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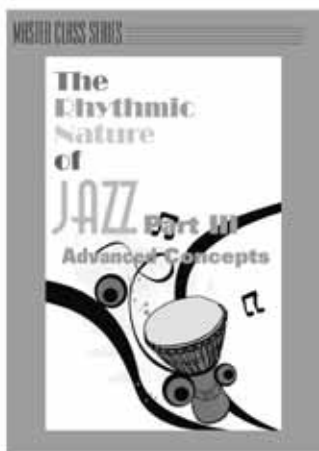


Jacques Schwarz-Bart

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#### OFFICES

102 N. Haven Road, Elmhurst, IL 60126-2970  
630-941-2030 / Fax: 630-941-3210  
<http://downbeat.com>  
[editor@downbeat.com](mailto:editor@downbeat.com)

#### CUSTOMER SERVICE

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#### CONTRIBUTORS

##### Senior Contributors:

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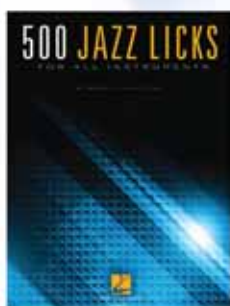
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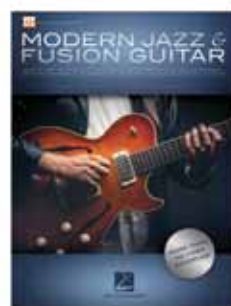


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# FEBRUARY 2017

# Inside

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*No Barriers. No Limits.  
No Fear.*

BY PHILLIP LUTZ

Pianist/keyboardist Robert Glasper and producer/multi-instrumentalist Terrace Martin are fearless artists who respect tradition but don't want to be confined by it. Both worked on Kendrick Lamar's 2015 hip-hop masterpiece *To Pimp A Butterfly*, and both have been busy recording new material with Herbie Hancock.



Cover photo of Terrace Martin (left) and Robert Glasper shot by Jimmy & Dena Katz in Brooklyn on Oct. 13.

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## First Take

BY BRIAN ZIMMERMAN



Robert Glasper (left) and Terrace Martin

JIMMY & DENA KATZ

## Building Bridges

**A FANTASTIC JAZZ SONG CAN DISSOLVE BORDERS. GROOVE IS** universal, and even bitter enemies can tap their feet to the same beat. In today's political climate—which has carved entire populations into needless factions, turning mere debate into rancorous discord—we should all try to make room for a little more harmony.

These days, jazz is more porous than ever, inclusive of different ideas (and of people from different backgrounds) in ways that our politics, unfortunately, is not. At a time when Democrats and Republicans are drawing lines in the sand, musical genres are perpetually being blurred. Of course, this is hardly a new phenomenon. The jazz greats of yore have always known better. "There are simply two kinds of music," Duke Ellington wrote in the *Music Journal* back in 1962, "good music and the other kind."

Robert Glasper and Terrace Martin, the artists on our cover, make the good kind of music. They've also dissolved some borders of their own. Reared on the rhythms of hip-hop and r&b yet steeped in the ways of jazz, they play a style of music that defies easy categorization. (But if you feel that *jazz* is a huge umbrella term, a river with endless tributaries, then, well, let's call this music jazz.)

Purists may scoff at any divestiture of old ways, but it's clear that the movement of jazz/hip-hop hybridity has already altered the landscape. "The cats who believe in barriers, we don't see them around," says Martin in his profile on page 30.

There are plenty of reasons to believe that only good can come from this expansion of jazz territory. Glasper and Martin—along with Kamasi Washington and his ilk—have opened doors to a new generation of listeners, many of whom are coming to jazz for the first time. What these fans are embracing is a music devoid of classification—a music of plurality and acceptance. What they're responding to is good music.

In his profile on page 26, Glasper tells *DownBeat* that the only constant in jazz is change: "The tradition is, it keeps moving," he says. "It reflects the time we're in."

There is profound truth in that statement, but it doesn't quite capture the *whole* truth. For as much as jazz is a mirror, reflecting the present moment, it's also a crystal ball, revealing what is yet to come. In 2017, we see jazz musicians building bridges. We don't see any walls.

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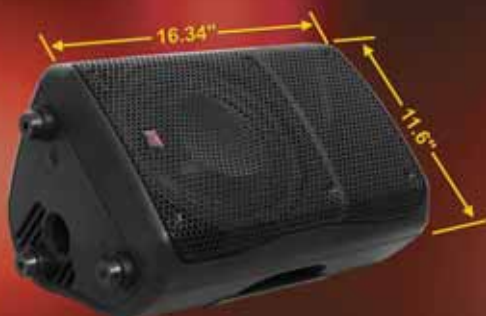


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## Chords & Discords

### Fuller & Richer

Your January issue—with its articles on Thelonious Monk, Dizzy Gillespie, Ella Fitzgerald and Buddy Rich—sparkled.

I especially liked Ted Panken's article on Gillespie, "The Greatest Linguist in Jazz," in which he points out how arrangers like Gil Fuller helped Dizzy expand on his harmonic and rhythmic ideas in order to create a finished composition.

The day after I read the article, I attended a concert by the Oberlin Jazz Ensemble, directed by Dennis Reynolds. The last piece on the program was Gillespie's 1946 composition "Things To Come," arranged by Gil Fuller.

In addition to the historical pieces in your



January issue, I also enjoyed the Jazz On Campus article "Jazz Essential at Oberlin." It may not be essential, but it has made life richer for me.

SID COMINGS  
OBERLIN, OHIO

### Offer for Keppard?

I'm writing in regard to John McDonough's essay in your January issue about the first jazz record, recorded by the Original Dixieland Jazz Band in 1917.

It would have been interesting to hear his opinion of the widely circulated story that trumpeter Freddie Keppard was offered the chance to make the "real" first jazz record two years earlier, but turned it down.

A Wikipedia article on Keppard describes the numerous differing versions of this story, none of which can be called definitively authentic. However, it is still fascinating to think that a black man could have been the real pioneer.

GARY MILLIKEN  
LOS GATOS, CALIFORNIA

should trade him to CNN, where he belongs (for a wastebasket and a player to be named later).

RON WEBSTER  
THE VILLAGES, FLORIDA

### Duopoly Disparity

I am all about the current jazz releases. But based on your reviews nowadays, it's hard to tell what's good. There's such a disparity lately.

For instance, in The Hot Box in your December issue, pianist Kris Davis' album *Duopoly* received a 1½-star rating (from John McDonough) and a 4½-star rating (from John Corbett). It's hard to feel confident with that.

That said, it's difficult to find a jazz radio station that plays your reviewed albums on a consistent basis. So here's my suggestion: Have all of the reviewed albums available on your website, and allow subscribers to stream any of them for one time only. The key is that it would be a *one-time* listen. Just a thought.

KEVIN MCINTOSH  
STERLING HEIGHTS, MICHIGAN



Delfeayo Marsalis

### Apolitical Correctness

I'm writing in regard to (critic?) John McDonough's Hot Box review of Delfeayo Marsalis & The Uptown Jazz Orchestra's album *Make America Great Again!* in your December issue.

If McDonough can't keep his political opinions out of your (my) magazine, perhaps you

### Remembering Wellins

Sadly, Bobby Wellins—one of the giants on the British and European jazz scenes—died Oct. 27. He was 80. He was a great saxophonist with a very original sound. (I played with him.)

Some of his best work was on the Stan Tracey Quartet's album *Jazz Suite Inspired By Dylan Thomas's "Under Milk Wood,"* which is still selling over here. You can get further info on his website, [bobbywellins.co.uk](http://bobbywellins.co.uk).

PAUL BURNETT-KIRK  
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Have a Chord or Discord? Email us at [editor@downbeat.com](mailto:editor@downbeat.com) or find us on Facebook & Twitter.





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# Beat

## Deelee Dubé Wins Sarah Vaughan Jazz Vocal Competition

**D**eelee Dubé's performance during the final round of the 2016 Sarah Vaughan International Jazz Vocal Competition in Newark, New Jersey, on Nov. 20 illustrated this truism: As a vocalist increasingly sings with integrity, the potential for her performance to touch audiences—and judges—rises exponentially.

Dubé, a house singer at Ronnie Scott's Jazz Club in London, adeptly mined the distinctive qualities of her voice to prevail as the winner of the fifth annual competition at New Jersey Performing Arts Center, holding off a challenge from the talented Sinne Eeg of Copenhagen, Denmark.

In accepting the award, Dubé expressed her gratitude for the opportunity to participate in a tradition that, for five years, has helped extend the legacy of Newark-born vocalist Sarah Vaughan.

"To be here honoring Sarah Vaughan has been not only a dream come true for me because I love Sarah Vaughan, but it is also an honor to be celebrating her voice, her music and her legacy," said Dubé, whose deft final-round performance pointed to the power inherent in connecting with one's own unique voice. "I feel so blessed."

Exploring the cello tones that informed her bottom register (and were reminiscent of The Divine One herself), Dubé created an immediacy that resonated with audience members and judges. Her grand prize package consisted of a Concord Records recording contract and \$5,000 cash.

Eeg, who had delighted the crowd in the first round with a superb blend of technique, self-assurance and professionalism but faltered in her final-round performance, was declared the first runner-up and took home \$1,500 cash. Detroit native Lauren Scales was second runner-up, receiving \$500.

Falling short of the final three were Lauren Bush, a Canadian-born London transplant whose self-released debut album received a 3.5-star rating in *DownBeat*'s January issue, and Los Angeles-based Teira Lockhart, a finalist in the 2013 Sarah Vaughan competition.

The event, emceed by Rhonda Hamilton—an announcer and producer with Newark jazz radio station WBGO—capped off the weeklong TD James Moody Jazz Festival, named for another Newark progeny, saxophonist James Moody.

The judges were bassist and Moody festival advisor Christian McBride, singers Dianne Reeves and Sheila Jordan, WBGO host Sheila E. Anderson and jazz journalist Mark Ruffin.



Deelee Dubé performs during the Sarah Vaughan International Jazz Vocal Competition in Newark, New Jersey, on Nov. 20.

COURTESY NJPAC/TD JAMES MOODY FEST

In her welcoming remarks, Hamilton told the audience that the competition's role in boosting the careers of promising jazz singers fit with Newark's history as a jazz hotbed. During the first half of the 20th century, the city was home to dozens of nightclubs and live theaters that featured the biggest names in jazz. Besides Vaughan and Moody, it also is the birthplace of saxophonist Wayne Shorter.

"Jazz will always be a big part of the cultural life of Newark," Hamilton told the NJPAC audience. "And certainly, Sarah Vaughan's legacy is part of the cultural fabric of our country."

Dubé's climb to the top was no easy feat. She survived three preliminary rounds and an online vote, with 7,500 votes cast at *IndabaMusic.com* for contestants from 23 countries. Her guiding star was a dedication to her own artistic truths.

"In terms of my performance, my delivery, I just gave my heart and soul and spirit, and that was it," Dubé said. "I just let myself be, as I always do. Even when I am at Ronnie Scott's. That's what I do. That's been my life."

—Michael Barris

## Riffs ›



**Final Bar:** Victor Bailey, a bassist who performed on numerous recording sessions and who was formerly a member of Weather Report, died on Nov. 11 at age 56 due to complications from a nerve disorder. Bailey's albums as a leader included *Low Blow* (1999), *That's Right* (2001) and the 2005 disc *Electric*, which he recorded with guitarist Larry Coryell and drummer Lenny White. Guitarist Bobby Broom sent DownBeat a note that read, in part, "[Victor] was a dear, old friend of mine and as I'm sure you know, one of the most prolific electric bassists to emerge in the 1980s."

**ASCAP Salutes Schneider:** The American Society of Composers, Authors and Publishers (ASCAP) honored jazz composer, arranger and bandleader Maria Schneider with its Life in Music Award in the Jazz category during its 2016 ASCAP Foundation Honors ceremony on Dec. 14 in New York City. According to foundation president Paul Williams, Schneider was recognized for her inventive works in classical and jazz and for her steadfast advocacy of creators' rights. The annual ceremony also recognized Morten Lauridsen in the Concert category for his distinguished contributions to the American choral tradition. [ascapfoundation.org](http://ascapfoundation.org)

**Abercrombie's Next Step:** Guitarist John Abercrombie, who has recorded as a leader for the ECM label since 1974, returns with a second album by his quartet featuring pianist Marc Copland and longtime rhythm partners Drew Gress on bass and Joey Baron on drums. The album, titled *Up And Coming*, will be released on ECM on Jan. 13. The group's previous album, *39 Steps*, was released in 2013 to wide critical acclaim. [ecmrecords.com](http://ecmrecords.com)

**Seeking Donations:** The Jazz Bakery, a non-profit organization, has launched a new Performance Fund as progress continues toward building the organization's new home (designed by architect Frank Gehry) in Culver City, California. The Jazz Bakery currently presents shows in multiple venues.

[jazzbakery.org](http://jazzbakery.org)

## Caught ›



COURTESY DOMINICAN REPUBLIC JAZZ FESTIVAL

# Rocking Grooves, Roaring Oceans at DR Jazz Fest

**THE 20TH EDITION OF THE DOMINICAN** Republic Jazz Festival, which has expanded its programming in recent years, broke new ground by presenting a five-night program entirely composed of bands led by women. But DRJF sustained tradition by holding the two final nights of concerts—on Nov. 11 and Nov. 12—on the beach of Cabarete, the north coast resort community that has been its base of operations since 1993.

As always, the tented bandstand sat perhaps 50 feet from the Atlantic Ocean, which backdropped the sound of all six bands, not least Enerolisa y El Grupo de Salve de Mata Los Indios, a folkloric Afrodominican band from the Villa Mella suburb of Santo Domingo that is led by matriarch Enerolisa Núñez, who opened the Nov. 11 concert. She delivered the chants with oceanic power, standing still as three of her daughters and two of her sons created a maelstrom of vocals and tambourine that complemented the three percussionists—one, a son who created a flurry of rhythm-timbres on the guira.

Next up was the Berklee Global Jazz Ambassadors (elite students culled from Berklee's Global Jazz Institute), comprising U.S. tenor saxophonist Gregory Groover, Venezuelan pianist Santiago Bosch, Palestinian cellist Nasim Alatrash, U.S. bassist Jared Henderson and U.S. drummer Nate Winn. The remainder consisted of songs by drum master and Berklee professor Terri Lyne Carrington, who guided the flow throughout with creative, percolating grooves of her own invention. Soprano saxophonist Lihi Haruvi, pianist Caili O'Doherty and cellist Marta Roma, all BGJI alumnae, came on stage for effective solos on the final number.

Next was a new band led by Berklee alumna (and frequent Carrington colleague) Esperanza Spalding, who coalesced her skills as a songwriter, composer and badass bassist in the company of keyboardist Geoffrey Keezer, trumpeter Jason Palmer, tenor saxophonist Dan Blake and drummer Justin Tyson. Spalding delivered her songs with deep soul and high craft, while simultaneously playing spot-on bass lines with impeccable time and resonant tone.

