Series: Volume 1 The Music of Clare Fischer & George Gershwin

In this first in a series of live solo piano recordings, Dobbins presents his arrangements of pieces by Clare Fischer, legendary harmonic wizard and master of jazz, blues, Brazilian and Afro-Cuban idioms, and George Gershwin, consummate songwriter and the most successful of early twentieth-century composers at bringing jazz elements into symphonic writing.



Composers Series: Volume 2 The Music of Duke Ellington & Billy Strayhorn

In celebration of Strayhorn's centennial year, the repertoire presented in this second set of performances ranges from well-known classics to seldom heard and more recently discovered works, all selected and arranged by Dobbins to represent the full spectrum of Ellington's and Strayhorn's musical creativity.



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Spiritual Fulfillment

As a lifelong lover of the music of Charlie Parker, Bud Powell, John Coltrane, Charles McPherson, Sonny Stitt, Barry Harris and other great masters of jazz music, I was given hope by your article on Stanley Clarke ("Acoustic Renaissance," March).

It has been with much sadness, anger and disappointment that I have witnessed excellent musicians like Clarke, Miles Davis and Herbie Hancock move jazz music in a decidedly more commercial and less inspiring direction since the late 1960s.

Perhaps witnessing the personal suffering of Charlie Parker, Lester Young, Billie Holiday, Bud Powell and many other geniuses of improvised music actually frightened a sensitive musician and person like Miles Davis, making him more vulnerable to the lure and security of commercial success. Maybe the path of the pure and uncompromising (and often poor) jazz musician began to seem dangerous to the generations of musicians who followed the beboppers.

After all, many of them chose the safe direction of more commercially appealing styles

Stanley Clarke



of jazz, such as jazz fusion, funky jazz, etc.

My sense is that artists like Clarke, who have tasted broad public acceptance and large paychecks, may be discovering that pure materialism leaves one feeling an inner emptiness. I hope that more contemporary jazz musicians like Clarke will rediscover the musical treasures and spiritual fulfillment that come with devotion and dedication to the beauty, truth and joy that cannot be created by lucrative business contracts.

RAMAKUMAR JONES
FAIRFAX, CALIFORNIA

Get Some Getz

I enjoyed the cover story on Stan Getz in your March issue. I have a vast collection of his LPs, including his terrible foray into electronic music. My favorite album is *For Musicians Only* with Dizzy Gillespie and Sonny Stitt (recorded in 1956). Critics at the time said Getz couldn't swing, but just listen to "Bebop," where he holds his own—and them some—alongside those giants.

MARTY DAMBROT
BOYNTON BEACH, FLORIDA

Kudos to Panken

Ted Panken's article "Remembering Phil Woods" in your December issue was excellent. For my money, it was one of the finest tributes/obituaries to appear in DownBeat during the last few years. The black-and-white photographs complemented the quality of the piece.

Panken mentions *Live From The Showboat*, a highlight of Phil's discography. Surprisingly, this recording is not readily available at a reasonable cost on CD. There is an incomplete version on RCA/Novus and there's an expen-

sive import version from Sony. Really a pity.

A. M. GOLDBERG
LONDON, ENGLAND

Confident, Not Cocky

Reading the tribute to Phil Woods in your December issue, I was struck by statements he made that some might construe as cocky, but which I received as a reflection of his well-earned confidence and disciplined devotion to his craft.

CHARLES WINOKOOR
FALL RIVER, MASSACHUSETTS

Correction

■ In the March issue, the Jazz Camp Guide included a listing for a camp that has been held in the past but will not take place in 2016. The Janice Borla Vocal Jazz Camp is presently on hiatus as it retools its curriculum and identifies venues to host the event in the future.

DOWNBEAT REGRETS THE ERROR.

Have a Chord or Discord? Email us at editor@downbeat.com or find us on Facebook & Twitter.

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– MOJO



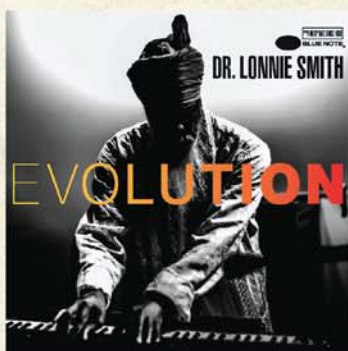
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– NPR All Things Considered



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– All About Jazz



LOGAN RICHARDSON

SHIFT

Stellar Blue Note debut from the Kansas City-born, Paris- based saxophonist featuring guitarist **PAT METHENY**, pianist **JASON MORAN**, bassist **HARISH RAGHAVAN** and drummer **NASHEET WATTS**.

The

Inside >

14 / Amir ElSaffar

15 / Ari Hoenig

16 / Ken Vandermark

17 / GoGo Penguin

Beat

VJO Celebrates 50-Year Milestone

The Vanguard Jazz Orchestra, still thriving 50 years after launching its regular Monday night residency at New York's Village Vanguard, marked the anniversary with a special string of dates Feb. 1–8 at the venue. The concerts illustrated how this ensemble of top-tier musicians continues to build on the big band innovations of trumpeter Thad Jones and drummer Mel Lewis.

Performing exactly 50 years to the day (Feb. 7, 1966) when Jones and Lewis introduced “The Jazz Orchestra” at the famed Greenwich Village club, the VJO riffed on such classic Jones vehicles as “Backbone,” “Low Down” and “Mean What You Say.” The residency culminated in a Monday night event to honor Jones, Lewis and the orchestra's historic performances captured on the recently released two-CD set *All My Yesterdays: The Debut 1966 Recordings At The Village Vanguard* (Resonance).

In the mid-'60s, many venues across New York City were closed on Monday night, including the entire theater district. With the blessing of Village Vanguard founder Max Gordon, the orchestra's Monday night slot gave the city's best jazz musicians (many of whom were busy in Manhattan's then flourishing session and soundtrack scene) the opportunity to get their creative juices flowing by playing Jones' inventive compositions and arrangements.

The lineup on *All My Yesterdays* reads like a '60s supergroup: pianist Hank Jones, bassist Richard Davis, tenor saxophonists Joe Farrell and Eddie Daniels, alto saxophonist Jerome Richardson, baritone saxophonist Pepper Adams, trumpeter Jimmy Owens and trombonist Bob Brookmeyer, to name a few.

The band's repertoire was heady fare for then 25-year-old trombonist John Mosca, who



Director/trombonist John Mosca (center row, third from left) performs with the Vanguard Jazz Orchestra at New York's Village Vanguard on Feb. 3.

© JACK VARTOOGIAN/FRONTROWPHOTOS

joined the group in 1975 and now serves as its director. (The band's name was changed to the Vanguard Jazz Orchestra after Mel Lewis' death in 1990.)

“I remember my first time playing the unison soli in ‘Tip Toe,’” Mosca recalled. “The chart looked simple, but it wasn't. Four bars before the section, [trombonist] Janice Robinson tells me we have to stand up. I see Pepper Adams' shoulders going up and down. He's cracking up listening to me dying over here. It had its desired effect. I studied the book until I had every chart down—though that is really a lifetime of study. Thad's lines were so unique.”

Jones and Lewis encouraged the band's rhythm section to comp freely and improvise behind soloists, who were given ample room to stretch out and weren't bound by restrictions typical of traditional big band arrangements.

“That was different from how every other big band rhythm section functioned then,” said

VJO drummer John Riley. “The [conventional] ensembles were almost like a giant fur coat that got wrapped around the soloist.”

“Thad's charts were already electric and exciting,” said bass trombonist and orchestra manager Doug Purviance. “[The charts] were so sophisticated yet so down home. And it's still that way. And Mel was a really lovable guy. A drummer with chops can confuse a band, but with Mel you always knew where you were. Mel always handed us the ‘1’ on a silver platter.”

The packaging of *All My Yesterdays* includes a 92-page booklet consisting of essays, photos and interviews with band members past and present. The two CDs document performances from Feb. 7 and March 21, 1966.

One fan at the Vanguard VJO residency in February commented, “I could feel the music in the center of my chest—it's that powerful.” That experience can be felt anew when listening to *All My Yesterdays*.
—Ken Micallef

Riffs >



The Bad Plus

Newport-Bound: Charles Lloyd, Kamasi Washington, Gregory Porter and Chick Corea are among the headliners for this year's Newport Jazz Festival, which will take place July 29–31 in Newport, Rhode Island. Other artists scheduled to perform include Kenny Barron, Steve Coleman, Angélique Kidjo, Robert Glasper, Mary Halvorson and a supergroup featuring Chris Potter, Dave Holland, Lionel Loueke and Eric Harland. The Bad Plus will perform Ornette Coleman's landmark 1972 album *Science Fiction* in its entirety.

More info: newportjazzfest.org

Sax Idolatry: Chris Milyo of Arlington, Texas, was named the winner of the 2015 Saxophone Idol competition presented by Buffet Crampon and Julius Keilwerth. Milyo performed live at Andy's Jazz Club in Chicago during the Dec. 16 finals event. He received the grand prize—a Keilwerth MKX saxophone—plus a year's supply of Rico reeds and a two-year subscription to DownBeat. More info: saxidol.com

Shankar at Home: Northern Spy Records is releasing *In Hollywood, 1971*, a new record by Ravi Shankar presented across two LPs, for Record Store Day 2016 (April 16). It's a live recording of an "at home" performance Shankar gave for friends at his residence on Highland Avenue in Hollywood, California. Profits will benefit The Ravi Shankar Foundation.

More info: northernspyrecords.com

Jazz on the Tube: *The Jazz Creative* is set to premiere on the Aspire TV Network on Feb. 26 (10 p.m. PST/1 a.m. EST). Produced by All Music Television and hosted/curated by Los Angeles jazz radio personality LeRoy Downs, the series will feature interviews and new music from established artists and rising stars in jazz. More info: allmusictelevision.net

Caught >



Amir ElSaffar (foreground) and Ole Mathisen perform at Subculture in New York City on Jan. 16 during Winter Jazzfest.

BART BABINSKI

ElSaffar's 'Global Fusion' Heats Up Winter Jazzfest

THE STRUCTURE OF THE WINTER JAZZFEST'S two-night marathon—several lineups of artists playing 50-minute sets, spread across a dozen venues in New York City's Greenwich Village—obscures the fact that a back-and-forth hustle isn't the only way to enjoy it. One well-chosen venue can present as diverse and thrilling a marathon of jazz as six concerts at six spaces. That certainly was the case on Jan. 16 at Subculture, a basement space on the neighborhood's eastern boundary.

Less a club than a black box theater (with a bar), Subculture focuses on music performance but is hardly a traditional venue for jazz. But then, Winter Jazzfest isn't interested in traditional venues, nor, to a large degree, in traditional jazz. The first performer of the night made that clear: Dan Blake, a tenor and soprano saxophonist with one foot in jazz and the other in postmodern classical music.

This performance paired Blake with the Mivos Quartet, a string ensemble with a reputation in contemporary classical music. Blake, on both of his saxophones, did a remarkable job of integrating with the strings. It took some acclimation—but in time, even Blake's squeaky soprano break toward the end of the set had a compelling logic.

The evening took a complete right turn with the arrival of another saxophonist, Chicagoan Frank Catalano, for the next set. His ace quartet (guitarist Vic Juris, bassist John Benitez, drummer Mark Whitfield Jr.) focused on two things: bebop and blues. Catalano brought them together into what can best be described as party jazz, a counterbalance for Blake's more cerebral ideas.

The third set of the night proved to be one of the most beautiful of the entire festival. Trumpeter Amir ElSaffar was born in the States

and learned jazz here, but he studied *maqam*—the traditional Arabic music system—in Baghdad.

His fusion of the two traditions in his Two Rivers sextet project resulted in numerous remarkable moments. It's not every day that one hears a jazz bouzouki solo, like the lovely one Tareq Abboushi fired off in "The Great Dictator." That tune reflected a strong Middle Eastern influence, yet also tinkered with an Ornette Coleman-like aesthetic in its ensemble passages. Saxophonist Ole Mathisen, too, adopted Coleman's energy in the exhilarating solo that followed Abboushi's.

Whether by accident or design, ElSaffar's music suggested other global musical connections. His languid trumpet tones on "Love Poem" evoked the sonorities and tremolos of flamenco music, mindful perhaps of the Moorish influence in Spanish music. (These crossed paths with Mathisen's sax in a counterpoint line that lay against a bass/drum/bouzouki groove.)

When he switched to the *santur* (an Iranian hammered dulcimer) on the following tune, it carried with it echoes of similar instruments used in Eastern Europe.

The sound was exotic yet familiar, lyrical and longing. Contributions by bassist François Moutin and drummer Nasheet Waits—two masters on their respective instruments—were understated but essential. While he mines the musical fusion that remains at the heart of all jazz, ElSaffar is also crafting something thoroughly original and wonderful. He's one of the most exciting voices on the scene today, and it's no slight to the other acts to say that the trumpeter had quite simply stolen the show.

—Michael J. West



Hoenig Spins Magic, Multimedia Tale

FOR DRUMMER ARI HOENIG, STORYTELLING IS A FAMILY TRADITION. When Hoenig was a small child in Philadelphia, his father, a vocalist and choir conductor, and his mother, a violinist, related the adventures of invented characters like a monster named Mr. Spigelbottom. Now a father of two toddler daughters, Hoenig, 42, entertains them with tales about various animals, such as the squirrels Scooter and Sally, and two archetypal figures dubbed the Pauper and the Magician.

The “panhandling Pauper” and “the greatest sorcerer in all the land” are the subjects of *The Pauper And The Magician* (AH-HA Records), Hoenig’s fifth leader recording, and first since *Lines Of Oppression* (Naive), from 2010. Each song on the album is a chapter from a short story that appears in the liner notes for this six-tune, 43-minute program. It comprises five originals and a set-closing cover of “You Are My Sunshine” on which Hoenig showcases his long-established ability to transform the drum kit into a well-tuned melodic instrument with precision and nuance. Hoenig’s bandmates (tenor saxophonist Tivon Pennicott, pianist Shai Maestro, guitarist Gilad Hekselman and bassist Orlando le Fleming) solo resourcefully while not neglecting ensemble imperatives; the leader guides the flow, mixing odd meters, straight-up swing and balladic tone-painting with the crisp intention, timbral control and conceptual rigor that inspired Billy Hart, in a 2007 Blindfold Test, to tag Hoenig as “already a huge influence on emerging drummers.”

“This is all the music that I wrote for those two characters,” Hoenig said over lunch at a Japanese restaurant near his home in Brooklyn. He started conceiving the stories three years ago as his first child, Lyric, became old enough to understand them, and wrote the music in summer 2014 during a weeklong teaching engagement in southern France. Hoenig performed and tweaked the tunes at Manhattan’s Smalls Jazz Club, the location of his Monday night residency, where’s played, by his

estimate, 30 to 35 nights a year over the past decade.

“I wasn’t planning to make a record, but the guys were pushing me, so it was time to do something and put it out,” Hoenig explained. “The logistics of an independent release are complicated, but I wouldn’t have felt good about giving it to a label. I could have made this record a lot longer by mixing the originals with standards that I also recorded, but I’ll probably put out a standards record in a year or two.”

While documenting the recording process, videographer Steve Brickman suggested a trailer. The result is a five-minute, two-part short film with elaborate sets, costumes, special effects, 10 actors (including Hoenig) and musical vignettes from the album serving as a soundtrack. The film, now posted on YouTube, depicts the interplay between the Magician (portrayed by Dylan DePice) and the Pauper (Joan Carra), backdropped by a *mise en scene* evocative of the Grand Guignol and psychic dystopia.

“It seemed to me like a far-fetched idea, but Steve dreamed it up and made it come to life in a video context,” Hoenig said. “I love putting my creative energies toward non-musical things, and this was a fun outlet.”

Within the narrative, Hoenig remarked, “the Magician owns the Pauper—‘do this, do that, do that.’” He added that some of the Magician’s conniving and controlling tendencies “go back to his early childhood with his mother.” Hoenig had earlier described his own mother’s efforts to teach him piano and violin early on as “very painful,” precipitating a “power struggle” that he takes pains to avoid with his own children and the students he encounters when teaching at NYU or as a clinician.

So it seemed appropriate to ask if the characters represent components of Hoenig’s own personality and experience. He laughed. “If I say ‘yes,’ do I have to pay you \$150 as a psychologist? I would say no. This is fantasy. This is saying, ‘I want to imagine a world that’s totally different than my own.’”

—Ted Panken



Ken Vandermark performs at Corbett vs. Dempsey gallery in Chicago on Jan. 23.

MICHAEL JACKSON

Vandermark Develops Artistic Vision in Photo Book

THE CHICAGO CREATIVE MUSIC FAN BASE IS compact but loyal, and key enthusiasts, including promoters and critics, convened at the Corbett vs. Dempsey gallery on Jan. 23 to catch a rare solo performance by saxophonist Ken Vandermark in support of *Site Specific*, his ambitious CD/book compilation of photographs and accompanying recordings.

With clarinet, bass clarinet, baritone and tenor saxophone ready for action on the floor, Vandermark, a 1999 MacArthur “genius grant” recipient, took position in front of an exotic painting by German artist Kati Heck. Bashful, nervous and perhaps a little worn out (he’d recently hosted an intense weeklong series at John Zorn’s New York venue, The Stone), Vandermark interspersed generous anecdotes amid fiery improvisations during his set. The intervening monologues allowed Vandermark to catch his breath after full-bore extrapolations on each member of his woodwind arsenal, but they also proved elucidating, amusing and articulate.

One such anecdote preceded a clarinet tribute to avant-garde saxophonist Fred Anderson (1929–2010), and involved a story about a shared road tour on which Anderson had experienced an epiphany about romaine lettuce.

Another story gave props to Dutch clarinetist/tenor saxophonist Ab Baars, and recalled a concert where he and Vandermark had been drowned out by an overpowering drum duel

between Han Bennink and Hamid Drake.

Lighthearted, impassioned and informative, Vandermark’s remarks added value to what would have been a strong and varied musical soliloquy without them. Despite his discursive introductions, his musical forays were succinct and tightly focused. He has played with a panoply of improvisers across the globe, and this diversity of experience has become the fuel for his creative approach.

Though tenor is terra firma for him, Vandermark is equally bold on baritone and clarinet, and his playing on the latter is particularly rich and resonant (and intermittently piercing). He’s also trained his fingers to negotiate non-standard key configurations (following a trail blazed by Evan Parker), and his first-hand absorption of Ethiopian traditions (he’s worked frequently in Addis Ababa) fuses whiffs of Albert Ayler’s rubbery rhapsodizing in the lower register with a Stravinsky-esque austerity.

Given the variety and energy of the hour-long set, much of which seemed to be mining new material, as well as his estimable poise, it was easy to momentarily forget that this event was also a book release party to showcase his photography.

Like Peter Brötzmann, who has exhibited artwork several times at Corbett vs. Dempsey, Vandermark has emerged as an artist whose visual works bear a strong corollary to his

music and reinforce his worldview.

Site Specific functions as an ineffable travelogue of the itinerant musician, with meditations on diaphanous hotel curtains in Zurich, Zagreb, Pavia and Stuttgart; almost obsolete push-button phones in Paris, São Paulo and Vienna; arrays of furniture; and lonely light bulbs viewed from Orson Wells-ian angles.

Peeling paint, excerpts of haphazard graffiti and urban signage are common subjects for street photographers, and a number of these themes populate the pages of Vandermark’s book, but the majority bespeak a certain peripatetic melancholia and reveal his canny in-camera editing and sophisticated sense of form.

Limiting the edition of *Site Specific* (there are 500 copies hand-numbered) recalls Bennink’s ethos with the Instant Composers Pool of making the output of a given concept finite. In a transcribed monologue from a house concert at Kate Dumbleton’s residence archived in one of two CDs attached to the book, Vandermark states he was inspired by author Jorge Luis Borges’ short piece “The Witness.” More specifically, he wanted to communicate “the idea of chronicling information [and the notion that] there’s a stopping point, when the witnesses go.”

With Vandermark, there’s always a documentation and then a moving on.

—Michael Jackson



Chris Illingworth (left), Nick Blacka and Rob Turner are GoGo Penguin.

GoGo Penguin Defies Categorization

DRUMMER ROB TURNER, DOUBLE BASSIST NICK BLACKA AND pianist Chris Illingworth—the Manchester, England-based trio GoGo Penguin—crossed the pond to New York in January with two one-nighters on tap and some fish-out-of-water trepidation.

"We didn't really know if it was going to go down well," Illingworth said.

That question was soon answered. A Jan. 16 gig at Le Poisson Rouge—part of Winter Jazzfest—opened Big Apple minds to the trio. And two sets at the Mercury Lounge the following Monday closed the deal. Whatever these Brits were brewing, New Yorkers wanted more of it.

But what, precisely, was *it*? Was it jazz? And does it matter?

"We don't want to call it anything," Illingworth said, his bandmates nodding in agreement as they relaxed at the offices of Blue Note, the label that released their new album, *Man Made Object*.

As they searched for artistic antecedents, names popped up fleetingly in the conversation, including the trios of Bill Evans and Ahmad Jamal, as well as the Swedish trio E.S.T., whose pianist, Esbjörn Svensson (1964–2008), clearly was an early inspiration.

The fact is, GoGo Penguin is all of that and none of that.

"We used to try and figure it out," Turner said, "and then we eventually gave up. We found that you're arguing with yourself."

On one level, GoGo Penguin is not about categories but about process. Theirs often begins with bits of raw material—a rhythmic fragment cooked up by Turner on programs like Ableton or Logic; a chord broken and reassembled by Illingworth; a primal drone emanating from Blacka's bow—which, through sometimes fractious interaction on and off the bandstand, yield structured soundscapes.

"It's like an embryo we develop together," Illingworth said. "That's why it sounds like GoGo Penguin, not just the three of us playing one of our pieces of music."

The band hits the States in the spring for gigs at California's massive Coachella festival (April 16 and 23), Philadelphia's World Cafe Live (April 25) and Boston's Cafe 939 (April 26), plus a return to Le Poisson Rouge (April 27).

—Phillip Lutz

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Drummer Eric Schaefer (left) pianist
Michael Wollny and bassist Christian Weber

Players >

MICHAEL WOLLNY

Nocturnal Themes

© JOERG STEINMETZ

Darkness is at the core of German pianist Michael Wollny's latest album, *Nachtfahrten* (ACT), the title of which can be translated as "night journeys." The nocturnal themes provide the pianist with a platform for his many interests.

"It is hard to justify an interest in dark material," he said. "But anything that is not brightly lit is more interesting. There are questions that are left to answer and explore."

Wollny's music is clearly informed by European romanticism, but the pianist is also influenced by many aspects of American art. The new album features a breathtaking solo piano piece, "Metzengerstein," named after an Edgar Allan Poe short story. The program also includes renditions of themes from movies by Alfred Hitchcock (Bernard Herrmann's "Marion" from *Psycho*) and David Lynch (Angelo Badalamenti's "Questions In A World Of Blue" from *Twin Peaks: Fire Walk with Me*). Interestingly, Wollny does not dissociate a movie from its soundtrack; it is part of a whole.

"You are exposed to a narrative with characters, a story and ideas," he said. "The music has a manipulative quality as it draws you into a story. But a soundtrack is more than functional; it puts you in a certain world." Like the composer of a soundtrack, the pianist has become an expert at setting up a mood to lure the listener into his universe.

Wollny is among an increasing number of jazz musicians who grew up listening to pop and rock music and now write arrangements of their favorite songs, which potentially can become standards for a new generation. Previously, he has included tunes by Bob Dylan, Prince and The Flaming Lips in his repertoire, and he's an avid fan of singer-songwriter Sufjan Stevens' 2015 album, *Carrie & Lowell* (Asthmatic Kitty).

"It is normal to improvise on a structure that you know, that you are infatuated with," he said. "If a melody sticks, it becomes a natural ground for exploration. It is part of a sonic environment. And the same applies to classical music."

The pianist has a profound admiration for composer Franz Schubert. Wollny's previous album, 2014's *Weltentraum* (ACT), featured pieces by Alban Berg and Edgard Varèse. For *Nachtfahrten*, longtime collaborator and drummer Eric Schaefer brought in his own arrangement of a piece by Guillaume de Machaut. A 14th century French composer of vocal music might be an odd choice for a drummer, but it seems that de Machaut is enjoying a rediscovery in European jazz circles—trombonist Samuel Blaser and reedist Joris Roelofs have each delved into his music.

Nachtfahrten introduces a new trio, but that was not Wollny's original intention. "Initially, this was going to be a solo piano recording," he

said. "Then, I thought it would be nice to have the bass on a few pieces; later, I decided to add the drums here and there. In the end, we had the trio on [nearly] all the tracks."

The pianist shares a strong aesthetic bond with Schaefer; the two musicians have performed together for more than 15 years. "We had an immediate connection," Wollny recalled. "When you have a long relationship, the magic can fade away or, as in our case, the trust grows and the possibilities become limitless."

The newcomer to the trio is Swiss bassist Christian Weber, who had some experience playing with Schaefer prior to joining the band. Weber turned out to be a great fit. "I was impressed by how supportive they were and to see that what I had to offer was very welcome," he said. "I felt free to contribute and to bring in my own approach."

Wollny lives in the moment and does not follow a master plan. Therefore, he was waiting to see how the new music would develop on stage before making any decision regarding the future. By the conclusion of a tour late last year, the pianist had developed a better idea about what his next chapter might look like. "The tour proved that a trio is a living being; it reacts as an entity to different situations," he said. "The [album's] songs were islands with improvisations in between. There were also stops within a song. Doors open when you play a lot together."

—Alain Drouot

Pedrito Martínez (left) and Román Díaz

Players >

ROMÁN DÍAZ

Rhythm Titan

© REBECCA MEEK

In 2007 the esteemed percussionist-singer Pedrito Martínez uploaded to YouTube several undated videos (circa early 1990s), documenting his mentor, Román Díaz, including a vignette in which Díaz leads a three-drum choir that propels three male singers through a series of Yoruba ritual chants in the tropical gardens of La Quinta de los Molinos in Havana. In the comments section, one viewer responded: “Román Díaz ... un *baluarte*”—or bulwark.

“Bulwark” aptly describes Díaz’s position within the New York’s Yoruba/*santería* and jazz communities since he emigrated in 1999, at age 36. Díaz brings his encyclopedic knowledge of traditional beats, melodies and chants, prodigious hand-drum skills and slithery baritone not only to a host of ceremonial gatherings, but also projects by Yosvany Terry, David Virelles, Michele Rosewoman and Francisco Mora Catlett. Since July 2013, he’s led a weekly, freewheeling rumba at the Zinc Bar.

“Román is the father of the Yoruba culture out of Cuba,” said Martínez, who met Díaz in 1989 and produced their fifth album together, *L’ó Da Fún Bàtá* (Motéma), released in November. He and Díaz arrange seven *orisha* chants, sung by a group of five women—none Cuban, each rooted in the African-American gospel tradition, each a virtuoso soloist—who transition seamlessly from their declamations to collective call-and-response harmonizing of an other-worldly caliber. Díaz, Martínez and Sandy Perez guide the flow on *batas*, mixed to delineate their individual drum voices but also to render a natural, uncompressed, breathe-as-one blend with the voices. Díaz prologues each chant with a wry, urbane introduction.

“In my opinion, the mix of the African culture from here with the Cuban one takes Yoruba chants to another level,” Martínez said.

Over lunch a week after a mesmerizing CD release concert at Joe’s Pub, Díaz sipped

rum as he discussed the project. (Translating was Onel Mulet, a saxophonist and recording engineer with whom Díaz works closely.)

“[My approach] is less to showcase Yoruba religious music than its longevity,” Díaz said. “It adapted in Cuba as the culture evolved, and it’s the same in New York. The drums are higher pitched and tempos are slower today. In New York we have access to old manuscripts and recordings that weren’t available to us in Cuba, so new chants have been created based on ancient melodies.”

Díaz discovered folkloric music as a 12-year-old in the La Victoria neighborhood of Centro Habana. “My next-door neighbors were religious people, who had *abakuá*, rumba and ritual music playing all the time,” he said. “On the other side was a social club for the plaster workers’ guild, where the great bands of Cuba played Sunday dances. I made sure to hear as many percussionists as possible.”

While studying electroplating in technical school, he apprenticed in ceremonial rumba units and in carnival bands. Then Lázaro Valdés, founder of the group Bamboleo, enrolled him in a popular dance band (T Con E), before he was recruited by the prestigious ensemble Yoruba Andabo to play *bata* in support of singer Merceditas Valdés.

“In folkloric music, each singer has their own accent and phrasing,” Díaz said. “The experience of accompanying them prepared me to work with jazz artists. Jazz has profoundly influenced me. From each artist I work with, I take away something that I can apply when I work with someone else. I apply the dynamics of playing jazz—going from *piano* to *mezzo-forte* to *forte*—to the folkloric setting.

“I work on finding rhythms that relate to the jazz rhythm section, ways to support the melody,” Díaz added. “The fundamentals of jazz and folklore are the same.” —Ted Panken

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CHRIS DRUKER

At this year's Winter Jazzfest, guitarist-singer-composer Camila Meza captivated the audience at The Django, a new venue inside The Roxy Hotel in Manhattan. Accompanied by a stellar band—James Francies on piano, Linda Oh on bass and Kendrick Scott on drums—Meza delivered pure, unaffected vocals, sung alternately in Spanish and English, that flooded the subterranean space with a genuine warmth and uplifting spirit. When she soloed on numbers like “Para Volar,” “Emerald” and the enchanting title track of her Sunnyside debut, *Traces*, it was clear that this triple threat from Santiago, Chile, had more to offer than just a beautiful voice, thoughtful lyrics and refreshing stage presence.

On her first outing as a leader, 2007's *Skylark* (recorded in Santiago), Meza set out to establish her jazz cred in a swinging Great American Songbook program that had her dipping heavily into a Wes Montgomery/Kenny Burrell bag on her guitar solos. But on *Traces* (her fourth album overall), she stakes out far more personal and revealing territory on six harmonically sophisticated originals, along with clever interpretations of tunes by Brazilian composer Djavan (“Amazon Farewell”), legendary Chilean songwriter Victor Jara (“Luchin”) and Broadway legend Stephen Sondheim (“Green Finch And Linnet Bird” from *Sweeney Todd*).

“I’ve been slowly looking for a way to connect deeper with my own self expression,” said Meza, who moved to New York in 2009 at age 23 and subsequently studied at The New School with veteran guitarists Vic Juris, Peter Bernstein and Steve Cardenas. “I’ve been gathering much knowledge, learning a lot of rich and powerful traditions of music that have influenced me so that I can actually make my own impression,” she said.

“It’s been a long road because I’ve gone through all sorts of phases to get to where I am today. *Traces* is definitely the shifting point where I finally pour myself completely into these emotions and stories in my own material.”

Meza shows a decided Pat Metheny influence in her flowing legato playing on *Traces* while also revealing a distinct George Benson approach in her simultaneous scatting and soloing salvos on tunes like “Mar Elástico” and the title track. “When I was just beginning to know what jazz was, a friend showed me George Benson, how he was singing his solos. And I was like, ‘Whoa, that sounds so cool! I want to be able to do that one day!’” she recalls. “Pat Metheny and George Benson really got me into the jazz world.”

Meza has taken those towering influences and run with them, developing her own unique vocabulary over time. Throughout *Traces*, her impressive guitar playing serves the song as she seeks a perfect balance between poignant vocals and killer chops.

“Camila is that rare breed of musician who uses the voice as one of her outlets,” said Scott, who plays drums on the album. “She’s just as strong a composer as she is an instrumentalist, so that provides a great experience when we play together. She’s able to hear and interpret in the moment, which for me is one of the most important things.”

“Camila has a vision for the shapes of her compositions—but not in a way that stifles the creativity of the other musicians in the band,” he added. “Playing with her is deep because she uses the folklore from her country and elsewhere and brings it through her own unique filter as a Chilean-born New Yorker.”

—Bill Milkowski



Players >

ERIC PLATZ

Novel Approach

After a young Eric Platz heard Tony Williams' playing on Miles Davis' album *The Complete Concert: 1964 (My Funny Valentine + Four & More)*, he vowed to make his drumming just as musical as that of his hero. Platz may not have reached that wildly ambitious goal—after all, few drummers in jazz history could match Williams' musicality—but he has built a reputation as a tremendous player, trusted collaborator and acclaimed educator.

Platz, 42, expresses his musicality through versatility. He spent more than a dozen years playing, studying and teaching jazz, world music and other genres in Boston, and is now on the faculty of Brandon University in Manitoba. He has explored the full spectrum of jazz, recorded with Americana music singer-songwriters such as Carrie Rodriguez, and played Sephardic grooves in the group Asefa.

Now he has synthesized his diverse experiences into an extraordinary debut, *Life After Life* (Allos Documents).

"I really like the experience of communicating with people through music, [regardless of] the style of music," Platz explained. "If you're playing with musicians who really listen and are focused on sound and open to making a vibe happen as a group—that is just a magical feeling. That's really what I seek to do. At heart I'm an improviser."

Improvisational flexibility has facilitated both his playing style and his work as an educator. He took his first teaching assignment at a day school while he was attending the New England Conservatory, and juggled teaching and touring for more than a decade. But moving to the northern prairie necessitated adjustments. Because he lives a two-hour drive from the nearest major city, pick-up gigs are out of the question. So when he's not teaching, he plays with fellow faculty members and sits in

with a local big bands.

Additionally, he has joined multi-instrumentalist Jeff Presslaff's Complete Rebirth Of The Cool project. "Jeff's idea was to reconstruct Miles' *Birth Of The Cool* ensemble in terms of the instrumentation but commission composers from around Canada to write new music for that instrumentation," Platz said. "The only stipulation is that we're not trying to recreate that aesthetic; it's just taking that instrumentation and exploring that sonic palette a bit more."

But Platz's most ambitious and personal endeavor is his first solo CD, which incorporates rigorously plotted counterpoint, richly textured drones, folksy melodies, free interludes and trance-inducing Jamaican and Moroccan grooves.

His decision to shift from ensemble member to leader came after he invited Chicago-based clarinetist James Falzone, a fellow NEC alumnus, to participate in Brandon's chamber music series. Working with cellist Leanne Zacharias, the musicians found a chemistry that transcended genre. This led Platz to compose pieces that would be analogous to the visual images he envisioned when reading the novels of Cormac McCarthy and Kat Atkinson (whose 2013 bestseller is titled *Life After Life*).

"Eric had a real vision for how to use the studio and shape a narrative, sonically speaking," Falzone said. "I really appreciated the way he mixed and edited the stuff we recorded."

Falzone was sufficiently impressed to put the session out on his Allos Documents imprint. The album was released on Feb. 2, but Platz is already thinking ahead.