The wind was blowing onshore and the rain poured buckets on Nov. 12, which opened with a lovely set by Chilean alto saxophonist-composer Patricia Zarate, who set to music a cohort of original lyrics—rendered by the exquisite Colombian singer Lucia Pulido—that referred to her family's traumatic experiences during the 1973-'90 military dictatorship of General Augusto Pinochet.

There followed a quartet, putatively headed by Carrington, with Geri Allen on piano and keyboard, Linda Oh on bass and Ingrid Jensen on trumpet, who each contributed a tune. The set opened with Jensen's Miles Davis-esque "Higher Grounds," which she opened with a deliberate solo of brisk flurries, deep colors and stepwise phrases. As Carrington's partners generated unending melody, her own intensity counterstated their gentleness.

It had been raining hard, but the weather cleared around midnight for the final performer, merengue típico accordionist La India Canela (Lidia María Hernández López), from a village near Santiago, whose set reveled in merengue's African roots, but, more importantly, gave the thousand or so attendees an opportunity to dance the rest of the night away alongside the roaring ocean.

—Ted Panken



# Shimabukuro Takes Ukes to Extremes

## HAWAIIAN UKULELE VIRTUOSO JAKE

Shimabukuro was charting new waters before he landed on the Atlantic Coast for a show at Boston's Wilbur Theater. His latest album, *Nashville Sessions*, features nothing like the covers that have brought him worldwide acclaim.

But Shimabukuro's incendiary approach to his instrument—with blazing lines, impossibly fast strumming, blur-fingered tremolos, fretboard tapping, surprisingly piquant chord voicings and more—is amply showcased on the new album. Bassist Nolan Verner and Nashville studio drummer Evan Hutchings hold down the groove while Shimabukuro mingles acoustic uke tones with sometimes soaring distortion-laced solos.

A veteran performer, Shimabukuro knows his audience well. At the Wilbur, he and Verner offered a 21-song set interspersing new material with a generous portion of cover songs. Consumed by the music, Shimabukuro danced as he played, never muffing a note.

A few hours before showtime, he spoke with *DownBeat* about his musical adventures.

***Nashville Sessions* is your first album to feature entirely original material.**

Yeah, and I'm really happy with this one. I was a lot more experimental and pushed myself using different techniques and sounds. I also used more studio techniques, which I had shied away from before because I am more of a live performer. There were no edits on any of the songs. We overdubbed to the live takes and that's what helps it maintain the live energy.

**The tunes all began as jams. Can you describe the creative approach?**

For the song "6/8," for instance, Nolan started with the bass line that begins the song and then I came up with a melody. We had "A" and "B" sections, but that was it.

We played those and kept vamping. I stepped on my stomp box and started soloing and it became a seven-minute jam.

**Did you create many tracks and then pick the best ones?**

We had 13 or 14 tracks and picked 11. The opening one, "Hemiola Blues," is actually the last half of another song. We listened to the track and kept saying, "The back half feels good, but the front half doesn't cut it." We were going to leave it off but then decided that we liked the second half so much that we used just that part. That's why it's so short.

**These new songs feature a lot of odd meters.**

The first time I went beyond the standard meters was when I wrote the tune "Trapped."



I had played in 5/4 and in 7 before, but I don't know why I started writing that way for this album.

**You built your reputation playing cover tunes, so this album represents a new direction.**

I started playing covers and still love doing them. In my show tonight I'll do new stuff, as well as "Bohemian Rhapsody" and "While My Guitar Gently Weeps." There is a sense of comfort and security in doing covers because people already love them. When I play the first few notes of "Hallelujah" or "Over The Rainbow," you can hear the people go, "Ahh." You've got them just by playing the melodies because they mean so much to everyone. It's a little scarier to play your own music.

**Are you surprised that you've developed such a great career playing instrumental music?**

I always knew I'd be playing the ukulele because it's my passion, but I didn't dream that I'd be a touring musician playing concerts. I started out playing coffee shops, and figured I'd play in small clubs and hotel lobbies.

A lot of musicians in Hawaii play in hotel lobbies, and I thought it would be cool to do that. But most of the time they wanted ukulele players that sing; only a few could make it playing solo uke.

**Have you ever considered making an album**

**with singers?**

I love working with vocalists, but at the same time, I'm such a fan of the ukulele that I like to hear it as the main voice. Having a ukulele accompany a singer has been done a million times, and I know that sound works.

**When did you start playing pyrotechnical things on the uke?**

I guess [it was when] I was in high school. I'm a bit of an extremist. If I was to decide to be a vegetarian, I'd probably go all-vegan. I always loved music and practicing, but I approached things with an extreme mentality. If I was practicing a strum, I'd see how fast I could do it and then how slowly. It's the same with dynamics: how loud can I make the ukulele, and then how soft. Taking things to extremes was how I approached my playing to make it more interesting. I like surprising people.

**What's next for you?**

We hope to get back into the studio in February. The new record will be more along the lines of *Nashville Sessions*, but I want to take things even further. I won't over-practice. I want a balance between preparedness and spontaneity. I'll also use different-sounding ukuleles. Last time I used tenor, baritone and soprano. Next time I'll include a concert uke as well as six- and eight-string ukuleles. There are so many possibilities.

—Mark Small

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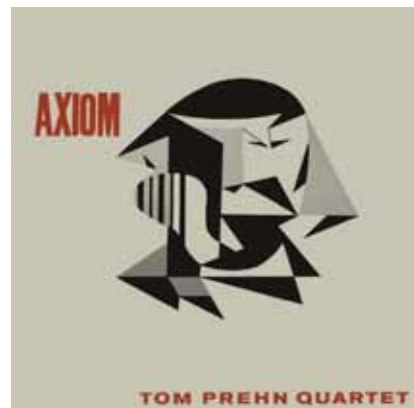
## Good for Circulation

The vinyl renaissance shows no sign of stopping, but it has gone through calibration in recent years. Price gouging for run-of-the-mill albums has caused a warranted backlash, but at its best the vinyl reissue market is gracing us with music that's long been out of circulation or at least hard to find.

The brilliant 1972 album *Dogon A.D.* by St. Louis alto saxophonist **Julius Hemphill** has experienced a turbulent history since dropping on the tiny Mbari Records—getting reissued countless times since the Freedom label took control of it in 1975. A couple of years ago, the remarkable Chicago indie label International Phonograph gave it a stellar CD reissue. But even that wasn't true to the original. Still, the inclusion of the 20-minute masterpiece "The Hard Blues," cut at the same sessions but only issued in 1975 on *Coon Bid'ness* (Arista), is a blessing. Now the label has luxuriously brought the music to four sides of vinyl for maximum power, so that every cello slash by Abdul Wadud, every fraught backbeat by Phillip Wilson, every sob and whinny by trumpeter Baikida Carroll, and every shuddering sigh and bluesy cry by the leader cuts like a razor and punches like a cannonball. The cost and treatment are extravagant, but this music is worthy of it.

An album can't be the holy grail of one or another genre if nobody knows about it, but the Danish pianist **Tom Prehn** still deserves credit for offering one of the most gripping and original iterations of free-jazz—anywhere—with his first album, *Axiom*. It was cut in October 1963 for Sonet Records, but by the time the test pressings were approved and production impending, the leader pulled the plug. With only two finished copies in circulation, it is one of the rarest free-jazz albums in the world. In 2015 the Chicago label Corbett vs. Dempsey released the album on CD, but it's finally available in the format for which it was first destined, thanks to Rune Grammofofon. Collectively, over the course of two sidelong pieces, the group—with tenor saxophonist Frits Krogh, bassist Poul Ehlers and drummer Finn Slumstrup—experiments with unmetered time, shifting harmony and a muscular, surging abstraction of hard-bop phraseology, all accomplished with a preternatural rapport.

By the time German bassist **Peter Kowald** got around to making his stunning debut album for FMP—a searing, bruising quintet session with alto saxophonist Peter Van de Locht, trombonists Paul Rutherford



and Günter Christmann and drummer Paul Lovens—he'd already been making serious contributions to the advent of European free music as a key sideman to Peter Brötzmann, Pierre Favre and Manfred Schoof, among others. Remarkably, that eponymous 1972 debut has never been reissued on CD, so its reappearance on vinyl, thanks to Cien Fuegos, is especially welcome. Kowald carves out his own space here, so while there are passages of wildly hurtling energy, with the garrulous blowing of his twin trombonists leading the charge, there are also dazzling sections of repose, such as a lengthy dialogue of scratching, scraping and bowing in the middle of "Platte Talloere" that's nothing short of astonishing.

When the Norwegian quintet known as **Masqualero** dropped its 1983 self-titled debut for the new Odin imprint—a label launched by the Norwegian Jazz Federation to support up-and-coming talent—the band went by the Arild Andersen-Jon Christensen Quintet, after its two most senior, best-known members. But it was young trumpeter Nils Petter Molvaer and saxophonist Tore Brunborg who secured the record deal that introduced the group to the world, heralding a new generation of Nordic jazz that continues to exert a profound influence (the keyboardist here was another key figure, Jon Balke). The group took its name from the Wayne Shorter tune that opens the album, and the influence of Miles Davis hangs heavy over the performances, but the band was already finding ways to reconcile that impulse with distinctly Scandinavian characteristics, like the generous use of space. The group would go on to make three albums for ECM, and this sounds of a piece with those. It's great that the Grappa label has pressed this overlooked work onto fresh wax. **DB**



Dave Holland performs at the Tampere Jazz Happening in Tampere, Finland, Nov. 6.

MARIT KYÖHÄRJÄ

## Bold in the Cold: Finland's Tampere Jazz Happening Makes an Impact

**IN THE CITY NAME-ASSOCIATION GAME, TAMPERE, FINLAND,** may not register boldly among the general public, but it is a vital name in the context of jazz festival culture. The Tampere Jazz Happening is indeed a “happening,” a mighty gathering of jazz talent whose 35th anniversary edition solidly validated its stellar reputation. As reputation has it, the festival—smartly organized by Artistic Director Juha Matti Kauppinen—addresses broad issues in jazz and its multiple incarnations and attitudes, always with a sense of adventure folded in among more mainstream elements.

An account of this festival's pinnacles should include the one-two punch of sets by rhythmically charged saxophonists Steve Lehman and Marius Neset, Donny McCaslin's group (riding high in the aftermath of appearing on David Bowie's masterful swan song album, *Blackstar*), young Swedish guitarist Susanna Risberg and Håkon Kornstad's disarmingly moving tenor sax-meets-opera project, “Tenor Battle” (with an encore piece by a Finnish national hero, composer Jean Sibelius).

Finnish jazz, a healthy and historically rich field, was given a sturdy showcase in the program as well, represented by the Jazzlitton Juhlaokestreri group, featuring saxophonists Mikko Innanen and Esa Pietilä and guitarist Teemu Viinikainen. Also representing Finland was trumpeter Verner Pohjola, who performed music by his father, bassist Pekka Pohjola, who died eight years ago.

Among the more experimental items on the festival agenda was French keyboardist, composer and conceptualist Eve Risser, who offered up a set of challenging and self-defining musical sensibilities with her White Desert Orchestra. The unorthodox “little big band”-style tentet—including bassoon, a Buick-sized bass sax and prepared piano—adeptly navigated her alternately intense ensemble structures and impressionistic soundscapes.

A best-for-last proposition was in place with the program's official closer, Aziza, a new band led by bassist Dave Holland featuring Lionel Loueke on guitar, Chris Potter on saxophones and Eric Harland on drums. The group (named for an African term meaning the god of inspiration) proposed a fascinating middle ground in the realm of groove/art music. Creative musical geometry was a recurring theme here, but balladry had its place in the ebb-and-flow. A new force to reckon with on the jazz scene, this group's invigorating encounter in Tampere embodied what makes it special, and ripe with future potential.

In all, the “bold in the cold” phenom that is the Tampere Jazz Happening remains a festival and a city for discerning jazz lovers to keep on the radar.

—Josef Woodard

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# Jazz at the Limits: Avant Artists Convene at Edgefest

**THE 20TH EDITION OF EDGEFEST IN ANN** Arbor, Michigan, took place Oct. 26–29 and fulfilled all its promises. It showcased some of the most forward-looking artists in jazz and improvised music, and the constant stream of stellar performances kept the audience engaged and enthralled throughout the four-day festival.

The second day started in a bittersweet fashion with a remembrance of the late pianist Connie Crothers, who passed away Aug. 13. The organizers had originally booked TranceFormation, a trio featuring the pianist with vocalist Andrea Wolper and bass player Ken Filiano.

For this tribute, Wolper and Filiano invited multi-reed player Vinny Golia and drummer Michael T.A. Thompson to join them. Before the set actually started, Wolper made a poignant statement—overcome with emotions at one point—about her beloved cohort and friend.

The first minutes of their fully improvised act showed that their celebration of Crothers' life would not be mournful. The musicians threw themselves into a maelstrom of notes, best illustrated by Golia's flurries on the soprano. The lead voice alternated between members, and the state of flux gave the music new direction; the group also broke down in duos or trios as they saw fit.

Wolper alternated between wordless vocals and lyrics delivered in psalm-like fashion, occasionally ending her phrases with a sigh. Golia, an equal opportunity woodwind player, kept switching between flute, baritone saxophone, bass clarinet and clarinet to match the constantly evolving tone of the musical environment.

Filiano's nimble bass work featured effects and bowing techniques that, at times, lent his playing a vocal quality. In that regard, he was a perfect foil for Wolper. Thompson also provided valuable support; he often acted more like an auxiliary percussionist than a drummer, privileging colors and accents over rhythms.

Together, the four musicians came to a poetic and ethereal conclusion, a most proper ending to a heartfelt performance. As an ultimate homage to their departed peer, they shouted, "Thank you, Connie!" over the applause.

The piano trio is a quintessential jazz format and pianists such as Satoko Fujii, Myra Melford and Vijay Iyer have written music for this configuration with the goal of expand-



ing its possibilities. Among those also pushing boundaries is pianist Kris Davis, who presented her daring trio comprising bassist John Hébert and drummer Tom Rainey on the third evening.

This adventurous trio quickly set the mood with "Twice Escaped," an older piece that the pianist has been keen to revisit with her various projects. She provided violent thrusts and staggering blows through repeated attacks. In such an environment, it would have been easy for Rainey to get carried away. Instead, he showed the necessary restraint and hovered above the drum kit with agile movements.

Whether plucking or bowing, Hébert could add some tension or be as blunt and hard as the leader. They followed with "Active Membranes," which opened with a thunderous and threatening movement before Hébert gave the music a minimalist orientation and Davis probed her lines as if in a trance.

In recent times, Davis has been infatuated with John Zorn's *Bagatelles*. That night, the trio tackled "Bagatelle No. 59," a fast-paced and intricate composition that also included flashes of the jazz tradition.

They concluded with "Fragment," another multifaceted Davis original that drew to a sudden and unexpected close. The trio performed each composition as an eventful journey, starting at one point and ending at another. The fact that Hébert's and Rainey's eyes seldom strayed from the charts laid in front of them illustrated the demands of Davis' music and arrangements.