"I'm interested in bringing some of the people I know from the States and connecting them with people here in Canada," he said. "It would be great to do more of that and try to create links that didn't exist before."

—Bill Meyer



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On his new recording and his second as a leader, **Wanted**, the exceptional chromatic harmonica player Grégoire Maret once again finds himself moving away from his complementary duties as a sideman, and focusing on his role as a leader with his own musical vision. Naturally, Maret finds collaborating an important part of developing as an artist, but he is especially aware of the pressures imposed by the needs of others, and the necessity of removing these outside influences in order to get to one's core identity.

Going into the studio, Maret knew that he wanted to shape his music using all the tools at his disposal. He assembled a tight, core quartet of pianist Gerald Clayton, bassist James Genus and drummer Terri Lyne Carrington.



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Don Cheadle stars as Miles Davis in *Miles Ahead*, his directorial debut. (Photo: Brian Douglas, Courtesy of Sony Pictures Classics)

TROUBLED GENIUS

DON CHEADLE'S GRITTY PORTRAYAL OF A
DRUG-ADDLED, GUN-TOTING MILES DAVIS IS
THE MOST ANTICIPATED JAZZ FILM IN DECADES

BY ALLEN MORRISON

'IF YOU'RE GONNA TELL A STORY, COME WITH some attitude, man. Don't be all corny with that shit.'

That's Miles Davis, as played by Don Cheadle, talking to a TV producer who is rehearsing the intro to an interview he's about to tape with the legendary trumpeter. The scene occurs near the beginning of *Miles Ahead*, Cheadle's biographical film about Davis' life and music. The lesson in "cool" can be taken as a mission statement for both Davis the musician and Cheadle the actor, who is making his debut as a director with the film. Critics and the movie-going public will certainly debate the liberties it takes with the factual record in pursuit of larger truths about Davis (1926-'91). But one thing is indisputable: *Miles Ahead* is anything but corny.

When the film premiered in October at the 2015 New York Film Festival, the festival's selection committee raved that "every second of Cheadle's cinematic mosaic is passionately engaged with its subject: this is, truly, one of the finest films ever made about the life of an artist." Within days, Sony Pictures Classics had picked up the film, which will open April 1.

Cheadle knows a thing or two about biographical films. The acclaimed actor was nominated for an Oscar for his portrayal of hotelier Paul Rusesabagina in 2004's *Hotel Rwanda*, and he won a Golden Globe (and earned an Emmy nomination) for his role as Sammy Davis Jr. in the 1998 HBO movie *The Rat Pack*.

Co-writing the *Miles Ahead* script with screenwriter Steven Baigelman, Cheadle deliberately avoided the usual cradle-to-grave biopic approach, opting instead to focus on just three days in the life of Davis in the late

1970s, when he was deep into the creative impasse that has become known as his "silent" period.

Following a press screening in New York, Cheadle answered the inevitable questions about how much of the story is invented by saying that "to some degree, all biopics are historical fiction." In order to be true to Davis' continual quest to push the music forward, Cheadle felt it was necessary to expand the conventional idea of a biographical film and "to make a movie that Miles would have wanted to see—or star in."

Although the public verdict is not yet in, Davis' family and friends feel that Cheadle hit a home run. Miles' nephew, drummer/record producer Vince Wilburn Jr., who helps run Miles Davis Enterprises and is one of the film's producers, said, "I think Don fuckin' nailed it, period. Don is a badass, and I love him. And you can quote me on that."

Reached by phone at his West Hollywood home, keyboardist Herbie Hancock—who worked extensively with Davis and served as a music consultant for the film—said, "I loved Don's approach to the film. It's not historical, not a documentary. I love the fact that he was being so creative, as a tribute to Miles' own creativity. If you're going to do a film about Miles, it's gotta represent what Miles stood for. He would absolutely have dug this approach. As a matter of fact, Miles would probably have gotten mad if it had been done [as a conventional biopic]. Miles would have said"—and here he imitated Davis' distinctive, gravelly voice—"Fuuuuck that."

Despite the way the film embellishes the record, one thing that feels authentic is the music. Cheadle, a musician himself, hired pianist Robert Glasper to compose the score. Working together, they took impressive pains to get the music right, whether the scene employs original Davis recordings or Glasper's score, which includes compositions that simulate the trumpeter's various eras and styles so faithfully that they could easily be mistaken for lost Davis recordings. For the score's critical trumpet parts, Glasper turned to Keyon Harrold, his former classmate at The New School for Jazz & Contemporary Music. He also assembled a stellar group of musicians to simulate the sound of Davis' groups from the various eras depicted in the film (see sidebar on page 26).

As the film begins, Davis, then in his early fifties, hasn't touched the trumpet in three years. He has become a recluse, holing up in his disheveled, roach-infested townhouse on West 77th Street in Manhattan, where he spends his days snorting cocaine, consuming copious amounts of alcohol and painkillers to deaden the pain from a degenerative hip disorder, and fending off friends, fans, creditors and record company executives with equal hostility.

Forcing his way into this mess is a free-lance journalist named Dave Brill (played by Ewan McGregor), who claims to be on assignment from Rolling Stone magazine in order to write the story of Davis' alleged "comeback." After a violent initial confrontation, the mismatched pair gradually develop a wary respect for each other. The two eventually become entangled in a mission to reclaim a tape of Davis compositions that has been stolen by an unscrupulous record producer named Harper and the gifted young trumpeter, Junior, whom he is promoting.

Beneath this melodramatic surface, however, a more important drama unfolds. Davis is haunted by memories, shown in numerous flashbacks, of his past triumphs and humiliations. He is particularly pained by his failed marriage to the lovely dancer Frances Taylor (Emayatzy Corinealdi), whose face famously adorns the cover of the 1961 album *Someday My Prince Will Come*, and who was subjected to his repeated physical abuse. We also get to see him creating some of the music that made him one of the most important musicians of the 20th century.

Cheadle's movie is many things: a buddy action movie; a love story; a feast for fans of the music; and potentially an eye-opening experience for millennial kids who have not

yet discovered Davis' oeuvre. But ultimately, *Miles Ahead* is a meditation on creativity, the mysteries and loneliness of genius—and the toll it can take on an artist's personal life and family.

Jazz fans and Hollywood insiders have long wondered whether this film would ever come to be. It was in development for nearly a decade. In 2006, while representing the Davis family at the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame,

'IF YOU'RE GOING TO DO A FILM ABOUT MILES, IT'S GOTTA REPRESENT WHAT MILES STOOD FOR.' —HERBIE HANCOCK

into which his uncle had just been inducted, Wilburn announced that he and his cousins—Miles' son Erin and daughter Cheryl—had already chosen their leading man: Don Cheadle. This was news to Cheadle, who had never even met them. A meeting was arranged, and the actor signed on.

There had been other attempts to film Davis' life, none bearing fruit. The actor Wesley Snipes was attached to one such project, which had been championed by former Columbia Records president Walter Yetnikoff. Ex-wife Frances Taylor Davis recalls having been a consultant to that effort as early as 1993. Various projects have involved author Quincy Troupe, with whom Davis wrote his autobiography (published in 1989).

Cheadle, speaking via Skype from Sony Studios in Hollywood during a break from filming his Showtime series *House of Lies*, reflected on what makes this telling of the Davis story unusual. "Our focus was on who Miles was as an artist, not necessarily who he was as a man," Cheadle said. "I wanted to let the *music* run the show, and not try to check off all these points that were supposedly 'important' for people to know about Miles Davis.

"The truth is that, if you think of the biopics you've seen, after five minutes you start to say, 'I'm not sure about that moment.' Most of them take expansive lives and try to squeeze them into an hour-and-a-half, or two hours. You have to make priorities based upon the story that you want to tell. But to do that, you have to omit characters, create characters, elide characters and moments. There's a lot of poetic license that you take with a biopic, but it's still passed off as the 'true story' of whoever. I didn't want to tell a straight-up-and-down story about Miles Davis, because I don't think that's what Miles would want."

Lacking support from a major studio,

Cheadle and the family raised the film's \$8.5 million budget independently, including some of Cheadle's own money and \$325,000 raised from an Indiegogo crowdfunding campaign.

When making the film, Cheadle sought input from the trumpeter's relatives: "I asked the Davis family for guidance about what Miles would have liked, and they'd say, 'I don't know. Go for it—make it interesting!' They wanted me to make the movie that *I* wanted to star in, the one where I'd go into the movie theater and say, 'Yeah, that's me, muthafucka!'"

The family had originally considered doing a more conventional biopic. "But Miles wasn't conventional," Wilburn said. "Somebody else can do a biopic, or we could get a documentarian. Look,

everybody's not gonna dig it. But it's the way Miles' life was. My uncle was not complacent. Just like the movie, the music moved around a lot. When you thought you could catch up with him, he'd move somewhere else. Shit, he changed clothes six times a day!"

While the character of Dave Brill, and the exploits he and Miles engage in, are fictional, Davis' descent into a self-medicated state, in which he oscillated between torpor and agitation, was all too real. (In his autobiography, Davis was rather candid about this dark period.) Hancock mostly avoided Miles during these years. "I was scared of him," Hancock said. "He was delusional, paranoid ... he had a crazed look on his face."

Wilburn saw him more often during this painful period, and was instrumental in helping him emerge from it. When Davis decided to resume his career, his first album was 1981's *The Man With The Horn*, a project that began with the trumpeter coaching Wilburn's own band, which plays on the album. Wilburn refuses to take much credit: "People say to me, 'Vince, you helped your uncle to come back,' But I didn't help my uncle do shit. When he was ready to stop doing cocaine and *play*, then he picked up his horn and *played*. And even when he was not sounding good, I'd say, 'Uncle Miles, that's *killin'*.' And he'd say, '*Fuck you*,' because he knew it wasn't good. I just wanted him to come out on top—and he did."

To prepare for the role, Cheadle devoured every book, interview and documentary film he could find: "It was great to have his family there. There were so many sources—Herbie, Wayne, people who played and toured with him. I talked to Frances a lot about their relationship, what they were to each other." The result of all the research is a complex, multi-dimensional depiction of Davis, in which he is sometimes



Davis onstage in Berlin on Nov. 6, 1971

JAN PERSSON

arrogant and manipulative; sometimes slyly humorous; and sometimes the sensitive artist hiding behind that famously fierce exterior.

Cheadle has music in his blood. As a high school student in Denver, he had been a promising saxophonist, turning down a music scholarship to pursue acting at California Institute of the Arts. For the Davis role, he actually learned to play the trumpet, practicing for months and transcribing Davis' solos. "I knew that I would never get anywhere close to Miles' acumen," he said, "but I was really trying to go through what he went through... to try to open up that part of my brain that was like Miles' brain. For me, the exercise of transcribing was part of the process. You're actually *doing it* at that point, you know? There's no acting—you're doing it."

While some of the film's plot elements were fabricated, its unflinching portrayal of Davis' abusive relationship with Frances Taylor Davis is based in fact.

"I was the love of his life," Frances Davis said, speaking by phone from her West Hollywood home. "Every time I went to see Miles in a club, he would immediately stop what they were playing, and he would have the band play Cole Porter's song: 'I like the looks of you, the lure of you' ['All Of You]."

When they first met, Frances was a rising ballet star who had danced all over the world.

By the time she began dating Miles, Frances was appearing in the Broadway production of *Mister Wonderful* with Sammy Davis Jr. "The second time we met," she recalled, "he said to me, 'Now that I've found you, I'll never let you go.'" The following year, she was in the original Broadway cast of *West Side Story*, in which she played one of the Sharks' girls. "I had a big career, but Miles couldn't handle it," she said. "After I had been in the show for eight months, one night he came to pick me up after the show in his Ferrari, and he said to me, 'I want you out of *West Side Story*. A woman should be with her man.' And I froze. I didn't know how to talk back to him. I did as he said."

The abuse needed to be depicted in the film, Frances said. "All my friends knew about it. Many times I had to run for my life." She attributes the violence to Davis' cocaine use, which she says she only learned about from her mother-in-law, as her husband had kept it hidden from her.

The movie version streamlines much of this background, depicting Frances as having a highly successful dance career but avoiding explicit references to *West Side Story*. Still, Frances is glad the film has finally been made, and says she admires the acting by Cheadle and Corinealdi. She admitted to one reservation, however: She would have liked to see more of her dance career depicted.

Considering Miles' abhorrent treatment of Frances, was Cheadle concerned about los-

ing the audience's sympathy for Miles? "The sympathy part is tricky," Cheadle said. Steven [Baigelman] and I were more interested in empathy, not sympathy." The co-writers wanted to include Miles' dark side, but without having it overshadow the entire movie. "It was there," Cheadle said. "It happened, and Miles talked about it in his [autobiography]: 'I did drugs, I was in bad situations with women, I didn't treat Frances right. I felt bad about it.'"

"I know there are people who are going to see this part of him and be like, 'OK, I'm off the Miles thing. I'm done. I can't follow you to the end of the movie.'" Other viewers, he felt, would have a more nuanced reaction—not condoning the behavior, but acknowledging the reality and complexity of it. Above all, Cheadle said, his objective was to explore what kind of music comes out of that mercurial personality: "That was always the goal of the story: to ask how he got back to the music."

While the film is a passion project for Cheadle and the Davis family, one of its goals is to inspire a new generation of fans. "I would love for people to have a greater interest in the music," Cheadle said. "I want people to get hip to the fact that the Miles they *think* they know is not the *only* Miles. There's a continuum [in his music] that goes from bebop all the way to hip-hop. Hopefully, people will dig

back into that music. [Young listeners today should] understand that what they're listening to now is sitting on top of these roots. If you're listening to Kendrick Lamar and you love him, thank Miles. If you dig D'Angelo, thank Miles. If you dig speed metal and Jack White—thank you, Miles, thank you, John McLaughlin and Chick Corea—all the leaders that Miles spawned."

The relevance of the Davis legacy to today's music is underscored in the film's final concert sequence, filmed at the Brooklyn Academy of Music before a live audience. It features Cheadle as Miles with a fantasy band that includes Herbie Hancock and Wayne Shorter, members of Davis' second great quintet, playing with young lions of today's music scene: pianist Glasper, guitarist Gary Clark Jr., bassist/vocalist Esperanza Spalding and drummer Antonio Sanchez. Trumpeter Harrold was off-stage, playing the actual horn parts. Emblazoned on the back of Cheadle/Miles' jacket is the phrase

#SocialMusic (with a hashtag conspicuously included). "Social music," as Miles explains in the movie, is the term he preferred to describe his music, as opposed to "jazz," a term which, according to Wilburn, Miles felt carried connotations of slavery. That final sequence accomplishes a dual objective: It conveys the message of Miles' continued relevance, and it contains what could become a key component of the film's marketing campaign.

Will *Miles Ahead*, a movie about how one of the foremost architects of modern music dug deep and found the strength to make a comeback, also serve as a springboard for another Davis comeback, some 25 years after his death?

Just before that blissed-out fantasy concert scene, there is one last bit of dialogue that reverberates. It takes place in the TV studio shown in the film's prologue. Miles is walking out on the hapless TV interviewer, who shouts after him, "Miles, are you coming back?"



Frances Taylor (left) with Davis

DOWNBEAT ARCHIVES/KLM ROYAL DUTCH AIRLINES

Once again, for one final moment, there's that patented gravelly whisper, as the screen fades to black: "You better believe it." **DB**

Making The Soundtrack

If Don Cheadle looks like he's playing Miles Davis trumpet solos in *Miles Ahead*, it's no accident. He is playing them, note for note—but the audience is actually hearing the original Davis recordings.

That is, unless Cheadle is playing new material composed by Robert Glasper to re-create the sound and feeling of various eras of Davis music for the film's soundtrack. In those sections of the film, the listener is hearing trumpeter Keyon Harrold, who managed to dub in terrific, Miles-like horn parts after the scenes were shot.

Cheadle's insistence on learning to play trumpet well enough to execute actual Davis solos before filming demonstrates the lengths to which he, Glasper, Harrold and a host of other prominent musicians would go to make the music in the film sound authentic.

The first task was to hire a composer. Cheadle asked Herbie Hancock, but he was too busy; instead, he became a consultant to the project. Then Cheadle, a long-time Glasper fan, approached the 37-year-old Grammy-winning keyboardist and struck a deal, with the family's enthusiastic support.

Scoring the film proved to be one of the biggest challenges of Glasper's career. "It was amazing, enlightening, hard, stressful, challenging—all of that," Glasper said.

"I would go into the studio," Glasper continued, "and record what I think he wanted, because, at this point, there's no scene; it hasn't been shot yet. Don sees the scene in his head, and he's telling me the vibe. And I had to go into the studio hoping the vibe I create is what he sees in his mind."

Cheadle wanted to select a piece of music—"like in *Rocky*," he said—that could be used repetitively, depending on the dramatic context. "If you listen carefully to the soundtrack, you'll hear [the Davis composition] 'Fran-Dance' played throughout the movie in different forms. We bring it back as many times as we can."

For the critical off-screen role of Miles' trumpet, Glasper chose Harrold, whom Wynton Marsalis once called "the future of the trumpet."

Asked how he prepared for the off-screen role of Miles' trumpet, Harrold responded, "In a way, I have been preparing for it forever," implying that the music was already part of his identity as a musician. "I mean, I'm so familiar with Miles' voice ... sonically, linearly, harmonically. He's like a father to me in how I approach the trumpet."

"Keyon is something else," Cheadle said. "He's a magician. Many times, he had to write to what I played [on camera], as opposed to me ghosting his solos. I would sing him the kind of solo that I was thinking of, the articulation of it. And he would improvise over what I was fingering, and make it make sense. ... I've never seen it done that way, and neither had our sound designer and our music supervisor. They thought it was impossible."

In addition to Harrold, Glasper employed a core group of young, distinguished musicians to play the score, including saxophonists JD Allen, Marcus Strickland and Jaleel Shaw; bassists Vicente Archer and Burniss Earl Travis II; drummers

Kendrick Scott, E.J. Strickland, Otis Brown III and Justin Tyson; flutist Elena Pinderhughes; pianist Taylor Eigsti; and guitarist Mike Moreno.

Cheadle and Glasper collaborated on various music cues throughout the film, as well as the closing song, "What's Wrong With That," which is performed live in the spectacular finale, a fantasy Miles concert including Herbie Hancock (on Rhodes), Wayne Shorter (soprano sax), Glasper (piano), Esperanza Spalding (bass), Gary Clark Jr., (guitar) and Antonio Sanchez (drums).

Will there be a soundtrack album? "Yes, definitely," Cheadle says. Stay tuned.

—Allen Morrison



Keyon Harrold

DENEKA PENISTON

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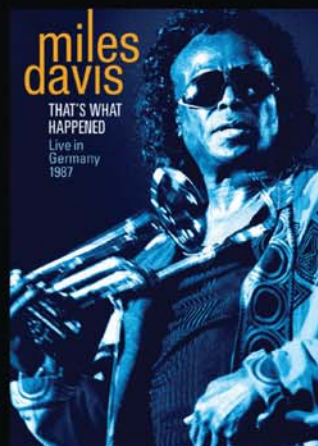
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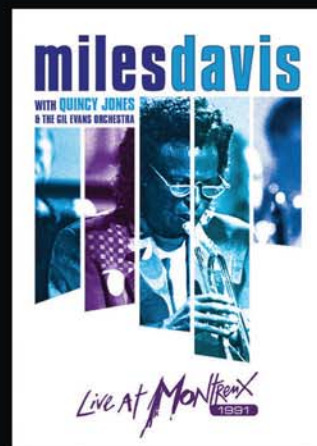
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Esperanza Spalding (shown here in a collage) has a new project, Emily's D+Evolution.



Long before Esperanza Spalding became the first jazz musician to win the Grammy for Best New Artist, in 2011, she was an outsized attraction—a petite woman with big ideas and the will to realize them, not to mention a captivating voice, a photogenic face and a gift for handling the double bass that set her apart from most of her generation's players.

So when she swept into the Village Vanguard on a Friday night in mid-December—the occasion was a gig with A.C.S., an acoustic trio with pianist Geri Allen and drummer Terri Lyne Carrington—the buzz in the packed room was hardly a surprise.

ESPERANZA SPALDING INVITING 'EMILY' OUT TO PLAY

BY PHILLIP LUTZ | PHOTO BY HOLLY ANDRES



Guitarist Matthew Stevens (left) performs with Spalding in her Emily's D+Evolution project in New Orleans on July 4, 2015.

ERIKA GOLDRING

But to those who had over the previous year become accustomed to seeing Spalding as she launched her wholesale move into jazz as theater—a big idea, indeed—a bit of adjustment was in order. Suddenly, she was stripped of the brightly colored eyeglasses, low-hanging braids and low-slung electric bass associated with the new project and the persona at its center—Emily.

“I’m here as a bassist for A.C.S.,” she said with quiet conviction, pausing to let her mind clear before she headed toward the bandstand. “Emily has her own life.”

That life had been in evidence a few days earlier as Spalding settled into a corner booth in a favored Brooklyn hangout. Amid the coffee and conversation, the trappings stood out: glasses still framing the searching eyes, braids nearly draping the shoulders. And, while she insisted that those physical manifestations of the Emily character were nothing more than holdovers from a video shoot the previous day, they evoked the identity of the character they helped define.

Identity—and the search for it—is at the core of the new project. The effort’s promotional art depicts, in quasi-surrealist style, juxtaposed images of Emily/Esperanza, while its central product, the CD *Emily’s D+Evolution* (Concord), contains 12 songs that, in the context of Spalding’s staging, form a kaleidoscopic picture of someone determined to make sense of disparate sides of herself—and, by extension, of the world around her.

“Emily has a very distinct worldview,” she

said, “which is D+Evolution. That’s her belief system. Through performance she wants to show that, and reconcile the contrary extremes of her identity—an identity.”

The emphasis on the album, released on March 4, is on the songwriting at the expense of extended soloing. What blowing is present comes largely from guitarist Matthew Stevens, a onetime Berklee College of Music schoolmate of Spalding’s. He proves to be an ideal collaborator, crafting well-shaped statements that slide seamlessly into tight musical spaces around which the structures expand and contract along with the demands of the leader’s lyrics.

And those lyrics are demanding. Ranging from the concrete to the abstract, they leave room for interpretation but little doubt of Spalding’s determination to be heard, from the opening command (“See this pretty girl, watch this pretty girl flow”—rendered amid a four-on-the-floor drumbeat in “Good Lava”) to the closing declaration (“I want it now”—from the Anthony Newley-Leslie Bricusse tune of that name, the only piece on the album not written by Spalding).

“I want to go for it,” she said. “I want to figure it all out, and live it, and share it, and taste it. Damn straight, I do. And nobody’s going to tell me no.”

Spalding’s theme of reconciling extremes finds its expression in an exploration of what she calls “the opposing force of opposites,” a kind of philosophical push-and-pull reflected musically in tunes suffused with creative tension—pregnant pauses, dynamic contrasts,

harmonic leaps—that resolve, within and between songs, to great effect dramatically.

“We know opposites when we see them,” she explained. “The savage and the noble, the sinner and the saint, a faker and a real artist, a mother and a father, a winner or a loser, educated or stupid, brutish or civilized. We tend to think of evolution as moving in one direction, on the side of civilized, educated, sophisticated. But I don’t think that solely moving in that direction equals growth. You have to reach back, too. You have to reach into the primal.”

The tunes reach into the primal with surprising directness, as in the collective scream that anchors “Funk The Fear,” a Funkadelic-inspired exercise in which four vocalists hired for the recording—Fred Martin, Katriz Trinidad, Celeste Butler and Kimberly Davis—render the refrain in blunt unison.

Compared with “Funk,” the tone and texture differ in “I Want It Now,” for which Spalding makes her lone move to the acoustic piano. The tune’s inclusion grew out of Spalding’s realization that a piece she was writing based on the character Tituba—a slave woman accused of being a witch in Arthur Miller’s play *The Crucible*—was actually an arrangement of Newley’s music from the 1971 film *Willie Wonka & The Chocolate Factory*.

The struggles of Tituba, Emily and the character Veruca Salt in the Newley-Bricusse piece dovetail thematically, and convinced Spalding of the validity of the cover. In it, she makes ample use of the piano’s percussive power to convey the tune’s messages.

"There are many ways you can take that tune," she said. "All are intriguing."

Spalding pursues the theme of institutional racism in "Ebony And Ivy," defaulting to the guitar-bass-drums backing for the voices. Taking its title from a recent book by historian Craig Steven Wilder that explores how major American universities benefited from the slave trade, the tune is a barely couched commentary that gained currency in recent months as racial protests roiled Ivy League schools.

"It's interesting in terms of, What are you being taught to think?" she said. "Whose worldview are you assimilating? And what's getting pushed aside to make room for that?"

If such insights seem remarkable, they are more so coming from someone who, growing up as a girl suffering from stress-related illness in hardscrabble Portland, Oregon, was homeschooled between the fourth and eighth grades before dropping out of high school. By her own admission, Spalding—then known by her middle name, Emily, which her brother still calls her—would "waste a lot of time, watch a lot of TV and wander around the neighborhood and smoke cigarettes and be cool."

Even as she was occupying her time with unproductive pursuits, she was laying the groundwork for the new project. "The art I was most interested in as a child—theater and dance and movement through space; how people choreograph themselves in a coffee shop, at a bus stop, in a waiting room—I never delved into as a grownup. Movement, acting, poetry, performance—putting on a *show*—I'm bringing that up to date. I'm revisiting that initial curiosity now.

"Beyond that, it's not a story about me as a kid. It's more like, 'I miss you. You can come out and play, Emily. Let's see what you wanted to say.' It's like the door has opened for Emily to come through."

Spalding has knocked on the door before, enjoying wide exposure in the jazz community as an original member of Joe Lovano's *Us Five* and at the helm of the acclaimed albums *Chamber Music Society* (2010) and *Radio Music Society* (2012). But the lyrics she produced, she said, lacked the depth of meaning derived from writing for a character.

"If I was just putting lyrics to something," she said, "it was more about finishing it, having it rhyme and sound good."

The big leap in her development as a lyricist came in 2013, when Wayne Shorter recruited her to write the libretto for "Gaia," a 26-minute opus that brought Spalding, on vocals and bass, together with the Los Angeles Philharmonic, Shorter on saxophone and his working group: Danilo Pérez on piano, John Patitucci on bass and Brian Blade on drums.

Paraphrasing Shorter, she said that the central point of the piece was "the kids telling the

adults to wake up and stop acting like children.

"It was the first time I was asked to write a lyric that was specifically portraying an idea. Once I had the experience of writing poetry with the intent of expressing somebody else's specific ideas, I got a taste for it. And I really liked that process. It's not open-ended. It's got some parameters."

With that piece under her belt, she began concentrating on her own themes, told through the eyes of a kind of alter ego. That period yielded a set of demos featuring Spalding's vocals and her own piano accompaniment. In March

2014, Spalding called Stevens about performing the material that would ultimately become the program for *Emily's D+Evolution*.

"She said it was something entirely different from what she had done up until that point," he recalled. After assimilating the material in a matter of weeks, Spalding was onstage at the 92nd Street Y in New York with Stevens, Karriem Riggins on drums and, on vocals, Corey King and Nadia Washington. "It just sort of grew from there," Stevens said.

The first recording sessions took place in June and November 2014 at NRG Studios in Los

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Spalding onstage in Los Angeles at the Hollywood Bowl on June 13, 2010

EARL GIBSON III

Angeles. In 2015, concert, club and TV appearances led to a final, comprehensive recording session in September. By that time, Justin Tyson had assumed the drum chair and Emily Ebert was contributing background vocals alongside King.

Spalding, intent on duplicating the flavor of a theatrical experience in the studio, opened up the session to a live audience. Stevens said that about 15 people occupied the studio's large booth, transforming it into a decorated listening space. The session found Spalding in full Emily regalia—bedecked in glam pants, glasses and braids—swaying to the beat with her electric bass as she led the group in songs and rit-

uals as though they were onstage. On "Ebony And Ivy," a mock processional enlisted band members who brandished would-be diplomas.

Though the rituals would be cut from the record, Stevens said, "she was trying to capture the energy of people playing and maintain the integrity of the recording quality. It provided a different energy in a recording session in that it was a performance, essentially." A party followed.

Tony Visconti, a producer long associated with David Bowie, was present in the sessions and in post-production. (Visconti is credited with co-producing the album with Spalding, and he mixed seven of the tracks.) Although some of Bowie's music had at one time or another been in the Spalding songbook, the Emily character "didn't feel like Ziggy Stardust or something like that," according to Stevens.

Two months after the September recording session, Spalding upped the ante theatrically, recruiting director Will Weigler, a man in his fifties who has known Spalding, 31, since she was 5 years old in Portland. Even then, he said, she showed the "fearlessness, insatiable curiosity and incredible sense of humor" she would display as an adult.

For three-and-a-half days in November, Weigler and Spalding holed up in a studio in Vancouver, British Columbia. Equipped with markers and a huge sheet of paper spread across an eight-foot table, they worked their way through Spalding's material, deconstruct-

ing lyrics, reordering songs and, Weigler said, "trying to figure out what's going on, what the discoveries are."

After the November meeting, plans were set for a February get-together in which the entire band would run through the show without the music. "I'm convinced that the audience would find it compelling in the way they would find a silent play compelling," Weigler said. "Then we add the songs and we're off to the races."

Weigler and Spalding were sparing in the details about the new staging. But in one emblematic tidbit, "Farewell Dolly" benefited from a simple shift in lighting that altered the focus of a lyric. The piece—employing only voice, guitar and light percussion—is a kind of lament, its lyrics beginning: "Change the way I see my life/ Why would I, why would I? I'm the dolly, I'm the wife/ Damned if I do or die."

"We came up with a new conception of why the singer is singing the song," Weigler explained. "It wasn't her personal revelation, it was her watching someone else and narrating what's happening for the audience that then leads into the next piece."

The live production reaches a climax with the song "One." In the production, the piece is pushed back in the playlist and, in a "bit of physical staging," reaches a kind of inflection point, Weigler said, likening the moment to the "to be or not to be" soliloquy in Shakespeare's *Hamlet*. He added, "It's not choreography as

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such. It comes at this crisis moment, where she makes this breakthrough."

Weigler dispensed with or replaced most of the show's props, opting in many cases for making the points through a technique developed by the playwright Bertolt Brecht—*Gestus*—in which a moment's meaning is conveyed through a physical action.

In "One," Weigler said the "big reveal" comes near the end of the piece. A close reading of the lyrics suggests that it might be the last word of the refrain, which on repetition changes from "see" to "meet": "The one/ so strong/ it stops the world and my heart spinning/ one to prove what I've always known/ but couldn't meet."

Maintaining an air of calculated ambiguity, Spalding declined to say who or what "the one" might be.

"That's the point," Spalding explained. "You believe it; you don't see it. You think something like that must exist, whatever *that* is." And then she assigned authorship of the piece to Emily.

"I'm talking about somebody else's songs," she said. "I listened to what Emily was implying, to what the melodies were asking for, to what they lyrics were revealing. When the first of the melody comes, it will have the language with it. And then you keep unpacking it in both directions, musically and lyrically."

Emily, about whom Spalding consistently spoke in the third person, was only now starting to find her footing. "This past year we've been experimenting," she said. "Figuring out more about her, about the sound, the energy and the ideas and how they can be compelling and penetrate the audience. But now it's really time to make her performance come to life." A series of East Coast performances incorporating Weigler's input have been scheduled for April (including a show at Harlem's famed Apollo Theater on April 14).

Given the project's relative lack of emphasis on improvisation, people will argue about whether those performances are jazz. By comparison to Spalding's gig with A.C.S.—which on that December night in the Vanguard revolved around expansive interpretations of Shorter tunes and an Allen original—they may not be.

"Every night, she makes choices I never would have thought of," Allen said, referring to Spalding's treatments. "She helps create a place where we can make it be what we want it to be. It's a very free zone."

But Spalding took a broad view of the art form and her project's place in it—referring to a quote from Shorter, who, she said in an email, had come up with her favorite definition of jazz thus far: "I Dare You."

"According to that definition," she said, "I would say this project is jazz."

DB

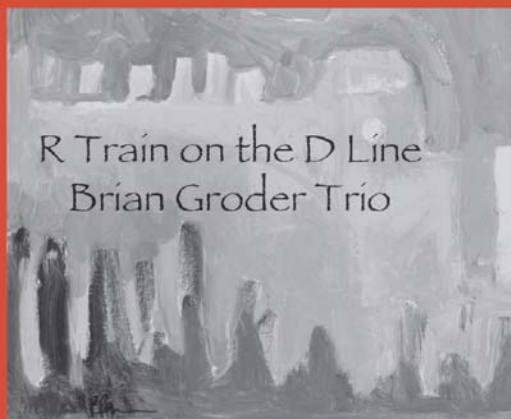


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ARTURO SANDOVAL

A LIFE OF GRATITUDE

By Frank Alkyer • Photos by Michael Jackson

Arturo Sandoval counts his blessings. At 66, the Cuban-born U.S. citizen has many to count. He is thankful for the first time he picked up a trumpet at 10 years old. He is thankful for the day in 1977 when he met John Birks “Dizzy” Gillespie, his mentor. He is thankful for the day in 1990 when—with the help of Gillespie—he received political asylum in the United States, effectively fleeing the dictatorship of Fidel Castro. And he is thankful for the life he has been able to enjoy in America, a life that has allowed him to become one of the world’s most revered trumpeters, the recipient of 10 Grammy awards, the subject of a TV biopic—*For Love Or Country: The Arturo Sandoval Story*—and recipient of the Presidential Medal of Freedom in 2013.

Both professionally and personally, Gillespie holds a special place in Sandoval’s heart, as exemplified by his 2012 tribute album released by Concord, *Dear Diz (Every Day I Think Of You)*, and his 2014 memoir, written by Robert Simon and Sandoval’s wife, Marianela—*Dizzy Gillespie: The Man Who Changed My Life* (GIA Publications). Both go into great detail, and express great love, for a man who helped bring Sandoval’s talent to the world.





In mid-December, Sandoval came to Chicago for the Midwest Clinic, where he performed with the Sydney Conservatorium of Music Jazz Orchestra, signed copies of his book and promoted his latest album, *Live At Yoshi's* (ALFI). He also sat down for a live interview in front of an audience of educators and student musicians. The following is an edited transcript of a freewheeling conversation that covered everything from Diz to the complexity of bebop to the repression of the Cuban people.

DownBeat: You were born in Artemisa, Cuba. What kind of town was that?