—Alain Drouot

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# Mose Allison Dies at 89

## NEA JAZZ MASTER MOSE JOHN ALLISON

Jr., a distinguished pianist, inspired lyricist and communicative singer, died of natural causes in Hilton Head, South Carolina, on Nov. 15, four days after his 89th birthday.

Allison's most enduring contribution will be his wry, sardonic songs that entered 20th century pop vernacular through interpretations by such artists and bands as The Who ("Young Man Blues"), John Mayall and Eric Clapton ("Parchman Farm"), Bonnie Raitt ("Everybody's Crying Mercy," also covered by Elvis Costello and Karrin Allyson), Leon Russell ("I'm Smashed") and Van Morrison (the CD *Tell Me Something, The Songs Of Mose Allison*).

The lyrics are informed, his biographer, Patti Jones, wrote in *One Man's Blues: The Life and Times of Mose Allison*, by "the folklore, characters, life and aphorisms" of rural Tippo, Mississippi, where he grew up. Allison sang them with minimum vibrato in a pure, laconic voice drenched in blues connotations. He accompanied and signified upon his stories with graceful piano lines that were evocative of what he called "the neo-New Orleans classic jazz style" and were influenced by the likes of pianists Nat "King" Cole, Erroll Garner and Al Haig, as well as saxophonist Lester Young and trumpeter/vocalist Louis Armstrong.

In 1956, Allison moved north to New York City from Louisiana, where he had arrived in 1950 after two matriculations at the University of Mississippi interrupted by an Army stint. After a year of on the Gulf Coast, he enrolled at Louisiana State University, where he earned a bachelor's degree in English and philosophy in 1952. Once settled in New York, he appeared as a sideman with Al Cohn, Zoot Sims, Bob Brookmeyer, Stan Getz, Gerry Mulligan and Chet Baker while developing his songcraft and establishing his solo career.

In 1957, Allison signed with Prestige, for which he recorded the influential LPs *Back Country Suite*, *Mose Allison Sings*, *Young Man Mose* and *Seventh Son*. Between 1959 and 1961, he recorded three albums for Columbia, then moved to Atlantic, his label until 1976. In 1982, Allison cut *Middle Class White Boy* for Elektra/Musician; in 1987, he signed with Blue Note, for which he recorded *My Backyard* and *The Earth Wants You*.

The consequential impact of Allison's early albums is evident in the detailed testimonies that Jones elicited from his acolytes.

"I never heard anyone as cool as [Allison]," Raitt said, recalling her impressions as a California teenager. "He seemed to be the epitome of everything I wanted to get into. He had this laid-back style. His music was bluesy, and he was singing about social issues that were

important to me."

"All I ever wanted to do was play," Allison remarked to his biographer. "I was always more concerned with staying busy and earning the respect of my peers than making a lot of money. I'm quite fortunate that I've been able to make a good living doing what I want to do."

Survivors include Audre Allison, his wife of 65 years, three daughters, a son and two grandchildren.


—Ted Panken




Mose Allison



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Yotam Silberstein's new album is titled *The Village*.

EMRA ISLEK

## YOTAM SILBERSTEIN

### *Burning Brightly*

Since moving to New York in 2005 to attend The New School, where he studied with esteemed six-string vets Vic Juris, Peter Bernstein, Adam Rogers and Jonathan Kreisberg, Israeli guitarist Yotam Silberstein has made quite a mark on the Big Apple scene.

He has impressed fans and critics alike with his prodigious facility in the service of jazz elders Monty Alexander, James Moody, Jimmy Heath and Paquito D'Rivera, as well as his contemporaries Brian Charette, Spike Wilner and Antonio Hart.

On his fifth album as a leader, *The Village* (Jazz & People), the Tel Aviv native is joined by pianist and former teacher Aaron Goldberg, bassist Reuben Rogers and drummer Gregory Hutchinson on an eclectic program that runs the gamut from delicate ballads ("October," "Nocturno") to uptempo burners ("The Village," his paean to Greenwich Village based on the changes to the jazz standard "It's Alright With Me").

The program also contains Brazilian-flavored fare (the baião "Parabens"), along with renditions of tunes by Argentine pianist Carlos Aguirre ("Milonga Gris"), Brazilian mandolinist Jacob do Bandolim ("O Voo Da Mosca") and jazz pianist Lennie Tristano ("Lennie-Bird," his contrafact on "How High

the Moon").

He dedicates the flamenco-flavored "Albayzin" to the late guitarist Paco de Lucía and nonchalantly blows through a torrent of shifting chords on the aptly named "Changes," his answer to John Coltrane's "Giant Steps."

Despite Silberstein's deep, solid foundation in jazz—he was a Thelonious Monk Competition finalist in 2005—he made a conscious effort to stretch into other musical territories on his new release: "On this album, I was able to bring together all my different influences, including music from the Middle East, Brazil, Spain, Portugal, Argentina, Uruguay and, of course, jazz and blues, into a unique, coherent voice."

The first music that Silberstein thoroughly immersed himself in back in Tel Aviv was jazz. "I was really lucky because I had a great teacher in high school named Amit Golan," he recalled. "He was a pianist who came back from New York after graduating from the first class of The New School, along with Peter Bernstein, Brad Mehldau, Larry Goldings and all those guys. He became a very important figure in my life and for a lot of other Israeli musicians. This guy was an encyclopedia of jazz, especially music from the '50s and '60s. So the first week that I got together with him,

he gave me a cassette tape, which had Grant Green on one side and Kenny Burrell and Wes Montgomery on the other side. And he just said, 'Check it out. Start transcribing and we'll take it from there.' So that was a great entry point for me."

By age 21, Silberstein had won the coveted Israeli Jazz Player of the Year honor, which led to his excellent debut album, 2003's *The Arrival*, and subsequent tours of Europe and the Middle East. He arrived in New York at age 25 on the heels of impressing the Thelonious Monk Competition judges with his clean-toned, fleet-fingered burn.

His sophomore release, 2009's *Next Page* (Posi-Tone), garnered much critical acclaim, and he followed it up with two outings on the JLP label, 2010's *Resonance* and 2011's *Brasil*, the latter featuring special guests D'Rivera (clarinet), Toninho Horta (acoustic guitar), Claudio Roditi (trumpet) and Roy Hargrove (flugelhorn). And Silberstein burns brightly alongside colleagues Goldberg, Rogers and Hutchinson on *The Village*, his most fully realized recording to date.

"We've been playing together for almost 10 years," Silberstein said of his gifted sidemen, "so it's not a pickup band. It feels like a band to me, almost like a family." —Bill Milkowski



## AL McLEAN

### *Emphasis on Aesthetics*

Saxophonist Al McLean might be the only jazz musician in Montreal to sit in on all three jam sessions in town, every single week. He's at Upstairs on Mondays, Diese Onze on Tuesdays and Grumpy's on Wednesdays, and he's there not only to play; McLean is known around the city as the go-to saxophone restoration expert, particularly for vintage horns.

McLean, a professor at McGill University's Schulich School of Music, recently celebrated the release of *Frontiers* (Cellar Live), his second recording with veteran Los Angeles-based saxophonist-composer Azar Lawrence, which pays tribute music and spirit of John Coltrane.

"He is the primary reason I got into music, and the saxophone," said McLean of Coltrane's profound influence. "I decided that would be my mission, to get close to making listeners feel some of the way I feel while listening to Coltrane. There's something so visceral about his music. And that's how I feel about Azar's music. It's shocking, the depth of it."

McLean, who grew up in Esquimalt, a suburb of Victoria, British Columbia, arrived in Montreal in 1995 to attend McGill's music school, where he went on to earn bachelor's and master's degrees in jazz performance. Within two years, he was getting hired for gigs around town, subbing in various groups and playing in pianist Vic Vogel's big band. McLean worked on cruise ships for a period of five years, sailing between Vancouver and Alaska, Singapore and Hong Kong. He also spent several years working as a vehicle inspector, while gigging three nights a week at the Queen Elizabeth Hotel and attending as many jam sessions as he could.

But over time, the demands of his day job and busy performance schedule left McLean feeling burned out, and the saxophonist took a year off to begin learning how to repair instruments. "I had two C-melody saxophones hanging around—novelty horns, not something peo-

ple want," he recalled. "I got my airplane model building supplies out, rebuilt them and started becoming proficient at it."

McLean now has musicians from all over the world shipping him their saxophones for repair, but he focuses on local professionals' instruments. His restoration practice led him to Montreal photographer and filmmaker Randy Cole (co-producer of both McLean-Lawrence albums), who was selling vintage horns at the time. Cole suggested creating mini-documentaries portraying McLean playing these restored vintage instruments, and so began their collaboration on *Jazz, Period*—a series of short films.

"We started sourcing vintage saxophones and churning out beautiful restorations of rare, hard-to-come-by instruments," McLean said.

McLean met Lawrence (who succeeded John Coltrane in McCoy Tyner's group) while sharing the stage at a Lenox Lounge jam session in Harlem. The two stayed in contact, later playing a weekend at Upstairs in Montreal, followed by the recording of *Conduit* (2015). *Frontiers*, the second Lawrence-McLean collaboration, is rooted in mid- to late-1960s classics. The album spans medium-tempo minor-key modal tunes—Coltrane's classic "Lonnie's Lament" and Lawrence's "Mystic Journey"—as well as two Thelonious Monk ballads, McLean's "Get Up" and Freddie Hubbard's "Up Jumped Spring."

"Playing with Azar really kicks my ass," McLean reflected, "because he has so much energy. There's so much meaning in his playing. I think to myself, 'Wow, what do I play after that?' It's a cross between finding my own voice and being completely dumfounded."

McLean has an appreciation for vintage craftsmanship. "I drive a 1959 Pontiac. These old things have a certain character that you don't see anymore," he mused. "It's the same with the horns I restore. They're all hand-made. They're works of art."

—Sharonne Cohen



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Pianist Emmet Cohen recorded his latest album with iconic drummer Jimmy Cobb.



## EMMET COHEN

### *Student of History*

When Emmet Cohen isn't on the road with vocalist Kurt Elling, drummer Herlin Riley or bassist Christian McBride's "Special Trio" with guitarist Mark Whitfield, the 26-year-old pianist is a ubiquitous presence around Manhattan. Consider the Harlem resident's itinerary during the first weeks of fall: uptown, a string of Tuesday midnight sets on Hammond B-3 at Smoke; midtown, a week of late-night deconstructions of Fats Waller repertoire at Dizzy's Club Coca-Cola with his working trio (bassist Russell Hall, drummer Kyle Poole); downtown, a night at Mezzrow with his Italian "Trinity" trio (Giuseppe Venezia, bass; Elio Coppola, drums—represented on the 2013 date *Infinity* [Skidoo]) that revealed his kaleidoscopic sense of musical narrative.

At Mezzrow, Cohen started with a nod to the late Cedar Walton, reharmonizing an opening cadenza on "That Old Feeling," a Walton favorite, then settling into a medium swing groove infused with Walton-esque voicings. Cohen interpolated "Over The Rainbow" and "Surrey With The Fringe On Top" as he constructed an ascending arc, exploring a different idea with each chorus. An orchestral decrescendo refracted Wayne Shorter's harmonic language, transitioning gradually into Walton's "Hindsight."

Cohen squeezed the aria-like Neapolitan standard "Nun è Peccato" for all available emotional juice. "It's All Right With Me," on the other hand, was a master class in the seamless application of stylistic juxtaposition—he followed another abstract intro with a bravura stride passage, shifted into bebop gear and jump-cut briskly between rhythms.

"I'm developing a concept, as are many people I play with, that tries to encompass the entire spectrum of jazz history," Cohen said the following afternoon. "I've been exploring every pianist who has meant something to the history of jazz. I look for new ways to tackle their material and try

to capture their spirit, without necessarily playing exactly what they played."

Cohen dates his embrace of this direction to 2012, when he attended Manhattan School of Music, following three years at University of Miami. That he was already a highly proficient practitioner of post-Bud Powell piano language is evident on his 2011 debut, *In The Element* (Bada Beep Music), with bassist Joe Sanders and drummer Rodney Green, and on *Questioned Answer* (Hollistic MusicWorks), a probing 2012 date co-led with Lynch that is anything but postmodern. Once ensconced in New York, though, Cohen slipped into after-hours rotations at Smalls and, consequentially, at Dizzy's, where vocalist Michael Mwenso was curating across-the-timeline-oriented programs with stars-to-be like Jonathan Batiste.

"Michael booked people who he thought the people playing the main set should hear," Cohen recalled. "One week, Russell and I played after Herlin Riley, who joined us later for the jam session. Thanks to Michael's foresight and vision, that relationship developed naturally. I met Mulgrew Miller and Monty Alexander that way."

Cohen tamps down experimental imperatives on the new release *Masters Legacy Series, Volume 1, Featuring Jimmy Cobb* (Cellar Live). He contributes arrangements of landmarks of Cobb's discography ("Two Bass Hit," "On The Trail," "When I Fall In Love," "Hard Times"), and responds to the 88-year-old drum icon's signature ride cymbal beat and efficient fills with improvisations that impart the sound of now.

For *Volume 2*, Cohen intends to recruit nonagenarian Jimmy Heath, with whom he interacted in 2013 in the Dizzy Gillespie Big Band. "The [goal] is to bring out the best of whoever I'm sharing the moment with," Cohen said. "If I'm relaxed and listen first, I can make decisions based on all the information I've experienced."

—Ted Panken



Vocalist Ellen Andersson's new album is titled *I'll Be Seeing You*.



SATU KNAPE

## ELLEN ANDERSSON

### Leaving Spaces

In the lobby of Stockholm's Grand Central Scandic Hotel, singer Ellen Andersson, 25, sits with her guitarist and main collaborator, Anton Forsberg. Their youthful faces suggest a new spirit in jazz, one that reminds that age isn't everything—especially when it comes to standards.

On her excellent new album, *I'll Be Seeing You* (Prophone/Swedish Jazz), Andersson interprets rare gems like the title song but also "Everything I Love" and "Gloomy Sunday" (a tune strongly associated with Billie Holiday). Her depth charges of vocalese as well as lyrical phrasing may cause listeners to rethink how standards, post-Diana Krall, can be sung. And her interaction with the band is a major part of it.

The other members of her quartet are bassist Hannes Jonsson and drummer Sebastian Brydnyak, and the special guests sitting in on the recording sessions were Swedish trumpeter Peter Asplund and Danish saxophonist Oilly Wallace.

Andersson's career path was set at a tender age. "I was introduced to jazz by my father," she says. "There were a lot of records at home. I was struck by the swing, and I felt instantly that [becoming a singer] was something that I would like to do. That goes way back, to maybe when I was 6. The voice has always been natural to me, and I've always felt it was really natural to hum; I never really wanted to play an instrument."

There was a period, between high school and college, when Andersson started to develop her voice in the context of ensemble playing and working with others. That constituted the bulk of her musical training.

Andersson says that the members of her band clicked right from the start: "Someone

from the group got a gig at a Christmas fair or something. We were going to play some Christmas jazz outside. Somehow, we instantly felt like we knew each other musically; we produced the sounds that we all really liked. And from there, it just went on. That was in 2013. ... We wanted to have a quartet with a guitar player and not a piano player because it would leave a lot of space. And it's somewhat different from what a lot of vocalists do. There tends to be a piano player all the time; whereas with a guitarist, that leaves more space in the group that makes for a bigger responsibility for everyone."

Regarding his collaborations with Andersson, Forsberg says, "Ellen provides a lot of the energy and the ideas, which I could never think of in a million years. We want to put our own touch on the music. She is such an of-the-moment person. There's a [section] on 'A Day In The Life Of A Fool,' where Ellen said, 'What if the intro was like a Bach thing with the saxophone and the guitar sharing the space and equally communicating?'"

The two musicians are also in Touché, a group of 12 singers from Copenhagen referred to as an a cappella vocal big band.

"I've always seen the voice as just another instrument," Andersson says. "To me, it's really important that we try to change the tradition with the vocalist singing the melodies, then waiting for the guys to burn, and then singing the melody again."

"It's important to me to be part of [how] the music is performed all the way, with my solos on the same terms as the other musicians, but also being in charge of the musical direction and the dynamics."

—John Ephland

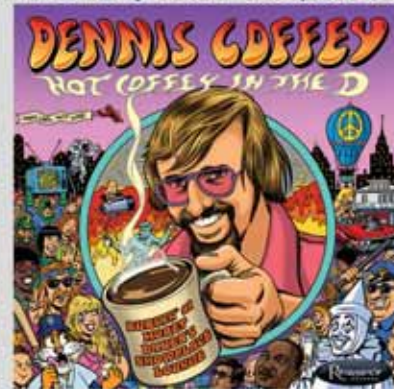


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# NO BARRIERS. NO LIMITS. NO FEAR.

**WELCOME TO THE FUTURE.** DownBeat recently convened a meeting in Brooklyn with keyboardist **Robert Glasper**, saxophonist/producer **Terrace Martin**, journalist Phillip Lutz and photographers Jimmy and Dena Katz.

When DownBeat approached Glasper about doing a cover story, he suggested that we also invite Martin, one of his close friends and key collaborators. It was a great idea and a natural fit. After all, both musicians worked on Kendrick Lamar's hip-hop masterpiece *To Pimp A Butterfly* (Top Dawg), and both are in an ensemble that has been recording material with Herbie Hancock for a forthcoming album. As you'll read in the following pages, Glasper and Martin are fearless artists who respect tradition but don't want to be confined by it.



# ROBERT GLASPER

# ‘SO WHY THE HELL AM I GOING TO SOUND LIKE THEM?’

By Phillip Lutz | Photos by Jimmy & Dena Katz

**FOR THE BETTER PART OF A YEAR,** Robert Glasper has been shuttling between his Brooklyn digs and Herbie Hancock’s home in Los Angeles. There, the two pianists—joined by saxophonist-keyboardist-producer Terrace Martin and a rotating cast of artists schooled in theory and steeped in the musical vernacular—have been holding a series of jams.

Held in a studio stacked with keyboards, the jams are deliberately yielding material for Hancock’s next album. In the process, they are transforming the studio into a laboratory for the continuing merger of jazz and hip-hop culture—fueling a drive to bring jazz to a younger generation of listeners.

“All the elements have been marinating,” said Hancock, whose contributions to the broadening of the jazz audience include his hard-bop hit “Watermelon Man” (1962), the electrified jazz-funk album *Head Hunters* (1973) and the music video for “Rockit” (1983). “The elements were bubbling beneath the surface. Now they’re exploding.”







The new album by the Robert Glasper Experiment is titled *ArtScience*.

For Glasper, whose reputation for straddling genres has been growing since he burst on the scene more than a decade ago, the explosion has been a controlled one—his collaboration with Hancock is only the latest manifestation, if a particularly edifying one.

“It’s like a master class every day,” Glasper said between bites of a burger at a hangout in his neighborhood on the eve of a fall European tour. “I’m like a little kid.”

That kind of enthusiasm has informed every aspect of the collaboration, said Hancock, who, at 76, is twice as old as Glasper. “His energy, spirit and humor embrace everybody in the room,” Hancock said. “I really sense the seeds of genius in him.”

By all indications, those seeds are bearing fruit.

Glasper first gained notice in jazz circles as a thoughtful artist with a touch that, for many, evoked the easy brilliance of Hancock’s early work. That he fashioned fresh takes on Hancock’s tunes strengthened the association. His 2004 debut, *Mood* (Fresh Sound New Talent), covered “Maiden Voyage.” *Canvas*, his 2005 Blue Note debut, included “Riot.” *In My Element*, released in 2007, revisited “Maiden Voyage.” And *Double-Booked*, released in 2009, took flight with “Butterfly.”

Hancock had been aware of Glasper prior to the collaboration, but he wasn’t deeply familiar with the younger artist’s work. Hancock checked out some YouTube videos of Glasper in action and, upon getting together with him, was duly impressed. “I found out he was a devotee of my music,” Hancock said. “He had even recorded some of my tunes, and put a new approach to them.” Meeting Glasper’s wife and young son, Riley, sealed the deal, and conversations began about the pianists working together.

In the studio, Glasper has put forth a novel approach, according to Hancock: “He has made a style of repeating short, provocative phrases and building on that. It could be a melody or something that involves some harmony with a melodic element to it that repeats over and over and has enough space for other elements

to be added—building structures and textures around what Robert started.”

Martin, who has known Glasper since high school, spoke more personally about his friend: “I admire the person he is, the man he is, the father he is. He’s been warm and giving, even in the darkest hours of my life.”

That combination of innovation and inspiration has helped Glasper to earn the attention of the wider musical community, not least the Grammy powers-that-be. Working in the early part of this decade with his electric group, the Robert Glasper Experiment, his tune “All Matter” (off *Double-Booked*) was a Grammy nominee for Best Urban Alternative Performance. *Black Radio* (2012) won for Best R&B Album. And his treatment of Stevie Wonder’s “Jesus Children Of America” (off 2013’s *Black Radio 2*) won in the category Best Traditional R&B Performance.

Never one to rest on his laurels, Glasper reverted to his acoustic trio with *Covered*, a 2015 collection that focused on interpretations of contemporary tunes by the likes of Radiohead, Bilal and Cyndi Lauper. A powerful version of Kendrick Lamar’s “I’m Dying Of Thirst” closed the album. (Glasper and Martin both contributed to Lamar’s milestone album *To Pimp A Butterfly*.)

Between Glasper’s acoustic and electric bands, the vibe is different but the voice is not. While the tones and textures of *Covered* suggest jazz by anyone’s definition of the term, the underlying sensibility is of a piece with any electro-funk mash-up Glasper creates. In fact, he said, audiences drawn to one sound or the other often end up checking out his entire catalog. With some smart marketing, they can be encouraged to do so.

“People come to my shows and say, ‘I never listened to jazz in my life, but because of *Covered* I bought your whole discography,’” he said. “When we first put out *Black Radio*, we made every one of our trio albums \$5.99. We knew people would go back and look, so we made it really cheap so they’d just buy it. It really worked.”

On his latest album, *ArtScience* (Blue Note), Glasper has returned to the Experiment, with a twist. Having recruited a gaggle of guest performers for the Black Radio series—from rappers Snoop Dogg and Common to singers Norah Jones and Jill Scott—he has pared down the cast on *ArtScience* and amped up the participation of his core group: Casey Benjamin on saxophone (and many of the vocals), Derrick Hodge on bass and Mark Colenburg on drums. Guitarist Mike Severson figures in the mix as well.

The tracks were laid down over two weeks in New Orleans, a location he chose for its relative isolation. “Nobody in the band knew many people in New Orleans,” Glasper explained. “We literally just camped out and wrote all the songs in the studio.”

“Somebody would bring in a piece of a song and I’d say, ‘Let’s add this.’ Someone else would add lyrics. We’d run over it once or twice and say, ‘Let’s record.’ The cool thing about this record is that everybody produced.”

Colenburg echoed the sentiment: “The initial spirit was to be a collective effort. The vibe was loose. No one knew what this project was going to be beforehand. Everybody got into a space of creativity. It was just open.”

Colenburg noted Glasper’s generosity throughout the two weeks. “This situation is not your typical band situation. Even though Robert is a Blue Note artist, it’s a friendship. It’s more about having this platform, having something to express, having something together.”

Befitting the process, the album’s 12 songs—not counting interludes—range widely in style and substance. The opener, “This Is Not Fear,” is a smoking acoustic romp that skirts the edges of the avant-garde. The closer is a version of synth-pop band The Human League’s 1986 hit “Human,” which is faithfully rendered up to a point, before dissolving into a swinging postlude that functions as the album’s acoustic bookend.

In between, a variety of moods are conjured—most strikingly, perhaps, on the soaring, multilayered “Find You.” “That might be my favorite song on the whole album,” Glasper said, adding that, while it started with an idea by Hodge, it ended up as the first song for which the group took a collective writing credit. “It encompasses so much in one song.”

Set within its musical context, “Find You” calls to mind the aspirational overtones of the Hancock oeuvre of the 1970s, from the episodic escalations of *Thrust* to the vocoder vocals of *Sunlight*. The latter album, Glasper said, is the one that, in 1999, turned him into a Hancock adherent when rapper J Dilla played it for him.

Among the more poignant moments on the album is a short spoken-word interlude in which Riley, then 5, comments on police shootings of unarmed civilians. Though Glasper said that the commentary bears no special relation-



ship to the music surrounding it—Riley’s words are purely extemporaneous—it seems to flow organically from “Find You.”

Glasper’s evocation of Hancock has prompted the occasional critic to regard some of his efforts as unduly derivative. But even as Hancock hears echoes of his playing in Glasper’s touch—a compliment, surely, given that it is delivered by the man himself—he is firmly convinced of the younger player’s originality. “He is his own man,” Hancock said.

Glasper’s catholic tastes have likewise elicited some skepticism from jazz purists. He rejects the argument: “People ask me, ‘Do you think you’re selling out?’ Because I’m doing more than one genre of music? Because I love more than one genre of music? Not at all. You sell out when you stick to one but in your heart you want to do some other stuff.”

Hancock, who ruffled a few feathers back in the day on a similar point, supported Glasper’s approach, asserting that he found a predilection toward eclecticism evidence of open-mindedness and an admirable restlessness. “He’s not stuck in one style,” Hancock said. “He’s a broad-based musician.”

Glasper said his penchant for seeking artistic variety had taken root in his native Houston. “We all grew up listening to more than one style of music,” he said. “I love playing r&b. I love playing hip-hop. I love playing jazz; it’s in my blood. But I was playing gospel first, then r&b, then jazz. That’s my personal journey.”

Glasper recalled the first time he was blown away by Miles Davis. It was in junior high school, and the record was *Live Around The World*, a posthumously issued compilation of Davis’ live performances from the late 1980s and early ’90s that included renditions of Michael Jackson’s “Human Nature” and Lauper’s “Time After Time.” Glasper interpreted the latter on *Covered*.

Little did he realize that Davis would figure heavily in his life. When actor/director Don Cheadle was preparing to make *Miles Ahead*, the 2016 film, he reached out to Glasper, complimenting him on *In My Element*. That prompted a flurry of correspondence that ended with an offer to score the film—after Cheadle had run the idea by Hancock and Vince Wilburn, Davis’ nephew.

Never having scored a film—let alone one about an iconic practitioner in his own field—Glasper quickly saw the challenge. The movie works its way through different periods in Davis’ musical life, each of which had a different sound associated with it. At various times, Glasper noted, he had to mimic Wynton Kelly, Bill Evans and Joe Zawinul.

The results were widely praised, and more Davis-related work came Glasper’s way. He received access to the Columbia/Legacy vaults containing Davis’ recordings, rehearsals and outtakes. From that material, he assembled *Everything’s Beautiful*, a work akin to a remix album. For the project, he said, his role as a player took a back seat to that of a curator.

To make the Davis oeuvre speak to today’s generation, he hired musicians with hip-hop bona fides, including Erykah Badu, Hiatus Kaiyote, Phonte and Bilal, who share space on the album’s 11 original tunes with guitarist John Scofield, a veteran of Davis’ early 1980s ensemble.

Meanwhile, Glasper, who has been touring with his Experiment band, is unsure of his next move. “I’m really happy having two bands because I get bored,” he said. “Year to year I feel something different. I couldn’t tell you what I’m going to do next year. I’ll see what the musical climate is doing and feel what it needs at the time.”

Whatever he does, it will encompass an expansive—and inclusive—view of the music: “I try to go out of the box of just pleasing the jazz audience, because the jazz audience can be your worst enemy,” he said. “Jazz, which should be the freest music, is the most imprisoned—and it’s imprisoned by the people who love it. They’re the captors, the officers.

“People want to shrink jazz down to a rhythmic pattern. But we’re living in the era when we have a lot more music to be influenced by than Miles did, than Coltrane did, than Charlie Parker did. So why the hell am I going to sound like them? Jazz was never a music that reflects history.