Arturo Sandoval: It's not a town. It's a village, a little village. I grew up in the middle of

what, I hate singers in the band because they make the money, they're in front of the camera shaking their body and they get all the credit for everything. And the trumpet players are there in the back. That's the reason why I stopped playing salsa. I am the singer. I don't need a singer in my band.

I was trying different things and finally, one day, I saw a guy playing trumpet and I was like, "Oh, that's the one I like, yeah that's the one."

So I went to the teacher, he played the clarinet and tried to teach everybody as good as he could, and I said, "Maestro, I've made my decision: I'd like to play the trumpet." And he said, "I'm so sorry, we've only got two trumpets and we gave them away a long time ago. We don't have any instruments left." So I said, "What

You never had a lesson?

No, no, no, and that's a true story. I started walking to my house, and I was crying, crying all the way. And, I really liked it. I liked it. I wanted to play. I was crying, crying, crying.

I learned that day a very important lesson. Only God could say who's going to make it and who don't—nobody else. Nobody else.

When did you first connect with jazz?

When I came out of school, I started playing with another band in Havana. And the guy was a journalist, by the way. He played a little bit of saxophone. He said, "Hey, have you ever heard of jazz music?" And I said, "What's that?" And he said, "Come with me," and he'd play me a vinyl [record]—one of those compilations of recordings from '46 through '48 of Dizzy Gillespie and Charlie Parker. That was it. That tore my head upside down, and I said, "Oh my god, what is that?" And he said, "Jazz." I said, "Man, I want to learn how to play that thing."

I started on a mission. I was trying to figure out how to play bebop. And bebop is very difficult. I still believe that if you're a good bebop player, nothing is going to stop you, nothing. Your mind has to be right there—your skill, your command of your instrument, everything. To be a good bebop player, you really have to be in command of your tool.

I was 20-something. Ten years later, 1977, I got a phone call from a guy with the musicians union and he said, "Arturo, don't repeat what I'm going to say, but this afternoon a cruise, a jazz cruise, is gonna stop here in Havana and Dizzy Gillespie will be on that cruise." I said, "Yeah, that's a funny joke." He says, "No, no, no, no. I'm very serious, very serious." So, I went to the harbor to wait for that boat.

And this was the first time that American musicians had landed in Cuba since the Missile Crisis.

Since 1960, for 17 years, nobody came. May 1977. I'll never forget that day because that changed our life, big time. I was there when Dizzy was coming down the steps, and I [thought], "Damn, I would love to tell him so many things. What are you going to say? You don't speak English, at all." Man, that was so frustrating, you know? But God is so good to me.

When I was in front of Dizzy, I felt the frustration because I couldn't say a word. A guy walks behind him, then that guy started to talk to me in Spanish, and I said, "Wow, this is my salvation over here." I said, "Hey, how are ya? Welcome to Cuba." He said, "Do you know this man?" I said, "Yes, yes." "You know who he is?" "Yeah, yeah." "Are you a musician?" I said, "No, no." I looked at Dizzy and was like, "Damn, I'm not going to say that I'm a trumpet player in front of *this* guy. No way, man!"

I had, at that time, a 1951 Plymouth. It was



Stan Getz (left) performs in Havana, Cuba, with Paquito D'Rivera (second from left) and Arturo Sandoval (far right) in May 1977.

DOWNBEAT ARCHIVES/ARNOLD JAY SMITH

nowhere. I had to quit school when I started 5th grade. No more school. I am not a good example, not a good example to others.

I grew up in that village and my father was a car mechanic. Nobody in my family, before or after me, got into music. Before, that's OK, I understand, but *after*, I don't know because I'm ...

You're an example.

Yeah, my life is not miserable, you know? [The audience laughs.] It's not bad. I don't know why anybody hasn't gotten encouraged to follow me, but so far, nobody.

The City Hall put together a little marching band with kids, and I joined it. They gave me several instruments to try. They gave me bass drum, marching, you know? With that thing hanging, I said, "That's too heavy, man—no way." Then they gave the flute. The flute [Sandoval mimics playing by whistling] made me feel a little dizzy. Then, the trombone, and I said, "No way—the trombone is never good for picking up the best chicks."

I wanted to be a singer, *the* singer. You know

if I found a trumpet, would you let me play?" "Yeah, if you find one, yes." So my aunt bought me my first trumpet. It was made in China or somewhere. And I'm talking about 1960. Man, that thing was a lot worse than those plastic ones you see around. It was horrible.

Someone in my village got a reputation for being a trumpet teacher, and I went to see him. He was a cranky old man. He was a bastard, a horrible person. One day I said, "Maestro, they sent me here because I want to learn how to play the trumpet." He doesn't even say hi; he says, "Open the case and play something for me." I said, "I have no idea, I don't know how to play." He said, "I said *play something!*" "OK, OK." I was shaking already. [Sandoval makes noises with his mouth mimicking some bad, tuneless trumpet playing. The audience laughs.]

After a few seconds, that son of a gun told me, "Put it back in the case. Don't waste your time. You're never going to make it. Do something else because it's never gonna happen. Don't waste my time, either." That's what he told me, and I was 10 years old.

falling apart. I just painted it with a brush with gasoline and tar. That's a true story. The passenger door didn't open, but finally Dizzy asked me if I had a car, and I said, "Yeah, I got a car." He got in the car and the first thing he said was, "Man, this car smells funny." I said, "Yeah man, tell him I just painted it with this and that. And then Dizzy said, "You're supposed to put the car on the road, not the road on the car" [laughs].

I showed him the city for the very first time; he had never been there before. A lot of people thought that he went to Cuba in the '40s, '50s or the '60s a bunch of times, but no, May '77 was the first.

It's difficult to believe, given his contributions to the Afro-Cuban musical tradition.

Of course, and his connection to Mario Bauzá and Chano Pozo, but I showed him the city for the very first time. We spent a few hours together. That night, they organized a kind of meeting and jam with the visitors. The band I was playing with that year was Irakere, which later on became a kind of well-known band.

Just a little bit famous.

A little bit, yeah [laughs]. So I drove [Gillespie] to his hotel. I got to the [concert venue], and I was warming up backstage. When he got there and saw me with the trumpet,



Sandoval takes a break from signing books on Dec. 18 at Chicago's Midwest Clinic.

warming up backstage, he turned around to the people and said, "What the hell is my driver doing with the trumpet!" Somebody said, "Mr. Gillespie, he's the guy [performing] here." And Dizzy said, "Hey, no, he's my driver!" And then we played together, and that was it.

Man, he was so good to us, and especially later with me. Listen to this because it's amazing, man: Less than a year after [that], we were in a rehearsal with that band in Cuba. A guy

came with a bodyguard, came to rehearsal. He sat down and watched the whole thing. When we finished the rehearsal, he came up to us—big guy, blue eyes, elegant. And he said, "Good afternoon." But nobody understood him, but they've got a translator there. He said, "Good afternoon. My name is Bruce Lundvall, and I am the president of CBS Records." When he said, "President of CBS Records," everybody understood that *very* well.

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[Lundvall] listened to the whole rehearsal. He said, "I'm here because Dizzy Gillespie has been talking about you for months. And now I understand what he is talking about."

Exactly 13 months later, CBS signed us for three years. They put us on a plane straight to LaGuardia [Airport] in New York. We got off the plane, we get into the little bus and they drive us to the sound check at Carnegie Hall. That was our very first day ever in the U.S.—straight to the Carnegie Hall sound check.

By the way, that was June 1978. That was part of the Newport Jazz Festival in New York, because Newport, a couple of years before, had a big problem there.

So they started a New York version of the festival, right?

George Wein did the festival for a while in the city of New York, but it was still named the Newport Jazz Festival. OK, we played the second part of the program.

This is Irakere, correct?

Yes. The first half was two piano trios—Mary Lou Williams' trio and Bill Evans' trio. [*The audience gasps.*] They played the first half of the program and then we played the second half. But that's not even the worst part. The worst part was that when we looked at the first row, there was Stan Getz, Mario Bauzá, Tito Puente, Dizzy Gillespie, Toots Thielemans, Bill Evans, Maynard Ferguson ... oh, my Lord.

Did you stop looking? Don't look at the front row! [laughs]

I said to the other guys, "Man, are you sure we have to play in front of those people now?" Oh, my Lord, help me. That was nice, and that was because of Dizzy Gillespie.

Later on, of course, I got to play with him until he departed physically, but not spiritually, because he's always going to be with us.

What are your views on how the relationship between the U.S. and Cuba has changed recently?

You know, it's a completely different perspective, according to the prism that you see the whole thing [through]. But it's a completely different story when you watch CNN or any of those things where they give you a completely distorted and manipulated version of the truth. But, to be absolutely honest, as a Cuban, we really appreciate the intention of the U.S. government and Mr. Obama to reestablish the relationship

that has been broken for many years. We appreciate that intention very much. I had the privilege to tell the president that one-on-one.

When you received the Medal of Freedom?

Yes, we were sitting there for three-and-a-half hours and we talked a lot. I told him, "We appreciate the intention of what you're about to do, but I'm warning you, the response that you're going to get from there, I'm sorry, is a middle finger in your face. As always, you are not the first one to attempt to do it. You're not the first. And it's always the same response. You are dealing with a couple of lunatic dictators; they feel an absolute pleasure to be able to say that they own a farm with 11 million slaves working for them."

And this is coming from you, who was once jailed for listening to Voice of America.

You're right.

For how long?

I was in jail for three-and-a-half months because a sergeant caught me listening to a little short-wave radio. The Voice of America. Willis Conover's jazz program, they called it *The Jazz Hour*. I listened to that for years. That was the only way we had to learn and listen to jazz music because we had no radio programs, nothing.

I haven't gotten back there in 27 years. In some moments, I would like to go back, but I'm not allowed because I got a political asylum through Dizzy Gillespie. I'm not allowed to go back. In 27 years, I lost almost all of my family there. I couldn't go back and bury them or bring them flowers or anything.

That has to be tough for you because Americans are so excited to go to Cuba.

One thing I hear that is terrible—people write it on the Internet, and I hear it on the radio and television: "Hurry up and go now before they transform the thing."

Man, that's so horrible. Go now to enjoy and watch the complete and absolute misery before the people can dress and eat properly. "Hurry up and go now."

You want to go now and enjoy the misery and see the cheapest prostitutes on earth? They charge five bucks. Maybe one of them is my cousin or niece or something. People come back and say, "Man, I had a great time there!" Of course, a very nice, young, beautiful, educated lady had sex with you for five bucks. That's a good prize, man. But how do we feel about that? We're talking about my relatives, my people. They get so low on the scale of misery that they have to do such a thing ... and it's because of the wrong government.

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the JULIAN LAGE JAZZMAN COMETH

BY BILL BEUTTLER | PHOTO BY STEVEN SUSSMAN

At this year's Winter Jazzfest in New York, Julian Lage demonstrated that he is, first and foremost, a *jazz* guitarist. His trio closed out the Jan. 16 lineup at Subculture, blazing through a half-dozen tunes from its superb new release, *Arclight* (Mack Avenue), and throwing in a version of Charles Lloyd's "Island Blues" for good measure.

Lage, 28, was wielding a newly adopted Fender Telecaster, and was joined by Scott Colley on acoustic bass and Kenny Wollesen on drums—the same pair Lage had witnessed in his child-prodigy years backing Jim Hall at Yoshi's in Oakland, California. The trio's Subculture set mixed three early 20th-century covers from the album—Spike Hughes' entrancing "Nocturne," W.C. Handy's "Harlem Blues" and a forgotten piano roll number by Gus Kahn-Nel Moret titled "Persian Rug"—with three Lage originals, climaxing and concluding with the leader's bravura guitar work on "Ryland," a charmer that he had also recorded on his solo acoustic album *World's Fair*, released last year.

The crowd roared its approval. Two of Lage's former collaborators—Jorge Roeder and Tupac Mantilla—sprang from the audience to the side of the stage to congratulate him, as did Dave King of The Bad Plus. The consensus among them was that *Arclight*, Lage's fourth album under his own name (not counting his recent duo discs with Fred Hersch, Chris Eldridge of Americana group the Punch Brothers and Nels Cline of the rock band Wilco), marks a major leap forward for him artistically. The album also firmly establishes him as a jazzman for any listener who had any doubts about this eclectic, multi-genre explorer.

King, in his role as Jazzfest's 2016 artist in residence, had

been interviewed onstage by festival staffer Adam Schatz earlier that day, and during the conversation, King quoted the design guru Bruce Mau on the challenge facing artists in these technologically advanced times. "Now that we can do anything," went Mau's mantra, "what will we do?"

That loaded question is certainly appropriate for Lage. Aside from sharing his generation's access to top-flight music education and an incredible array of music history, genres and recordings, Lage possesses jaw-dropping technical facility on his instrument. (Critics have noticed: Lage finished second to Bill Frisell in the Guitar category of the 2015 DownBeat Critics Poll.) Indeed, he seems capable of tackling whatever musical challenges appeal to him. He has already used his guitar virtuosity to pursue a wide range of music, and with *Arclight* he has made his most identifiably jazz album while simultaneously zeroing in on his stylistic enthusiasms to hone a unique voice.

"I just love that quote," Lage said in response to hearing Mau's comment. "In today's musical climate, it's hard to hide from the fact that you have some awareness of how you fit into a technological community. It's harder and harder to be anonymous, and it's easier and easier to see where a musician comes from. Now more than ever it's so easy to constantly take a 360-degree picture of all the people we love. And so, with that awareness, I think that there's this incredible freedom to really ask that question the designer said, with extreme sincerity. 'OK, now that I can associate with this crew, I can associate with that, I could deliberately carry on this torch, I could do that—and it's all at my grasp.' It gives me a lot of hope, because very quickly it comes to that question: 'What do you want? What do you do? What's important?'"



Lage wanted to do several things with *Arclight*. One was to scratch his Telecaster itch, specifically by employing it as jazzmen had done in its early days, exploiting its ability to be “very robust and very sensational at a low volume.” Another was to craft short, focused tunes (the longest of the album’s 11 tracks clocks in at 4:12, the shortest at 2:09), an approach inspired by his girlfriend, singer-songwriter Margaret Glaspy, and Lage’s own listening preferences.

“The hope is that you get to the point, more or less, and that you could drop the needle at any point in the song and you would kind of know how it goes,” he explained. “It’s almost like a little DNA sample. But within that there’s all this exploration.”

The songs in the program can be classified in three basic categories: pre-bebop standards; originals inspired by the folk- and rock-injected acoustic fusion of Keith Jarrett’s early ’70s quartet with Dewey Redman, Charlie Haden and Paul Motian; and “free” music, as exemplified by the drum feature “Stop Go Start,” which had Wollesen whirling a corrugaphone at Subculture and overdubbing vibraphone on the album.

The producer holding Lage to his game plan was singer-songwriter Jesse Harris, who helped propel Norah Jones to stardom on her album *Come Away With Me* (and wrote its Grammy-winning song “Don’t Know Why”). Lage had backed Harris on a few tracks of his 2015 album *No Wrong No Right*, and both men have collaborated with John Zorn, to whose musical sorcery the *Arclight* tune “Prospero” is dedicated.

Lage had packed in a lot of music getting to this point. It has been 20 years since the short film *Jules at Eight* documented his life as a Northern California guitar prodigy. Two years later, he appeared on an album with bluegrass star David Grisman, and five years after that he made his jazz recording debut with Gary Burton. Heeding Burton’s advice, he waited until graduating from Berklee College of Music to make his first album as a leader, *Sounding Point* (EmArcy), which earned a 2010 Grammy nomination. *Gladwell* (EmArcy), with a group inspired by the chamber jazz of Jim Hall associate Jimmy Giuffrè (Roeder, bass; Mantilla, percussion; Aristides Rivas, cello; Daniel Blake, saxophone), arrived in 2011, and by that year’s end Lage was working in a short-lived trio with bassist Larry Grenadier and drummer Eric Harland. Copious sideman work on the road and in the studio continued throughout, most notably with the New Gary Burton Quartet (where he began working with Colley) and Harland’s band Voyager.

Lately Lage has focused on duo and solo projects. His collaboration with pianist Fred Hersch, *Free Flying* (Palmetto), earned a 5-star review in the December 2013 issue of *DownBeat*. He pursued bluegrass/Americana sounds for two recordings with guitarist

Lage (left) performs with Scott Colley at Zankel Hall at Carnegie Hall in New York City on Oct. 17.



© JACK VARTOOGIAN/FRONTROWPHOTOS

Chris Eldridge, while his album with Nels Cline, *Room* (Mack Avenue), skewed free and avant-garde. Lage recently began performing with classical guitarist Gyan Riley (son of Terry Riley) on John Zorn’s *Bagatelles* project. *World’s Fair*, his solo album, sprang from a composing commission and began his fascination with writing compact, song-length pieces. He also suffered an injury to his fret hand from overuse while working on *World’s Fair*, causing him to overhaul his technique before recording it.

The injury hasn’t been the only obstacle to overcome during Lage’s career. His mentor Burton knows firsthand that exploring multiple genres can cause problems. And that child prodigies often don’t pan out.

“I was pretty sure that Julian would be a winner,” Burton said. “He seemed to have a lot of depth to his musicianship. And I guess the other word would be ‘breadth.’ This is a guy who is at home in folk music and acoustic string bands as well as jazz, and several different kinds of jazz as well. And it has proved actually challenging to him career-wise, because people have trouble connecting with someone who is hard to label.”

Burton recalled a similar scenario in the late ’60s, when he and Keith Jarrett were both signed to Atlantic. Label executives had cautioned him about working with the pianist because Jarrett’s wide-ranging projects in those years and afterward supposedly were rendering him difficult to market. (Despite the warning, the two collaborated on a 1969 duo album, *Gary Burton & Keith Jarrett*.)

“Julian has faced that challenge as well,” Burton explained, “because he has one foot in each of several different musical worlds, where he’s considered a hero in each one of them. The string band people think he’s fantastic, because he’s a heck of a guitar player. And the jazz people of course are in awe of his abilities and tal-

ents. In the end, it will all be to his advantage—but it’s a challenge at this stage in his career.”

Lage is fully aware of the issue: “That’s a real consideration in of all this,” he said. “Are you diffusing the message? What is the message? You know, guitar is an instrument that’s at ease in a lot of areas: folk music, blues, rock, jazz. Ironically, I feel like jazz is maybe the most awkward, for me, as a home for the guitar. The guitar in jazz ... doesn’t always feature the bare-bones elements of the guitar. It asks for something else a lot of times.

“But when I reflect on it, I feel so lucky to be a jazz musician. No question about it: I’m a jazz guitarist. And although that label might not make sense for everything I do, it really contextualizes the way I grew up. In a lot of ways it’s out of my control. It’s embedded in the way I grew up; it’s embedded in the teachers I studied with. All arrows point to me being a jazz musician, and I love it. I love it. And then within that, the guitar is such a flexible instrument that I can venture into the acoustic string world. But like jazz, the acoustic string world, bluegrass world, is so open-minded right now that even that’s kind of nebulous. It’s just creative improvised music.”

Late last year, Lage spent some time in his Upper West Side apartment describing the creative improvised music on each of *Arclight*’s tracks, and what he said about three of them—and Scott Colley’s take on the album in a later conversation—fleshes out what he means by the album’s “three camps” of compositions.

“Nocturne,” for instance, is a case of unleashing modern sensibilities on jazz as it existed in a time of creative ferment before bebop. “The recording I learned it from has Coleman Hawkins as the feature,” Lage said. “It starts with a minor chord in the melody and then for the rest of the song they play completely in major. And so I kind of took the first round

of the song, and I thought, 'Man, this is just dreamy.' It feels like something you've heard before, but it's pretty unorthodox. The bridge is a little weird. It speaks to what I think of a lot of this music: It's coming from the Wild West, before things became codified as a style.

"They sound like country guitar chords, but they're moving chromatically so they sound pretty space-agey. But they hadn't evolved into the kind of nuanced way that the bebop cats dealt with it. I just love it. It spoke to that aesthetic I was so drawn to. Beautiful melody. The original was just incredible."

"That was one that really stood out to me," agreed Colley. "That one struck me as such a great vibe, and immediately felt like that was the essence of this record—finding the most important elements and stating just what's necessary and not more to make the statement."

Colley recalled playing duo gigs with pianist Jimmy Rowles while a student at Cal Arts, and the older man choosing standards of similar vintage to the songs Lage is drawn to. "It's interesting that I've started this association with such a young player who is interested in reimagining this really rich period of music," he said. "Maybe there's other young players out there who are doing the same thing, but I haven't met too many of them."

"Stop Go Start" is another of their favorites, a skeletal composition meant to spark free improvisation. "It's like the other end of the spectrum," Colley noted, "but it's also very compact, and it makes a statement. There's a kind of a collage of an improvisation, but it's just a brief statement to enhance the written material, in my mind."

"This was a real treat," Lage said. "I've been trying to get access more and more, especially working with Nels, where you write very little and you give tremendous freedom to the band. You say, 'We're going to play this and whatever happens, happens.'"

The trio members thought they were merely *rehearsing* the version of "Stop Go Start" that appears on the album, but after the song ended, Harris told them, "Nope, that's it." Incredulous, the musicians asked to overdub themselves as a second trio onto the initial run-through. "What you're hearing is basically a product of Jesse Harris mixing the song live," Lage explained. "He basically would decide when to bring in the overdubs and when to take them out."

"Fortune Teller" opens the album and seems the tune most inspired by the mixing of jazz with folk and rock in the late '60s and early '70s. "It's totally derived from my love for the early Gary Burton era, when he was in the circles of Keith Jarrett and Keith's quartet, and then as an extension Charles Lloyd's band," Lage acknowledged. "It was almost like before fusion was a thing. It was this *rough jazz*. I just love that stuff. I think maybe the aesthetic that I was so attracted to with that kind of writing and that type of music is it's so bold, it's so anthemic. It kind of has an epic quality and yet, by the vary nature of the instrumentation and the temperament of the instruments, it doesn't sound boisterous."

"The things they share in common are the orchestration for the most part," Lage said, summing up how songs and styles on the album all fit together. "The approach to the guitar as a certain kind of voice, and also the integration of the '70s, the '20s, a kind of contemporary take on music. So it's a weird record, but it feels like the kind of record I wanted to make. God willing, that we would do another one, where now it feels like anything would be possible."

During a follow-up interview a couple of months later, Lage was even more upbeat about the album and his future.

"I've got these plates spinning in these different fields," he said, "but my vision is to see that they coalesce into one sound as much as possible. *Arclight* was the—I wouldn't say it's the missing piece, because I think there's other pieces that are not represented in the public eye yet, or the public ear—but in a lot of ways I feel like now we can sew it all together: the electric voice, the acoustic voice, the song voice, the avant-garde thing. I think those relate to my constitution the most. And now we begin."

DB

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Jeff Lindberg *director*

Dee Alexander *vocals*

Ann Hampton Callaway *vocals*

René Marie *vocals*

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FRIDAY, MAY 27, 8:00

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Wayne Shorter *saxophones*

Danilo Pérez *piano*

John Patitucci *bass*

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Gregory Porter vocals Marquis Hill BlackTet

Marquis Hill *trumpet*

Christopher McBride *saxophone*

Justin Thomas *vibraphone*

Joshua Ramos *bass*

Makaya McCraven *drums*

Grammy® Award-winning vocalist Gregory Porter has quickly become an audience favorite by fusing pop, soul and gospel influences into a sound that is "strong and sometimes experimental, and mightily good" (*The New York Times*).



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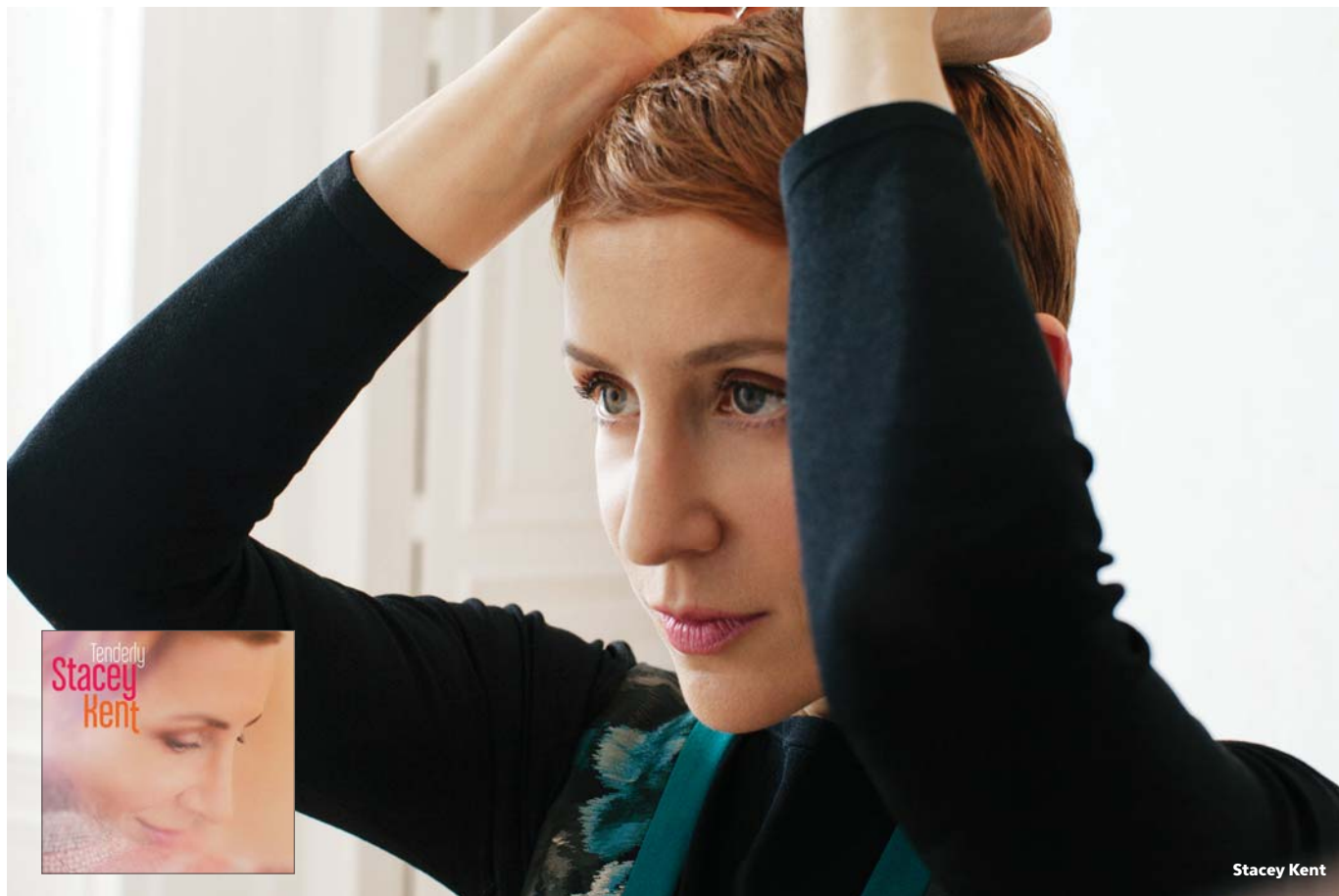
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Inside >

50 / Jazz
54 / Blues
58 / Beyond
60 / Historical
64 / Books

Reviews >



Stacey Kent

Stacey Kent *Tenderly*

OKEH 88875-156782

★★★★

Stacey Kent surfaced 20 years back as one of the softer voices in that no-man's land between the cabaret and jazz-room scene. She's been around the world quite a bit in recent years, flexing her multilingual skills on projects that took her into more offbeat and original material. Now her first CD for Okeh brings her home to the Great American Songbook.

The standards are a remarkably tolerant and flexible canon that welcomes the unorthodox and unexpected with broad, interpretive latitude. But its temperament is relentless-

ly adult and quietly elite, two smart words that characterize Kent very nicely and explain why she fits so snugly into the intimate vortex of this rather rarefied genre, where it's less about the particulars of one's intonation (although Kent has a lovely, caressing intelligence about hers) than the overall environment of the moment.

Here she delivers a wistful soliloquy of whispered pillow talk, reclining comfortably on a cloud of bass and guitar and occasionally under the cover of Jim Tomlinson's velvety tenor sax or flute. No piano or drums to rattle the cozy romantic ambiance.

You have to consult the liner notes, though, to know what this album is really supposed to be: a summit meeting between Kent and Brazilian guitarist Roberto Menescal—"one

of Brazil's most important 20th-century figures." But you wouldn't know it from the cover, which features a misty profile of Kent along with her name writ large, but no mention at all of Menescal (who was also on Kent's previous album, *The Changing Lights*, in 2013). Anyway, his vocal "feature" is limited to a single song, "Agarradinhos," which agreeably bisects the American Songbook theme and permits Kent to switch to Portuguese. Beyond that, he contributes admirably to the pastel tranquility of a lovely album.

—John McDonough

Tenderly: Only Trust Your Heart; Tangerine; The Very Thought Of You; Embraceable You; There Will Never Be Another You; Tenderly; No Moon At All; If I'm Lucky; Agarradinhos; In The Wee Small Hours Of The Morning; That's All; If I Had You. (43:17)

Personnel: Stacy Kent, vocals; Jim Tomlinson, tenor saxophone, flute; Roberto Menescal, guitar; Jeremy Brown, bass.

Ordering info: okeh-records.com



Avishai Cohen *Into The Silence*

ECM 2482

★★★★★

There's no lack of poise in Avishai Cohen's music. This new quintet disc arrives with a fetching equilibrium that gives each passage the power to determine its own weight. As the trumpeter's crew moves along, precision guides their choices. Maybe that's because Cohen is so accustomed to trio work, a realm that demands a pronounced sense of balance. His decidedly more flamboyant Triveni outfit has nurtured an enviable unity by steadily shifting as one. The band on *Into The Silence* takes that strength even further, positioning it as a priority.

Bill Frisell *When You Wish Upon A Star*

OKEH 88751 42212

★★★★★

Bill Frisell's music has always had a kind of doubleness to it, as if it existed simultaneously in real time and dream time. For all its detailed specificity and precision, something mysterious hovers over the music, pulling it into another dimension. How perfect, then, that this album deals with movie themes, so concretely etched in our collective memory yet from a genre that feels so much like dreaming.

With guitar, viola, voice, drums and bass, Frisell ingeniously reimagines large orchestrations with careful simplicity, endowing a tune as sweet and sincere as "Happy Trails" with a William Blake-like aura, as if it were not a cliché, but a window to a wider world. The guitarist's noir sensibility—so appropriate for a movie theme album—creates an unexpectedly haunting quality throughout.

Though there are a few lapses of momentum, everyone plays to perfection, with Frisell tumbling through halting cascades or succinctly laying down atmospheric back-grounds. Drummer Rudy Royston is reserved and respectful and bassist Thomas Morgan (of the Jim Black Trio) anchors the ship with

The music radiates with authority. Whether it's an overt ballad like "Life And Death" or the momentary agitation of the title cut, the program is bolstered by a deeply considered feel. Pianist Yonathan Avishai plays a key role as the trumpeter's main foil, using a palpable determination to stress the nuance in the leader's writing. The pieces were inspired by the passing of Cohen's father, and an elegiac vibe is often in the air. Reflection guides "Quiescence," and even the rumbles of the title track seem to seek a thoughtful repose.

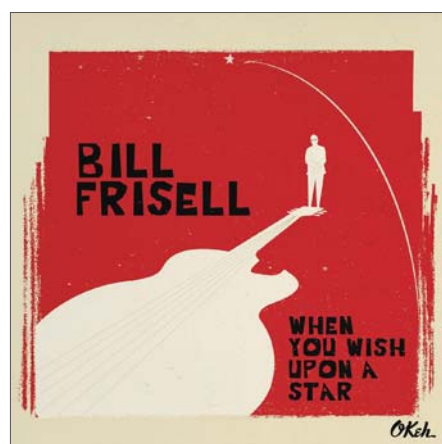
The rhythm section boosts such subtleties. "Dream Like A Child" steers into myriad twists and turns; with each new swerve, drummer Nasheet Waits and bassist Eric Revis shade the action, feathering impulses while Cohen's brass lines keen or wail. Indeed, the trumpeter, who sounds fantastic throughout, strolls a bit on this one, letting his team wax eloquent. Cohen found solace in Sergei Rachmaninoff's piano music after the loss of his father, but the drama here is more akin to the grief of Miles Davis' "He Loved Him Madly" and "Vonetta." It's the guiding spirit of a somber program that's well calibrated, poetic and straight from the heart.

—Jim Macnie

Into The Silence: Life And Death; Dreams Like A Child; Into The Silence; Quiescence; Behind The Broken Glass; Life And Death—Epilogue. (53:10)

Personnel: Avishai Cohen, trumpet; Yonathan Avishai, piano; Eric Revis, bass; Nasheet Waits, drums; Bill McHenry, tenor saxophone.

Ordering info: ecmrecords.com



aplomb. Frequent Frisell collaborator Eyvind Kang takes the lead on viola on the love theme from *The Godfather*, and Petra Haden's take on Henry Mancini's wistful "Moon River" is nothing short of transportive.

—Paul de Barros

When You Wish Upon A Star: To Kill A Mockingbird, Pt. 1; To Kill A Mockingbird, Pt. 2; You Only Live Twice; Psycho, Pt. 1; Psycho, Pt. 2; The Shadow Of Your Smile; Bonanza; Once Upon A Time in the West (Theme); Once Upon A Time In The West (As A Judge-ment); Once Upon A Time In The West (Farewell To Cheyenne); When You Wish Upon A Star; Tales From The Far Side; Moon River; The Godfather; The Bad And The Beautiful; Happy Trails. (63:26)

Personnel: Bill Frisell, acoustic guitar, electric guitar; Petra Haden, vocals; Eyvind Kang, viola; Thomas Morgan, bass; Rudy Royston, drums, percussion.

Ordering info: billfrisell.com



Kneebody & Daedelus *Kneedelus*

BRAINFEEDEER

★★★★★

Synthetic electronic music and organic jazz are distinct worlds that have each contained a subset of mutual admirers. That's been true in recent years—think of the cross-genre flirtations between jazz musicians and Radiohead, Bjork and Flying Lotus—but I think of it being anchored in the great Jon Hassell/Brian Eno outing *Fourth World, Vol. 1: Possible Musics*. Possibilities, after all, are the fuel for musical hybridity, the most recent example being the collision of Kneebody and Daedelus.

A perfect release for Flying Lotus' relatively new label Brainfeeder, *Kneedelus* combines the already omnivorous but more acoustically based music of Kneebody with the computer- and electronics-saturated mixology of the producer Daedelus, an entity otherwise known as Alfred Darlington.

This is, in itself, not new; people have been tinkering with cyborg jazz all over the aesthetic spectrum lately, with varying degrees of success. The balancing act needed to make it work requires the acoustic component to be more than just a source and the electronics more than just treatment.

A track like "Home" has plenty of compositional integrity, electronic washes and effects shifting the timbre and context enough that it brings the melody from a simple ballad to the edge of implosion. Other tracks have more overt and radical dance-remix qualities, like "Loops," which is a giddy drum workout for Nate Wood, or "Rounds" with its post-apocalyptic dub vibe.

The marriage of real and virtual music is inherently uncomfortable, but managed here with deftness and intelligence. —John Corbett

Kneedelus: Loops; The Hole; Drum Battle; They Are We; Platforming; Home; Move; Though Not; Rounds; Not Love. (51:30)

Personnel: Daedelus (Alfred Darlington), electronics, mixing; Adam Benjamin, keyboards; Shane Endsley, trumpet; Kaveh Rastegar, bass; Ben Wendel, saxophones; Nate Wood, drums.

Ordering info: brainfeedersite.com

The Hot Box

Critics	John McDonough	John Corbett	Jim Macnie	Paul de Barros
Stacey Kent <i>Tenderly</i>	★★★★	★★★★½	★★★	★★★★½
Avishai Cohen <i>Into The Silence</i>	★★½	★★★	★★★★	★★★★
Bill Frisell <i>When You Wish Upon A Star</i>	★★★★½	★★★★	★★★	★★★★
Kneebody & Daedelus <i>Kneedelus</i>	★★	★★★★	★★★★	★★½

Critics' Comments

Stacey Kent, *Tenderly*

A sweet, delicately delivered stroll through a list of great love songs, sung with an ace's intonation and precision diction—nothing mumbled, nothing lost. —John Corbett

A supple feel is needed to sell the best Brazilian programs, and though Kent's spin lacks a certain sultriness, there's lots of grace at hand to get the job done. Sweet song choice, too. —Jim Macnie

Kent's intimate, miniaturist whisper is perfectly suited to this quiet bossa nova project with guitarist Roberto Menescal. It may remind you of the famously cool Julie London album with Barney Kessel, *Julie Is Her Name*. Kent projects a persona that is chipper, accurate and cute. "No Moon At All" is a standout. —Paul de Barros

Avishai Cohen, *Into The Silence*

Music that hovers in the subconscious like an out-of-reach memory without emotional dynamics. There is a passive beauty here, but mostly Cohen hides in a pallid ambiance without disturbing the atmospherics with bold strokes. —John McDonough

With this cast of heavies and Cohen at the oar, I thought this would slay me. It's got stellar passages, but errs on the side of being careful and precious and ends up ponderous on the way to sleepy. —John Corbett

The musical equivalent of a cloudy, gray day, this often mournful, impressionist album churns with anxiety, so it was no surprise to learn that it is a meditation on the death of this fine trumpet player's father. Cohen shines on "Behind The Broken Glass." —Paul de Barros

Bill Frisell, *When You Wish Upon A Star*

Borrowing interest from films of his childhood, Frisell tosses off a few easy movie songs, but breaks interesting new ground in interpretations of several classic scores. His *Psycho* and *Mockingbird* are especially convincing. Worth a sequel. —John McDonough

You can count on Frisell to take an idea as tread-worn as this and transform it into something gripping. Petra Haden sounds lovely throughout these hypnotic translations of the super-familiar into the very softly deranged. —John Corbett

As with many Frisell albums, it unveils its intrigue a layer at a time. The top attraction is its diversity. From Bernstein to Mancini, he ties it all together —Jim Macnie

Kneebody & Daedelus, *Kneedelus*

Without strategies of movement or escalation, each piece tends to marinate in its own juice without taking us anywhere, starting and ending in the same groove. —John McDonough

It's the kind of mash that keeps on revealing new aspects of itself. What you think is ethereal turns out to be thick; steely moments manage a cool pliability. A step forward. —Jim Macnie

This relentlessly dark, spooky enterprise, with its rumbling percussion, massive synth sounds and cathedral-like echo, feels like a cross between energy music and EDM. More jazz-ish tracks like "Platforming," with a spiraling Ben Wendel tenor sax solo, or "Home," with Shane Endsley's winsome trumpet, would have been welcome. —Paul de Barros

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Marlene VerPlanck *The Mood I'm In*

AUDIOPHILE RECORDS

★★★★★

Marlene VerPlanck has been exploring the Great American Songbook since her days singing in the bands of Charlie Spivak, Tex Beneke and Tommy Dorsey. She's contributed backing vocals to a legion of artists, including Sinatra and KISS, and has sung on demos for the writers in the Brill Building. But it's her work as a solo artist that has brought her lasting fame. On this, her 24th album, the singer continues to showcase her impeccable phrasing, sinuous

melodic sense and flawless diction. She's a quiet vocalist, but she conveys an encyclopedia of emotion with every word.

"Come On Strong," a Sammy Cahn/Jimmy Van Heusen obscurity, is a case in point. It's a celebration of carnal love, and when she whispers the titular lyrics you can feel the growl behind her purr. Bobby Worth's drums and Andy Panayi's saxophone add to the subtle sizzle.

VerPlanck's voice is like a summer breeze, warmly caressing the simple, poetic lyric, especially when delivering the pensive vocal that enhances Duke Ellington's "It Shouldn't Happen To A Dream." Mark Nightingale's muted trombone complements her vocal with a smoky, restless solo.

VerPlanck's playful phrasing is evident on the title track. She plays with the rhythm, singing before and behind the beat, taking the song home with a cluster of frisky extended notes. At 82, she still has most of her range, lending these timeless standards a heartwarming grace.

—j. poet

The Mood I'm In: The Mood I'm In; Me And The Blues; Free And Easy; It Shouldn't Happen To A Dream; Certain People; I Want To Talk About You; Come On Strong; All Too Soon; It Started All Over Again; This Is Always; My Kind Of Trouble Is You; Too Late Now. (49:56)

Personnel: Marlene VerPlanck, vocals; John Pearce, piano; Paul Morgan, bass; Bobby Worth, drums; Mark Nightingale, trombone; Andy Panayi, saxophone, flute.

Ordering info: jazzology.com

David Bowie *Blackstar*

COLUMBIA 888 75173871

★★★★★

Jazz has long been coloring the innately varied range of David Bowie's musical impulses. He has tapped its flavors and its spirit along the course of his 25-title discography, drawing players such as saxophonist David Sanborn, trumpeter Lester Bowie and jazz-fluent pianist Mike Garson into his fold. But what Bowie wrought with his grand finale, *Blackstar*, is something with a deeper jazz creed and credo. Wisely inducting tenor saxophonist Donny McCaslin and his nimble, genre-elastic band into the fabric (drummer Mark Guiliana is particularly inventive), Bowie created a new paradigm of how pop and jazz can unite toward a higher artistic good.

Not incidentally, *Blackstar*—strategically timed with his cancer-stricken death, released on his 69th birthday, two days before his passing—is a quixotically beautiful, mortality-inflected "swan song" project, a left-of-pop masterpiece that stands among Bowie's more experimental periods. Musically, with the help of producer Tony Visconti, a sympathetic comrade, Bowie's gift for mixing unconventionality with infectious pop style hooks and refrains



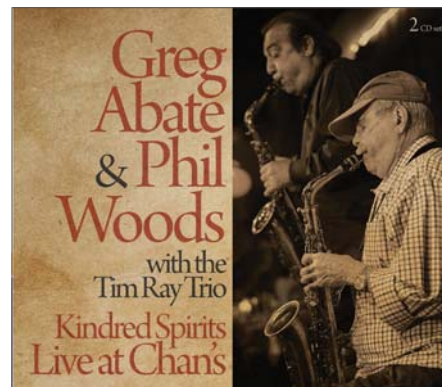
reaches a new high here. As a poignant finale, "I Can't Give Everything Away" touches on both Bowie's reluctance to take leave of his literal being and his reluctance to explain away the complexity of his work.

Blackstar is not so much a tidy or predictable summation of Bowie's long musical adventure, but a suggestion of what might have been had the adventure continued. —Josef Woodard

Blackstar: Blackstar; 'Tis A Pity She Was A Whore; Lazarus; Sue (Or In A Season Of Crime); Girl Loves Me; Dollar Days; I Can't Give Everything Away. (41:13)

Personnel: David Bowie, vocals, acoustic guitar, harmonica (7); Donny McCaslin, flute, tenor saxophone; Ben Monder, guitar; Jason Lindner, keyboards; Tim Lefebvre, bass; Mark Guiliana, drums.

Ordering info: columbiarecords.com



Greg Abate & Phil Woods with the Tim Ray Trio

*Kindred Spirits:
Live At Chan's*

WHALING CITY SOUND 077

★★★★★

If you're a devotee of meat-and-potatoes bebop, sparring saxes and technical fireworks, then this generous twofor is a no-brainer. If you're curious to hear one of the last testaments to the artistry of Phil Woods (82 at the time, a year shy of his passing), prepare to be satisfied.

Abate and Woods' relaxed simpatico—often crowning one another's phrases or echoing quotations—stems from formative duties as big band section leaders. Such apprenticeship demands forthright tone, pinpoint timing and the ability to blend seamlessly. Woods is beyond pedantry. Despite technical prowess, there is always his thrill-seeking drive and willingness to respond to the moment.

Two takes of Charlie Parker's "Steeplechase" appear on Disc One, the first twice the duration of the second; Disc Two features fleet Abate on "Yardbird Suite" and a cavalcade of Bird references from Woods and vivid piano from Tim Ray. The rhythm section is featured on a sparkling, Latinized version of "Speak Low," but rousing alto jousting is what the Chan's clientele came for. Woods is identified by his bent-note bravado and postured riffing, Abate by a more streamlined, less querulous approach. Only on two takes of the mellow "Moonlight In Vermont" do we realize, as the altos spiral round each other, that Woods' career is in its twilight, and he can now admit the genuine wistfulness his mighty machismo of yore seldom permitted.

—Michael Jackson

Kindred Spirits: Disc One: Steeplechase (Thriving On A Riff); A Sleepin' Bee; The End Of A Love Affair; Angel Eyes; Cedar's Blues; Willow Weep For Me; Steeplechase (Short Version); Fried Clams With Bellies (Spoken); Phil And Sequel (Spoken); Emotionally Involved (Spoken); Different Keys (Spoken). (60:12) Disc Two: I'll Remember April; Moonlight In Vermont; Speak Low; Strollin'; Yardbird Suite; Moonlight In Vermont (Short Version); The First One's Free (Spoken). (52:04)

Personnel: Greg Abate, alto saxophone, soprano saxophone; Phil Woods, alto saxophone; Tim Ray, piano; John Lockwood, bass; Mark Walker, drums.

Ordering info: whalingcitysound.com



Michael Formanek's Ensemble Kolossus *The Distance*

ECM 24371

★★★★★

This is Michael Formanek's third album as a leader for ECM. His first two, *The Rub And Spare Change* (2010) and *Small Places* (2012), were quartet affairs including longtime colleague Tim Berne on alto saxophone (playing baritone here). *The Distance*, in many ways, is a continuation of the first two, despite the radical personnel changes, mainly because in all three cases, all the music is Formanek's.

"Exoskeleton" is defined as "a hard, protective outer body covering an animal." And while there's a sense of the hard and protective, Formanek's "Exoskeleton" eight-part suite with a prelude is hardly in need of protection, least of all because of who he's brought on board.

This 18-piece ensemble (not counting conductor Mark Helias, taking the baton instead of his own bass bow) most often reminds of Gil Evans' early to mid-'60s ensemble; Formanek manages to sound close-in even as this largely lumbering ensemble roars to and fro. This is due in large part to where the music was recorded (Brooklyn's Systems Two) but also because Manfred Eicher was producing.

Like Evans, Formanek delivers a big sound. There are touches recalling John Lewis' *Music For Brass* (eight of the 18 instruments on *The Distance* are brass instruments) and J.J. Johnson's work with Gunther Schuller. Elsewhere, the influence of George Russell's scalar approach pervades. Charles Mingus is another touchstone, especially when Formanek lets the players loose.

The album's lack of melodic invention, roughhewn and dry as might be, is countered by a music that doesn't hit you over the head (à la Kenton) but instead is filled with engaging small-group sections and a recurring swirl of large-ensemble, angular hoedowns. The mood suggests a drunken or subterranean vibe, with constantly shifting and effective meters, the

overall execution more patient than plodding, more like a slow-motion merry-go-round or roller coaster.

That said, the pervading stillness that surrounds much restlessness is anchored through the various solo voices, heard with much delight with, for example, Ben Gerstein's dreamy trombone and Mary Halvorson's woozy, liquid guitar in the Parts IV-V section. And there's an elegant, forceful swinging that takes place during sections of Parts I-III.

All told, Ensemble Kolossus wears its exoskeleton proudly. Michael Formanek's musi-

cal world is a kind of gracious envelopment of everyone present.

—John Ephland

The Distance: The Distance; Exoskeleton: Prelude; Exoskeleton Parts I-III: Impenetrable/Beneath The Shell/@heart; Exoskeleton Parts IV-V: Echoes/Without Regrets; Exoskeleton Parts VI-VII: Shucking While Jiving/A Reptile Dysfunction; Exoskeleton Part VIII: Metamorphic. (71:19)

Personnel: Loren Stillman, alto saxophone; Oscar Noriega, alto saxophone, clarinet, bass clarinet; Chris Speed, tenor saxophone, clarinet; Brian Settles, tenor saxophone, flute; Tim Berne, baritone saxophone; Dave Ballou, Ralph Alessi, Shane Endsley, trumpet; Kirk Knuffke, cornet; Alan Ferber, Jacob Garchik, Ben Gerstein, trombone; Jeff Nelson, bass trombone, contrabass trombone; Patricia Brennan, marimba; Mary Halvorson, guitar; Kris Davis, piano; Michael Formanek, bass; Tomas Fujiwara, drums; Mark Helias, conductor.

Ordering info: ecmrecords.com



Ralph Alessi Quiver

Ralph Alessi trumpet
Gary Versace piano
Drew Gress double-bass
Nasheet Waits drums



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Sound the Trumpets

The popularity of the trumpet as an improvising instrument seems to rise and fall with the seasons. It's a sticky wicket for the aspiring trumpeter, for sure. Should he or she go for the pungent yet placid Freddie Hubbard style? What about the cerebral tone of Kenny Wheeler or the extroverted aplomb of Dizzy Gillespie? Has any trumpeter since Chet Baker replicated his purity of tone and coolness of line? The following trumpet-centric releases pose their own questions and offer their own answers.

Will Caviness Sextet, *A Walk* (Cellar Live 071115; 43:00 ★★★½) A trumpeter/flugelhornist with hard-bop on the brain, Will Caviness revisits hard-bop's golden years on every track of this all-originals debut. His tone recalls Miles by way of Nat Adderley, with an introverted approach set off by a sprightly rhythmic center. Tenor saxophonist Sam Dillon, alto saxophonist Benjamin Drzen, joyful pianist Jeb Patton, bassist Will Slater and slick drummer Pete Van Nostrand take Caviness' light-hearted romps for a stroll like it's 1959 all over again.

Ordering info: cellarlive.com

Shareef Clayton, *North & South* (Harlem River Records; 44:57 ★★★) Miami native Shareef Clayton is a firecracker. Clayton recorded two albums with Bobby Sanabria's big band, and he's worked with Stevie Wonder and the Duke Ellington Orchestra. His precocious debut as a leader is equal parts contemporary r&b, groove-heavy funk and orchestral ballads. The glossy production serves Clayton's goal of being an entertainer as well as a pure jazz musician, but he blows hot-blooded trumpet nonetheless.

Ordering info: shareefclayton.com

Freddie Hendrix, *Jersey Cat* (Sunnyside 1435; 50:22 ★★★★★) Covering material from Freddie Hubbard and Horace Silver, as well as some original compositions, Freddie Hendrix delivers a scalding hard-bop message with powerful soloing from an inspired ensemble. Hendrix carries the hard-bop trumpet mantle like he owns it, turning in beautiful solos that spit with fire and charm with grace. Outstanding performances from pianist Brandon Mc-



John Raymond

Cune, tenor saxophonist Abraham Burton and drummer Cecil Brooks III round out this exceptional debut.

Ordering info: sunnysidezone.com

Ibrahim Maalouf, *Kalthoum* (Impulse! 602547496997; 49:00 ★★★½) Ibrahim Maalouf, a classical composer and son of a renowned Lebanese musical family, has recorded seven albums; *Kalthoum* marks his Impulse! debut. Maalouf surrounds himself with the instrumental trappings of the jazz group, but his music is far too broad-based to be labeled jazz. *Kalthoum* relies heavily on traditional Arabic music, following its melodies, rhythms, tonality and structures. While the material is spirited and compelling, the album is less about improvisation in the jazz sense, and more akin to folk music.

Ordering info: impulse-label.com

John Raymond & Real Feels, *Real Feels* (Shifting Paradigm 115; 51:00 ★★★★★½) Making a joyful improvisational noise, Raymond's trio of guitarist Gilad Hekselman and drummer Colin Stranahan swings spiritually and blissfully on the trumpeter's muscular third CD. Recalling the freedom and interaction of Paul Motian's groups as well as the down-home funk of John Scofield's more visceral outings, *Real Feels* traipses multiple directions, each of them rewarding. The trio goes New Orleans psychedelic on "I'll Fly Away," creates streamlined swinging goodness on "Donna Lee," weaves a silvery requiem on "Scarborough Fair" and mines Paul McCartney's "Blackbird" for all its ethereal beauty. If your kids insist on dancing when you play Raymond's latest, let them—they're irresistibly caught up in the *Real Feels*. **DB**

Ordering info: shiftingparadigmrecords.com



Ches Smith *The Bell*

ECM 2474

★★★★★

New York percussionist Ches Smith's leader debut for the ECM label represents a very different stylistic approach, growing out of his compositional side. All of the pieces here are Smith originals, with the pervasive atmosphere being one of spacious contemplation, glacial development and thoughtful attention to sonic properties. Smith employs a conventional drum set at the center, but is also within easy reach of timpani and vibraphone. This chamber intimacy is shared with Craig Taborn (piano) and Mat Maneri (viola), fellow regulars on the New York scene. The album was recorded at the famed Avatar Studios (formerly The Power Station), and produced by Manfred Eicher himself.

The opening title track begins with lone gongs and a careful piano entrance, Taborn softly developing a figure's repetition, Maneri creeping inside with a citrusy mournfulness. Smith triggers a deep timpani roll about two-thirds through the piece's nine minutes, adding tiny bell-shakes. The exquisite development is expertly paced. There's a seamless transition into "Barely Intervallic," lending a suite-like character.

The steady transitions remain in place, but the threesome's interactions increase their rapidity. Once again, as the finish beckons, Smith makes a surprise swerve, as vibraphone and piano click into a repetitive, minimalist pattern. This technique of altering a composition's flow is something that Smith utilizes in several instances, always to beneficial effect. The drummer's skill with subtlety has long been a part of his arsenal, but on this album it glides into the foreground. —Martin Longley

The Bell: The Bell; Barely Intervallic; Isn't It Over?; I'll See You On The Dark Side Of The Earth; I Think; Wacken Open Air; It's Always Winter Somewhere; For Days. (68:08)

Personnel: Ches Smith, drums, vibraphone, timpani; Craig Taborn, piano; Mat Maneri, viola.

Ordering info: ecmrecords.com

Luca Nostro Quintet *Are You OK?*

VIA VENETO JAZZ/
JANDO MUSIC

★★★★★

On *Are You OK?*, Italian guitarist Luca Nostro poses a question prog-rock-flavored jazz has asked since its inception: Where's the sweet spot for instrumentalists working at amped-up volumes? The title track attempts an answer. The guitarist plays one fuzzed-out lick after another, pianist John Escreet comps with Fender Rhodes overtones on high, tenor saxophonist Donny McCaslin joins the fray, bassist Joe Sanders adds some bottom and Tyshawn Sorey strikes up a roiling storm.

A composer touched by Frank Zappa's inquiring angularity, Nostro works closely with his energetic band on nine tracks that have a suite-like quality. The context for his songs is not disclosed, but there's no mistaking the grip of the group as a unit. McCaslin is particularly garrulous, steely and imaginative. Sanders is supple and subtle on his upright bass, and Sorey excels at being supportive and propulsive. —Howard Mandel

Are You OK?: Are You OK?, ... No; Trematoda; My Dear Fears Intro; My Dear Fears; Wane Lèn Ma Yone Bi; Reverse Cone In Spite Of A Square Woman; I Had To Hurt You For No Reason; I Hate. (57:33)

Personnel: Luca Nostro, guitar; Donny McCaslin, tenor saxophone; John Escreet, Fender Rhodes, piano; Joe Sanders, bass; Tyshawn Sorey, drums.

Ordering info: viavenetojazz.it



Jim Rotondi *Dark Blue*

SMOKE
SESSIONS 1602

★★★★★

Trumpeter Jim Rotondi searches for home on his latest album, *Dark Blue*. Billed as “a musical travelogue” of the places he’s lived and worked, the album finds Rotondi navigating seven originals and three covers with the hopeful momentum of a trailblazer breaking fresh ground. He’s joined on this endeavor by an alert team of rhythm players that enhance his every move: vibraphonist Joe Locke, pianist David Hazeltine, bassist David Wong and drummer Carl Allen. Together, they glide smoothly over a shifting landscape of meters and grooves.

Rotondi is a trumpet player of calm and measured deliberateness, with a style that tends toward sprawling eighth-note runs and melodic pirouettes in the middle register. Whether leaping across bebop licks on the bustling “In Graz” or swaggering through bluesy motifs on the title track, the trumpeter demonstrates a remarkable ease of expression. Like a true world traveler, he’s at home anywhere. —Brian Zimmerman

Dark Blue: In Graz; BC; Biru Kirusai; Dark Blue; Highline; Pure Imagination; Monk’s Mood; Le Crest; Our Day Will Come; Going To the Sun. (64:13)

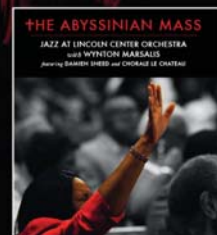
Personnel: Jim Rotondi, trumpet, flugelhorn; Joe Locke, vibraphone; David Hazeltine, piano; David Wong, bass; Carl Allen, drums.

Ordering info: smokesessionsrecords.com



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Gabriel Vicéns

Days

INNER CIRCLE MUSIC 055

★★★★

Gabriel Vicéns is a jazz guitarist from Puerto Rico. His music is essentially post-bop jazz influenced by the modern New York scene. The guitarist, who contributed all of the songs to the date, is a thoughtful improviser with a quiet tone who makes every note count.

From the start of the opening “El Teatro,” trumpeter Alex Sipiagin emerges as one of the set’s key soloists, displaying fire and creative ideas. A tricky but infectious bass pattern is heard much of the time on this tune, which also has excellent spots for pianist Bienvenido Dinzey (often recalling early 1960s McCoy Tyner), tenor saxophonist David Sánchez (in mellow form) and Vicéns. Paoli Mejias’ congas are a major asset, adding to the rhythmic excitement behind the horns, and bassist Dan Martinez and drummer Leonardo Osuna keep a complex but catchy rhythm going throughout much of “Morph,” inspiring strong solos by Sipiagin, Vicéns and saxophonist Jonathan Suazo.

With its mood variations, stirring rhythmic interplay and fine solos, *Days* is an impressive early effort by a talented guitarist. —Scott Yanow

Days: El Teatro; Days; Morph; Prelude To Amintiri; Amintiri; Doing Circles; Comprehend; Breaking Through Shadows; Justice. (72:33)

Personnel: Gabriel Vicéns, guitar; Jonathan Suazo, alto saxophone; David Sánchez, tenor saxophone; Alex Sipiagin, trumpet, flugelhorn; Bienvenido Dinzey, piano; Dan Martinez, bass; Leonardo Osuna, drums; Paoli Mejias, congas, shaker (2, 8).

Ordering info: innercirclemusic.com



Aruán Ortiz Trio

Hidden Voices

INTAKT RECORDS 258

★★★★

It would be misleading to characterize this impressive outing as free-jazz. While it’s fair to describe much of *Hidden Voices* as atonal, the harmonic and conceptual elements of this album are in equal parts sophisticated and accessible.

The piano motif that opens “Fractal Sketches,” for example, feels at first like it’s rooted in a particular key, but when pianist Aruán Ortiz adds a second voice, the connection starts to evaporate. This impression escalates as bassist Eric Revis and drummer Gerald Cleaver enter, only to resurrect a tonal center that marks the end of what we might call the chorus.

How to critique this dance in and out of abstraction? Viscerally, that’s how. After all, Ortiz gives us plenty to savor. Playing unaccompanied, he doesn’t make it obvious whether “Arabesques Of A Geometrical Rose (Spring)” is written out or improvised. Whichever is true, he plays it with very expressive rubato and dynamics, pedaling delicately. The point seems not to figure this out but rather to let the music speak unhampered by analysis. To the open mind, *Hidden Voices* testifies to Ortiz’s eloquence and originality.

—Bob Doerschuk

Hidden Voices: Fractal Sketches; Open & Close/The Sphinx; Caribbean Vortex/Hidden Voices; Analytical Symmetry; Arabesques Of A Geometrical Rose (Spring); Arabesques Of A Geometrical Rose (Summer); 17 Moments Of Liam’s Moments; Joyful Noises; Skippy; Uno, Dos Y Tres, Que Paso Más Chévere. (48:50)

Personnel: Aruán Ortiz, piano; Eric Revis, bass; Gerald Cleaver, drums.

Ordering info: intaktrec.ch



Robert Landfermann

Night Will Fall

PIROUET 3088

★★★★

Robert Landfermann is one of Berlin’s most in-demand bassists, a highly versatile player that can fit easily into mainstream and avant-garde contexts with impressive élan. Leading an agile, resourceful quintet, Landfermann explores a variety of sturdy notions on *Night Will Fall*, producing one of the most interesting albums I’ve heard this year. He brings a loose but clear leadership, both in terms of concept and composition, but affords his excellent band plenty of space.

The effort opens with “Motettu De Tristura,” a collective improvisation built on a Sardinian folk melody that highlights the band’s refined elasticity. Saxophonists Christian Weidner (alto) and Sebastian Gille (tenor) push and pull over a loose, harrumphing groove, with pianist Elias Stemeseder working inside his instrument as much as upon its keys. “Berg” features a jagged, propulsive rhythm expertly shaped by drummer Jim Black, and elsewhere the quintet evokes the classic Miles Davis Quintet with Wayne Shorter on the wonderfully moody “Randnotiz” and tackles the Paul Motian ballad “Arabesque” with an irresistible sense of rhythmic drag. Landfermann traffics in exquisite tension, and that friction has never sounded more rewarding.

—Peter Margasak

Night Will Fall: Motettu De Tristura; Berg; Katarrh; Night Will Fall; Rot; Randnotiz; Zehn Und Acht; Arabesque. (49:06)

Personnel: Robert Landfermann, bass; Christian Weidner, alto saxophone; Sebastian Gille, tenor saxophone; Elias Stemeseder, piano; Jim Black, drums.

Ordering info: prouet.com



GoGo Penguin

Man Made Object

BLUE NOTE 00602547648341

★★★★

At the moment, there seems to be a plethora of U.K.-based acoustic piano trios sparked by the success of The Bad Plus in the U.S. and the Esbjörn Svensson Trio in Sweden. I’m thinking of the Neil Cowley Trio, Phronesis and now the break-

away GoGo Penguin (bassist Nick Blacka, drummer Rob Turner and pianist Chris Illingworth), recently signed to the hallowed Blue Note label. Sidestepping the prevalent trio ethos of, say, Keith Jarrett or Brad Mehldau, GoGo Penguin’s influences lean more toward underground Brit sound-gurus Aphex Twin and Squarepusher—purveyors of what is controversially termed Intelligent Dance Music (IDM)—who melded complex breakbeats with algorithmic or generative schemes.

The music resists chord sequences and songbook conceits in favor of insistent melodic mantras that chime in the brain. The trio is a collective that avoids listing individual names on promo materials, functioning as an entity. Individual members don’t solo as much as they interlock intricate drum-and-bass rhythms with diatonic, chaste melodic motifs. Acoustic electronica is the favored term for this fusion.

There’s much to relish if you’ll surrender to floating waves of ambience and itchy rhythm; not so much if you demand fierce abstraction or traditional cadence and resolution.

—Michael Jackson

Man Made Object: All Res; Unspeakable World; Branches Break; Weird Cat; Quiet Mind; Smarra; Initiate; Gbfsysih; Surrender To Mountain; Protest. (45:05)

Personnel: Chris Illingworth, piano; Nick Blacka, bass; Rob Turner, drums.

Ordering info: bluenote.com



Lars Møller *ReWrite Of Spring*

DA CAPO 8.226117-18

★★★★★

Danish saxophonist Lars Møller's *ReWrite Of Spring* is a soaring, sprawling conception, combining exquisite detail with monumental vision. Imposing as it is, one might best approach the album with an open mind, anticipating something awe inspiring, which on reflection is a perfectly valid perspective by which to appreciate any creation, musical or physical.

The first inclination here is to recognize that Møller is a supreme colorist. His command of instrumental combinations is fully evident throughout *ReWrite*. From the clustered harmonies to the meticulous overlays of woodwinds and brass to his use of the ensemble's dynamic resources, he seems to draw from the same well that nourished Oliver Nelson's *The Blues And The Abstract Truth*. But he goes further down his own path, unleashing a full complement of percussion to enhance rhythmic momentum and to add a little sonic tinsel on quieter passages. To this mix he adds opportunities for improvisation, mostly by saxophonist David Liebman and percussionist Marilyn Mazur. —Bob Doerschuk

ReWrite Of Spring: Disc One (Studio): Part 1: Evocation; Interlude; Part 2: Spring Square; Part 3: Procession. (36:16); Disc Two (Live): Introduction; Part 1: Evocation; Part 2: Spring Square; Part 3: Procession. (46:31)

Personnel: Lars Møller, composer, conductor; David Liebman, soprano saxophone, wooden flute; Marilyn Mazur, percussion; Nicolai Schultz, Johan Toftegaard Knudsen, alto saxophone; Michael Bladt, Claus Waidtlow, tenor saxophone; Finn Henriksen, baritone saxophone, bass clarinet; Antonio Gecek, Jan Lynggaard Sørensen, Jakob Buchanan, Rasmus Bøgelund, trumpet; Nikolai Bøgelund, Stefan Ringive, Niels Jakob Nørgaard, Henrik Resen, trombone; Thor Madsen, guitar; Mads Baerentzen, piano; Morten Ramsbøl, bass; Morten Lund, drums.

Ordering info: dacapo-records.dk



Jonathan Powell & nu Sangha *Beacons Of Light*

TRUTH REVOLUTION

★★★★★

Jonathan Powell and his group nu Sangha display a power that's downright unstoppable. The eight songs on *Beacons Of Light* never let up, a fitting attribute given the album's subject matter.

Each of these songs is a tribute to various world leaders who have shaped global history. Mahatma Gandhi and the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. are two examples, and the music commemorating these heroes is as passionate as the heroes themselves.

Powell is a full of ideas on his trumpet, and he leads this band with boldness. Marco Churnchetz on piano and keyboards is consistently interesting and a deft technician, and drummer Kenny Grohowski executes steadily throughout. On top of that, trombonist Joe Beaty, alto saxophonist Louis Fouché and bass clarinetist John Ellis bring a welcome jolt of energy.

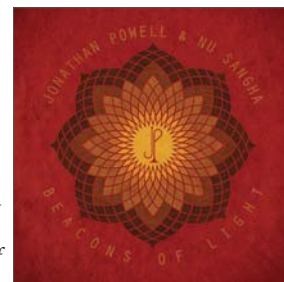
Beacons Of Light is worthy of the people who inspired it, with songs as bright as the album title evokes. It's a concept that thankfully doesn't burrow into itself, but instead flourishes with outward appeal.

—Anthony Dean-Harris

Beacons Of Light: Liberation (For Aung San Suu Kyi); Daskalos (For Stylianos Atteshlis); Chant (For Gautama Buddha); Mawlana (For Rumi); Biocentrism (For Robert Lanza); Lifetime (For Mahatma Gandhi); The Vision (For Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.); Compassion (For Tenzin Gyatso, The Dalai Lama). (52:54)

Personnel: Jonathan Powell, trumpet, flugelhorn; Jeremy Powell, saxophones; Marco Churnchetz, piano; Luques Curtis, acoustic bass; Kenny Grohowski, drums; John Ellis, bass clarinet; Louis Fouché, alto saxophone; Joe Beaty, trombone; Yumi Koshigai Powell, chanting; Karina Curtis, chanting.

Ordering info: truthrevolutionrecords.com



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Easy, Baby

Magic Sam Blues Band, *Black Magic* (Delmark 620; 68:19 ★★★★★) Obscuring the line between Chicago's West Side blues and soul music, Magic Sam Maghett filled his high-flying singing voice and slashing guitar work with humanity of almost imponderable worth. The return of this record, cut in the studio in late 1968 and issued the next year (he died that December, age 32), has the original program supplemented by five alternate tracks and two making their debut. Keeping fast company with tenor saxophonist Eddie Shaw, pianist Lafayette Leake and other all-stars, Magic Sam bores like a laser into the core of his own tunes and perdurable ones by Lowell Fulson, Otis Rush, Freddie King and others. This is a treasure.

Ordering info: delmark.com

Jason Vivone & The Billy Bats, *The Avenue* (Self Release; 39:56 ★★★★★) An outlier with a feverish musical imagination, Kansas City's Jason Vivone casts intriguing moods as a songwriter and as a better-than-good slide guitarist who also sings with conviction. He and six Billy Bats, always attentive to craft, revel in killer riffs, eerie blues depictions and time-bound train metaphors. You just have to hear the appealingly weird "Calendar" to believe it.

Ordering info: billybats.com

Karen Lovely, *Ten Miles Of Bad Road* (Kokako; 51:31 ★★★★★) The Portland-based singer excels at setting moods that connect the hard-core life situations of the words to adult, intelligent songs (most self-penned, plus gems by Dennis Walker, Alan Mirikitani and Dave Fleischner) that boast high-quality modern blues courtesy of guitarist Johnny Lee Schell and keyboardist Jim Pugh. Lovely possesses range and a sure sense of pacing, and her blues intonations are strong and fluent at any tempo.