“The tradition is, it keeps moving; it reflects the time we’re in.” **DB**

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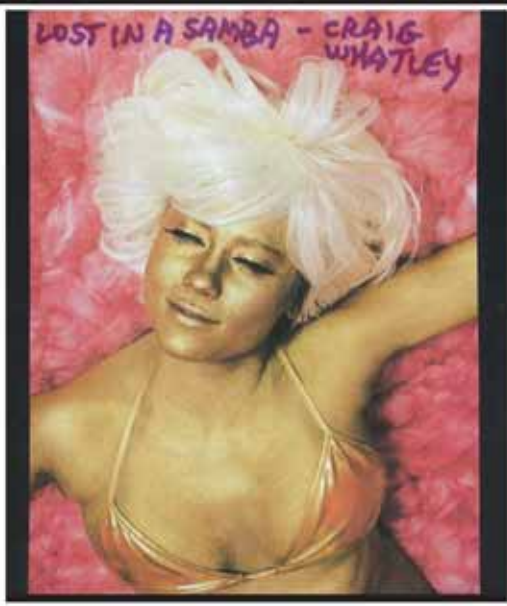
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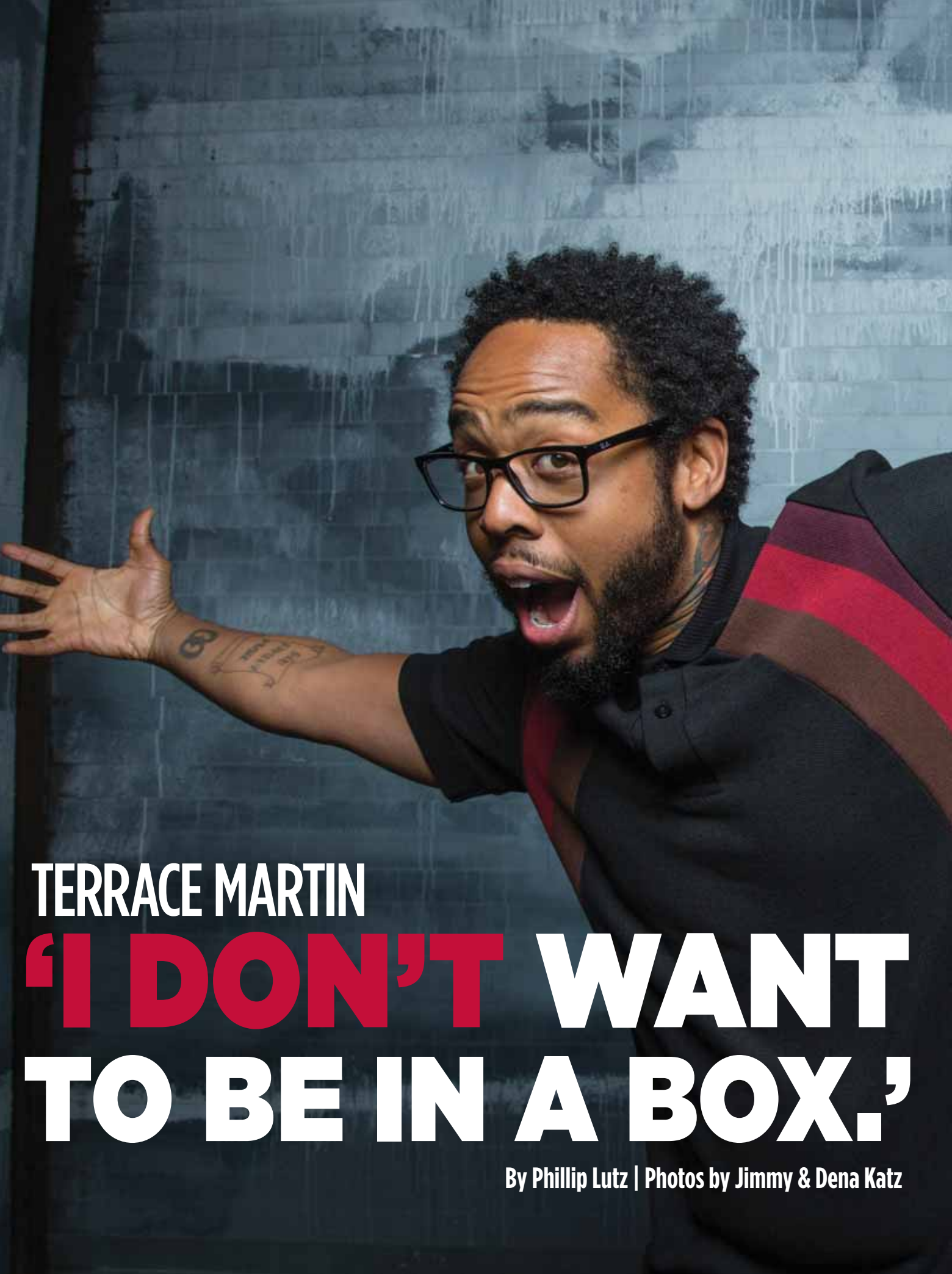
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TERRACE MARTIN

# **'I DON'T WANT TO BE IN A BOX.'**

By Phillip Lutz | Photos by Jimmy & Dena Katz





## **STRAIGHT OUT OF CRENSHAW IN SOUTHWESTERN LOS**

**ANGELES**, saxophonist-keyboardist-producer **Terrace Martin** has little time for purists who seek to wall off jazz from the struggles of those around him—and, more to the point, from the sound that reflects those struggles: hip-hop.

“The cats who still believe in barriers, we don’t see them around,” he said over drinks in Brooklyn in October. “I guess they’re in their box hanging out together.”

Decidedly not among those cats is Herbie Hancock, the jazz community’s longtime lodestar of musical pluralism and a champion of Martin’s.

“He’s a real producer, a conceptual thinker,” Hancock said. “He’s been at the forefront of a movement of jazz that’s emerging with the youth right now.

“In a way what he did with Kendrick on *To Pimp A Butterfly* kicked it off,” Hancock said, referring to Kendrick Lamar and his groundbreaking work on the Top Dawg label, which won the 2016 Grammy for Best Rap Album with Martin as key producer. “The way jazz was introduced, it was cutting-edge stuff. I’m happy that Kendrick picked up on that and embraced it. He didn’t put the jazz element in the background. It’s right up there in your face.”

Despite Martin's self-effacing personal manner, "in-your-face" is as good a description as any for his *modus operandi* in the studio and on the bandstand. Beyond Lamar, he has produced for, performed with or otherwise stamped his imprint on some of the strongest-willed personalities in hip-hop, among them Snoop Dogg, Dr. Dre and Pete Rock.

At the same time, he has decidedly won the favor of Hancock, an idol who said that he admires Martin's willingness to take—and ability to assess—musical risks.

"He welcomes crazy ideas and has a keen sense of recognizing what element may be needed at any time," Hancock said.

Martin, 31, has been putting those skills to good use. Over the past year or so, he has been making his way across Los Angeles to Hancock's home studio, which has become the staging ground for a group of musicians—chief among them pianist Robert Glasper—who are jamming in preparation for Hancock's next album.

The process of producing that music, Hancock said, is open-ended; the project is still taking shape, and a release is expected in the spring at the earliest. Interested parties are holding the results close to the vest, but a hint about where the music may be headed might be gleaned from performances like the one Hancock gave last August at the Prospect Park Band Shell in Brooklyn, where he led a quintet in which Martin played a prominent role in an atmospheric work titled "Overture."

The performance segued from synth-infused abstraction to a rock-inflected churn over which Martin, moving from keyboards to saxophone, offered a solo packed with short, smart and, at times, wholly unexpected phrases that confirmed his credentials as an improviser with a point of view.

"He's a killer saxophonist and an amazing keyboardist," Hancock said. "Jazz is in his DNA."

Jazz became embedded in Martin's psyche early on. As a young boy, his father, drummer Curly Martin, filled the house with the recorded sounds of Woody Shaw, Sonny Stitt and Elvin Jones. Those sounds, Martin said, "were going into my soul even then."

Not that Martin was able or willing to accept them. "I thought jazz was old and boring and it was always presented in such an old museum fashion," he said. "I didn't get it."

He started getting it in one day in the eighth grade: "I was at my father's gig and out of the blue he asked me if I wanted to play an instrument." While Martin had been creating hip-hop beats with a drum machine, adding a seemingly conventional tool to his musical arsenal had not been top of mind.

But the alto saxophone beckoned. "I would look at magazine articles and jazz album covers with the saxophone, its buttons and the gold



One of Terrace Martin's many projects in 2016 was his album *Velvet Portraits*.

and the pearls. My father and my stepmother got me a saxophone for \$150. It was a Conn and I fell in love with the look of holding it."

Playing it was another story until he enrolled at Santa Monica High School, where a teacher fed him scales and a friend turned him on to Charlie Parker. Later, he transferred to Locke High School, and became a star in the all-state band, which led to a stint at the California Institute of the Arts.

As a teenager, he struck up a relationship with drummer Billy Higgins, who ran the World Stage, a club in the Crenshaw district known as a launching pad for young musicians. "He started taking me to his house to play with him all day," Martin said. He met jazz stars like Harold Land, George Coleman, Cedar Walton, Kenny Burrell and Jackie McLean—all through Higgins. "Billy was like a father to me."

By the time he was a high school junior, Martin's jazz and hip-hop identities began to merge. "The whole time I was hanging with Billy Higgins I was still listening to a lot of hip-hop," he said. So when guitarist Marlon Williams—a veteran hip-hop guitarist who appeared on Martin's latest album, *Velvet Portraits* (Ropeadope)—called him with an offer to play with Snoop Dogg, he couldn't refuse.

The offer, as it turned out, had an organizational component, one that would presage the producing aspect of his career. "Snoop is starting a band and he wants a horn section," Martin recalled Williams telling him. "You want to put one together?" I said, 'Yeah.' He said, 'In fact, he wants to put together a band.' I said, 'Yeah.'"

With that, Martin was suddenly in a position to put his executive skills to an early test, recruiting a cadre of well-trained artists who would, in a few short years, become stalwarts of the emerging jazz/hip-hop scene. Among them were saxophonist Kamasi Washington

and bassist Thundercat (aka Stephen Bruner).

"I hired all these cats who were versed in jazz," Martin said, "because we loved it all."

And so did the band's frontman. "Snoop would listen to Miles Davis a lot," Martin said. "I figured out that the people who made jazz and gangsta rap had a lot in common because they were both reporting things that happened in real life, in real time, in the moment."

Snoop Dogg, in fact, had created one of the two albums Martin cited for the impact on his thinking: 1993's *Doggystyle*. The other was Miles Davis' *Live At The Plugged Nickel*. "I was listening to them back to back," he said. "They shifted my life—Snoop because he's from the same environment I'm from. I understand his struggle. Snoop felt like a big brother talking to me on a record, at a time in Los Angeles when there were a lot of broken households and music raised a lot of us. He was my hero before I even met him."

The *Plugged Nickel* concert album—which was recorded at the Chicago club in 1965 and featured the classic Davis quintet with Hancock, saxophonist Wayne Shorter, bassist Ron Carter and drummer Tony Williams—was the apotheosis of cool adventurism in its day. Hancock, Martin said, was a tangible link to all that.

"I still feel the spirit of *Plugged Nickel* in the '60s every time I speak with Herbie—breaking rules for the right reasons," he said.

"I had grown up in a lifestyle where we would break all the rules for the right and wrong reasons—mostly the wrong reasons," he added. "So when I figured out a group that were breaking the rules for the right reasons, I gravitated towards them. Once again, even more than the sound of the music, the spirit of it led to these people."

When Martin was introduced to Hancock—a meeting arranged in a quick



phone call from Glasper, who summoned him to Capitol Studios in Hollywood—he was pinching himself. The feeling only intensified when Hancock, impressed by what he had heard on *To Pimp A Butterfly*, suggested they work together.

“It felt like all the years listening to the quintet, listening to *Plugged Nickel*, practicing, it seemed like it just made sense that day,” Martin said. “Because of a hip-hop record I wound up back to my foundation—one of my leaders, my heroes, who I studied almost every day of my musical life. That was a lesson of how hip-hop brought that together.”

The collaboration, he said, has been far more rewarding than he expected. “Working with Herbie feels new every time, whether we’re in the studio or on the bandstand. Some of the most exciting moments of my life thus far have already been with him, musically, creatively, in conversation—he’s a great teacher, a great mentor and of course a master at what he does.”

Offering further evidence of a jazz/hip-hop nexus, Martin likened Hancock to Lamar: “What’s cool about working with Herbie and Kendrick—something they have in common—is that everything is happening right there. The ideas are in that room and everybody’s giving their best. They’re both cutting-edge and into breaking the rules for the right reason.”

Martin said that his presence in a Brooklyn restaurant, being interviewed for a jazz magazine, constituted a kind of rule-breaking—or at least evidence that the rules have changed since the days when the lines dividing jazz and popular genres were more clearly drawn.

“Right now jazz is in so much music,” he said. “Twenty or 30 years ago, *DownBeat* wouldn’t be talking to me because people believed that what jazz was isn’t what they believe it is today. What I see happening is the titles going away and people saying, ‘We’re here to hear some good music again.’”

“I look at hip-hop and jazz as one thing. I think there’s boring jazz like there’s boring hip-hop. I think there’s good jazz like there’s good hip-hop. But I think the younger generation—18, 19, 20 years old—they don’t call it jazz; they call our name: ‘That’s Robert’s record, that’s Thundercat’s, that’s Kamasi’s.’”

“There are a lot of traditional, straightahead musicians who don’t agree with the things that they do. They never have. And that’s OK.”

Undaunted, Martin said, he will continue to break down barriers, getting out the message—even beyond the boundaries of music—with a collective he is forming with Glasper and Los Angeles singer-producer James Fauntleroy. The immediate intent, he said, is to write films and produce music that showcases the performing talents of others.

The tendency for Martin to favor presenting—at the expense of performing—was

already evident by the time he produced his 2013 full-length debut, *3ChordFold* (AKAI/Empire), and its successors in the *3ChordFold* series. The guest lists included Lamar, Fauntleroy, Snoop Dogg and other artists who knew how to play within Martin’s subtle but complex environments. The tendency continued to reveal itself with *Velvet Portraits*, the first release on Martin’s Sounds of Crenshaw label.

The collective will continue to play to Martin’s strengths as an organizer, Glasper said, recounting his yeoman effort on *To Pimp*

*A Butterfly*. “That album alone—it was Terrace putting that together—put the world on a tilt,” Glasper said. “It put jazz in a place where it hasn’t been in a really long time.”

But wherever jazz may be today, Martin said, it won’t be there tomorrow if he has anything to say about it. “Every time I have an idea of what’s going to be happening, I go against the grain and change it. I don’t want to be in a box. I don’t want to get used to one thing. I don’t want to make another *To Pimp A Butterfly*.”

“Everything we did yesterday is gone.” **DB**

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# LARRY CORYELL BACK FROM THE BRINK

BY BILL MILKOWSKI | PHOTO BY MARK SHELDON

**O**n Nov. 8, the day after Donald J. Trump shocked the world, Larry Coryell was sitting in his Orlando home, cussing out the president-elect, fuming about the outcome of the election and plotting an exit strategy for himself and his wife, Tracey. “We’re going to move to Europe,” he declared. “Now that Trump is in ... we’re going to make good on our promise to each other to move to either Germany or Ireland.”

Coryell was clearly agitated as the reality of a Trump presidency was sinking in. “This is an unacceptable situation,” he snarled into his phone. “We cannot let all the work we’ve done as jazz musicians to help relationships between people ... we can’t let all that go to hell. And that’s what this election is going to do. It’ll take us back to the Dark Ages and people will think that it’s OK to be prejudiced again. Well, I don’t accept it. We have to stand up. ... [Trump is] an impostor, a huckster, and he’s got to go. And because I’m a Buddhist I’m going to chant about it and try to turn poison into medicine, and just get deeper and deeper into my music.”

The guitarist had already been deeply into his music through most of 2016, which proved to be one of the most productive years in his lengthy career. In January, he went into a studio in St. Augustine, Florida, and recorded a new Eleventh House project entitled *Seven Secrets* (Savoy/429 Records) with charter members from 1973: Randy Brecker on trumpet and Alphonse Mouzon on drums, along with John Lee (bassist on the group’s 1975 album *Level One* and 1976 follow-up, *Aspects*) and Coryell’s son Julian, a six-string shredder

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Larry Coryell is acclaimed for his work  
on both electric and acoustic guitar.

©MARK SHELDON

in his own right, on second guitar. The results, which won't be released until spring, are electrifying. Fueled by Mouzon's big-as-a-house backbeats and power-precision fills, Daddy Coryell cuts loose with sheer abandon on several cuts, like his "Mr. Miyake" and Mouzon's kinetic 7/4 title track. Coryell deals in audacious string-bending on the blues-rock-er "The Dip" and the earthy "Mudhen Blues," and delivers some Wes Montgomery-style octaves on the mellow "Having Second Thoughts."