Ordering info: karenlovely.com

Pinetop Perkins & Jimmy Rogers, *Genuine Blues Legends* (ELROB Records 15235; 62:38 ★★)

In 1988, two ex-Muddy Waters sidemen—pianist Pinetop Perkins, 74, and guitarist Jimmy Rogers, 64—insured their long-abiding fidelity to Chicago blues on a Maine gig with the shaky NYC band Little Mike & the Tornadoes. Though their vocals were poorly recorded, the two Legends handled themselves with skill and personality on tunes they knew like the back of their wrinkled hands. They should have kept preening harmonica player Mike on a shorter leash.

Ordering info: littlemikeandthetornadoes.com

Julie Rhodes, *Bound To Meet The Devil* (Self Release; 40:01 ★★) A natural talent, Julie Rhodes sings the 10 welcoming original songs of her debut release (partly recorded in Muscle Shoals) with a range and assurance of delivery that is impressive for a 28-year-old newcomer. Seldom over-emoting or straining for effect, this New Englander imparts urgency to lyrics on emotional dislocation with deftness and believable presence.

Ordering info: facebook.com/julierhodesmusic

Jonn Del Toro Richardson, *Ten-go Blues* (VizzTone JRCD-01; 48:18 ★★★★★) Houston-based Jonn Del Toro Richardson branches off from Diunna Greenleaf's Blue Mercy band and delivers his first solo record, produced by contributing guitarist Anson Funderburgh. On an adequate array of original shuffles and other song types, including a salute to his Mexican heritage titled "The Moment," he sings lyrics about romantic concerns with honest emotional engagement though nary a trace of virtuoso spirit.

Ordering info: deltoroblues.com



TEDESCHI TRUCKS BAND LET ME GET BY



Tedeschi Trucks Band *Let Me Get By*

FANTASY/CONCORD 37716ADV

★★★★½

Let Me Get By, the third studio album from blues-rock outfit Tedeschi Trucks Band, begins with a bang: The syrupy-smooth slide guitar of Derek Trucks and soul-deep vocal intonations of wife and co-bandleader Susan Tedeschi that introduce "Anyhow" practically shout out to fans, "We're going for a ride now." But the lead-off track, and most of the nine songs that follow, soon slip into a steady pace where a few breathtaking vistas yield to an uneventful journey through the musical midlands.

Tedeschi Trucks Band is billed as a 12-piece collective in which every member is a vital contributor. The concept seems to work better in concert than in the studio. Perhaps there are just too many competing factions to produce a unified vision. Longtime Allman Brothers guitarist Trucks, now free from those obligations after the Allmans disbanded in 2014, and the soulful, big-voiced Tedeschi bring their blues sensibilities and impeccable musical pedigrees to the party. But the musical merger also carries with it the stylistic and commercial expectations of the jam-band genre. The resultant noodling yanks out some of the group's r&b roots.

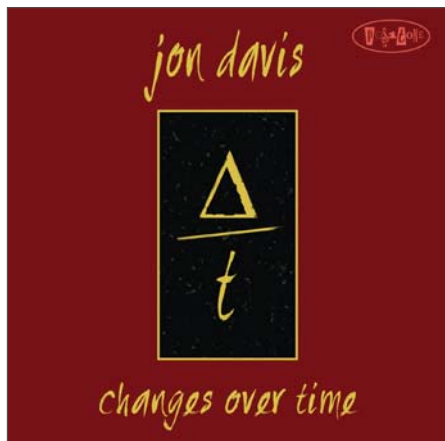
Let Me Get By was produced by Trucks at the group's Swamp Raga Studios in Jacksonville, Florida, with an assist from Doyle Bramhall II, Trucks' former guitar partner in Eric Clapton's band. It serves up the requisite mix of churchy New Orleans funk (the radio-friendly "Don't Know What It Means"), Motown-inspired power pop ("I Want More"), soul-inflected jazz ("Right On Time") and rollicking soul-pop ("Let Me Get By"). But it could have been so much tastier.

—Jeff Johnson

Let Me Get By: Anyhow; Laugh About It; Don't Know What It Means; Right On Time; Let Me Get By; Just As Strange; Crying Over You; Swamp Raga For Hozapfel; Lefebvre, Flute And Harmonium; Hear Me; I Want More; In Every Heart. (56:45)

Personnel: Derek Trucks, guitar; Susan Tedeschi, guitar, vocals; Kofi Burbridge, keyboards, flute; Tyler Greenwell, J.J. Johnson, drums, percussion; Tim Lefebvre, bass; Mike Mattison, Mark Rivers, Alecia Chakour, vocals; Kebbi Williams, saxophone; Elizabeth Lea, trombone; Ephraim Owens, trumpet.

Ordering info: tedeschitrucksband.com



Jon Davis *Changes Over Time*

POSI-TONE 8146

★★★★½

Ken Fowser *Standing Tall*

POSI-TONE 8145

★★★★

Pianist Jon Davis writes tunes of wit, surprise and daring on *Changes Over Time*. He plays with tempo in the title track, slyly builds tension in "Slowly But Surely" and modernizes a classic rhythm in "Waltz For U," the final track, characterized by his light, fast touch, Ugonna Okegwo's judicious bass and Jochen Rueckert's rich, laser-like drums. The longest track, "Waltz," is also the most ambitious. And, perhaps, the most satisfying.

Davis has leavened his third Posi-Tone album with five judicious cover versions. A sultry Latin treatment of Mal Waldron's "Soul Eyes" kicks off the disc, which also features "Las Olas," a brooding tune by former Davis band mate and storied bassist Jaco Pastorius, the Beatles' "Yesterday," Jimmy Rowles' majestic "The Peacocks" and Stevie Wonder's guileless and lovely "My Cherie Amour."

Davis doesn't broadcast his technical mastery, deploying a rich sonic palette and a rhythmic sophistication both piquant and unsettling. Check out the title track, a masterful and entertaining excursion into second-line territory in which Davis trades fours with Okegwo and Rueckert.

Enjoy the sense of humor in "Klutz," a lurching, lilting tune that Davis launches cautiously. It builds slowly, evolving through shuffle into double time; it's a musical character study with a coiled melody that sticks in your head.

Tenor saxophonist Ken Fowser's debut as a leader, after four Posi-Tone albums with vibraphon-

ist Behn Gillece, is a solid, occasionally stimulating affair. Its 12 originals touch on blues ("Filling In The Blanks"), swirled post-bop ("Timeless"), balladry ("Hanging On") and straight bop like the crisply arranged "Brick's Tune," showcasing Josh Bruneau's tart, muted trumpet. It kicks in by the third track and all tunes are accessible. Some are more daring than others, like "Off The Path," a dark, sprawling waltz.

Fowser's solos are well built, if not as probing as those of Bruneau, his chief foil. But overall, the group swings, particularly pianist Rick Germanson, who can embroider and hammer

with equal alacrity.

—Carlo Wolff

Changes Over Time: Soul Eyes; Just For Fun; Las Olas; Changes Over Time; Yesterday; Klutz; Jazz Vampire; The Peacocks; It's For Free; My Cherie Amour; Slowly But Surely; Waltz For U. (64:10)

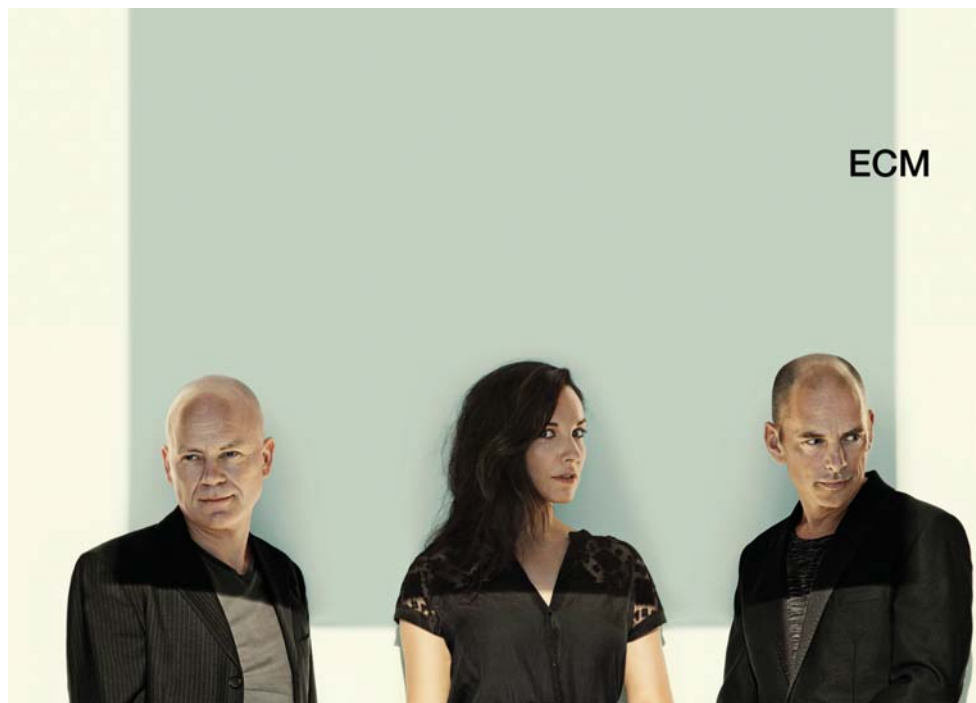
Personnel: Jon Davis, piano; Ugonna Okegwo, bass; Jochen Rueckert, drums.

Ordering info: posi-tone.com

Standing Tall: Head Start; Lucid Dreaming; Filling In The Blanks; Off The Path; Mode For Red; The Fade Away; Patience And Optimism; Standing Tall; Hanging On; Brick's Tune; Timeless; Somebody's Got To Do It. (63:14)

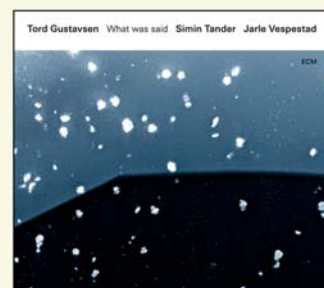
Personnel: Ken Fowser, tenor saxophone; Josh Bruneau, trumpet; Rick Germanson, piano; Paul Gill, bass; Jason Tiemann, drums.

Ordering info: posi-tone.com



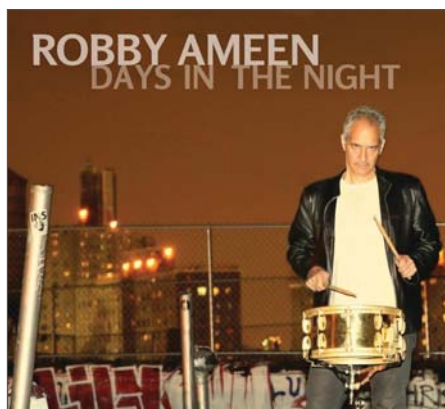
Tord Gustavsen with Simin Tander and Jarle Vespestad *What was said*

Tord Gustavsen piano, electronics
Simin Tander voice
Jarle Vespestad drums



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Robby Ameen *Days In The Night*

TWO AND FOUR 002

★★★★★

The titles of the opening numbers—"The Pursuit" and "Crowded Hour"—say it all: This rhythm-fueled release is about in-your-face urban energy. Although drummer Robby Ameen has lent his dynamic groove to diverse artists (Dave Valentin, Dizzy Gillespie, Paul Simon), his trademark remains his mastery of Afro-Cuban jazz with a New York edge. And as a longtime member of Seis del Solar, backing Rubén Blades (who makes a cameo appearance on this disc), he has excelled at mixing Latin

rhythms into a stylistic stewpot.

Ameen's power grooving is delivered with hard-hitting attack, pinpoint technique and hair-trigger interaction. His ideally chosen rhythm section mates include the dynamic pianist Manuel Valera and bassist Yuniór Terry, who gives breath to the music's bullet train momentum in all the right places.

Ameen's imaginative duets with tenor saxophonist Troy Roberts are palette-changers, including their take on "Bernie's Tune" that allows the two to let their swing chops flow free. The drummer's composition "Crowded Hour" is an ensemble highpoint with its insistent, jagged rhythm. Ameen is dazzling here, morphing the Latin groove into a funk-infused muscle-swing. Soloing over an ostinato, he brings the tune to fever pitch.

As a writer, arranger and drummer, Ameen is not content with chilling: You've got to keep up with his pace.

—Jeff Potter

Days In The Night: The Pursuit; Crowded Hour; Begin The Beguine/ Se Acabó La Ilusión; Up Jumped Spring; Miles To Go; Oleo; The Corners; Funkguanco; Bernie's Tune. (48:48)

Personnel: Robby Ameen, drums; Manuel Valera, piano (1–3), Fender Rhodes piano (5), Moog synthesizer (6); Yuniór Terry, bass (1–3); Lincoln Goines, bass (5–7); Troy Roberts, tenor saxophone (1–4, 8, 9), soprano saxophone (3); Bob Franceschini, tenor saxophone (2, 3, 5–7); Conrad Herwig, trombone (1, 3, 5); Mauricio Herrera, congas (1, 3); Rubén Blades, vocal, coro (13).

Ordering info: robbyameen.com



Mike Moreno *Lotus*

WORLD CULTURE MUSIC

★★★★★

Classically skilled and conceptually romantic, guitarist Mike Moreno begins *Lotus*, his sixth album, alone and acoustic, but in 90 seconds introduces his electric guitar and bandmates. Thereafter, Moreno's glowing tone, tasteful production and well-attuned collaborators (pianist Aaron Parks, bassist Doug Weiss and drummer Eric Harland) unite in explorations of a suite of original compositions dusted with lyrical melancholy, suffused with warmth and color.

Moreno expresses his cell-like melodies with grace, mostly at moderate tempos. All the songs are modal and impressionistic, with inner momentum if not outright urgency. Throughout, the four musicians create and sustain an aura of intimacy within sensuous sonic fields.

"The Hills Of Kykuit" starts boldly, almost with a rush; "Hypnotic" builds as if by surprise to unleashed improvisations and a stirring climax. On "The Last Stand," Moreno distills his improvisational strategy: One rhythmic phrase countered by another, both blending as he stretches lines and bends them unpredictably. Throughout, his team is active, providing depths that offset his crest-of-the-wave.


On "Can We Stay Forever?" the pace slows dramatically to highlight sustained guitar notes against the glistening timbres of a Rhodes keyboard and piano slipped subtly underneath. "Epilogue: The Rise" ties together all the previous threads. One might take *Lotus* as perfect romance music. It's a lovely unfolding.

—Howard Mandel

Lotus: Intro; The Hills Of Kykuit; Lotus; Hypnotic; The Empress; The Last Stand; Can We Stay Forever?; Blind Imagination; Epilogue: The Rise. (49:58)

Personnel: Mike Moreno, guitar; Aaron Parks, piano; Doug Weiss, bass; Eric Harland, drums.

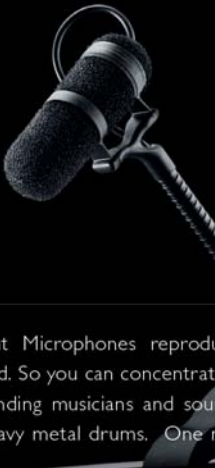
Ordering info: mikemoreno.com



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


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Cyrille Aimée *Let's Get Lost*

MACK AVENUE RECORDS 1097

★★★★

Growing up in Samois-sur-Seine, France, the home of legendary Gypsy guitarist Django Reinhardt, Cyrille Aimée learned to sing with visiting musicians attending the town's annual Reinhardt jazz festival.

The ebullient spirit of that music infuses her highly rewarding second major-label release, but there's much more, as she assays Sondheim, chanson, American standards and the jazz canon with equal charm and fluency.

Her voice is a marvel: saucy, swinging and utterly charming. But don't let that girlish voice fool you; it's powered by a sleek, powerful jazz engine with razor-sharp intonation, and her scatting shows a deep strain of Ella Fitzgerald.

That killer combination helped her win first prize at the Montreux Jazz Festival vocal competition in 2007 and the Sarah Vaughan International Jazz Vocal Competition in 2012, as well as becoming a finalist in the Thelonious Monk International Jazz Vocal Competition in 2010.

She also has the good sense to surround herself with superior talent. The album's a prime example of the alchemy that can happen when a great singer teams with the right band; the sum is greater than the parts. Her quartet, featuring bravura Django-influenced playing by acoustic guitarist Adrien Moignard and electric guitarist Michael Veanu, anchored by the wonderfully precise rhythm section of Sam Anning on bass and Rajiv Jayaweera on drums, is as entertaining and magnetic as Aimée.

The fresh arrangements, by Aimée and the guitarists, include a winning, time-shifting version of Sondheim's "Live Alone And Like It" (which the great Broadway composer asked her to perform in a revue of his songs at New York's City Center); a dreamy, evocative reading of the standard "Lazy Afternoon"; a joyful Gypsy-

style romp through "Three Little Words"; and killer versions of the title track and of Monk's "Well, You Needn't" (a bonus track), both featuring wonderful scatting.

The four originals show her more contemporary side, including the acoustic pop-jazz of "Each Day" (a duet with the engaging singer Matt Simons) and "Nine More Minutes," which marries delicate jazz harmonies to an intimate love story. They round out the image of a singer who has found a way to combine tra-

ditional swing, a modern jazz esthetic and an old-fashioned sense of romance.

—Allen Morrison

Let's Get Lost: Live Alone And Like It; There's A Lull In My Life; Estrellitas Y Duendes; Lazy Afternoon; Three Little Words; Tes Beau Tu Sais; Let's Get Lost; Samois A Moi; Nine More Minutes; Laverne Walk; That Old Feeling; Each Day; Words; Well You Needn't (bonus track). (45:16)

Personnel: Cyrille Aimée, vocals; Adrien Moignard, Michael Veanu, guitar; Sam Anning, bass; Rajiv Jayaweera, drums; Matt Simons, vocals (12).

Ordering info: mackavenue.com

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Pop Goes Indie

Animal Collective conquered the indie rock world during the 2000s in the most unlikely fashion, making records that were uncompromisingly, joyfully messy. They've spent the '10's suffering for their success, releasing the meandering *Centipede Hz* in 2012, and now taking a left turn toward something much more straightforward and pop-oriented on ***Painting With (Domino; 41:02 ★★★)***. Animal Collective's definition of pop happens to imply that all the melodies have to be crammed into the same space at once, and in spite of its relative sonic crispness, the first half of the album is over-cafeinated and overstuffed. Things finally snap into place on "Bagels In Kiev," which has an addictive beat and a simple vocal approach that escapes the over-layered trap of the songs before it.

Ordering info: dominorecordco.us

Louisiana quintet **Givers' New Kingdom (Glassnote; 56:45 ★★★)** finds different ways to overwhelm the listener, pushing its drum programming right to the front of the mix for most of the album. Dual vocalists Taylor Guarisco and Tiffany Lamson are buffeted by all manner of keyboards and saw-toothed bass sounds, but always seem to make their way to a big, anthemic chorus. While a catchy song like "Record High, Record Low" could use some tightening at the edges, it still comes across as a strong, memorable song.

Ordering info: giversband.com

The impulse to make everything an anthem runs fairly strong among indie pop bands these days, and Brisbane, Australia's **Cub Sport** falls victim to this pursuit on its debut album, ***This Is Our Vice (Self Release; 37:08 ★★★)***. Even in its interludes and intros, it is a tad too compressed to feel as though it has any dynamic range. Each of these songs might have the potential to pop on its own, but they drown in the sea



of each other.

Ordering info: soundcloud.com/cubsport

It could be argued that California's **Run River North** shares Cub Sport's anthemic aspirations. ***Drinking From A Salt Pond (Nettwerk, 40:38 ★★★½)*** is much savvier about how to hold back so that the hook snares with maximum effect. Vocalist Alex Hwang has a natural power, and he uses it to blow "Run Or Hide" through the roof during its final build-up. This band sounded a bit more organic on its debut, and here that album's staccato violins give way to a much more muscular, digitized rhythmic drive.

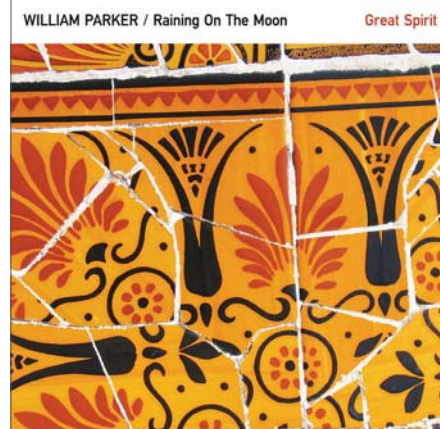
Ordering info: runrivenorth.com

While Run River North moves away from their rootsy elements, Philadelphia veterans **Dr. Dog** run to re-embrace them on ***The Psychodelic Swamp (Anti-; 38:35 ★★★)***. The album revisits material the band originally recorded in 2000 for an intended debut that was never released. Original member Doug O'Donnell, who left the band in 2004, even returns for the effort. The result is a throwback to the ramshackle classic rock that characterized the band's early albums for Park the Van Records.

"Bring My Baby Back" is a fine trad-rock ballad with a powerful melody and sticky refrain, and the album opens with a simple but effective guitar riff that immediately establishes the record's hazy atmosphere. The album is a retreat for Dr. Dog, but it is a fairly satisfying one.

Ordering info: anti.com

DB



William Parker/ Raining on the Moon Great Spirit

AUM FIDELITY 098

★★★

Although the bulk of bassist William Parker's Raining on the Moon project features musicians from his protean quartet In Order to Survive, they deliver a markedly contrasting sound when they meet up with the singer Leena Conquest. *Great Spirit* features previously unused material cut during the same sessions that produced the project's 2007 album *Corn Meal Dance*. Once again, Parker composed all of the music and wrote the charged, ruminative lyrics sung in a lovely, fluid and soulful voice by Conquest. The leader delves into heady subject matter throughout, meditating on spirituality, history and survival. On his "Feet Music," for example, Conquest adopts the perspective of a slave, recounting brutal indignities with a remarkable determination and inner strength.

Any ensemble driven by Parker and drummer Hamid Drake will deliver serious propulsion, but Raining on the Moon pulls back on the feverish intensity that marks the pair's usual collaborations. Here they fall into sleek mid-tempo grooves that are both imperceptible and elegant. The piano playing of Eri Yamamoto adds additional calm, filling the sonic field and giving the typically incisive improvisation from alto saxophonist Rob Brown and trumpeter Lewis Barnes plenty of extra counterpoint. But while everyone in the ensemble gets space to improvise, the general tenor of the music leans inside, and the focal point remains clearly upon Conquest's singing.

The project reinforces Parker's versatility and artistic range, but the vamp-driven melodies ultimately fall a bit short in terms of variety and definition.

—Peter Margasak

Great Spirit: Bowl Of Stone Around The Sun; Doson Ngoni Blues; Feet Music; Great Spirit; Prayer-Improv; Song (For Whitney); Potpourri. (44:42)

Personnel: William Parker, bass; Rob Brown, alto saxophone; Lewis Barnes, trumpet; Hamid Drake, drums; Eri Yamamoto, piano; Leena Conquest, voice.

Ordering info: aumfidelity.com

Ben Paterson *For Once In My Life*

ORIGIN 82700

★★★★

Philly-born pianist Ben Paterson picked up organ after a move to Chicago, where he became inspired by Windy City B-3 wizard Chris Foreman. Along with quintessential organ trio guitarist Peter Bernstein and Chicago drummer George Fludas, Paterson stays strictly in the pocket on this decidedly old-school offering, which harkens back to classic 1960s Blue Note sessions.

Everything feels right on Ray Bryant's "Cubano Chant," with the drums understated just enough in the mix to set a simmering tone for this swinging session. Paterson states the melody of "I'll Close My Eyes" in soulful, intimate terms over Fludas' briskly swinging brushwork, while Bernstein comps in typically hip fashion before unleashing a dynamic single-note flurry. Paul Simon's "50 Ways To Leave Your Lover" is rendered as a sly 6/8 groover, while the title track has Paterson channeling his inner Jack McDuff.

While Paterson is the type of player who places a premium on melody and groove over chops, he does flaunt some sizzling licks, especially on the Horace Silver uptempo showcase "Nutville." And his two originals, a shuffling "Blues For C.F." and a relaxed "Near Miss," fit in nicely with the tone of this classy, swinging session.

—Bill Milkowski

For Once In My Life: Cubano Chant; I'll Close My Eyes; 50 Ways To Leave Your Lover; Cry Me A River; For Once In My Life; Decision; Nutville; Blues For C.F.; Near Miss; We'll Be Together Again; I've Never Been In Love Before. (60:20)

Personnel: Ben Paterson, Hammond B-3 organ; Peter Bernstein, guitar; George Fludas, drums.

Ordering info: benpaterson.com



Clark Gibson + Orchestra *Bird With Strings: The Lost Arrangements*

BLU JAZZ 3431

★★★★½

For his third album, educator, scholar and saxophonist Clark Gibson unearthed rare chamber orchestral arrangements commissioned by Charlie Parker in 1950. Of the 14 pieces, only five were reportedly ever performed by Parker. (Neal Hefti's "Repetition" was the sole tune to be recorded in a non-concert setting, at Carnegie Hall, for Norman Granz's *The Jazz Scene* box set in 1949.) So *Bird With Strings: The Lost Arrangements* allows these compositions to be heard cleanly, with Gibson taking up the Parker role in his own voice.

The outlier for the album is "Yardbird Suite," which is the only Parker original. It features an additional brass-and-reeds septet and is the sole mini-big-band-plus-orchestra selection found here. Though it's the album's shortest track, it somehow manages to capture the uplifted spirit of this project in under two-and-a-half minutes.

—Yoshi Kato

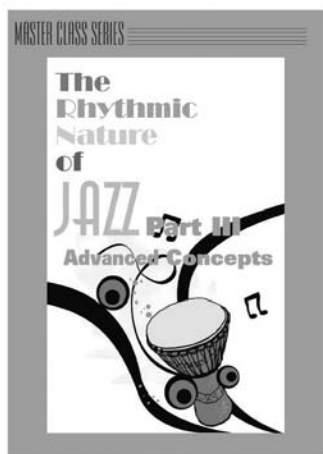
Bird With Strings: The Lost Arrangements: Stardust; Repetition; You Go to My Head; Gone With The Wind; I Cover The Waterfront; God Rush; Love Walked In; Yesterdays; Yardbird Suite; Ezz-thetic; They Didn't Believe Me; Scootin'; I've Got You Under My Skin; When I Dream Of You. (54:34)

Personnel: Clark Gibson, alto saxophone; Pete Carney, conductor; Evan Tammien, oboe, English horn; Daniel Colbert, Eliana Park, Johnny Lusardi, violins; Andreas Ruiz, viola; Ben Hayek, cello; Claire Happel, harp; Chip Stephens, piano; Samuel Peters, bass; Mathew Charles Endres, drums; Chip McNeill, tenor saxophone (2), baritone saxophone (9); Barksdale Bryant, Dan Wendelken, trumpets (9); Euan Edmonds, trombone (9); Jonathan Beckett, Maddie Vogler, alto saxophones (9); Pete Carney, tenor saxophone (9); Chukyung Park, Sara Sasaki, violins (11); Lauren Pellant, Haeju Song, cello (11); Whitney Ash, piano (11).

Ordering info: blujazz.com



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A handful of new albums put the spotlight on the development and changing role of brass in post-World War II big bands. Aside from the novelty of long-buried material, it's fascinating to compare the ways bandleaders chose to utilize brass—by sections and soloists—in their units.

Count Basie had rebuilt his orchestra after disbanding and working with a sextet, when he played in the *Netherlands On Kurhaus Concert 1954* (*Doctor Jazz* 015; 76:53 ★★★★★). Alto saxophonist Marshall Royal was the reed section straw boss and drummer Gus Johnson kicked the rhythm section along, so the band was tight and punchy; all it lacked were Joe Williams' vocals and Sonny Payne's percussive explosions to become the band of "April In Paris" and "The Comeback."

The program relied on chestnuts ("Woodside," "Jive At Five" and "Rock-a-bye Basie") but used new charts by Neal Hefti ("Why Not" and "Two Franks") and Johnny Mandel ("Straight Life"). Though the swinging blues charts and occasional ballads were reed-centered, trumpeters Joe Newman and Joe Wilder and trombonists Benny Powell, Henry Coker and Bill Hughes all got turns in the spotlight. This is a vital portrait of Basie's New Testament band in ascendance.

Ordering info: doctorjazz.nl

When trumpeter/composer **Thad Jones** and drummer **Mel Lewis** combined forces to form their big band in 1966, a glorious chapter in orchestral jazz began. The extraordinary *All My Yesterdays* (*Resonance* 02023; 47:11/75:21 ★★★★★) captures the band's first night at the Village Vanguard, its spiritual home. It began as it has remained—stocked with New York's finest: trumpeters Jimmy Nottingham, Snooky Young, Jimmy Owens, Danny Stiles and Bill Berry; trombonists Bob Brookmeyer, Garnett Brown and Tom McIntosh. Loose and boisterous on flag-wavers and focused on the slow tempos, the band hit at a very high level—powered by Lewis'



The Thad Jones/Mel Lewis Orchestra

propulsive drumming. This two-disc set is a treasure trove of jazz delights.

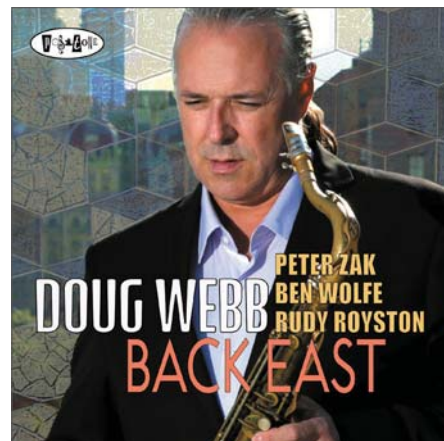
Ordering info: resonancerecords.org

Composer-orchestrator **David Angel** has convened a rehearsal band for many years in Los Angeles that's little known to the public. *Camshafts And Butterflies* (*V.S.O.P.* 127; 70:52 ★★★★★) is culled from 1973 and '75 sessions and it shows an impressive array of players (including reedmen Bob Cooper, Jackie Kelso and Bill Perkins) addressing a book with a wide musical vocabulary. Angel uses brass largely for orchestral color, but the undervalued trumpeter Jack Coan and trombonists Bob Enevoldsen and Don Waldrop get some shining features. It's too bad this outfit hasn't been a performing entity, but it's nice to have this document to assess its considerable worth.

Ordering info: magnebit.xeran.com

The technically superlative trumpeter **Maynard Ferguson** was between his gold album *Conquistador* rejuvenation and his valedictory Big Bop Nouveau band when *Storm* (*Omnivore* 160; 40:24 ★★) (1982) and *Live From San Francisco* (*Omnivore* 161; 41:27 ★★★★★) (1985) were released. Both feature young players conversant with the rock-based charts of Nick Lane, Denis DiBlasio and others. The trumpet section often served as a building brass wave that could only be surfed by Ferguson's steely high notes. Billy Strayhorn's "Lush Life" (from San Francisco) is an anomaly, as intimate dynamics or reflective tunes were seldom heard from this band. It was a concert band that also elbowed into the disco realm, based on the formula of Ferguson topping all the instruments in power and elevation. Though his audience was seldom, if ever, disappointed, these releases point out that even galvanizing virtuosity for its own sake can wear thin.

Ordering info: omnivorerecordings.com



Doug Webb Back East

POSI-TONE 8144

★★★

Saxophonist Doug Webb's absorbing album boasts several originals that should become standards. Webb, a big-toned tenor player with a knack for melody, brings passion to everything he serves up on this disc, including Henry Mancini's alluring "Dreamsville" and Antônio Carlos Jobim's sultry "Vivo Sonhando," the most memorable of the album's four covers.

Propelled by drummer Rudy Royston, bassist Ben Wolfe and pianist Peter Zak, Webb delivers an album that builds on tradition without being tethered to it. But despite the occasional change of pace, there's a sense of having heard this before. It's meat-and-potatoes jazz, impeccably played. But it's more admirable than inspiring.

One thing's for sure: Webb is involved in his music making, suggesting this band would be dynamite live. Zak knows when to lay back and when to embroider. Wolfe, who should have gotten more solo space, pushes the tunes forward, and the precise, increasingly powerful Royston daubs them with color.

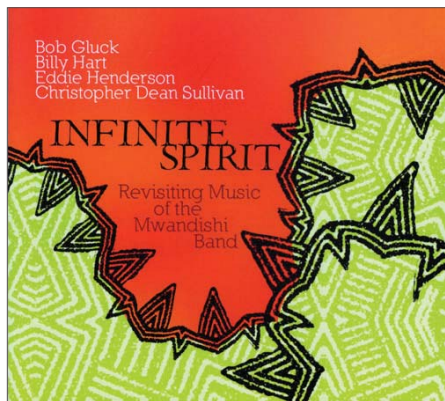
One suspects that originals such as the leisurely "RDW Esq.," the brisk and bracing "254 West 82nd" (check out Royston's rim shots) and the aspiring "Mr. Green" are musical messages about people and places close to Webb's heart. They certainly are emotional; at no time does Webb phone it in.

The focus is the ensemble, and the players' virtuosity never gets in the way of the feeling. Check out the way Royston and Webb trade fours on "Mr. Green," the minimalist but effective solo Zak delivers on the title track, and how the Jobim melody floats on the beautifully constructed "Viva Sonhando." —Carlo Wolff

Back East: Back East; Sally's Song; Spiral; RDW Esq.; Vivo Sonhando; 254 West 82nd; Dreamsville; Stanley; Down East; Mr. Green; If Ever I Would Leave You; Snicker's Lament; Old Times. (59:53)

Personnel: Doug Webb, tenor saxophone; Rudy Royston, drums; Ben Wolfe, bass; Peter Zak, piano.

Ordering info: posi-tone.com



Gluck/Hart/ Henderson/Sullivan *Infinite Spirit: Revisiting Music Of The Mwandishi Band*

FMR 398-0915

★★½

While Billy Hart and Eddie Henderson are squarely on board with this release, one might get the impression that these former Mwandishi Band members are an indirect driving force on *Infinite Spirit*. Instead, this seems to be keyboardist Bob Gluck's project with assistance from bassist Christopher Dean Sullivan. Four of the five tunes were arranged by Gluck, with Gluck and Sullivan serving as co-producers.

Gone are the expansive sonics and ear-catching lyricism that were hallmarks of Hancock's (and his band Mwandishi's) early electric experiments. Also not heard are the funky overtones and rhythmic drive of the Mwandishi sound. What we do hear, though, are occasional electronics that seem mostly superfluous, and nary a groove one can dance to. But then, that may not have been what animated this "revisiting."