But the real killer on *Seven Secrets* is Lee's "Dragon's Way," a 6/8 romp that will whet the appetites of true fusion fans. Sparked by Mouzon's slamming groove and Lee's slippery, singing tones on his resounding Rob Allen fretless bass (with ebony fingerboard and nylon strings), this catchy number also showcases the young Julian's mondo chops, which are coming directly out of the Steve Vai-Joe Satriani school. Papa Coryell follows those mind-blowing fusillades with something simple, lyrical, tasty and blue—a typically Zen response from the guitar master.

In May, Coryell went into the studio again, this time in Orlando, and with another crew of musicians. John Lee returned on fretless electric bass, making a formidable rhythm tandem with drummer Lee Pearson (from Chris Botti's band). Joining them on this session—a decidedly "jazzier" affair than the thunderous *Seven Secrets* session—were pianist Lynne Arriale and reedman extraordinaire Dan Jordan. Together they created *Barefoot Man: Sanpaku* (Purple Pyramid Records), Coryell's answer to his 1971 opus *Barefoot Boy*, which he recorded with drummer Roy Haynes, bassist Mervin Bronson, pianist Mike Mandel and saxophonist Steve Marcus at Electric Ladyland Studios in New York City. "I made that [1971] record in the spirit of my seeking mind when I got to New York," the guitarist recalled. "I wanted to do some shit that was different. My attitude was, 'I'm gonna play like this may be the last time I will ever play, so I gotta make it good.'"

At age 73, Coryell still carries that same attitude to the bandstand. It's evident in his aggressive playing on both *Barefoot Man: Sanpaku* (which has him wielding a Gibson Super 400 jazz box, in the spirit of Wes Montgomery, a personal hero) and on *Seven Secrets* (which has him stinging on a custom C.J. Fearn model with distortion set on stun and wah-wah pedal fully engaged, in the spirit of the immortal Jimi Hendrix).

"Larry is the ultimate guitar hero," said bassist and longtime colleague Lee, who joined The Eleventh House back in the mid-'70s. "I don't know if anybody else around has mastered as many styles as him. There are few guys who can really get into a straightahead situation and go that route, then pick up acoustic guitar and play a great Brazilian feel or some classical. And the rock 'n' roll and fusion, well, we know about that."

Indeed, Coryell was one of the first jazz-trained guitarists to embrace rock and incorporate those hard-edged sounds into his own music, leading to the birth of jazz-rock, as it was initially called, or "fusion," as it got tagged later. You can hear some early examples of that rock-tinged energy on the frantic track "Jim-Jeannie" from Chico Hamilton's 1966 *Impulse!*

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recording *The Dealer* or the Chuck Berry licks inserted into his solo on the title track.

Coryell's subsequent experiments with The Free Spirits—tenor saxophonist Jim Pepper, rhythm guitarist Chip Baker, bassist Chris Hills and drummer Bob Moses—further bridged the worlds of jazz and rock, pre-dating the formation of Blood, Sweat & Tears, which also blended horns and rock rhythms with pop singing and jazzy improvisation. The Free Spirits' 1967 ABC Records debut, *Out Of Sight And Sound*, is often called the first-ever jazz-rock album. Although tunes like "Cosmic Daddy Dancer" and "Tattoo Man" meld the psychedelic aesthetic of the times with Coryell's tough guitar solos and Pepper's free-jazz flights on tenor, this LP, with its three-minutes-or-less-per-song approach, didn't reflect the way the band would stretch out in concert, opening shows for Hendrix and The Doors. Coryell left The Free Spirits shortly after the album was released.

He subsequently joined the Gary Burton Quartet and made more musical history in April 1967 by playing on *Duster*, another seminal jazz-rock album. His debut as a leader came the following year, with the Vanguard LP *Lady Coryell*, where he's joined by Moses, Jimmy Garrison (bass) and Elvin Jones (drums).

Coryell participated in yet another landmark recording with his 1970 album *Spaces*, which featured an all-star cast of John McLaughlin, Chick Corea, Miroslav Vitous and Billy Cobham, well before the formation of Weather Report, Return To Forever or the Mahavishnu Orchestra.

At the time of DownBeat's post-election phone call to Coryell in Orlando, he was busy working on a piano reduction for his next opera, an adaptation of Leo Tolstoy's *Anna Karenina*. His first opera, based on Tolstoy's *War and Peace*, received its world premiere in Slovenia in 2013 and was staged in Russia in 2014, with help from the U.S. Embassy there. "It went over huge in Russia," he said. "The audience went absolutely crazy. And it was also a good diplomatic exercise in showing how through love of music and culture you can have a dialogue between what are ostensibly enemies."

The world premiere for Coryell's *Anna Karenina* will take place in May. Plans are already in place to stage his third opera, *Ulysses*, based on the James Joyce novel, in Dublin, Ireland, on June 16, 2018, which is officially Bloomsday, an annual commemoration and celebration of the life of the Irish author. "Fortunately, I obtained from one of his family members while in Ireland a 'companion book' telling how to read the original, in terms of what he means or *may* mean," Coryell said. "So, I am slowly extracting content from the book and converting it to music."

Opera, it turns out, is a relatively recent passion for the godfather of fusion guitar. The seed

was planted several years ago when he first heard Barney Kessel's 1959 Contemporary album *Carmen*, on which the great guitarist adapted pieces from the Georges Bizet opera. But it wasn't until 2010, when Coryell encountered a series of Maria Callas performances on German TV, via YouTube, that the opera bug bit hard. "I was enamored by these videos of Callas," he said. "She had a tone like Ben Webster ... it was so deep, just unbelievable. She had to sit through eight or nine minutes of the overture, but when she started to sing, she was truly transfigured. And it reminded me of

when I saw Wes play. When you see a genius like a Wes Montgomery or a Maria Callas, they have this look when they're in the heat of battle. It's the look of eagles, and I saw it on her."

Between the Eleventh House reunion, the solo project and his immersion into opera, Coryell was thriving artistically through the first half of 2016. But all his forward momentum came to a crashing halt for a period of three months—from June to August.

"On June 2, I had a sinus operation that went wrong," he explained. "The doctor went into my brain by accident with the laser. So



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I had brain damage. My family—especially my wife—freaked out. It caused unbelievable emotional stress for them. And for one month I was just unresponsive. My wife brought me home and did all these antibiotic drips on me. We had to do this day and night, and it wore her out. I don't remember everything, but at one point Tracey told me, 'You almost died twice.' When you have something like that happen to you and then you come back from it, you have a tremendous appreciation for your life."

So how did Coryell make it through this dark period?

"*Nam-myoho-renge-kyo*, baby," he said with chuckle, reciting the Buddhist mantra. "All the members in Orlando chanted for me when I couldn't chant for myself. It took me three months, but I came back. Now I'm back 100 percent and I think I'm playing better."

Coryell's attempt to regain the muscle memory in his hands was an arduous process that involved endless hours of practicing on his instrument at home. "I couldn't play," he recalled. "I was so incapacitated, I had no coordination. It was scary. In the beginning, I would take a nylon-string guitar and go into the bathroom, where there would be more reverb, and I would just play Bach—this one lute prelude that I learned in my first guitar lesson way back in New York in the fall of 1965. At first, I just sounded awful. Nothing was working. I had to work long and hard to get the muscle memory back."

Throughout the month of August, Coryell continued his intensive woodshedding process at his brother Jim's house in Chicago. "I practiced and practiced on a black Cort guitar, a Larry Coryell signature model I had given him. Whenever I go to Chicago, I just borrow my brother's guitar. I shedded a ton on that axe."

In late August, he began going to Chicago restaurants and sitting in with local bands. "I'd just walk up to them with my black Cort and ask, 'Can I sit in?' And they'd let me," he said. "I did this over and over until I gradually started getting my strength back. I sat in at the Jazz Showcase during the Charlie Parker celebration that [venue founder] Joe Segal does every August. I played with Ira Sullivan. I listened to his band the first set, then I went up and said, 'Can I play?' He let me sit in, and he let me play as much as I wanted on the second set. Half the stuff I had never played before in my life ... tunes like 'I Get A Kick Out Of You.' That was the best I ever played, and I didn't even know the tune. It always goes like that. Tunes that I know too well I sound like shit on. Jazz is all about spontaneity."

By October, Coryell had regained enough chops to go out on a mini-tour of Europe with a special edition of The Eleventh House that featured Joey DeFrancesco on trumpet and organ (filling in for Randy Brecker, who was performing in China) along with original Eleventh House bassist Danny Trifan (Lee was locked into commitments with the Dizzy Gillespie Alumni All-Star Band) and drummer Guido Bay (filling in for an ailing Mouzon, who was fighting a debilitating kidney disease).

The new Eleventh House album isn't due out until spring, but *Barefoot Man* should satisfy Coryell fans until then. His fleet-fingered solos are apparent from the funky opener "Sanpaku" to the mysterious vibe of "If Miles Were Here" to the wailing "Improv On 97." The collection closes on a swinging note with "Blue Your Mind," which has Coryell dropping in quotes from "Flying Home" and "Seven Come Eleven" in tribute to Charlie Christian, another one of his guitar heroes.

Since recovering from his health scare this summer, Coryell has returned to the scene with a vengeance, exuding that same joyful spirit he brought with him to the Big Apple more than 50 years ago.

"Larry's got this almost childlike enthusiasm about music," Lee said. "It's exhilarating when you're about to go on stage with him because he's always so excited to do it. It was the same way during my 10 years with Dizzy. We could be traveling 16 hours to get to a gig, and he might be exhausted, but once he hit the stage it was always a party. Dizzy was always excited to put on a good show, keep it positive and make it fun. And Larry's the same way. He's got a great energy and is such a loving, giving human being. I love this guy to death, man."

DB



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Wallace Roney photo: Timothy Moersh



# WALLACE RONEY



## HARD TRAIL

By Ted Panken | Photo by Mark Sheldon

It would be difficult to cite a more accomplished 2016 album than Wallace Roney's *A Place In Time* (HighNote).

For his 18th leader date since 1987, the 56-year-old trumpeter assembled a sextet consisting of four over-60 masters—Gary Bartz on alto and soprano saxophone, Patrice Rushen on piano, Buster Williams on bass and Lenny White on drums—and wunderkind Ben Solomon on tenor and soprano saxophone. Over the course of nine tunes, Roney and company improvise fluently and passionately on vocabulary and syntax postulated in the trailblazing 1960s recordings of John Coltrane, Miles Davis and such Davis alumni as Wayne Shorter, Herbie Hancock and Tony Williams, generating the go-for-broke attitude that defined the era. Roney's intensely melodic solos have an architectural, inevitable quality, but close listening reveals the instant decisions he makes in mapping out his well-designed routes.

"They were my band from 1998 to 2001, but we never recorded," Roney said, referring to Bartz, Rushen, Williams and White. "That's why we did this. We got together for two days, pulled out some tunes, reacted and responded to each other, and goaded each other to play better."

Roney reflected on the sessions for *A Place In Time* while seated in the dressing room of New York's Blue Note on Oct. 26, before a soundcheck for night one of Chick Corea's "For Miles" engagement with saxophonist Kenny Garrett, guitarist Mike Stern, bassist Marcus Miller and drummer Brian Blade.

Regarding the title of the new album, Roney said, "It could mean a place in time when only innovation mattered and what was being said was more important than the instruments involved. All of them lived it. They play this thing nobody else can play, and can't express it with anyone else because no one understands it. They are innovative musicians. Everybody brings something to the table, and we all shape everybody's music. That's what Miles did."

*A Place In Time* marks a point of departure from the last three of Roney's six prior dates for HighNote, his label since 2004. On those albums, he emulated Art Blakey, his frequent '80s employer, by hiring less experienced aspirants.

"Sometimes younger guys aren't as up on things as you'd like," Roney said, without naming names. "You

teach them, they play with other people, and when they come back, they forget instead of utilizing it when you start to go for it. You want the time to be more elastic. They're playing licks they heard but don't understand how to expand on. They don't know different ways to play a chord, or reinvent or substitute that chord, or how to make something go a certain way melodically."

Despite such frustrations, Roney remains open to collaborating with younger players who have a strong work ethic and an open mind.

"Sometimes you wish the music would go forward, not backward," he said. "I want them to understand that music didn't stop in 1960, and it isn't beginning in 2016. Kamasi Washington is not Coltrane. Coltrane is 50 years ago. Who's more advanced? You've got to learn the most innovative things. If you can't do them, you're not in the ballpark. Learn why Trane and Wayne were able to do what they did, and be able to do it. Understand what Ornette [Coleman] was playing, or Herbie and John McLaughlin and Tony and Elvin [Jones]. Those are the high-water marks. Then use your creativity, and see if you can add to it. Not just some pentatonics or false fingers, but the idea of that type of virtuosity and spirituality, the merging of mind and spirit, time and universe. This music is hard. People who want to play it on that level of communication and telepathy have to do a lot of studying. It's a never-ending process."

Roney has practiced what he preaches. As a child in north Philadelphia during the '60s, he associated jazz with his father's social circle, who "were into social rights and civil rights and Nation of Islam—trying to enlighten and lift themselves. ... Jazz was a music of intelligence."

He was already playing trumpet and listening to his father's records at age 5 or 6 when Davis entered his consciousness. "I could hear Miles was reaching for something," Roney said. "He was my idol." He heard, dug and assimilated Lee Morgan, Blue Mitchell, Kenny Dorham and Clifford Brown. "My father would tell me he thought Clifford was better than Miles, and we'd argue. Matter of fact, I was so mad, I asked Clark Terry about it. Clark gave me the best answer. 'It's like apples and oranges: They're both good.'"

Roney had moved with his father to Washington, D.C., when he introduced himself to Terry after a set at

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Blues Alley. Terry brushed him off but, during a second encounter, asked the 12-year-old Roney to play something; the child responded with Morgan's solo on "M&M" from the Jazz Messengers album *Meet You At The Jazz Corner Of The World*. An enduring mentorship ensued. Soon thereafter, Roney met Dizzy Gillespie, who showed him "different scales, things about mouthpieces and breathing exercises." At age 15, he sat in with Blakey. At 16, he sat in with Cedar Walton, who subsequently hired him for a two-week engagement. He matriculated at Howard University, left after a year when Abdullah Ibrahim took him on the road, then transferred to Berklee. "I was aiming to go to New York," Roney said, explaining why he left school in 1981 to join Blakey.

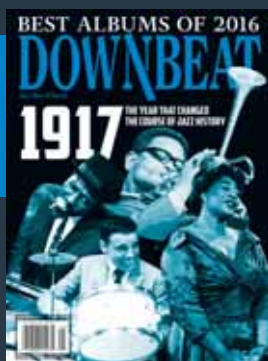
Two years later, Roney joined Jon Faddis, Randy Brecker, Lew Soloff, Jimmy Owens, Art Farmer and Maynard Ferguson at a Davis retrospective concert at Radio City Music Hall. Hancock, Carter and Williams were the rhythm section. After rehearsal, Carter introduced him to his partners. After the show next evening, Farmer informed Roney that Davis wanted to meet him. "I went to Miles' dressing room," Roney said. "He told me, 'I heard you up there, playing those things. Here's my number, call me tomorrow.'" He called, and received an invitation to visit.