Two Hancock tunes begin *Infinite Spirit*. Both provide dim outlines of their former selves. This could be a good approach if the results were inventive, musical enough. Instead, "Sleeping Giant" and "You'll Know When You Get There" suffer from attempts at reinvention. Still, the album begins on a good note, with inimitable touches from Hart's drumming before the electronics kick in; unfortunately, those electronics sound like they belong in an arcade game. This is where the odd rhythmic language between Gluck and Sullivan begins. Throughout *Infinite Spirit* no real grooves are established anywhere. The rubato that pervades "You'll Know When You Get There" is completed with Sullivan's meandering arco bass, the group eventually landing in a free-jazz zone. At 17-and-a-half minutes, this reimagined piece goes on way too long.

An ostinato pattern, courtesy of Sullivan,

surfaces with the medley "Sideways/Quasar," an uneven combination of a Gluck composition with one written by another former Mwandishi member, Bennie Maupin, back in the day. By now, Hart seems to have been placed back in the mix and Henderson has become the only real improviser. Perhaps not surprisingly, another bass ostinato pattern forms the core of Sullivan's "Spirit Unleashed," another modal piece that eventually leads into more free-jazz territory and alternating time signatures, but without an obvious link to the theme.

By the time we get to the closer, Maupin's

"Water Torture," Gluck's selective electronics (with some defining piano playing) and the band's stalwart but incoherent pace have firmly taken on the spirit of Maupin's title to this song. And yet, one must respect the endeavor to not try and mimic or simply recreate but instead attempt to forge ahead in one's own particular way, whatever that may be. —John Ephland

Infinite Spirit: Revisiting Music Of The Mwandishi Band: Sleeping Giant; You'll Know When You Get There; Sideways/Quasar; Spirit Unleashed; Water Torture. (63:20)

Personnel: Bob Gluck, piano, electronics; Billy Hart, drums; Eddie Henderson, trumpet; Christopher Dean Sullivan, bass.

Ordering info: fmr-records.com

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Hans Luchs *Time Never Pauses*

OA2 22123

★★★★½

Guitarist Hans Luchs, a fixture on the Chicago jazz scene since 2007, makes his recording debut as a leader on *Time Never Pauses*. He utilizes a quintet of local musicians to perform eight of his originals, plus the songs “Come Sunday” and “Get Out Of Town.”

Luchs’ compositions are more notable for their original and often-stimulating chord changes than for having any memorable melodies. But their structures inspire inventive solos from pianist Stu Mindeman, trumpeter Shaun Johnson and Luchs himself. Very much a team player, the cool-toned guitarist does not dominate the music and instead shares the spotlight with his sidemen.

“Der Lumenmeister” (a tribute to his father, who was often in charge of the lighting at performances) starts with a mysterious mood before Luchs plays fairly free over the fiery rhythms and Mindeman takes a percussive solo. “Elizabeth” is a thoughtful and lyrical medium-tempo piece, while “Green DeLuchs” swings hard. Trumpeter Johnson’s solos here and elsewhere are mellow even when the music is at its most heated.

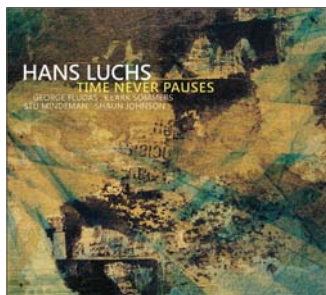
Time Never Pauses serves as a solid start to Luch’s recording career.

—Scott Yanow

Time Never Pauses: Der Lumenmeister; Elizabeth; Green DeLuchs; Come Sunday; Tuesday Night Delivery; January Spring; Hello Janssen; Taylor Street Swing; Get Out Of Town; 30 Rue Des Martyrs. (59:23)

Personnel: Hans Luchs, guitar; Shaun Johnson, trumpet; Stu Mindeman, piano; Clark Sommers, bass; George Fludas, drums; Juan Pastor, congas (1)

Ordering info: oa2records.com



Roxy Coss *Restless Idealism*

ORIGIN 82705

★★★★½

On her second album—following long on the heels of her 2010 self-released debut, Roxy Coss comes across as a fairly full-formed talent. As a player, on tenor and soprano saxophones, she possesses a poise and maturity beyond her years. She’s also a composer of diverse instincts and a strong bandleader (with impressive bandmates in tow, including trumpeter Jeremy Pelt, nimble guitarist Alex Wintz and versatile pianist Chris Pattishall, with drummer Willie Jones III and bassist Dezron Douglas rounding out the nicely integrated ensemble).

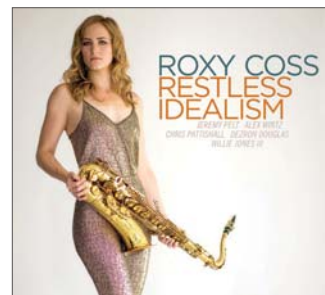
True to its title, the music contained here does heed a certain restless idealism, having to do with not-necessarily-commercial jazz idioms reaching across a spectrum of past and present, blessed with melodic intelligence and direct appeal, but also a sense of an ongoing musical search. Contrary to the clichéd notion that young players lack the wisdom and life experience to take the slow road, Coss also works well in ballad mode, with pen and horn: “Happiness Is A Choice” is a slow-brew ballad with a warm, breathy-toned and graceful tenor solo. “Recurring Dream” makes for an elegant, understated finale to an album that fulfills and expands on the early promise of this impressive and still-emerging artist.

—Josef Woodard

Restless Idealism: Don’t Cross The Coss; Waiting; Push; Perspective; Breaking Point; Happiness Is A Choice; Tricky; the Story Of Fiona; Almost My Own; Recurring Dream. (58:57)

Personnel: Roxy Coss, tenor saxophone, soprano saxophone; Jeremy Pelt, trumpet, Alex Wintz, guitar; Chris Pattishall, piano; Dezron Douglas, bass; Willie Jones III, drums.

Ordering info: originarts.com



Andrea Brachfeld *Lotus Blossom*

JAZZHEADS

★★★★

On her seventh outing as a leader, flutist-composer Andrea Brachfeld is accompanied by a stellar crew in pianist Bill O’Connell (who also shares her affinity for Latin jazz), master bassist Rufus Reid and veteran drummer Winard Harper. Together they interpret several familiar tunes and Brachfeld originals, each distinguished by the flutist’s rich, flowing lines and bold improvisational instincts.

Their take on Billy Strayhorn’s moody jazz classic “Lotus Blossom” is marked by a contrapuntal dialogue throughout between Brachfeld and Reid. O’Connell also pushes the harmonic fabric of the gentle but slightly melancholic piece on his brilliant solo here. Their Latinized take on Strayhorn’s “A Flower Is A Lovesome Thing” is equally compelling.

Herbie Mann’s landmark “Memphis Underground” is given an ultra-funky treatment here, courtesy of guest Wycliffe Gordon’s sousaphone groove in combination with Harper’s authentic second-line pulse. Brachfeld and O’Connell turn in torrid performances on the flutist’s uptempo burner “Changin’ Up,” and the quartet hits an appealing accord on George Shearing’s breezy swinger “Conception.” Vocalist Nancy Harms guests on the joyful closer “Queen Girl.”

—Bill Milkowski

Lotus Blossom: Lotus Blossom; A Flower Is A Lovesome Thing; If I Love Again; Memphis Underground; What A Little Moonlight Can Do; Changin’ Up; Conception; There Was A Time; This Is; Queen Girl. (66:58)

Personnel: Andrea Brachfeld, flute; Bill O’Connell, piano; Rufus Reid, bass; Winard Harper, drums; Wycliffe Gordon, sousaphone, trombone (4); Chembo Cornelii, percussion (3, 10); Nancy Harms, vocals (8).

Ordering info: jazzheads.com



National Jazz Ensemble directed by Chuck Israels *Featuring Gerry Mulligan*

DOT TIME RECORDS 8002

★★★★

The National Jazz Ensemble was in its third season when this historic concert was presented at the New School in Manhattan in 1977; the group had done well on the road, but was never able to sell out shows on its home turf until bringing Gerry Mulligan aboard as a guest.

The program commences with a pair of Mulligan originals and closes with three more, with pieces by Ellington, Monk, Charlie Parker and John Carisi’s “Israel” in between. Mulligan’s then-new “Back At The Barn” opens the concert with the composer’s recognizable fluid and authoritative tone driving that relaxed blues number. The honored guest’s “Walkin’ Shoes” proves to be an ideal forum for both the NJE’s taut horn section and trombonist Jimmy Knepper’s sinuous solo.

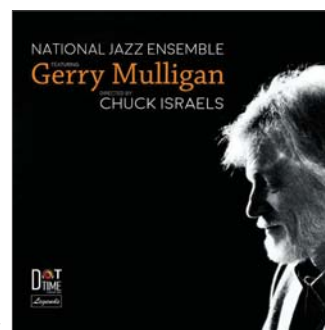
For the next three standards, Mulligan sat out as the NJE did its work. The entire band shows great discipline on the tricky Parker medley “Bird Tapestry,” and vocalist Margot Hanson is showcased on Ellington’s “Creole Love Call.”

—Yoshi Kato

Featuring Gerry Mulligan: Back At The Barn; Walkin’ Shoes; Israel; Evidence; Bird Tapestry; Creole Love Call; Thruway; Idol Gossip; Ballade. (52:54)

Personnel: Chuck Israels, conductor; Gerry Mulligan, baritone saxophone (1–3, 7–9); Arnie Lawrence, Lawrence Feldman, Greg Herbert, Dennis Anderson, Kenny Berger, reeds; Jimmy Maxwell, Waymon Reed, Mike Lawrence, David Berger, trumpets; Jimmy Knepper, Rod Levitt, Sam Burtis, trombones; Steve Brown, guitar; Bill Dobbins, piano; Steve Gilmore, bass; Bill Goodwin, drums; Margot Hanson, vocals (6).

Ordering info: dottimerecords.com



Michael Janisch *Paradigm Shift*

WHIRLWIND RECORDINGS 4676

★★★★

Versatility has helped many a musician survive in jazz, and London-based bassist, composer and educator Michael Janisch has his bases covered. Despite his U.K. postal code, it's OK to invoke baseball when discussing Janisch, since he was raised in Minnesota and attended Berklee College of Music. Following him through *Paradigm Shift's* two CDs to home plate is another matter; while he has aspired to hitting a stylistic grand slam, his music might be better served by a series of base hits.

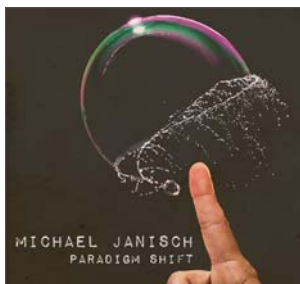
The first disc is long on intricate electric grooves, muscular hard-bop and atmospheric, ambient interludes. Each approach is competently rendered, but the journey from one to the next starts to feel like a trip through a résumé rather than a sequence of sounds that complement or meaningfully contrast with each other. Janisch leads a very tight, on-point band; in particular, pianist Leonardo Genovese and trumpeter Jason Palmer make the most of their solo space. But when Genovese switches to synthesizer, his contributions register more as vintage signifiers than compelling statements.

—Bill Meyer

The Paradigm Shift Suite: Disc One: Fluid (Intro); Movement I; Movement II; Rage (Interlude); Movement III; Movement IV; Be Free (Outro). (31:14) Disc Two: Terra Firma (Intro); Chacaraca; Mike's Mosey; The JJ I Knew; Crash; One-Eyed Cat; Awakening. (57:06)

Personnel: Michael Janisch, bass, percussion, electronics; Paul Booth, tenor saxophone, flute, bass clarinet, didgeridoo, percussion, hand claps; Jason Palmer, trumpet; Leonardo Genovese, piano, keyboards, effects; Colin Stranahan, drums; Alex Bonney, electronics, effects.

Ordering info: whirlwindrecordings.com



Doran/Stucky/ Studer/Tacuma *Call Me Helium*

DOUBLE MOON 71155

★★½

Of all the places one could take a tribute to Jimi Hendrix, straight-ahead psychedelic rock is the riskiest. It invites direct comparisons to the originals, and it's tough to do psychedelic better than Hendrix. This mostly German group (American bassist Jamaaladeen Tacuma aside) opts to take the music head on and half succeeds in doing it justice.

Unfortunately, that means the band also half fails, often on the same song. For instance, "In From The Storm" finds its way to a towering jam in the middle, but does it via wandering verses that never quite capture the song.

Eyes will be on the guitarist in any Hendrix tribute, and Christy Doran plays with a lot of fire; his heavy riffing is excellent, and he can wail on lead, though it's odd to hear Hendrix played with virtually no blues vocabulary. Where the blues is found, it's largely in Tacuma's bass, which is dynamite, especially on the fastest numbers.

Ultimately, what *Call Me Helium* captures in Hendrix's sound, it misses in spirit.

—Joe Tangari



Call Me Helium: Izabella; Hey Joe; In From The Storm/Sgt. Pepper; Gipsy Eyes; Foxy Lady; Angel; Machine Gun; 3-5-0-0; Bold As Love; Drifting/Teach Your Children; Up From The Skies. (51:39)

Personnel: Christy Doran, guitar; Erika Stucky, vocals, toy instruments; Fredy Studer, drums, percussion; Jamaaladeen Tacuma, bass, vocals

Ordering info: doublemoon.de

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BILL EVANS

Some Other Time: The Lost Session from The Black Forest

Newly unearthed STUDIO session from the iconic pianist **Bill Evans**, *Some Other Time* is a landmark discovery for jazz listeners around the world. Recorded on June 20, 1968, nearly 10 years after the legendary *Kind of Blue* sessions with Miles Davis and a mere five days after the legendary recorded live performance at the Montreux Jazz Festival, which won a Grammy. This is the only studio album in existence of Evans playing with jazz greats bassist **Eddie Gomez** & drummer **Jack DeJohnette**. Deluxe 2-CD and

limited edition 2-LP sets available, containing over 90 minutes of music, *Some Other Time* was recorded by legendary MPS Records founder & producer **Hans Georg Brunner-Schwer** at his studio in Villingen, Germany (aka "The Black Forest"). Booklet includes new historical essays by jazz journalist **Marc Myers** & German jazz historian **Friedhelm Schulz**; new interviews with Eddie Gomez & Jack DeJohnette; plus rare archival photos.

[LP Available Record Store Day April 16TH & CD Available April 22ND]



STAN GETZ/JOÃO GILBERTO *Getz/Gilberto '76*

Tenor titan **Stan Getz** and bossa nova legend **João Gilberto** reunite in 1976 with previously unreleased recordings from Keystone Korner featuring Joanne Brackeen (piano), Clint Houston (bass) & Billy Hart (drums). With a 32-pg booklet of essays by author **James Gavin**, bossa nova pioneer **Carlos Lyra** & more, this deluxe CD is a follow-up to one of the bestselling jazz albums ever, *Getz/Gilberto* (1964).

[Limited Edition LP Also Available]

STAN GETZ *Moments in Time*

Never-before-released music by **Stan Getz** featuring pianist **Joanne Brackeen**, bassist **Clint Houston** & drummer **Billy Hart**, recorded live in 1976 at the Bay Area jazz haunt Keystone Korner. The 28-pg booklet includes essays by jazz journalist **Ted Panken**, Stan's son **Steve Getz**, band members, and producers **Zev Feldman** & **Todd Barkan**, plus rare photos by acclaimed photographer **Tom Copi**. Cover art by the distinctive Japanese artist **Takao Fujioka**.



SARAH VAUGHAN *Live at Rosy's*

Newly discovered live recording of "The Divine One," **Sarah Vaughan**, from May 31, 1978 at Rosy's Jazz Club in New Orleans. Deluxe 2-CD set includes a 36-page book of essays and interviews with **James Gavin**, **Helen Merrill**, **Jimmy Cobb** and more. Nearly 90 minutes of music, originally recorded for NPR-syndicated radio program *Jazz Alive* with host Dr. Billy Taylor, some of which has never been aired before. Also includes rare photos from **Herman Leonard**, **Chuck Stewart**, **Tom Copi** & others.

Available March 25TH



LARRY YOUNG *In Paris: The ORTF Recordings*

In partnership with INA, the first release of all previously unissued material by organ great **Larry Young** in nearly 40 years. Features live and studio recordings from Paris in 1964-1965 with **Nathan Davis**, **Woody Shaw**, **Billy Brooks** & a host of notable Parisian jazz greats. Deluxe 2-CD set includes a 68-pg book of essays and interviews by **Larry Young III**, **John McLaughlin**, **John Medeski**, **Dr. Lonnie Smith** & others; plus rare photos and more!

[Limited Edition 2-LP Set Also Available]

Available March 11TH

Mingus' Moods

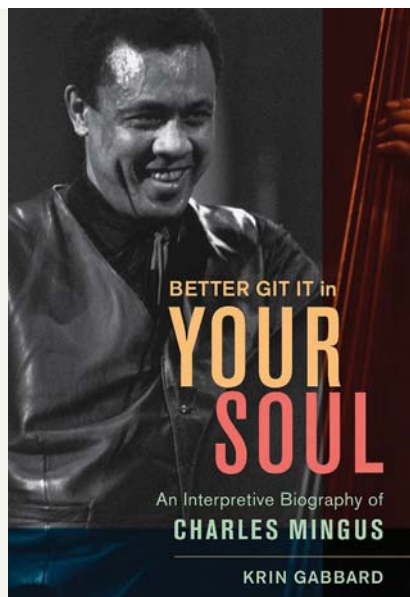
The story of bassist, bandleader and composer Charles Mingus, a man of giant talent and torments, has been ably retold in ***Better Git It In Your Soul*** (University of California Press) by **Krin Gabbard**. An adjunct professor at Columbia University whose previous books explore jazz trumpet and jazz in the movies, Gabbard relates the life arc of a man he valorizes—warts and all—as a musician, autobiographer, poet, activist, participant in analysis, political activist and even an actor.

Drama is inherent in the tale, starting with Mingus' hardscrabble birth in Nogales, Arizona, and conflictual upbringing in the Watts neighborhood of Los Angeles. Sensitive and self-aware from early youth through his death in 1979 (from Lou Gehrig's disease), Mingus is a modern hero in the rough, beset with flaws but ultimately triumphant against implacable pressures of racism, commercialism and conformity.

He had a four-decade-long career mostly in the forefront of the art form he entered knowing his first choice, symphony cellist, was beyond reach due to societal norms. Gabbard makes a point of the stylistic breadth of Mingus' experience in the company of New Orleans originators including Louis Armstrong, swing-era stars (most of all Duke Ellington, whom he idolized), the founding beboppers, Third Stream advocates, fusion guitarists and singer-songwriter Joni Mitchell.

Well remembered for stretching the forms and boundaries of jazz through his ambitious, often explosive projects and ensembles, Mingus documented his genre-defying concepts and stormy states of mind in more than 50 albums under his own name, plus classic sessions led by Red Norvo (with Tal Farlow), Charlie Parker (with Dizzy Gillespie and Bud Powell) and Ellington. Like the best musician biographies, *Better Git It In Your Soul* draws the reader to listening to its subject's productions. If already familiar with Mingus' music, a reader may return to favorites with fresh ears and deeper insights.

Although Gabbard's autobiography is "interpretive," it is not revisionist.



He acknowledges relying heavily on Brian Priestley's 1984 *Mingus: A Critical Biography* and Gene Santoro's deeply researched *Myself When I Am Real*. He quotes the double memoir *Mingus/Mingus* by Janet Coleman and Al Young. He also fully examines Mingus' self-mythologizing book *Beneath the Underdog*, both as a work-in-progress and a window into Mingus' vanities and insecurities.

Gabbard's greatest personal contribution to understanding Mingus is his contextualization of events through his own broad, well-informed perspective. He includes some new material to the overview, having interviewed Mingus' surviving sisters and immersed himself in an original manuscript of *Beneath the Underdog* and Max Roach's archive, both only recently available at the Library of Congress. He focuses attention on Mingus' negligible film appearances and aborted soundtrack attempts, and more significantly on his relationships with his hand-in-glove drummer Dannie Richmond, beloved reeds-and-winds virtuoso Eric Dolphy and trombonist Jimmy Knepper, an unfortunate victim of Mingus' rages.

The author's enthusiasm for Mingus' masterpieces such as *Black Saint And The Sinner Lady* is infectious. *Better Git It In Your Soul* is frank about Mingus' womanizing, depression, appetites, brutality and aggression, yet is persuasive that Mingus' "it" belongs in everyone's soul.

DB



Brian Andres and the Afro-Cuban Jazz Cartel *This Could Be That*

BACALAO 003

★★★★

This album of Latin jazz has the durability and precision of a premium Swiss watch, and keeps time even better. Powered by premier percussionists, *This Could Be That* is body music that celebrates a new San Francisco sound.

Joined by such guests as timbalero Alex Acuña, batá authority Michael Spiro and percussion king John Santos, the Cartel's third album is upbeat, immaculately tailored and packed with surprise.

It starts with Jack Wilson's driving "Amyable," a showcase for the Cartel's brass prowess, then powers down with Cartel percussionist Javier Cabanillas' slinky cha-cha, "Esto Puedo Per Eso" (Spanish for "this could be that"). If these aren't enough to propel you to the dance floor, up comes "Limite," a relentlessly dramatic piece written and arranged by German-born Steffen Kuehn, who also contributes a blazing trumpet solo.

Other highlights include a powerful rendition of "Got A Match?," a signature tune from Chick Corea's Elektric Band; "Banderas Rojas," a startling Germain piece showcasing the pan drum of Derek Smith, ominous, offsetting brass accents and absorbing percussion churning; a gorgeous "My One And Only Love" bedding the alluring vocals of Cuban-American vocalist Venissa Santi in a swelling arrangement that peaks with huge brass voicings; and Jamie Dubberly's sultry "Relativity," an angular beauty with piquant brass.

—Carlo Wolff

This Could Be That: Amyable; Esto Puede Ser Eso; Limite; Les Cailloux; Got A Match?; My One And Only Love; Bacalaitos; Roasted To Perfection; Banderas Rojas; Relativity; Algo Nuevecito. (57:46)

Personnel: Brian Andres, drums; Braulio Barrera, Alex Acuña, Javier Cabanillas, Omar Ledezma, Louie Romero, Calixto Ovedo, John Santos, percussion; Mike Andres, alto saxophone; Jamie Dubberly, trombone; Jesus Florida, violin; Aaron Germain, bass, electric piano; Henry Hung, flugelhorn, trumpet; Steffen Kuehn, flugelhorn, trumpet; Hermann Lara, baritone saxophone; Tony Peebles, tenor saxophone; Mike Rinta, trombone; Vanessa Santi, vocals; Derek Smith, pan drum; Nikki Smith, Jose Roberto Hernandez, coro; Michael Spiro, batá; Christian Tumulán, keyboard.

Ordering info: brianandres.com

Jason Kao Hwang/EDGE Voice

INNOVA/ACF 938

★★★★

On *Voice*, composer and violinist Jason Kao Hwang shares his thoughts about the ability of words and music to convey the unspeakable truths that often hide in everyday conversation. He likens the words of poets to the notes of instrumental music, sounds that bypass the critical brain and speak directly to the heart.

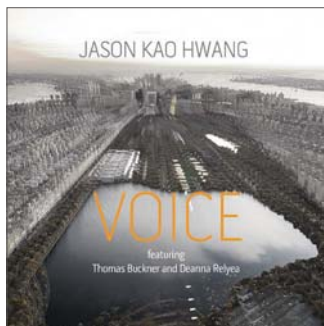
The music he composed to complement 13 poems by his favorite poets achieves his transcendent goal. The vocals often do not. Singers Deanna Relyea and Thomas Buckner often sound like they're overemoting. Relyea slurs her intonation on "Nocturnal" and "Vertigo," rendering the lyrics/poetry almost unintelligible. Meanwhile, Piotr Michalowski's bass clarinet, Hwang's violin, Ken Filiano's bass and Andrew Drury's drums play measured, time-shattering music that alternately complements and clashes with Relyea's vocalizations. The music Hwang composed for these tone poems is challenging and emotionally striking. The vocals are more of a distraction.

—j. poet

Voice: Nocturnal; Vertigo; Someone; Days Of Awe; I Raise Myself; Charles Gayle Trio At The Knitting Factory; What You Know; I Dream About You Baby; Father; In the Wind There is a Presence No. 2; A Rose Is A Rose; In Like Paradise/Out Like the Blues; Gypsy Prayers. (71:40)

Personnel: Jason Kao Hwang, violin, viola; Piotr Michalowski, soprano sax, bass clarinet; Deanna Relyea, vocals; Taylor Ho Bynum, cornet, flugelhorn; Andrew Drury, drums; Ken Filiano, bass; Thomas Buckner, vocals; Joe McPhee, tenor saxophone, pocket trumpet; William Parker, bass; Sang Won Park, kayagum, ajeng, voice; Vattel Cherry, bass (6); Marc Edwards, drums (6); Lester Afflick, Patricia Spears Jones, Fay Chiang, Steve Dalachinsky and Yuko Otomo, poems.

Ordering info: innova.mu



Fire! She Sleeps, She Sleeps

RUNE GRAMMOFON 2178

★★★★½

The Swedish trio Fire! could be viewed as a less jazz-orientated alternative to The Thing, another threesome that features power saxophonist Mats Gustafsson. If Fire!'s improvisation is arriving from other traditions, then these are more rock, drone or minimalist in nature. This album marks a cutting back to the trio's original form, following a few years of ridiculously intense expansion into the Fire! Orchestra.

Percussionist Andreas Werliin opens with tolling powerchords on his lap steel guitar, a dark presaging of the extended mood-building to come. After a minute, Gustafsson opens his mighty lungs, drawing out gobbets of raw tenor matter.

Werliin's drums help maintain a rolling stasis, as Gustafsson clamps down tightly. Such outbreaks of his characteristic sonic aggression are rationed with great discipline, emerging only occasionally from a terrain that's mostly concerned with slow development and accumulating textures. The guesting Leo Svensson Sander provides a mournful cello solo on the final piece, increasing its depth. By this time, it sounds as though Gustafsson is playing bass saxophone, taking bathyspheric jazz to its ultimate seabed destination.

—Martin Longley

She Sleeps, She Sleeps: She Owned His Voice; She Sleeps, She Sleeps; She Bid A Meaningless Farewell; She Penetrates The Distant Silence, Slowly. (44:09)

Personnel: Mats Gustafsson, tenor saxophone, baritone saxophone, bass saxophone; Johan Berthling, bass; Andreas Werliin, drums, lap steel guitar; Oren Ambarchi, guitar (2); Leo Svensson Sander, cello (3, 4).

Ordering info: runegrammofon.com



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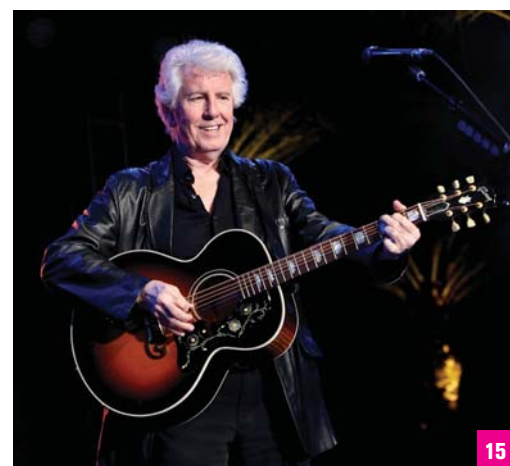
BEST OF THE NAMM SHOW 2016

This year's NAMM Show, held Jan. 21–24 at the Anaheim Convention Center, showcased new instruments and gear from all segments of the music industry. As usual, plenty of stars and celebrities showed up as endorsers, demonstrators, presenters and performers at the convention's after-hours concerts, all-star jams and awards ceremonies. In the following pages, DownBeat presents the best of The NAMM Show 2016.

REPORTING BY DAVID BALL, ED ENRIGHT,
KATIE KAILUS, BOBBY REED AND BRIAN ZIMMERMAN

1. George Garzone performs at a Jazz Jam hosted by JodyJazz, BG and Légère Reeds. **2.** Steve Morse (left) shares a laugh with Sterling Ball of Ernie Ball Music Man. **3.** Don Was plays at the NAMM TEC Awards, where he received the Les Paul Award (Jesse Grant/Getty Images for NAMM). **4.** Victor Wooten jams at the Hartke booth. **5.** Steve Vai strikes a pose at the Ibanez exhibit. **6.** Dr. John gets funky at the John Lennon Educational Tour Bus Imagine Party (Jesse Grant/Getty Images for NAMM). **7.** Bobby Watson (left) riffs with Jerry Vivino at Vandoren's VandoJam. **8.** Keith Emerson (left) hangs at the Casio booth with company man Mike Martin. **9.** Gregg Bissonette gives a demo for Dixon Drums. **10.** Chaka Khan accepts her She Rocks Award with a smile (Jesse Grant/Getty Images for NAMM). **11.** Jeff "Skunk" Baxter performs after being inducted into the NAMM TEC Awards Hall of Fame (Jesse Grant/Getty Images for NAMM). **12.** Questlove pays a visit to the Ludwig booth (Jesse Grant/Getty Images for NAMM). **13.** Billy Cobham discusses an educational program at the Sabian booth. **14.** Remo Belli holds court at the Remo booth. **15.** Graham Nash performs on the NAMM Nissan Grand Plaza Stage for an enthusiastic opening-night crowd (Jesse Grant/Getty Images for NAMM).





Band & Orchestra

1. EX-CEPTIONAL SAXOPHONE

The Yamaha YAS-875EXII Custom EX alto saxophone was designed in collaboration with some of the world's top saxophonists to provide unblemished sound quality and a stress-free playing experience. Features on this professional-level instrument include an annealed bottom bow for responsive low range, a hand-engraved lily design on the bell and redesigned ergonomic key shapes. The saxophone is available in multiple finishes, including silver and black lacquer. It also comes with a contemporary backpack-style case. (usa.yamaha.com)

2. 50-YEAR STRAD

To celebrate its 50-year residence in Elkhart, Indiana, Vincent Bach has released the 190237 50th anniversary model Stradivarius trumpet. Available in silver and brass finishes, the trumpet features the same superb resonance and flexible response of modern Strads but with some noticeable vintage touches, including a wide-sculpted double brace on the tuning slide, two-piece valve casings with nickel balusters, a steel bell wire, a vintage finger hook and anniversary engravings on the bell and second valve. (bachbrass.com)

3. LET THERE BE LIGHT

Perfect for nightclub gigs or pit orchestras, the Mighty Bright NuFlex clip-on light features two warm-white energy-efficient LED bulbs, engineered with optical lenses to spread light evenly across sheet music pages. The light also comes with a flexible silicone neck and is dimmable up to 55 lumens. With a battery life of 16 hours and optional USB-charging capability, the Mighty Bright NuFlex is a welcome addition to any gigging musician's accessory kit. (mightybright.com)

4. NEW YORK STATE OF MIND

Theo Wanne's NY Bros alto saxophone mouthpiece utilizes the best design principles from vintage 1940s-era Meyer mouthpieces. Manufactured with Harry Hartmann Fiberrrod material (which sounds and looks like hard rubber but doesn't discolor or smell), the mouthpiece features a sculpted medium chamber and roll-over baffle, making it suitable for jazz, rock and even classical settings. (thewanne.com)

5. TRENDY TROMBONE

The Blessing BTB-1287 is an ideal horn for aspiring jazz trombonists. Featuring an 8-inch bell diameter, yellow brass two-piece bell and a chrome-plated yellow brass slide, the instrument is ready-made for success in the classroom. But it will also look great on stage. That's because the BTB-1287 comes standard with a clear epoxy lacquer over a brushed-brass finish, a look that has become popular with jazz trombonists.

(blessingbrass.com)

6. ADD SOME FIBER

Denis Wick has extended its popular Fiber Mute line with the addition of the Fiber Cup Mute. With its seamless construction, wooden base and rubber-ringed cup, this affordable cup mute offers a sensational tone and even intonation across all registers, making it suitable for student musicians or busy pros. Designed with Denis Wick's signature fiber material and precise-engineered corks, this durable cup mute won't ding or dent.

(deniswick.com)

7. WAIL LIKE WHALUM

Tenor saxophonist Kirk Whalum collaborated with Julius Keilwerth Saxophones to produce the Kirk Whalum Signature Tenor Saxophone Neck. Modeled after Whalum's own modified SX90R neck, the signature model features nickel plating and a double-brace system for additional support, resulting in a neck with a free-blowing response and a dark, resonant sound. These necks were made to fit the Keilwerth SX90 models, but additional fitting might be required at your local shop. (julius-keilwerth.com)



1. DOUBLE DUTY

The KSM8 Dualdyne Cardioid Dynamic Vocal Microphone from Shure has virtually no proximity effect. It provides sound engineers with off-axis rejection and an output accuracy that requires none of the presence peaks or roll-offs that are typical of other dynamic microphones. (shure.com)

2. HI-RES IN-EARS

The UE Pro Reference Remastered is an in-ear monitor tuned for high-resolution audio. Jointly developed by Ultimate Ears Pro and Capitol Studios engineers, this new custom in-ear monitor lets users experience the nuances and details of high-resolution recordings. (pro.ultimateears.com)

3. UNIVERSAL SET

Audio-Technica's E-Series of professional in-ear monitors brings the sonic signature of the M-Series headphones to an in-ear design. The three models in the E-Series—the ATH-E70, ATH-E50 (pictured) and ATH-E40—have been designed to meet the needs of audio professionals and musicians. (audio-technica.com)

4. VOCAL MIC REISSUE

CAD Audio has reissued the classic A77 vocal microphone, originally introduced by Astatic in 1959. The A77 is a large-diaphragm, side-address dynamic microphone that has been updated with a PowerGap high-gauss magnet and a TrueFlex diaphragm. (cadaudio.com)

5. BLACK & GOLD

Roland's new accessory line includes professional cables available for instrument, microphone and MIDI applications. Black series cables, designed for the working musician, are hand-assembled with top-quality connectors and then individually bench-tested to ensure superior operation. Gold Series cables, for studio and audiophile applications, are outfitted with 24-karat gold-plated contacts and Roland's premium-grade audio cable. (rolandus.com)

6. USB CONNECTIVITY

Universal Audio's Apollo Twin USB audio interface combines high-quality 24-bit/192kHz audio conversion with onboard Realtime UAD-2 DUO Processing. With its ergonomic desktop design, rugged aluminum construction and front panel headphone and instrument connections, Apollo Twin USB lets Windows 8.1 and Windows 7 users record in real-time at near-zero latency through the full range of UAD Powered Plug-Ins from Neve, Studer, Manley, Marshall, API and more. (uaudio.com)

7. COMFORT & QUALITY SOUND

Samson's new Z series headphones include four distinct models: the flagship Z55 Professional Reference Headphones, the Z45 Professional Studio Headphones, and the Z35 and Z25 Studio Headphones. The Z series features lightweight components with a low-profile, over-ear fit. The entire line features ample cushioning for maximum comfort, highlighted by the genuine lambskin ear pads on the Z55 and Z45 models. (samsonheadphones.com)

8. DIGITAL SNAKE SOLUTION

Yamaha has debuted the Tio1608-D Dante-equipped I/O Rack and the NY64-D Dante I/O expansion card digital snake solution for the TF series digital mixers. The Tio1608-D offers a QuickConfig mode, which auto patches the inputs and outputs without requiring a computer to configure. With just three easy steps and a CAT5e LAN cable, sound engineers can network the Tio1608-D from the stage to the TF console for high-quality, low-latency audio transfer with 16 mic/line inputs and eight line outputs. The easy-to-install NY64-D expansion card increases the capability of the TF series to route audio over a Dante network. It allows for the transmission and reception of up to 64 input channels and 64 output channels of uncompressed 48kHz/24-bit digital audio data. (usa.yamaha.com)



Drums

1. STAND TALL

Jazz drummer Peter Erskine was involved in the development of the Tama HC52F flat-base cymbal stand, which provides stability and versatility with a vintage look. New anti-vibration construction inside the tubes makes the Classic Stand extremely stable. Because it weighs only 3.2 pounds and folds down to 22 7/8 inches, the stand is easy to transport. (tama.com)

2. GET LAYERS

Roland's EC-10 EL Cajon is an authentic acoustic cajon that also incorporates electronic percussion technology. The integrated sound module features 30 kits loaded with sounds developed specifically to complement the EC-10's natural cajon voice. Players can create layered electronic sounds, such as tambourine, djembe, shaker, acoustic snare, electronic drums and sound effects. (rolandus.com)

3. TRASH TIME

Built from a galvanized trash can lid, the LP RAW Trash Snare is extremely versatile and has a gritty look inspired by the streets. This instrument can be played as an auxiliary snare, a timbale, a shaker or an ocean drum. Its synthetic beads create compelling sonic coloration, such as sizzle effect. Additionally, drummers can play both sides of this instrument. (lpmusic.com)

4. STAY COOL

Drummers will stay cool onstage with the BLOWIT Fan, which can be clamped onto a microphone stand or drum hardware, and it includes an adjustable, built-in drum stick holder. It features directional and angle adjustments for direct air flow and it has a new recessed oscillator joint for tight setups. (blowitfans.com)

5. JUST RIGHT

Los Cabos Drumsticks' Red Hickory 55AB is a hybrid stick: It's more than a 5A, but less than a 5B, making it a perfect alternative when a 5B is just a little more stick than a player needs. (loscabosdrumsticks.com)

6. GRADE 'A'

Reminiscent of cymbals from the 1930s through the '60, yet distinctly modern, Zildjian's "A" Avedis collection offers a recreation of the vintage sound and feel played by some of the greatest jazz drummers of all time. Each cymbal has a patina finish that reproduces the look of a decades-old cymbal. The crash and ride models range from 18 to 22 inches, and hi-hats are also available. (zildjian.com)

7. GREAT GADD

Yamaha's new Recording Custom is an iconic kit developed with input from an iconic musician: Steve Gadd. New features include six-ply 100 percent North American birch shells with 30-degree bearing edges and weighted hi-tension lugs, resulting in a focused, deeper tone. (usa.yamaha.com)

8. HAMMER TIME

Sabian's handcrafted XSR cymbals provide high quality at an affordable price. These fully hammered cymbals have enhanced profiles, and they offer great sustain and projection. (sabian.com)

9. CONVENIENT CONTROL

The DrumClip for bass drum is an external resonance control device that is convenient and sturdy. The DrumClip prevents an "over ring" sound when drummers want to control the sustain. It comes with a felt pad that can be stuck to the flat surface of the Bass DrumClip if desired. The company also makes DrumClips in two other sizes. (thedrumclip.com)



Guitars & Amps

1. JAZZED UP

Alvarez has debuted its AAT series of archtop guitars, including single and double cutaway models with a mahogany center block (ATT33 and ATT34), as well as a single cutaway hollowbody. All models feature Duncan Designed pickups. (alvarezguitars.com)

2. DOWN-LOW ON NYXL

D'Addario has taken the same proprietary technology featured in its NYXL guitar strings and brought it to the low end of the tonal spectrum. NYXL Bass strings feature D'Addario's NY Steel core and a reformulated nickel-wrap wire to give bass players deeper lows, accentuated harmonics and a more powerful punch. NYXL Bass provides a comfortable feel and dynamic tonal response, plus increased durability and tuning stability. (daddario.com)

3. SMOOTH MOVE

Ernie Ball Music Man has released its 40th anniversary StingRay electric bass, "Old Smoothie," named after the prototype from 1976. The bass features a five-pole-piece pickup design for a smooth, full tone. All the other attributes of the original Old Smoothie have been replicated, including its body, headstock and pickguard shape, 34-inch scale maple neck and fingerboard, frets, electronics, hardware and chocolate-burst finish. (music-man.com)

4. WIRELESS WONDER

With Fishman's TriplePlay FC-1 Floor Controller, players can now extend the capability of the TriplePlay Wireless Guitar Controller. MIDI synths and sound modules can be played wirelessly with a TriplePlay-equipped guitar, eliminating the need for cables and connectors. (fishman.com)

5. LIGHT AS AIR

As part of its Passion series, Godin has released the RG-4 Swamp Ash bass. Unlike your average "P"-style bass, the RG-4 features five tuned, synchronized resonance chambers interconnected inside the instrument's body for optimal air transfer and exceptional resonance. The chambers are routed out of the contoured swamp ash top and red cedar back, which are then paired together to create a lightweight, vibrant body with an ergonomic design, powered by a set of Seymour Duncan Quarter-Pound PJ pickups. (godinguitars.com)

6. NEW CLASSIC

Guild has reintroduced the Starfire VI, a semi-hollowbody guitar based on Guild's Newark St. Collection's Starfire V. Featuring Guild's double-cutaway Starfire body shape, the VI has a AAA flamed maple top, back and sides with a solid centerblock. Powered by dual LB-1 Little Bucker pickups, the Starfire VI boasts premium appointments, including a three-piece neck and a bound rosewood fingerboard inlaid with mother-of-pearl and abalone V-blocks, plus a Guild Vibrato Tailpiece. (guildguitars.com)

7. PUNCHY OVERDRIVE

Marshall has unveiled the 20-watt Mini Silver Jubilee head and combo amplifiers. The two-channel valve amps boast three 12AX7 preamp tubes and two EL34 tubes, and feature a high/low power switching option on the front panel, letting the user switch between 20 watts and 5 watts. The 2525C combo is loaded with a Celestion G12M25 Greenback speaker, giving the Mini Silver Jubilee a punchy overdrive for a bluesier vibe. (marshallamps.com)

8. SOLID SOUND

Prestige Guitars' Premier Spalt boasts a combo of solid carved AAA spalt maple top and natural finish. Each Premier Spalt features a slab of solid, spalted maple for its ¾-inch carved top, which is balanced with a solid mahogany body. The neck consists of three pieces of solid mahogany, with the center piece reverse-grained, for greater stability. This is topped off with an ebony fingerboard, featuring mother of pearl and abalone fret markers and modern jumbo, nickel-silver frets. (prestigeguitars.com)



Pianos & Keyboards

1. TOM & DAVE'S CREATION

The OB-6 from Dave Smith Instruments is a six-voice synthesizer with an all-analog signal path and discrete VCOs and filters developed in collaboration with Tom Oberheim. Boasting a sound engine inspired by Oberheim's original SEM (the core of his acclaimed four-voice and eight-voice synthesizers), the new instrument is designed to provide true, vintage SEM tone with the stability and flexibility of modern technology. It offers studio-quality effects, a polyphonic step sequencer, an arpeggiator and more. The classic Oberheim-inspired resonant filter provides low-pass, high-pass, band-pass and notch functionality. This analog powerhouse is packed into a four-octave, semi-weighted keyboard with velocity sensitivity and channel aftertouch. (davesmithinstruments.com)

2. CATCH THE WAVE

The Seaboard Rise is a MIDI controller with a rippling layer of semi-rigid, tactile, wavelike silicon that resembles a traditional piano keyboard and allows for the kind of multidimensional expressiveness you get from an all-acoustic instrument. Players can strike, bend, nudge, squish and press the surface of the keywaves to achieve all kinds of creative sounds and effects that are not possible on a piano. RISE works across multiple devices and platforms, including iPhones and Android phones. (rolli.com)

3. PORTABLE VIRTUAL PIANOS

The Synthogy Ivory II VR is a portable hardware unit that can play the full Ivory II virtual piano library in its entirety, at full resolution, without the need for a Mac or PC. The presets for pianos, inputs, mixes and sessions enable users to power up and play in seconds. Its compact design makes the Ivory II VR small enough to sit nicely on a controller keyboard. (vixano.com)

4. STREAMLINED DISKLAVIER

Yamaha's Disklavier ENSPIRE piano offers an immersive new user experience. With three system variations (CL, ST and PRO) spanning 14 models ranging from 48-inch uprights to a 9-foot concert grand, Yamaha has given pianists more options. A new streamlined design eliminates the control box of previous Disklavier models, and an intuitive app enables the reproducing piano to be controlled seamlessly by Apple iOS and Android devices, as well as PCs and Macs. Exclusive high-quality streaming radio and video services are also available. (usa.yamaha.com)

5. DIGITAL GRANDS

Casio's Celviano Grand Hybrid GP-500BP and GP-300 are digital instruments that combine the advantages of modern technology with the traditional sound and action of acoustic grand pianos. These models have the actual key design and playing comfort of a real grand piano, and Casio's AiR Grand Sound Source accurately recreates the complex sounds of three legendary European grands. (casiomusicgear.com)

6. BLUETOOTH CONNECTIVITY

Roland's FP-30 applies Bluetooth wireless connectivity to an affordably priced digital piano. Roland's SuperNATURAL Piano technology delivers authentic piano sound and detailed articulation and response to satisfy advanced players. Its PHA-4 Standard keyboard inherits the progressive hammer action, escapement and Ivory Feel keys found on Roland's high-end home pianos. The instrument is equipped with a powerful

stereo audio system, and dual headphone outputs let two people listen at once. (rolandus.com)

7. VIENNA CONCERT GRAND

Bösendorfer employed an entirely new construction and design concept for the 280VC Vienna Concert grand piano, which features a wide spectrum of tonal colors, dynamic range and expressiveness suited for modern concert halls and performance venues. A modification to its action makes it an accessible instrument that puts the pianist at ease. (boesendorfer.com)

8. MINI SYNTH

The Korg minilogue is a fully programmable, four-voice polyphonic analog synthesizer with powerful sound creation capabilities. Features include a 16-step polyphonic note and motion sequencer, arpeggiator and delay. A Voice mode lets users choose how the four available voices are configured—from polyphonic to duophonic to unison and beyond. The OLED display, in addition to showing information on presets and editable parameters, provides functional visual feedback on the sound being played. (korgusa.com)





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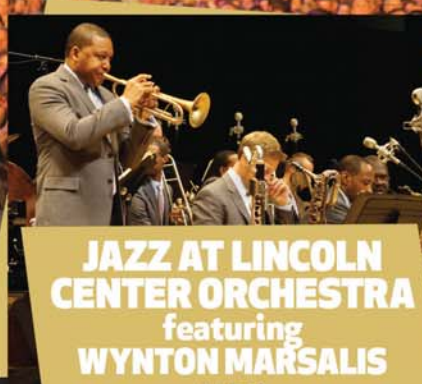
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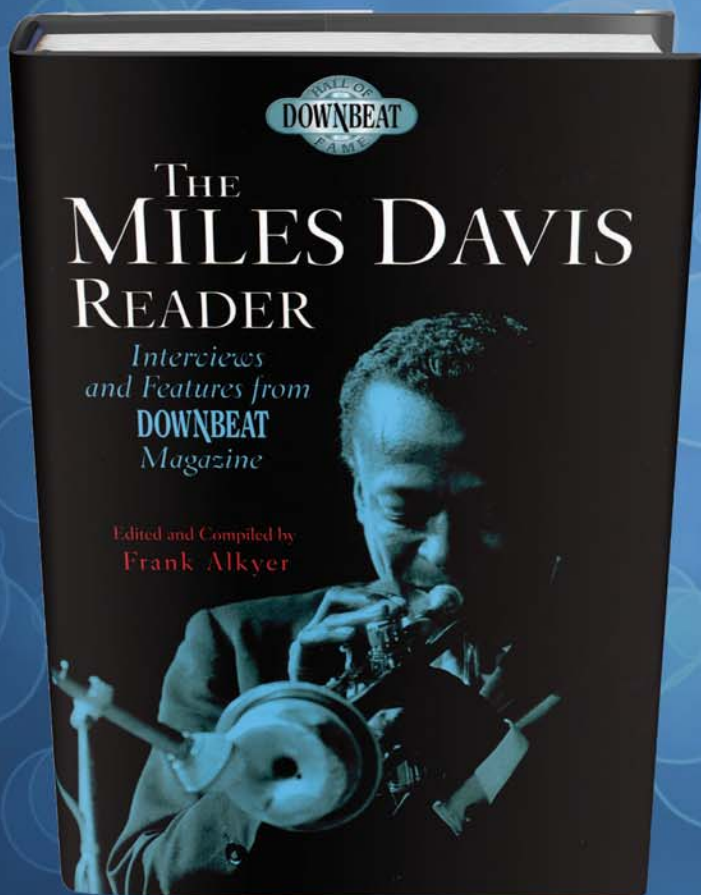
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MADERA LATINO

AN AFRO-CARIBBEAN
TAKE ON WOODY SHAW

BY BRIAN LYNCH
PAGE 76

KENNY CRANE
MASTER CLASS
PAGE 82

KIRK GARRISON
PRO SESSION
PAGE 86

STEVE DAVIS
TRANSCRIPTION
PAGE 88

TOOLSHED
NEW HORNS & GEAR
PAGE 90

A LATIN JAZZ PERSPECTIVE ON WOODY SHAW

BY BRIAN LYNCH

Woody Shaw (1944–'89) was one of the most important trumpeters and composers of the jazz tradition from the 1960s through the '80s. The implications of his innovative improvisational style and visionary musical concepts have still not been realized or perhaps even fully grasped by the jazz community more than a quarter century after his premature death at age 44.

My *Madera Latino* ("Latin wood") project is an effort to place Shaw's work back in the center of the contemporary jazz dialog through the medium of Afro-Caribbean jazz. For this project, I have arranged Shaw's sophisticated and evocative compositions with the intent of adapting the songs to work within the various rhythmic and formal structures of Latin music, much in the same way that I have has done in my re-imaginings of the work of other jazz composers for the acclaimed "Latin Side Of" series of recordings.

In this article, I will explore the processes that I have used to arrange and adapt Shaw's innovative music to the Latin jazz format and the rhythmic structures associated with *clave*, the foundational Afro-Caribbean rhythmic principle.

I will also attempt to provide insight into the unique improvisational language of Shaw, with its groundbreaking intervallic concepts, and shed light on Shaw's influences as a player and composer.

A natural affinity for *clave* exists in Shaw's music, not surprisingly given his experiences playing in Latin bands such as the group of master drummer Willie Bobo in his formative years, and the frequent use of Latin and Brazilian rhythms in his compositions.

Many of the Shaw compositions recorded for this project were selected for just this reason. Even so, slight rhythmic adjustments to the phrasing of the melodies and other aspects of the original treatment, in order to flow more naturally in *clave*, were a starting point for the re-imagining of these works in Afro-Caribbean style.

Brian Lynch



For the reader unfamiliar with the term, *clave* (key) is the five-stroke, two-part timeline (three strokes in one measure, two in the other) pattern that undergirds much Afro-Caribbean music, especially those rhythms and styles originating on the island of Cuba. This concept of a key pattern that organizes and directs polyrhythmic activity occurs in many diverse strands of African music.

Clave is a foundational principle of most Afro-Cuban music as well as musical styles descended from it, such as *salsa*. The asymmetric nature of this timeline pattern serves to give the *clave* a polarity that directs the tension and release of rhythm. Either "pole" (the "3 side" or the "2 side") can be perceived and used as the first bar in relation to a melody or harmony, hence the concept of *clave direction* (3–2 or 2–3). Precise yet expansive, the concept of *clave* makes possible the incredible synchronization of polyrhythmic

activity emblematic of the African and Afro-Caribbean musical ensemble. The two predominant duple meter forms of *clave* are *son* *clave*, associated with the *son-montuno* form of Afro-Cuban music and its offspring *salsa*, and *rumba* *clave*, prominent in both Afro-Cuban folkloric/sacred forms and in modern Afro-Caribbean jazz. Figure 1 shows the *son* and *rumba* *claves*, in the 3–2 direction.

Clave in its pure form is an unbroken pattern; musical events organize around it, not the other way around. The challenge in arranging a jazz piece to fit in *clave* is how to adjust the phrasing to keep the flow of the

Figure 1



Figure 2

Figure 2 shows a musical score for four bars. The top staff is for Trumpet 1, the middle for Trumpet 2, and the bottom for Clave. The key signature has three flats (B-flat, E-flat, A-flat) and the time signature is 4/4. The Clave part shows a 2-3 pattern: two eighth notes on beat 1, followed by a quarter rest, then a quarter note on beat 2, followed by a quarter rest, and finally a quarter note on beat 3.

Figure 3

Figure 3 shows a musical score for four bars. The top staff is for Bb Trumpet 1, the middle for Bb Trumpet 2, and the bottom for Percussion. The key signature has three flats and the time signature is 4/4. The Percussion part shows a 2-3 pattern: two eighth notes on beat 1, followed by a quarter rest, then a quarter note on beat 2, followed by a quarter rest, and finally a quarter note on beat 3.

Figure 4

Figure 4 shows a musical score for four bars. The staves from top to bottom are Trumpet 1, Trumpet 2, Piano, Bass, and Clave. The key signature has three flats and the time signature is 4/4. The Piano and Bass parts include chord markings: F-7 in the first bar and D-flat major (D-flat, F, A-flat) in the second bar. The Clave part shows a 2-3 pattern.

Figure 5

Figure 5 shows a single melodic line for four bars. The key signature has three flats and the time signature is 4/4. The melody starts on a quarter rest, then has eighth notes on beats 1 and 2, a quarter note on beat 3, and eighth notes on beats 4 and 5 (which would be the start of the next bar).

clave direction (3-2 or 2-3) deemed appropriate for the composition.

This affects every part of the arrangement, not just the melodic line. Looking at a couple of aspects of my arrangement of Shaw's "Tomorrow's Destiny" will illustrate this.

In its original recorded versions, "Tomorrow's Destiny" was performed in a mix of swing and Latin jazz rhythm. Shaw's melody and overall conception of the tune suggested a 2-3 clave

direction for the piece, and very few adjustments needed to be made to the melody in order for it to flow naturally in that orientation. A slight tweak to the second trumpet part in this contrapuntal arrangement make the weave of the horns more swinging *en clave*.

Figure 2 shows the original melody of the first four bars, and Figure 3 shows the adjusted melody (note the change in the second trumpet part).

Rhythm section parts that relate to the

clave are now added. Note the bass "marking" the clave with a downbeat on beat 3 of the 2-side, while the piano right hand makes "clave counterpoint" with an upbeat against it. Also note how the two parts go in and out of rhythmic unison in the course of the four-bar phrase, and how they relate to the underlying clave. Figure 4 shows the adjusted melody with piano and bass parts added.

It's always dangerous to make generalizations, especially about a subject as profound as clave, but for the neophyte, when listening to and absorbing rhythmic vocabulary *en clave*, one might test a starting assumption of "3-side of clave = upbeat rhythms" (positive, active, tension); resolving to "2-side = downbeat" (negative, passive, release).

Understanding other basic patterns in Afro-Caribbean rhythmic styles, particularly the *cascara* rhythm (akin to the ride cymbal beat in swing), is also crucial for the arranger. Figure 5 shows the *cascara* pattern in the 3-2 clave direction.

Developing clave consciousness and the ability (through listening to that music) to use Afro-Caribbean musical vocabulary creatively and flexibly is an immensely rewarding skill for today's arranger and composer.

Two emblematic aspects of Shaw's improvising style, and part of what establishes him as a true musical innovator on his instrument, are his systematic use of symmetrical cycles of intervals (often based on perfect fourths and fifths but also comprising other intervals) and his staggering fluency in the permutation of modal and pentatonic note collections (scales) as a material basis for single-line improvisation. These two aspects interpenetrate and inform each other both in a theoretical sense and as protagonists in the narrative of Shaw's solo storytelling.

Musical examples derived from recordings of improvisation workshops given by Shaw and lesson notes from direct students of the master give insight into the musical mind of a true genius.

Shaw constructed a rigorous and unique musical vocabulary influenced by sources ranging from John Coltrane and his mentor Eric Dolphy to 20th century European masters such as Béla Bartók and Paul Hindemith—but with a wholly autonomous, self-fashioned conception 100 percent situated within the core (African American) jazz esthetic of his era. Figure 6 on page 78 shows examples of interval cycle exercises from Shaw's workshops and lessons notes. Figure 7 shows "skip one" and "skip two" permutations on an F# major pentatonic scale.

As a lifelong devotee of Shaw's playing and composing, it comes naturally to me to employ similar materials in my own arranging and composing. Bringing this sensibility to this project resulted in these arranging choices:

- Using Shaw's own improvised material as



a direct source in the arrangements (in soli sections and other sections of the arrangement such as the *moña* (riff) section. Figure 8 shows the *moña* from “On The New Ark,” which uses part of Shaw’s solo passage from the original.

- Devising musical material (phrases, motives, bass lines, etc.) derived from Shaw’s compositions or improvisations by the use of various transformational processes. In Figure 9, from the *moña* section of the arrangement of “Sweet Love Of Mine,” note the melodic use of perfect fourth/fifth cycles connected by whole steps, as well as in the root movement of the *montuno* (vamp).

- Composing original material for use in the arrangements that complements, via either similarity or contrast, Shaw’s own material. In Figure 10 on page 80, my melodic line for the trumpets on “Zoltan” uses both pentatonic permutation and symmetrical interval cycling à la Woody.

My aims in re-imagining this music for the *Madera Latino* ensemble are tied to the specific instrumentation of the group. *Madera Latino* is also a tribute to the impact of Shaw’s music on many of the most prominent jazz trumpeters of today, as the arrangements have been realized on the recording by an all-star trumpet ensemble.

Trumpeters who participated in the recording sessions (along with myself) included modern masters Sean Jones, Dave Douglas and Diego Urcola; new stars Michael Rodriguez and Etienne Charles; and important emerging figures Josh Evans and Philip Dizack.

Figure 6



Figure 7



Figure 8



Figure 9



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- **RODNEY HOLMES**
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- **JUSTIN FAULKNER**

Writing for an all-trumpet front line in the Latin jazz context automatically references for me the trumpet *conjuntos* found throughout the musical styles of Cuba, Puerto Rico, Colombia and Mexico, and in Afro-Caribbean music in general, regardless of location.

I've always found it important to refer to the master form of the modern *salsa* arrangement, itself directly derived from the Cuban *son-montuno* structure, in devising my arrangements in the Afro-Caribbean jazz idiom (see sidebar on page 81). Thus, incorporating aspects of the classic *son* or *salsa* arrangement such as the *montuno* (vamp) section with its accompanying *mambo* (contrasting instrumental section with layered riffs) or the *moña* (another layered riff section, shorter in length and over the *montuno*) is a typical strategy. Figure 11 on page 81 shows the *moña* for "Song Of Songs."

Writing song-specific *tumbaos* (again, riff or ostinato figures) for bass and piano in the *montuno* section and adapting other aspects of classic Afro-Caribbean musical forms helps give the arrangement direction, unity and, above all, a vibe (*sabor*) that justifies its existence.

Figure 12 is an example of the *montuno* from the arrangement of Judi Singh's "Time Is Right," a classic Woody Shaw recording.

Of all the jazz and American Songbook composers that I've done Afro-Caribbean jazz treatments for in the style explained above (others include Miles Davis, Wayne Shorter and a host of songbook composers including Leonard Bernstein, Sammy Cahn and Bronislau Kaper), Shaw's music, along with the incomparable John Coltrane, fits the most naturally and seamlessly into clave.

This is a testament to the firm Afrological basis of Shaw's visionary musical approach. (*Afrological* is a term coined by master musician and scholar George Lewis; in the sense that I use it, this refers to music that has an African or Afro-diasporic sensibility as a fundamental organizing principle, structurally, materially, esthetically, culturally, etc.)

In my opinion, Shaw's music represents an under-utilized yet valid and progressive resource ripe for the jazz musicians of today to draw upon if they seek to build new music upon firm roots. **DB**

A graduate of two of the jazz world's most distinguished institutions—Art Blakey and the Jazz Messengers and the Horace Silver Quintet—Grammy Award-winning trumpeter, composer and bandleader Brian Lynch is a vital force within both the straightahead and Latin jazz communities. A longterm member of the groups of Latin music icon Eddie Palmieri as well as jazz legend Phil Woods, Lynch has been a valued collaborator of artists as diverse as jazz masters Charles McPherson and Benny Golson, Latin greats such as Hector LaVoe and Lila Downs, and pop luminaries such as Prince. Lynch has toured the world with various ensembles reflecting the wide sweep of his music, and recorded 21 albums as a bandleader. He is Associate Professor of Studio Music and Jazz at the Frost School Of Music, University of Miami, and he conducts clinics, residencies and workshops at colleges and universities. His *Madera Latina: The Latin Side Of Woody Shaw* project will be released this spring on Hollistic MusicWorks (hollisticmusicworks.com).



The music of Woody Shaw (1944–'89) fits naturally and seamlessly into clave.

DAVID GAHR/DOWNBEAT ARCHIVES

Figure 10

Inside the Salsa Arrangement

Salsa, an often disputed and sometimes controversial term (much like the term *jazz*), for me refers to the extraordinary efflorescence of Afro-Caribbean music since the 1960s. The form of the classic *salsa* arrangement has been codified by countless ensembles and can be heard in its utmost clarity in the work of legendary figures such as Eddie Palmieri, Tito Puente and Ray Barretto. Let's take a moment and read through a typical *salsa* chart:

We start with an introduction. This can range from an extended instrumental passage to a simple vamp setting up the song. The vocalist enters at the beginning of the song proper. The section where the song is sung through might be called the *largo* (long) or the *cuerpo* (body). In the *largo*, the vocal is accompanied by the rhythm section, with the horns punctuating phrases or providing a backing cushion. At the end of the *largo*, we transition, often by a percussion break or the full band, into the first *montuno* section. This features a *coro-soneo* section (call and response between the vocal soloist and chorus); that sometimes goes into an instrumental solo—usually piano or *tres* (the Cuban three-course double-strung guitar). The first *montuno* often kicks off with a horn solo or instrumental passage substituting for the singer in the first few *soneos*.

At the end of the first *montuno* section, the classic *salsa* arrangement will go to the *mambo*. *Mambo* is a word that has a number of different meanings in Latin music, but here it will pertain to a contrasting instrumental interlude, featuring the layering of the sections of the ensemble from rhythm section to horns. The *mambo* ends in another break, taking us to the second *montuno* section that ramps up the intensity with a range of options including more *coro-soneos*, a horn or percussion solo, and culminating with a new horn riff section over the *montuno*, commonly called the *moña*. The *moña* features the same layered concept for the horns as in the *mambo*, but in a shorter span and over the *montuno*. After a few final *coro-soneos*, we go to the coda, which may be similar to the intro or consist of new material, bringing the performance to a close.

The *salsa* arrangement in its pure form is an amazing vehicle for the control of directed musical energy over a long span and the channeling of excitement into a sustained burn that's satisfying to dancers and listeners alike.

—Brian Lynch

Figure 11

Figure 12

DEVELOPING JAZZ TROMBONE TECHNIQUE

As a trombone player who has been influenced by many instrumentalists other than trombone players, I have had to work at my technique in order to successfully express my musical ideas. I hope to show you a little of my journey from trombone-centered to trombone-technique-centered to great-music-centered, yet with the use of all the necessary learned techniques.

My earliest influences were J.J. Johnson, Kai Winding and Urbie Green, followed by Bill Watrous, Carl Fontana, Slide Hampton, Frank Rosolino and others. These artists challenged me to play the trombone well, but then I became fascinated by the great innovators on other instruments, like Louis Armstrong, Charlie Parker, John Coltrane and Miles Davis. As a brass player I was fascinated with trumpet players who accomplished whatever they wanted to do on their instrument with great clarity: Clifford Brown, Lee Morgan, Freddy Hubbard, Woody Shaw, Randy Brecker and Tom Harrell. I've also been influenced by the new breed of trumpet players, from Wynton Marsalis forward, who can cross all of the genre barriers with excellence. I practice all of the things I've learned in order to be able to play more of the music I'm hearing, and play it successfully.

Before I talk about technique, let's talk about content. Every jazz musician should listen intensely to a few favorite recordings and learn them inside out. I say a few because, these days, most of us have too much great music on our playlists to really concentrate deeply on

one thing—and do it well. Every jazz musician needs to transcribe those masters who came before them to develop an authentic jazz vocabulary. There is also no better ear training than

transcription and analysis. We need to take the time to figure out what we are hearing on a recording. Then we need to analyze it to see what makes it sound the way it does so that we

Example 1: Long Tones

Continue this exercise on all these following pitches

After this and any other fatiguing exercise, loosen up with pedal tones. Go lower than you are comfortable or sound good. It is the only way to extend your useful range in either direction.

Example 2: Flexibility & Against-the-Grain Exercises

Slurred triplets, using the slur as an articulation is a must.

This was a staple in the turns used in Jack Teagarden's style of playing.

1)

Diatonic turns. This was a staple of Frank Rosolino's playing.

For that matter, it was also a staple of Clark Terry and Clifford Brown's playing too.

Practice this in other keys, F, E, D, etc.

2)

Against the grain exercises, training yourself to tune the alternate positions and use natural slurs as an articulation, just like a trumpet player's valves. Continue these ascending chromatically into your high range.

3)

Likewise, play this upper tetrachord in chromatically ascending keys. Let the air do the work.

4)

This should also be practiced ascending chromatically in different keys throughout your range.

5)



Example 3: Trills, Shakes & Vibrato

This pattern should be done in one big breath with a metronome at a slow tempo. This could be played in #4th position or in 6th position. This concept could be applied to any pair of notes that are used in a shake. Also, to practice vibrato at different speeds, you can use this same pattern for jaw/air motion on one note.

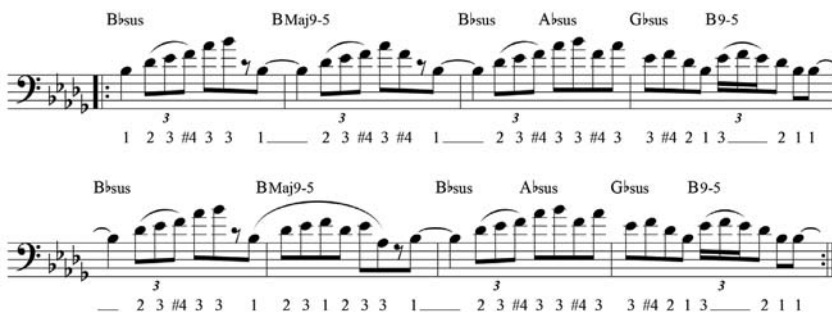


Example 4: Practical Pentatonic Exercise

This is an example of a practical minor pentatonic exercise that could be practiced in various keys, using just air for an articulation or then enhanced by the doodle tongue.



I turned the above exercise into a jazz composition. I play it with doodle tongue over the natural breaks of the trombone using available alternate positions when they are most practical. Here is an excerpt from "Hey Whaddayadoing, Hey Whatchyamacalit," by Kenny Crane



can replicate it. Finally, we should synthesize it into our own style, using it as a springboard for new approaches to improvisation.

I came by all this very naturally when I was listening over and over to my father's recording of Johnson and Winding (*The Great Kai & J.J.*) when I was 12 years old. Nobody told me to do this, but I sat down at the piano for hours with the recording on a cassette: play-rewind-play-rewind-play-rewind, until I had written the whole thing out. Then I practiced the transcriptions on my trombone, with and without the recording, until I could play and hear the material as though it was mine. I owned it.

For improvisation students first getting into transcribing, I've found that it is important for them not to pick something that is too difficult to play or to understand. In recent years I have encouraged several new-to-jazz students to write out Davis' trumpet solo from "Freddie Freeloader" on the album *Kind Of Blue*. Then we do a melodic/harmonic analysis to see what harmonic choices he made. I've had rock guitarists and classical flutists make successful baby steps in jazz vocabulary development and ear training by this practical exercise.

Something else happened in my junior high

years that changed me forever. I heard Watrous. I saw that the trombone can do a lot more as an improvising instrument if you work to maximize your range, flexibility and efficiency with alternate positions, and learn to *doodle tongue*. I became an extreme trombone technician in my late teens. Through trombone lessons with Phil Wilson, I came to believe that I could learn to do this (doodle tongue). It took an entire year to get any good at it, but then when I did, my solos were able to have 16th notes and fast triplets. All of this newly found technique was not truly valuable until it was later combined with the jazz vocabulary I had developed from transcribing the masters of other instruments as well as the trombone.

Now that I could play more than most trombone players I knew, I still needed musical depth. I bought other people's books of transcriptions, the *Charlie Parker Omnibook* and a book of John Coltrane transcriptions. I practiced them carefully using my doodle tongue, also playing on the tuba—which would have a positive effect on my trombone flexibility. The doodle technique became a vehicle for expressing authentic sounding jazz music. There was one other big influence. For a brief period in

1981, I had the opportunity to play with Slide Hampton's World of Trombones. Slide encouraged us all to play with a bigger horn to get a bigger, darker sound. It took quite a number of years for me to make the change, but I'm glad it did. I now play on a large-bore trombone like a symphony player uses, but I still use all the small horn techniques when I want to, and when I need to, in order to play the music that I'm now hearing.

It takes a lot of practice to be able to play like a trumpet or sax player on the trombone.

LONG TONES

To play the trombone well, start with a good long-tone warmup, like any classical teacher would tell you to do. I use a pattern I got from Wayne Andre, a great studio player in New York, but then I extended it to move into less comfortable ranges. Practice these with a tuner so you don't go out of tune when you change dynamics. Hold them as long as possible (15–30 seconds, depending on the range), trying to get the most efficient use of air and lip vibration. See Example 1.