From then until Davis' death, Roney says, "I saw him every time he was in town, if I could. Or if he was playing, I was always there. Miles didn't like a lot of silly people, but he took me. He didn't just pick me out of the street. He heard someone who was going inside his back pocket, his best stuff, and he said, 'Man, how did you figure that out? OK. Come on over here.' I wasn't just playing a couple of his licks. I was trying to figure out the theory, and giving my heart to it, because I knew it was the next extension of what the music is about."

On Oct. 27 with Corea, in the first chorus of his solo on the set-opening "All Blues," Roney hewed closely to Davis' original 1959 presentation on *Kind Of Blue*, then counterstated with complex variations, creating long lines phrased to fall at odd places against the groove locked down by Stern, Miller and Blade.

"Wallace plays in Miles' spirit, and he captures that essence, but there's more to it," Garrett said a few days later. "I'd hone in first on his beautiful, round sound—it grabs your attention immediately. We met when we were both 17—he was playing more like Clifford Brown, Lee Morgan and Freddie Hubbard then, and he already knew harmony. Now he's evolved to another level harmonically, extending the lines, playing harmony on top of harmony. He's way ahead of the game."

After the Oct. 26 soundcheck, Roney discussed his decision, made in his early 20s, to embrace Davis' innovative strategies as a jump-



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ing-off point. "I admired Woody Shaw, who basically came from Freddie Hubbard, who was the first to play those fourths and pentatonics on the trumpet, trying to play like John Coltrane and Eric Dolphy," he said. "Woody took that aspect of Freddie and developed it so much that it became his signature. I told myself that if I could do with Miles what Woody did with Freddie, at least I'm not going backwards."

He developed his conception during a long run with Williams' unparalleled quintet, which he joined after playing on Williams' 1985 album, *Foreign Intrigue*. The experience, Roney said, prepared him for eventually playing with Davis, Hancock and Shorter.

That opportunity occurred in July 1991, when Davis—who had been coaching Roney since they met—asked his disciple to play alongside him in a Quincy Jones-directed "Birth Of The Cool" concert at the Montreux Jazz Festival that would be his valedictory. After Davis died two months later, Shorter, Hancock, Carter and Williams formed a tribute band, and asked Roney to assume the trumpet chair. He participated in several "Miles Davis Legacy" tours with them before forming his own band in 1994.

"When Miles passed, I felt that Wallace was the one," Shorter said. "He wanted to keep going with not necessarily Miles' vision, but his vision is really connected with Miles. Wallace projects

the never-give-up thing, going on the trail less trodden. The other trail is crowded with wannabes and pop-this and pop-that—simplicity, simplicity and simplicity. I like what Einstein said: Yeah, we know we need simplicity, but no simpler. A lot of people fall by the wayside, give up and, like they say, 'sell out.' You want the people who take the hard trail, that warrior thing. Selling out is more noticeable than persevering."

"Wallace doesn't compromise," White affirmed. "He's dipped and dabbled in this and that, but he's a consummate musician and artist, because he doesn't change his attitude about what he does. He's authentic."

After the Miles Davis Legacy tours, Roney was reluctant to work as a sideman with somebody else. "I figured I had to take what those guys personally showed me, and use that knowledge in my band. Miles told me that if he ever got a band again, he wanted Tony, Herbie and Wayne, but, although he loved Ron, he thought he would still use [bassist] Foley or Marcus Miller. He wanted that blend, and I started figuring that electro-acoustic was the way to go."

Electro-acoustic is the template on *In An Ambient Way* (Chesky), a 2015 project on which the late Bob Belden, who had retained Roney's services on numerous projects for a quarter-century, reimagined *In A Silent Way* with Roney, Oz Noy on guitar, Kevin Hays on Fender

Rhodes, Daryl Johns on bass and White on drums. More consequential is a studio recording of *Universe*, an orchestral suite that Shorter composed, at Davis' request, in 1967. The band broke up, the music was put away, and then was rediscovered around 2006, Roney estimated.

"Wayne called to say he'd found this music, and I was the only one who could do this," Roney recalled. "My reaction was that this was the Dead Sea Scrolls. We'd all been trying to write something that would be the next step after, say, 'Nefertiti.' But here it was, from the originator, the person who thinks like that—and not only that, he orchestrated it. In all this music, you can hear the conception of the band, how Wayne's music influenced the band."

Perplexingly, Roney has not found a record company willing to release this labor of love. "We've had time to digest all the intricacies and respond, so the level is very high," Roney said. "I'm very proud of it, and I'm happy that I documented it for posterity. I have no faith that a label will be interested, but I'd love to get it on the commercial market. If that ever happens, the world can hear it."

"It's hard to get a record deal," Shorter said. "But never give up spirit. By persevering, Wallace is finding the key to open the door. More and more, Wallace doesn't have to lean on what Miles did. He has to lean on himself." **DB**



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# DOWNBEAT 2017 INTERNATIONAL JAZZ VENUE

GUIDE»

## Remarkable ROOMS

### 195 Clubs Where Music Thrives

**O**ur annual Jazz Venue Guide is your passport to excellent music rooms around the globe. On the following pages, the listings are divided by geographic region. Some venue names are in boldface capital letters, which indicates there is an advertisement for that establishment in this guide. Interspersed among the listings are features on six venues: **(le) Poisson Rouge** in New York City (page 46), the **Blue Whale** in Los Angeles (page 51), the **Sequoia Room** in Fort Bragg, California (page 54), **Blue Note Napa** in Napa, California (page 57), **Fasching** in Stockholm (page 60) and **Bimhuis** in Amsterdam (page 63).

James Carter onstage at The Blue Note in New York City (Photo: ©Jack Vartoogian/FrontRowPhotos)


 A photograph of Kermit Ruffins, a jazz trumpeter, performing on stage. He is wearing a light-colored suit jacket, a patterned shirt, a colorful tie, and a fedora hat. He is holding a trumpet and has his right hand raised near the valves. The background is dark with some stage lighting.
 

Kermit Ruffins performs at (le) Poisson Rouge.

# Rock 'n' Roll 'n' Romance at (le) Poisson Rouge

**D**avid Handler and Brice Rosenbloom envisioned a club that would be flexible not just in terms of booking but in the physical space itself when they founded (le) Poisson Rouge eight years ago in Manhattan. But even still, they probably hadn't anticipated being called on as a makeshift wedding chapel. That's what happened when guitarist Nels Cline and multi-instrumentalist Yuka Honda (perhaps still best known as half of Cibo Matto) had a sudden change in wedding plans and were looking for options.

It was November 2010 and the couple was set to have the ceremony in Central Park with a reception at the West Village club; they soon discovered that the Parks Department permit didn't allow for a P.A. or more than 100 people.

"We were starting to get nervous and every place was really expensive," Cline recalled. "We thought, 'Let's just do it at Poisson Rouge.'"

The venue's facilities allow for a concert hall arrangement with the stage at one end of the room or a more intimate setup with a circular stage in the center, which is what Cline and Honda opted for. Three large screens on one wall gave them a place to project images of the outdoors. With the help of the club's extensive lighting rig and a few well-placed cherry blossoms, they were able to create the atmosphere they wanted. The guest list would bring tears to any Downtown music fan's eyes, and with Cline's Wilco bandmate Jeff Tweedy officiating, the couple had an unforgettable reception—with a decent P.A.

"I ended up stage-managing at my own wedding!" Cline exclaimed, still laughing at the memory.

(le) Poisson Rouge opened on Bleecker Street in 2008 with the goal of being a multiple-purpose space, according to Handler, a native New Yorker who knows well what the city has to offer—and what it lacks.

"In a city like ours there are a host of venues dedicated to any one genre, but not many that host all under one roof and at the level that we do," he said. "No expense or attention was spared on the production, and our Bleecker home is physically quite malleable—offering seated, standing and hybrid configurations."

With a capacity of 350 seated or 750 standing (depending on the show), Poisson Rouge brings eclectic programming to its stages, not just jazz, pop and experimental music, but a fair bit of contemporary composition and even the occasional burlesque show.

Jazz, however, was flowing through the space even before Poisson Rouge opened its doors. From 1958 to 1994, the basement room housed Art D'Lugoff's renowned Village Gate. Albert Ayler, Alice Coltrane, Ahmad Jamal, Sonny Rollins, Herbie Mann, Thelonious Monk, Nina Simone and Jimmy Smith all recorded live albums there, and Poncho Sanchez hosted a longstanding "Salsa Meets Jazz" series with a wealth of players merging the two worlds. The club is also a primary venue for the annual Winter Jazzfest, which was founded by Rosenbloom.

"We stand on the shoulders of giants for sure," Handler said. "The site is hallowed ground as far as I'm concerned. Jazz and counterculture Mecca that the Village Gate was (hosting everyone from Morrison to Ginsberg, Ella to Warhol, Mingus to Lenny Bruce), it was Art's commitment to eclecticism that I identify most closely with. We were lucky enough to get to know him in the last years of his life and his receptivity to our endeavor, the extent to which he made himself available to us is something I will always be grateful for."

The nightclub atmosphere and moving colored lights can come as a shock to the no-nonsense jazz musician—or fan—as it did to Cline the first time he wandered in, for a JACK string quartet concert featuring a John Zorn composition.

"They were playing at this place that looked like a rock club," Cline said. "It had all these groovy lights and the place was packed."

But having since played there numerous times with a variety of projects, he's warmed to the room and—as he did for his wedding—learned how to get the atmosphere he wants for his gigs.

"It you don't want to have all those lights moving around, you just tell them," he said. "I think a lot of people don't direct their own shows in the serious music world."

"There's hardly anybody putting on adventurous gigs in Manhattan," he added. "It's absolutely the best spot, in my opinion."

—Kurt Gottschalk



# EAST

## CONNECTICUT

### Firehouse 12

45 Crown St.  
New Haven, CT  
(203) 785-0468

[firehouse12.com](http://firehouse12.com)

This intimate music venue doubles as a world-class recording facility that features everyone from regional jazz musicians to acts like the Taylor Ho Bynum 7-tette and the OGJB Quartet. Located in New Haven's historic Ninth Square District, Firehouse 12 also includes an award-winning bar.

### The Side Door Jazz Club

85 Lyme St.  
Old Lyme, CT  
(860) 434-0886

[thesidedoorjazz.com](http://thesidedoorjazz.com)

Situated inside the historic Old Lyme Inn, which was fully renovated in 2012, The Side Door Jazz Club kicked off its existence with a bang: George Wein and his Newport All-Star Band swung through Connecticut to christen the club. The unique space has also hosted the Rudy Royston Orion Trio, Curtis Lundy and Bobby Watson.

## MARYLAND

### An Die Musik Live!

409 N. Charles St.  
Baltimore, MD  
(410) 385-2638

[andiemusiklive.com](http://andiemusiklive.com)

Housed on the second floor of a historic townhouse, this venue presents jazz, classical and folk music. In the fall, the venue hosted shows by David Murray and John Abercrombie. Additionally, the club offers a standing date for Peabody Conservatory students and alumni to get together and jam.

### Bethesda Blues & Jazz Supper Club

7719 Wisconsin Ave.  
Bethesda, MD  
(240) 330-4500

[bethesdabluesjazz.com](http://bethesdabluesjazz.com)

Located in the historic Bethesda Theatre, this supper club has a seating capacity of 500 and books various jazz, pop and soul performers most nights. Among the artists who have appeared recently are Kirk Whalum and Cassandra Wilson.

### Caton Castle Lounge & Package Goods

20 South Caton Ave.  
Baltimore, MD  
(410) 566-7086

Local jazz and blues acts perform regularly in a casual, laid-back atmosphere at this regally named venue. Big names have dropped in, too, including Warren Wolf, Terrell Stanford, Bobby Watson and Cyrus Chestnut.

## MASSACHUSETTS

### Chianti Tuscan Restaurant & Jazz Lounge

285 Cabot St.  
Beverly, MA



Roy Hargrove (left) and Marquis Hill onstage at the Jazz Gallery in New York City

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Known as Beverly's go-to jazz spot, Chianti was founded to continue the legacy of area jazz advocate Sandy Berman, who died of cancer in 1991. By presenting shows by the best regional and national artists six nights a week, Chianti makes sure jazz has a place in the city.

### Lilypad

1353 Cambridge St.  
Cambridge, MA  
(617) 955-7729

[lilypadinman.com](http://lilypadinman.com)

Located in the heart of Inman Square, the Lilypad has been bringing a variety of musical, comedy and spoken-word performances acts to the area for more than a decade. Among the artists who play there regularly is the legendary trio The Fringe (George Garzone, John Lockwood and Bob Gullotti).

### Regattabar

1 Bennett St.  
Cambridge, MA  
(617) 661-5000

[regattabarjazz.com](http://regattabarjazz.com)

The owners of this 220-seat venue in the Charles Hotel book local musicians and nationally known talent. Regattabar has been named best jazz club in New England by numerous publications.

### Scullers Jazz Club

400 Soldiers Field Rd.  
Boston, MA  
(617) 562-4111

[scullersjazz.com](http://scullersjazz.com)

For nearly 30 years, Scullers Jazz Club has been the spot for world-class jazz in Boston. The venue hosts local acts on Wednesday and Thursday, with top-of-the-bill acts flying in on weekends. Arturo Sandoval, The Bad Plus and John Pizzarelli all performed recently.

### Wally's Café Jazz Club

427 Massachusetts Ave.  
Boston, MA  
(617) 424-1408

[wallyscafe.com](http://wallyscafe.com)

This family-owned and operated jazz club has been around since 1947. Continuously running since its founding, this venue provides a forum where local music students can further develop their chops.

## NEW JERSEY

### Robin's Nest Rhythm & Blues

3103 Tremley Point Rd.  
Linden, NJ  
(908) 275-3043

[robinsnestrhythmandblues.com](http://robinsnestrhythmandblues.com)

Taking the self-bestowed title of "Jersey's best juke joint" seriously, Robin's Nest works hard to bring the spirit of the Mississippi Delta to New Jersey. Open six nights a week, Sunday is reserved for jazz.

### Shanghai Jazz

24 Main St.  
Madison, NJ  
(973) 822-2899

[shanghaijazz.com](http://shanghaijazz.com)

Shanghai Jazz, which celebrated its 20th anniversary recently, draws its inspiration from the Shanghai of the 1930s, when the Chinese city was referred to as "the Paris of the Orient." In addition to Asian cuisine, the club serves up a range of local and international jazz acts six nights a week.

### Trumpets Jazz Club

6 Depot Square  
Montclair, NJ  
(973) 744-2600

[trumpetsjazz.com](http://trumpetsjazz.com)

For more than three decades, Trumpets has been featuring jazz five nights a week. The venue also presents blues, world and classical music. Trumpets has the power



Village Vanguard in New York City

to attract touring jazz acts, too, such as legendary saxophonist Houston Person.