SLURRED FLEXIBILITY EXERCISES

These types of exercises can be found in lots of great books like *The Remington Warm-Up Studies*, Max Schlossberg's *Daily Drills and Technical Studies for Trumpet*, Arban's *Complete Conservatory Method for Trumpet* and Charles Colin's *Lip Flexibilities*. In addition to these, I try to accurately slur every interval throughout my range in a variety of different rhythmic patterns. Perhaps this is too time-consuming to do every interval every day, so pick several per day and change up the patterns. Do not tongue. Let the diaphragm be used to accomplish everything. Example 2 shows a few slurred exercises from my book that are practical for a jazz trombone player to have the necessary diaphragmatic control to use the natural breaks of the harmonic series as an articulation.

Likewise, you want to be able to do a controlled trill. Example 3 is a time-honored way to develop a trill at variety of speeds between any pair of notes that you might want to use for a trill or a shake in your jazz playing. This same exercise is also practical for working on vibrato in the same manner to control it at different speeds. Use a metronome at a slow tempo, and play it in every range.

LEGATO PLAYING

You should play ballads with no tongue. This is helpful for accuracy of the intervals and tuning, with and without vibrato. Try to play entire long phrases (four measures or more) with continual flowing breath support as though they were just one long tone. If your

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Example 5: "All Things"

Intro

8

Chorus 1

9 Fm7 Bbm7 Eb7 AbMaj7

13 DbMaj7 D⁹ G7-9 CMaj7

17 Cm7 Fm7^{#4} Bb7 Eb7

21 AbMaj7 A⁹ D7alt GMaj7

25 Am7 D7 GMaj7

29 F^{#9} B7+5 EMaj7 C7+5

33 Fm7 Bbm7 Eb7 AbMaj7

37 DbMaj7 Dbm7 Gb7 Cm7 B⁹ C7-9

41 Bbm7 Eb7 AbMaj7 G⁹ C7-9

Song Continues

airstream, slide movements and use of alternate positions can be controlled without the tongue, adding the tongue later is just icing on the cake. Being able to play the trombone entirely with breath control is also key to some against-the-grain and doodle tonguing techniques. Try some of these ideas in Example 4 with no tongue. The natural breaks of the trombone can be a beautiful articulation in themselves. I try to make them sound like the great trumpet players I mentioned earlier, slurring with their valves. After you can do this with just your air, adding the doodle tongue can be help-

ful in having these natural breaks in the trombone be achievable at faster speeds.

The doodle (or duddle) tongue needs to be practiced by itself and then with every pattern that you would ever want to use it with. Don't be afraid to keep trying after initial failures. I can play many more notes with doodle tonguing than I can with the traditional double tonguing (*tah-kah* or the softer version of it, *doo-gah*). I can doodle tongue much faster than traditional double tonguing, and what I like best about doodle tonguing is that *I never ever get fatigued*. Doodle tonguing is also use-

ful in helping the against-the-grain/controlled rips and ascending arpeggios to come out more evenly. However, when descending, I tend to use natural lip slurs (without tongue) as there is a natural tendency to easily fall to the next lower partial, anyway. The doodle tongue helps with some patterns and not so much with other patterns. So, in a performance context, use it only as it is helpful—not all the time.

To work on your doodle tonguing, practice every note in every range, in every alternate position. Play it loud when practicing to harden up the tongue muscle. Practice ascending to your highest notes (where it won't sound good) as well as descending to your lowest pedal tones (where it also won't sound good). The muscles in the tongue will harden up with practice. It will be most useful in the middle two octaves, not too loud, after working the uncomfortable ranges and volumes.

Practice anything and everything with no tongue, and then with the doodle tongue. Practice doodle tonguing all of your modes derived from the major scale, two octaves starting on low E and going chromatically up to E-flat. Every other scale, arpeggio and favorite jazz pattern should be practiced doodled as well in all their inversions.

I especially like to practice chromatic scales with no tongue and then with the doodle tongue because they are *very* useful in bebop and modern playing. Chromatic scales won't come off well on the trombone unless they've been practiced because there should be muscle memory involved so you don't have to think about what slide position to go to to get from one note to another. Practice melodies that you love from other genres. I like to play Bach flute sonatas, cello suites and also the beautiful counterpoint melody from *Wachet Auf* (Sleepers Awake) in various keys—just to see if I can. Great melodies are great melodies, and all great music is worth adding to your jazz vocabulary.

I have compiled these and other exercises that I practice in a book called *What to Practice to Get Really Good on the Trombone*. There is also a section full of my own jazz etudes based on well known standard chord progressions. Example 5, "All Things," puts some of the against-the-grain/alternate position ideas in a musical context over common standard jazz chord progressions. You can get a copy of this book on my website (kennycrane.com). **DB**

Kenny Crane is a trombonist and educator from New York City. He was a touring member of the big bands of Maynard Ferguson, Clark Terry and Buddy Rich, and he backed up such singers as Frank Sinatra (both Sr. and Jr.), Mel Tormé, Nancy Wilson, Sammy Davis Jr., Natalie Cole, Johnny Mathis, Wayne Newton, Bobby Vinton and Manhattan Transfer. Crane has performed with Howard Johnson and Gravity Jazz Tuba Ensemble, the Mel Lewis Jazz Orchestra, Byron Stripling and Slide Hampton's World of Trombones. He is on the faculty at Portville Central School, and he has served as an adjunct professor at Houghton College, Jamestown Community College—Cattaraugus Campus and Eastman School of Music. He received his D.M.A. in jazz studies at the Eastman School of Music. Visit him online at kennycrane.com.

EARN YOUR BADGE

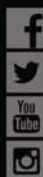


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Regardless of one's playing level, we all can take steps to improve. Finding an experienced teacher is an excellent start. Last summer, I scheduled a few lessons with my colleague and friend Dr. Mark Ponzo, professor of trumpet at Northern Illinois University. His instructions were incredibly beneficial and humbling at times. We discussed tried-and-true methods that I have never stopped using, and incorporated new methods (recently published, or new to me) into my daily and weekly routines.

Most professional players and teachers will be familiar with just about everything listed in the various areas of study covered in this article. There are many other methods that work as well. Emphasis on the importance of continuing study of these fundamental skills for college and high school students is the goal.

A metronome and tuner must be used during every practice session. Tunable is an inexpensive tuning and metronome app that is available for smartphones and iPads.

ORGANIZED WARMUP/ PRACTICE TIME

High school and college students have more practice opportunities now than they will have in the future. Time management is the key. Keeping track of what you work on daily and weekly is very important. Using a practice grid/checklist works very well.

Make a warmup grid that lists everything you hope to get through. I actually use two. One is a long, comprehensive warmup as my sched-

ule permits; the other is a short, "on the road" warmup that prepares me for the task at hand.

Secondly, make a daily practice grid that contains a list of everything you are working on. This list will inevitably change; it will be edited frequently as different repertoire is required. Check off what you have worked on at each session, and don't move on to the next column until everything has been completed. It may actually take two or three practice sessions to get through everything you need to do. This prevents us from avoiding or missing a key practice area.

WARMUP MATERIALS

Of course, long tones and lip slurs are absolutely necessary. Two longstanding methods are an excellent way to start daily practice sessions: Max Schlossberg's *Daily Drills and Technical Studies for Trumpet* (studies 1–32) and *Vincent Cichowicz Long Tone Studies* (recently compiled by Mark Dulin and Michael Cichowicz). Many teachers will provide a student with their own exercises. However, they only work if they are used.

TECHNICAL EXERCISES

It is impossible to achieve technical mastery on any instrument without the use of a metronome. Note values must be even and exact in order for the valves, tongue and airstream to work together efficiently. One of the best methods for this is Herbert L. Clarke's *Technical Studies for the Cornet* and *Characteristic Studies for the Cornet*. If you want to work on bebop tonguing, try his Technical Study #2 with a legato tonguing style. *Give It The Third Finger* by Mark Hendricks addresses dealing with technical problems involving an obvious deficiency for many of us.

Contemporary Jazz Studies by David Berger uses jazz harmony and a plethora of accidentals. Although *Triad Pairs for Jazz* by Gary Campbell primarily targets jazz improvisation, it is an excellent method to work on technique.

SCALE EXERCISES

Most teachers present their students with comprehensive scale sheets. In addition, Arban's *Complete Conservatory Method for Trumpet* has excellent scale exercises. The scale section does a thorough job covering major (including modes), minor and chromatic scales. Jamey Aebersold's *Jazz Syllabus* includes altered scales based on modes of the major scale and melodic minor scale, as well as diminished scales.

AIRFLOW, RANGE & PHRASING

Being able to play lip slurs/trills with ease goes hand in hand with getting air through the instrument efficiently. Control of the breath also plays a very important role in intonation. *Tuning Drone Melodies* by Brad Edwards used with the Tunable app works very well. Arban and Schlossberg offer many exercises to aid in flexibility, along with *Advanced Lip Flexibilities* by Dr. Charles Colin. *Vincent Cichowicz Flow Studies (Volumes One and Two)* and *The Bordogni Vocalises (Volumes One, Two and Three)* transcribed for trumpet by David Schwartz with a piano accompaniment CD assist breath control and phrasing. Phil Snedecor published two useful books, *Lyrical Etudes for Trumpet* and *Low Etudes for Trumpet*. *Top Tones for the Trumpeter* by W.M. Smith assists in the upper register. For jazz phrasing, check out the Artist Transcriptions series published by Hal Leonard. The best way to learn the phrasing of jazz giants of the past and present is to transcribe their solos yourself.

ETUDES & SOLOS

Some of the best sources for trumpet etudes and solos include Arban (mentioned earlier), *34 Studies* by Brandt, *36 Etudes Transcendantes* by Theo Charlier, *40 Studies* by Wurm and *Practical Studies for the Trumpet* by E.F.

Goldman. Preparing multiple-movement major works assigned by your private teacher and performing them in public is an outstanding learning experience.

For jazz rhythms, articulation, sight-reading and improvisation, go to *The Power of Two* by Doug Beach and George Schutack, *Jazz Trumpet Duets* by Greg Fishman and *Jazz Duets for Trumpet* by Bob Martin. An old standby but a very good book is *Dance Band Reading and Interpretation* by Alan Raph. Also worth checking out are *Contemporary Jazz/Rock Rhythms* by David Chesky and *Contemporary*

Jazz Studies by David Berger (mentioned earlier). For more on improvisation and jazz trumpet instruction, go to jazzbooks.com.

This is far from a complete list of practice materials, but is an excellent start for any young trumpeter. The key is to improve in all areas and not leave anything behind. **DB**

Kirk Garrison is a jazz trumpeter, composer and arranger based in the Chicago area. He is an adjunct professor at Concordia University and Elmhurst College and currently tours with actor/musician Gary Sinise and the Lt. Dan Band. Endorsement and sponsorship is provided by Schilke Trumpets and Denis Wick Mouthpieces & Mutes/Dansr USA. For clinician information, contact Garrison via email: kirkgarrison@att.net.

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Steve Davis



STEVE DAVIS' TROMBONE SOLO ON 'SAY WHEN'

Trombonist Steve Davis is truly steeped in the tradition, with a style and vocabulary derived primarily from trombone forefathers J.J. Johnson and Curtis Fuller. His 2015 album, *Say When* (Smoke Sessions), is an ode to Johnson. Here is his solo from the title cut.

Davis' solos are always very melodic. One of the ways he achieves this is by emphasizing the upper extensions of the chords. In bar 4, he highlights the 13th and flat ninth of the F7, resolving to the ninth of the B \flat maj7. Going into bar 13, he starts his phrase on the 11th of the Emin7(b5), and again lands on the 11th of the Dmin7 in the next measure. In measure 23 he starts with the ninth of the Amin7. He also uses the sharp 11th frequently, as in measures 11, 13, 14, 26, 41, and 44.

Another melodic device he uses is sequencing. The phrase in bars 13–14 consists of two melodically identical figures, the second being a whole step below the first. Three other examples of sequencing in this solo are straight from J.J.'s vocabulary: measures 27–28 and 35–36 feature the use of diatonic triads, with intermittent chromatic approaches, while measures 43–44 contain diatonic thirds with the chromatic approaches.

Harmonically, Davis mostly plays inside the changes, but there are a few examples where he alters the harmony, usually on dominant chords. We mentioned earlier that in bar 4 he plays an F13(b9). He also does this in measures

52–53, delaying the resolution to the B \flat maj7 until beat 3 of bar 53. In bar 22, beats 1 and 2 are from F mixolydian, but in beats 3 and 4 he shifts the harmony up a minor third (A \flat bebop scale). Then there are the many examples of the sharp 11ths on dominant and major-seventh chords that were previously mentioned.

Davis creates rhythmic interest in his solos in several ways. He often anticipates the next chord, as in bars 12, 13, 17, 18, 22, 29 and 56 (all on the “and” of 4). Rhythmic motives also play a big part in his solos. In measures 22–34, Davis begins with an eighth note tied to a quarter note, then the repeated pattern of eighth-eighth tied to quarter, eighth-eighth tied to quarter, etc. This same motive comes back in measures 55–57. In bars 39–40 he plays three upbeats followed by four downbeats, and in bars 61–62 he plays two upbeats followed by seven downbeats.

No J.J. Johnson-esque solo would be complete without a little bit of the blues thrown in. Bars 32–33 contain a nice blues lick that provides a contrast to all the bebop that precedes it. The only place the blues really comes back in the solo is in measures 65–66, and it feels like the perfect end to a really well constructed solo.

DB

Dr. Andrew Hamilton is prominent on the jazz scene in Miami. He is an accomplished performer, composer, arranger and educator. Visit him online at andrewhamiltonmusic.com.

0:39 Bbmaj37 Dmin7 G7(99) Cmin7 F7 A

5 Bbmaj37 Amin7 D7

9 Gmaj37 Cmin7 F7 Bbmaj37

13 Emin7(95) A7(99) Dmin7 G7 Gmin7 C7

17 Cmin7 F7 Dmin7(95) G7(99) Cmin7 F7

21 Bbmaj37 Amin7 D7

25 Gmaj37 Cmin7 F7 Bbmaj37

29 Emin7(95) A7(99) Dmin7 G7 Cmin7 A F7

33 Bbmaj37 Dmin7(95) G7(99) Cmin7 F7

37 Bbmaj37 Amin7 D7

41 Gmaj37 Cmin7 F7 Bbmaj37

45 Emin7(95) A7(99) Dmin7 G7 Gmin7 C7

49 Cmin7 F7 Dmin7(95) G7(99) Cmin7 F7

53 Bbmaj37 Amin7 D7

57 Gmaj37 Cmin7 F7 A Bbmaj37

61 Emin7(95) A7(99) A Dmin7 G7 Cmin7 F7

65 Bbmaj37 Dmin7(95) G7(99)



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S.E. Shires Destino III

Robust Trumpet Sound Suitable for Severinsen

The Destino III B-flat trumpet from S.E. Shires is a well-built horn that plays with an incredibly solid sound for lead and solo work. After playing it for several hours, it became clear to me why Doc Severinsen has declared it to be “absolutely the best trumpet I have played on in my entire life.”

The Destino III is a lacquered-brass horn with a standard .459-inch (medium large) bore and a C-shape tuning slide. The leadpipe, stamped “DOC” and made of lightweight yellow brass, felt good when leaning on it in the upper register. Apparently this leadpipe has been re-engineered over the years, with Severinsen’s specific recommendations inspiring the design.

The bracing, water keys, valve trim and finger rings are similar to that of the Bach Stradivarius, which I normally play. The trumpet immediately felt natural in my hands before I even buzzed my first note. The custom engraving on the one-piece, hand-hammered bell makes a remarkable impression the moment the instrument comes out of its case. The valves are tight, as they are on any new horn, but have a firm yet flowing action under the fingers.

I began my tonal observations with a short but intense practice session that included riffs at all volume levels in all registers. I quickly noticed that my mouthpiece did not leave a gap within the leadpipe receiver as it does on my other horns. I promptly ripped a small piece of thick bond paper and placed it between the mouthpiece shaft and the receiver. This made all the difference in the world. The horn sprang to life. The slotting of each note was impeccable, and the intonation was spot-on in all registers. The instrument is rather light and consequently responds well to phrases played in the upper register, both softly and loudly. The resistance is consistent with what a medium-large-bore horn should deliver, and the projection is ideal for either lead or section playing in a big band, show band or rock band. This model responds well to your chops, and notes speak clearly. I noticed it would also be a solid choice for solo

and small group work, especially in situations where the trumpeter must make his presence known above the accompaniment. These qualities also make this instrument an ideal choice for many types of recording sessions.

During a gig with a big band, the horn played with style and vibrance. I received wonderful comments about its resilient sound. It blended nicely while playing in the section and cut like a laser through the band when blowing lead. I played a portion of a ballad out in front of the band, and the confidence that this model inspires allowed me a significant creative license to develop a moving solo line. Whether holding a note and letting the vibrato ease in to match the interjections of the rhythm section, or playing fluid runs of 16th-note triplets, this horn delivered a golden trumpet sound that filled the room. I also had an un-miked scream solo at the end of an old Ray Charles number, and I appreciated the flexibility afforded to notes that are well above the staff. Lip-trills and glissandos flowed like wine due to the premium balance of resistance and pressure. I did not find myself wanting to switch back to my old horn at all during the performance.

The Destino III is a high-quality show horn for the working professional. It was packed nicely in an oversized box and shipped with a new Pro Pac case by Protec. The case has two shoulder straps, so it can be worn like a backpack, and has the S.E. Shires logo decoratively displayed on the front. With a side pocket for accessories and mutes and a plush, fur-lined interior, the Severinsen model is well protected.

I would definitely recommend this instrument to the serious trumpeter player and working professional. The durable construction means the horn will last for decades with proper care. Notes speak and are in tune at all volumes and in all registers. The Destino III offers the flexibility of playing section, lead or solo with a hearty presence full of robust trumpet sound.

—Dave Ruth

Ordering info: seshires.com



Yamaha Xeno 20th Anniversary Trombone

Flawless Mechanics, Solid Sound

Opening the case of the Yamaha 20th Anniversary Xeno 882O20TH trombone gave me a bit of a flashback. As a high school student in the 1980s, my first F-attachment horn was a brand new Yamaha YSL-643-II. So even though I hadn't played a Yamaha since the mid-'90s, I had some preconceptions about Yamaha trombones before I even saw this new Xeno model. Those old impressions didn't last long.

As soon as I opened the case, the quality of this horn's clear epoxy lacquer finish became obvious. After some warmups, I noticed the flawless build of the handslide and the unique F-attachment mechanism. The valve lever is smooth with a short throw, and the F attachment blows more freely than most traditional rotor horns I've played. The open wrap and slightly oversized valve contribute to this.

Some cosmetic changes distinguish this horn as an anniversary edition. The small "20th Anniversary" engraving on the bell and the

red metal flake sparkle against the cream-colored background of the counterweight are two obvious ones. Another is the F-attachment thumb lever—the only mechanical design difference I could find from previous 882O models. The old adjustable metal thumb paddle has been replaced with a molded plastic piece (also cream-colored) that is comfortable but not adjustable. This lever has a little jewel on its bottom end that matches the metal flake look of the counterweight. The rubber stopper on the bottom crook of the landslide is also this same cream color, creating a unique and subtle color scheme across the horn. Not as subtle are the cream-colored side panels of the otherwise standard plastic case, which give it a retro look.

The horn's .547-inch bore and the 8 2/3-inch bell put it in the same category as the Conn 88H or Bach 42 (which have the same bore size but 8.5-inch bells). The bell is one-piece and is hand-hammered. When I played this horn, it never occurred to me that the bell

was ever so slightly larger than usual. What I did notice was how dark the sound was—really dark. It was dark in all registers and at all volumes. I couldn't get an edge to the sound no matter how hard I pushed it. Some might see this as being inflexible, but I see this as consistent—strikingly so. The thick yellow bell and the overall heft of construction must account for this. Close comparison to a new Conn 88HO reveals many design similarities, even down to the shape of the F attachment.

While this 20th anniversary version is very similar to recent Xeno 882O models, it has much less in common with my old horn from the '80s. The finish is awesome, the mechanics are flawless and the sound is solid. If my first Yamaha trombone was built like this, I might still be playing it. Yamaha trombones have come a long way, so some anniversary "bling" on the Xeno 882O20TH is well deserved.

—Ryan R. Miller

Ordering info: usa.yamaha.com

Yamaha Xeno 25th Anniversary Trumpet

Full-Bodied Tone, Free-Blowing Feel

Since the first Xeno model trumpet was produced by Yamaha in 1990, countless professional and aspiring trumpet players have come to appreciate the instrument's signature full-bodied tone and open, free-blowing feel. To celebrate the horn's 25th anniversary, Yamaha has released the YTR-8335IIRS25TH, a limited edition trumpet that combines vintage touches with a distinctly modern design.

Based on the YTR-8335IIRS Xeno B-flat trumpet, the 25th Anniversary Xeno model features a .459-inch medium-large bore with a reverse leadpipe and yellow-brass bell—a combination that allows for maximum versatility and ease of play. However, the anniversary edition boasts a number of exclusive design features that set this horn apart from previous models. For one, the bell is lighter and features a wider flare, giving the horn slightly more warmth and projection. And on the tuning slide, a double brace has been added to help stabilize the air column, providing steady resistance through every register and an even tone at all volume levels. Another distinguishing feature is the barrel-shaped bell ferrule, which adds a



considerable richness and heft to the trumpet's sound.

The Xeno 25th anniversary model offers a few head-turning visual flairs as well. The trumpet comes with gold-plated piston buttons, valve caps and valve-bottom caps, features that, aside from adding visual appeal, also enhance the brilliance of the trumpet's timbre. It also comes standard with a gold-plated version of the TR16C4 mouthpiece, and the bell is engraved with a tasteful limited-edition "25th Anniversary" etching.

I play-tested the Xeno 25th anniversary trumpet in a small jazz combo consisting of a guitarist, bassist, pianist, drummer and vocalist. In these kinds of settings, in which extreme dynamic control is required, trumpeters often encounter problems playing quietly in the upper register, and horns sometimes feel like they are choking off in the higher par-

tials. Not so with the Xeno 25th anniversary model. The trumpet remained free-blowing and responsive all the way up into the high-C/D range, providing just the right amount of air resistance against my embouchure. Playing below the staff was equally comfortable.

Xeno trumpets are known for their ability to stand up to high-pressure wailing, and the 25th anniversary model is no different. I tried ripping a few high notes during rehearsal and found that the intervals slotted evenly and comfortably into place, my tone remaining round, voice-like and centered as I ascended to the limit of my range.

The Yamaha Xeno YTR-8335IIRS25TH is a solid choice for professionals seeking a durable, visually appealing trumpet for serious jazz, classical or studio applications. The horn comes with a dapper sky-blue backpack-style case.

—Brian Zimmerman

Ordering info: usa.yamaha.com

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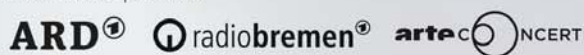
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DPA 4099

Quality-Built Instrument Mic for Brass

DPA (formerly Brüel & Kjær) is known for detailed sound and superior build quality in all of its offerings, from an array of studio recording microphones to the company's popular miniature live sound series. The DPA 4099 Instrument Microphone for Brass is no different.

The 4099 has the crystalline sound I would expect from DPA. Its features include a compact design, very high SPL (sound pressure level) and a supercardioid polar pattern. In other words, this small condenser microphone can easily reproduce the dynamic range of an instrument such as trumpet and reject sounds from other instruments to improve isolation of the main sound source. The 4099 was able to duplicate all of the overtones and harmonics in the trumpet cleanly and faithfully. The clear sound of the 4099 was not particularly warm, but it did accept equalization very well. I would not characterize DPA microphones as bright condensers, nor would I call the high end silky-smooth—simply an accurate and true reproduction of the sound source.

The 4099 I play-tested included a detach-

able cable, the DAD4099 adapter (for high SPL) and a STC4099 trumpet clip. There are a variety of clips available for all instruments, from piano and acoustic bass to violin and guitar. All of these accessories are well constructed, and the use of a detachable cable provides the ability to connect to many different wireless systems, which is very useful in live performance situations.

The DPA 4099 series of microphones is pricier than products it's in competition with for similar applications. Most of the accessories for the 4099 are also costlier. The other clip-on style microphones for live use from Shure and Audio-Technica are about half the price of a new DPA 4099 system.



I have long been a fan of DPA microphones for all styles of music and all manners of recording. The company has created some of the most coveted small diaphragm condenser microphones for studio and stage. The DPA 4099 has a superb build quality and yields excellent sound reproduction, but at a high price point.

—Brian Schwab

Ordering info: dpamicrophones.com



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TAKE THE LEAD



Student Aaron Lehrian (piano) rehearses with members of the University of North Florida Jazz Ensemble 1, with director J.B. Scott (trumpet) and visiting pianist/composer Michael Abene (second from right) conducting the band, in preparation for a January concert.

UNF Program Spotlights Originality, Versatility

FEW STUDENTS ENROLLED IN A JAZZ studies program—or *any* degree program—give much thought to the employment status of their teachers. But for J.B. Scott, jazz area coordinator at the University of North Florida's Music Flagship Program in Jacksonville, the fact that eight members of the program's faculty are tenured professors is a point of honor.

"That really sets our program apart," said Scott. "We're one of the few schools with that many tenured jazz faculty members."

The commitment to having tenured faculty, which was established by program founder Rich Matteson, creates a continuity and stability that make a huge difference to both the teaching staff and the students, according to drum professor Danny Gottlieb.

An early collaborator with guitarist Pat Metheny and a sideman on hundreds of recordings, Gottlieb was attracted to the school due to several factors: One was the opportunity to play in a rhythm section with bassist Dennis Marks and pianist Lynne Arriale, and another was the directive from the school's administration that faculty members should continue to perform as often as possible.

"That's a real inspiration for the students," said Gottlieb. "We lead by example."

"We start every year's Great American Jazz Series with a faculty performance of all original music," said Scott. "It's important to the students to see and hear the faculty writing and arranging new music every year. I know that inspires the students because they talk about it all the time."

When Matteson arrived at UNF in 1986 as the Ira M. Koger Eminent Scholar Chair in American Music, he brought with him a focus on large ensembles and improvisation.

"Those fundamentals are still really important for students," said Scott. "If you master everything that's involved in playing music in a big band, there are a lot of places you can go. Being able to handle section work, solo well, blend with other instruments—all those elements of ensemble work—sets you up well to play things besides jazz."

The UNF jazz program has three large ensembles, including one directed by Scott that has received numerous DownBeat Student Music Awards. A half-dozen small combos are directed by Arriale and cover a range of styles.

About 60 students are enrolled in the bachelor of music in jazz studies program, and the school has just launched a graduate degree program.

Both Scott and Gottlieb believe that the program's student-teacher ratio is one of its key strengths, exemplified by Scott's five trumpet students and Gottlieb's insistence on keeping his drum studio small and hyper-focused.

"We really focus on training working musicians," said Scott. While students are enrolled in the Music Flagship Program, he feels that no one goes unnoticed: "Kids don't get lost here. People know your name."

"One of the best things for me is getting to pop in and hear kids doing things," added Gottlieb. "We all do that, and if having heavy faculty members inspires the students, hearing what *they* do is what inspires us." —James Hale



Beantown Merger: Berklee and The Boston Conservatory have agreed to merge, creating a comprehensive training ground for music, dance, theater and related professions. The combined institution, located in Boston's Back Bay and Fenway neighborhoods, will be known as Berklee, with the conservatory becoming The Boston Conservatory at Berklee. The merger will allow both schools to leverage their individual strengths in co-designing new courses and hybrid programs. The two institutions have begun the necessary regulatory and accreditation review and approval process, expected to be completed by early summer. berklee.edu

Tech Pilots: The Chicago-based People's Music School is collaborating with five technology startups—Soundslice, JoyTunes, Music Prodigy, Sonation and Youtopia—to pilot innovative music instruction. Teachers at the tuition-free school will utilize the pilots to decrease time spent learning basic notes and rhythms, improve preparation for major performances and instill discipline by tracking and motivating students' practice time. peoplesmusicschool.org

Free at NEC: New England Conservatory's Jazz Studies and Contemporary Improvisation Departments will present more than 50 free concerts and master classes during the spring season. Highlights include 1 p.m. master classes with bassist/composer Dave Holland, NEC's visiting artist-in-residence, on April 19 and April 21 in Pierce Hall. Also on April 21, at 7:30 p.m., the NEC Jazz Orchestra directed by Ken Schaphorst will perform two of Kenny Wheeler's rarely heard extended works, *Windmill Tilter* (1969) and *The Sweet Time Suite* (1991); Holland, who played on both recordings, will be featured on bass. necmusic.edu/jazz

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Roy Hargrove

During his quarter-century career, trumpeter Roy Hargrove, 46, a singular stylist from the jump, has morphed gracefully from young lion to esteemed veteran and bandleader whose units have incubated a few dozen of the most consequential jazz musicians on the scene today. This was his fourth Blindfold Test.

Terell Stafford

"Yes, I Can, No You Can't" (*BrotherLee Love: Celebrating Lee Morgan*, Capri, 2015) Stafford, trumpet; Tim Warfield, tenor saxophone; Bruce Barth, piano; Peter Washington, bass; Daryl Hall, drums.

It's nostalgic. That's a Lee Morgan tune. Tim Warfield on tenor. It's the way he does the vibrato at the very end of the phrase. He plays very melodic; he sings. [trumpet solo] The blues is in there. He's got a feeling. The execution is great; it's not easy to play Lee's melodies. Could be Nicholas [Payton]. Could be Sean Jones ... no, it's not. Kermit Ruffins? No. He's probably from New Orleans, though. Oh, it's Terell. He's dealing. I heard another cut from the same record on the radio and I remember the sonic quality. 4½ stars.

Alex Sipiagin

"From Reality And Back" (*From Reality And Back*, 5Passion, 2013) Sipiagin, trumpet; Seamus Blake, tenor saxophone; Gonzalo Rubalcaba, piano; Dave Holland, bass; Antonio Sanchez, drums.

It reminds me of the music I hear younger guys playing now. It's not Wallace [Roney]. It's not Terence [Blanchard]. Terence does this dip that always identifies him—like Kenny Dorham and Clark Terry used to do. Good trumpet player, with a nice dark sound. The tune is pretty, with its own harmonic identity. You can't tell what's going on with the meter. It's a new, original sound; I haven't heard anything like that before. It reminds me a bit of Wayne Shorter's writing style. 5 stars.

Rodriguez Brothers

"Fragment" (*Impromptu*, Criss Cross Jazz, 2014) Michael Rodriguez, trumpet; Robert Rodriguez, piano; Carlos Henriquez, bass; Ludwig Afonso, drums; Samuel Torres, percussion.

One of the Latin cats. Which one? I have not a clue. With the odd meters, it reminds me of the music of Yosvany Terry and some of the Cuban guys. Now they're swinging, though—with a Latin thing in it. The trumpet player has great rhythm, great time. Beautiful sound, too, on the harmony. It's not easy to do that on the mute, which can cause all kinds of intonation disasters. 4 stars.

Eddie Henderson

"Dreams" (*Collective Portrait*, Smoke Sessions, 2015) Henderson, flugelhorn; Gary Bartz, alto saxophone; George Cables, Fender Rhodes piano; Doug Weiss, bass; Carl Allen, drums.

Eddie Henderson. I picked him up when he did this [sings ascending phrase], plus his sound is so broad and even—such a beautiful legato way of playing. You can hear Clifford Brown and Lee [Morgan] and all these guys I've listened to in his sound. 5 stars.

Tom Harrell

"Family" (*Colors Of A Dream*, High Note, 2013) Harrell, trumpet; Esperanza Spalding, Ugonna Okegwo, bass.

Bass and trumpet, duet. Two basses. That's cool. I wouldn't think to do that. I'd probably get two drummers. I like the melody. This player has a great sound, warm and pretty, mature and original. 4 stars. [after] Tom usually plays more stuff. He's one of my favorite players. I should know him by his sound.



Wadada Leo Smith

"Crossing Sirat" (*Spiritual Dimensions*, Cuneiform, 2009) Smith, trumpet; Vijay Iyer, piano, synthesizer; John Lindberg, bass; Pheeroan AkLaff, Don Moye, drums.

The piano player's going for it. Out there in the ozone. Pluto. It's in the vein of Don Cherry, but not him. Is the pianist Don Pullen? It's not Geri [Allen]. Jason Moran? [Robert] Glasper? No, he wouldn't do it; he's on another thing right now. I like the trumpet's expressiveness and boldness. The sound is majestic. 5 stars. It reminds me of Lester Bowie.

Gerald Wilson Orchestra

"Detroit" (*Detroit*, Mack Avenue, 2009) Kamasi Washington, tenor sax solo; Sean Jones, flugelhorn solo.

It's beautiful. I can't place the tenor player, but it's someone very mature. The trumpet player is playing a lot of harmony. Beautiful sound, great range, still playing very soft but in the higher register—real pretty. Definitely older players. The arrangement is incredible. 5 stars.

Nate Wooley

"Skain's Domain" (*Dance To The Early Music*, Clean Feed, 2015) Wooley, trumpet; Josh Sinton, bass clarinet; Matt Moran, vibraphone; Eivind Opsvik, bass; Harris Eisenstadt, drums.

Enrico Rava does that—multiphonics. Wynton? [hums the refrain] That's Wynton's thing. No, it's definitely not Wynton. One of his disciples? Could be Marlon Jordan. I'm hearing quarter tones. He's definitely getting sounds out of the trumpet that you wouldn't normally hear people do. Jonathan Finlayson? 5 stars, for the creativity and great technique—the dexterity.

Ambrose Akinmusire

"J.E. Nilmah—Ecclesiastes 6:10" (*The Imagined Savior Is Far Easier To Paint*, Blue Note, 2014) Akinmusire, trumpet; Sam Harris, piano; Charles Altura, guitar; Harish Raghavan, bass; Justin Brown, drums.

Ambrose. I can pick out his sound. It's very original. He makes me think about the future, where the music's heading. 5 stars. I first heard him when he was 12 or 13 in Oakland, where they had a matinee show; him and Jon Finlayson were like a team, and they'd sit in with us. Even then he had his own thing, a voice.

Mack Avenue SuperBand (2015)

"Sudden Impact" (*Live From The 2015 Detroit Jazz Festival*, Mack Avenue, 2015) Freddie Hendrix, trumpet; Tia Fuller, alto saxophone; Kirk Whalum, tenor saxophone; Gary Burton, vibraphone; Christian Sands, piano; Christian McBride, bass; Carl Allen, drums.

Freddie Hendrix. I know how he plays eighth notes, the way he swings. You don't hear many cats play time like that anymore. Freddie has been playing his ass off lately. 4 stars.

DB

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



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