## NEW YORK

### 55 Bar

55 Christopher St.  
New York, NY  
(212) 929-9883

[55bar.com](http://55bar.com)

This basement gig spot in Greenwich Village, which hosts funk, blues and jazz, bills itself as “a Prohibition-Era dive bar.” Mike Stern, Manuel Valera and Melissa Stylianou were booked for December shows.

### Birdland

315 W. 44th St.

New York, NY  
(212) 581-3080

[birdlandjazz.com](http://birdlandjazz.com)

Birdland, in its third incarnation, continues to book the top acts in jazz—such as the Chucho Valdes-Joe Lovano Quintet, which appeared at the club in November—on a nightly basis. The original Birdland opened its doors nearly 70 years ago a block west from the jazz nexus on 52nd Street.

### Blue Note

131 W. Third St.  
New York, NY  
(212) 475-8592

[bluenote.net](http://bluenote.net)

Billed as the world’s finest jazz club, the Blue Note now has clubs in Milan, Hawaii,

Napa, Beijing and Tokyo. All the jazz titans of yesteryear graced the Blue Note stage; these days, jazz musicians like Chick Corea, Chris Botti and Victor Wooten play the storied surroundings for lengthy residencies.

### Club Bonafide

212 East 52nd St.  
New York, NY  
(646) 918-6189

[clubbonafide.com](http://clubbonafide.com)

While 52nd Street is no longer what it used to be during jazz’s New York Golden Age, Club Bonafide is doing its part to keep the music alive in such a historic place. Richard Bona co-owns the club, which presents artists such as Don Braden and Snarky Puppy’s Maz.

### Cornelia Street Café

29 Cornelia St.  
New York, NY  
(219) 989-9319

[corneliastreetcafe.com](http://corneliastreetcafe.com)

According to a mayoral proclamation, this Greenwich Village spot is “a culinary as well as a cultural landmark.” Serving the community since 1977, the cafe features a variety of musical performances as well as readings, a lecture series and other events. Recent jazz shows included appearances by Sam Friend and the Yotam Silberstein Quartet.

### Dizzy’s Club Coca-Cola

10 Columbus Circle, 5th Floor  
New York, NY  
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### [jazz.org/dizzys](http://jazz.org/dizzys)

Musicians at Dizzy's play in front of a floor-to-ceiling window that overlooks Columbus Circle, giving a cosmopolitan vibe to the proceedings. Adding to these surroundings is the music inside, which is hard to beat. Upcoming shows include James Morrison (Jan. 10–11), Nicholas Payton (Jan. 12–15) and Andrew Cyrille (Feb. 16).

### Fat Cat

75 Christopher St.  
New York, NY  
(212) 675-6056

### [fatcatmusic.org](http://fatcatmusic.org)

Every Monday at half-past midnight, New York musicians know they can head to Fat Cat to jam with a revolving cast of hosts. Earlier in the evening, listeners can hear some of the best jazz music the city has to offer.

### Iridium

1650 Broadway  
New York, NY  
(212) 582-2121

### [theiridium.com](http://theiridium.com)

The Iridium is famous in jazz circles, partially for the live albums recorded there, including Charlie Haden and Kenny Barron's *Night And The City* and Kenny Garrett's *Sketches Of MD*. Recently, jazz vocalist Hilary Kole as well as revered guitarists Joe Satriani and Albert Lee played there. The reunited Brand X is booked for Jan. 2–3.

### The Jazz Gallery

1160 Broadway, 5th floor  
New York, NY

(646) 494-3625

### [jazzgallery.org](http://jazzgallery.org)

Open Thursday through Saturday, this small jazz space has a mission of giving innovative jazz artists a space for collaboration and experimentation. Dayna Stevens, the Linda Oh Adventure Double Quartet and Jonathan Blake are among the recent performers.

### Jazz Standard

116 E. 27th St.  
New York, NY  
(212) 576-2232

### [jazzstandard.com](http://jazzstandard.com)

The Mingus Big Band has had a steady gig at the Standard since 2008. The New York jazz hotspot fills the remainder of its week with world-class jazz artists—and some of them enjoy lengthy residencies. Drummer Jeff "Tain" Watts' birthday celebration is scheduled for Jan. 19–22.

### (le) Poisson Rouge

158 Bleecker St.  
New York, NY  
(212) 505-3474

### [lpr.com](http://lpr.com)

Le Poisson Rouge does it all music-wise, but as a venue sitting on the same spot where jazz mecca The Village Gate once stood, the venue pays homage to that history by booking the top jazz acts in the country like Pharoah Sanders, Gregory Porter and Medeski Martin & Wood.

### Mezzrow

163 W. 10th St.  
New York, NY

(646) 476-4346

### [mezzrow.com](http://mezzrow.com)

The owners of Smalls Jazz Club also run the lounge and listening room Mezzrow, which gets its moniker from clarinetist Milton "Mezz" Mezzrow (1899–1972). The Greenwich Village club has a heavy piano focus, booking musicians like Mike LeDonne and Johnny O'Neal.

### Minton's

206 W. 118th St.  
New York, NY  
(212) 243-2222

### [mintonsharlem.com](http://mintonsharlem.com)

Formerly the storied Minton's Playhouse, Minton's reopened in 2013 to keep jazz history alive. Five days a week, club owners present top-notch jazz by the likes of the Emmet Cohen/Brian Lynch Quartet. Jam sessions take place every Friday at 11 p.m.

### ShapeShifter Lab

18 Whitwell Place  
Brooklyn, NY  
(646) 820-9452

### [shapeshifterlab.com](http://shapeshifterlab.com)

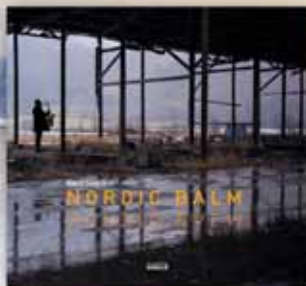
Creative Director Matthew Garrison and Director Fortuna Sung have created a performance space that offers a unique musical mix. Snarky Puppy has recorded and filmed shows there. Other performers have included Arturo O'Farrill and the Bruce Gertz Quintet.

### Smalls

183 W. 10th St.  
New York, NY  
(212) 252-5091

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**Andreas Ulvo:** piano · **Sigurd Hole:** bass  
**Jonas Howden Sjøvaag:** drums, perc.

This is the third studio album the norwegian saxophonist Karl Seglem recorded with his young Acoustic Quartet. It is exemplary for what it means when people talk about „magic“ in Jazz: discipline and freedom, trust and risk, feeling and energy. Plus: a lot of fun.

## Our Sense of Music ...



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Guest musicians: **Philipp Imdahl:** drums  
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Guitarist Dorado Schmitt (left) and vocalist Cyrille Aimée onstage at Birdland in New York City

#### smallslive.com

Unique among jazz clubs, Smalls actually serves as its own recording studio, with the club releasing live discs of past performers. Concerts, which happen every night of the week, can also be streamed on the club's website. This audio and video evidence is helping to build a historical record of jazz, officials say. Recent performers include Ralph Lalama and Bop Juice and the Winard-Haper Quintet.

#### Smoke

2751 Broadway  
New York, NY

(212) 864-6662

#### smokejazz.com

Seven nights a week, management packs just around 50 people into this small club to hear artists like Gary Bartz, Bobby Watson and Steve Wilson.

#### The Stone

Avenue C at 2nd St.  
New York, NY  
(212) 488-2705

#### thestonenyc.com

John Zorn founded The Stone as a performance space dedicated to avant-garde

and experimental music. This not-for-profit venue is all ages and has presented shows by Gerry Hemingway, Mephista and Marty Ehrlich.

#### The Village Vanguard

178 7th Ave. S.  
New York, NY  
(212) 255-4037

#### villagevanguard.com

With the Vanguard Jazz Orchestra holding court each Monday, and the biggest names in jazz playing lengthy residencies, the Vanguard is a must-see for jazz fans. Founded in 1935, the Vanguard has been the site for live albums by John Coltrane and Marc Ribot. The Ethan Iverson Quartet (featuring Tom Harrell) will be there Jan. 24–29.

#### PENNSYLVANIA

#### Chris' Jazz Café

1421 Sansom St.  
Philadelphia, PA  
(215) 568-3131

#### chrisjazzcafe.com

Chris' Jazz Café is the Philadelphia home of the heavy hitters; the club books musicians like Pat Martino, Orrin Evans and Joey DeFrancesco. There are hundreds of all-ages shows each year, and regional and local musicians perform often during the weekdays. Jam sessions are on Mondays.

#### Deer Head Inn

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#### deerheadinn.com

Deer Head Inn claims two titles: "Home for Jazz in the Poconos" and "the oldest continuously running" domestic jazz club. The venue hosts a Thursday evening jazz jam. In January, the venue booked Sue Giles & The Supreme Love Musicians and the Paul Jost Trio.

#### MCG Jazz

1815 Metropolitan St.  
Pittsburgh, PA  
(412) 322-0800

#### mcgjazz.org

For nearly 30 years, MCG Jazz has presented top-notch jazz talent alongside worthwhile educational programs. Past performers at its 350-seat music hall include Ramsey Lewis, Acoustic Alchemy and Monty Alexander.

#### South Jazz Parlor

600 N. Broad St.  
Philadelphia, PA  
(215) 600-0220

#### southrestaurant.net

Marcus Strickland, Orrin Evans' Captain Black Big Band and Walter Beasley have all recently performed at the South Jazz Parlor. The venue holds a weekly jam session with Michael Tozzi and Luke O'Reilly.

### WASHINGTON, D.C.

#### Blues Alley

1073 Wisconsin Ave. NW  
Washington, D.C.  
(202) 337-4141

#### bluesalley.com

When a venue claims it books jazz year 'round, it sometimes seems like a stretch. Blues Alley has literally booked artists for around 360 nights each year. Operating for more than 50 years, the club has made a name for itself by hosting artists like Arturo Sandoval, Jane Monheit, Cyrus Chestnut and Gary Burton. The staff is devoted to jazz education: The Blues Alley Jazz Society sponsors a summer camp and a youth jazz festival in addition to running a youth jazz orchestra.

#### KC JAZZ CLUB AT THE KENNEDY CENTER

2700 F Street NW  
Washington, D.C.  
(202) 416-8524

#### kennedy-center.org

Pianist Jason Moran is the artistic director for jazz at the Kennedy Center, overseeing bookings at a number of spaces inside the venue. Of those venues, the KC Jazz Club, which seats 160, is a setting for more intimate performances. The club books national acts like the Marquis Hill Blacktet and the Geoffrey Keezer Trio. Bands like the Maria Schneider Orchestra play at larger concert halls elsewhere in the Kennedy Center.

#### Twins Jazz Lounge

1344 U Street NW  
Washington, D.C.  
(202) 234-0072

#### twinsjazz.com

Students get half-price tickets for some Friday concerts at this U Street Corridor jazz landmark. Twins presents local, regional and international acts seven nights a week, also offering American, Ethiopian and Caribbean cuisine.



Vocalist Sara Serpa performs at Los Angeles jazz club the Blue Whale.

## Blue Whale Nurtures Creativity

It's 8 p.m. on a Friday night at the Blue Whale, the Little Tokyo neighborhood's prime jazz outpost. Tucked away in a nondescript third-floor corner of the mall on Onizuka Street, it's not a spot that unsuspecting tourists would wander past. People who come to the listening room know why they're here.

In a space of seven years, the Blue Whale has become the most consistent Los Angeles showcase for cutting-edge jazz. Local artists—some right out of college—and longtime veterans play here. Billy Childs, Peter Erskine and Bill Cunliffe might break in new bands, and touring groups led by Satoko Fujii, Allison Miller and Avishai Cohen all stop at the Whale.

Tonight, proprietor Joon Lee works the front door, collecting the \$15 cover fee. Some nights it's \$10, some nights \$20. He's cordial but firm. The challenges of booking new music seven nights a week has sharpened Lee's eye for the bottom line. But when two young women step out in the middle of the first piece and protest that this isn't their idea of jazz, he cheerfully refunds their money.

Late-night TV host Jimmy Kimmel's pianist, Jeff Babko, leads an aggregation tonight. Babko grew up in the Santa Clarita Valley and cut his teeth in outfits like Bone Soir, the five-trombone group headed by George Bohanon. "Jeff's one of the guys who's always trying new things for the room," Lee explained. "One night he had a mannequin in the middle of the room, a VHS TV in front and a balloon artist off to the side."

Lee allows his artists the freedom to alter the interior if it figures into their presentations. Pianist-composer Josh Nelson is well known

for his multimedia extravaganzas at the Whale. The room is essentially two rooms: the bar near the front door and the playing area.

The 2,200-square-foot room can accommodate 150 people, and Babko has come close to filling it. He heads a rhythm section that is visited by tenor saxophonist Chris Speed and vocalist Nayanna Holley.

A native of Seoul, South Korea, Lee was an unlikely candidate for impresario. As an 18-year-old architecture student in Brooklyn, he had his jazz epiphany when he heard Chick Corea and Bobby McFerrin perform as a duet. "I dropped out and decided I had to be close to music," Lee recalled.

"I came out here because I wanted to start something new," he said.

Lee was surprised at the number of fine musicians in the music programs of UCLA, USC, Cal State Northridge and CalArts. "They get better and better each year," he said. "But I saw that it was hard for them to find places to play. I want this place to be an extension of school for them—I want them to stay in that creativity zone."

Babko got an idea of the room's worth when he visited New York's Jazz Standard club recently: "I went back to say hello to the guys in Antonio Hart's band, and they were all talking about the Blue Whale."

Asked about the parameters of his booking policy, Lee said, "I don't mind if it's straight-ahead jazz, but it has to be really swinging. I favor groups with their own identity. I want them to try new things here. I love to see them being creative—that's what I'm always after."

—Kirk Silsbee

# SOUTH



The Jazz Corner in Hilton Head, South Carolina

COURTESY THE JAZZ CORNER

## FLORIDA

### Blue Bamboo Center for the Arts

1905 Kentucky Ave.  
Winter Park, FL  
(407) 636-9951

This venue offers gallery space and an assortment of jazz, classical and world music performances, but management also makes room for spoken word, theater and dance. Live shows happen most nights of the week.

### Bradfordville Blues Club

7152 Moses Lane  
Tallahassee, FL  
(850) 906-0766

[bradfordvilleblues.com](http://bradfordvilleblues.com)

This gem of a club hosts regional and local blues musicians in a rather remote location: Bradfordville is situated among fields and oak trees. Past performers include Joe Louis Walker and the Backtrack Blues Band.

### Heidi's Jazz Club

7 North Orlando Ave.  
Cocoa Beach, FL  
(321) 783-4559

[heidisjazzclub.com](http://heidisjazzclub.com)

Celebrating its 25th anniversary in 2017, Heidi's presents local and regional jazz acts five nights a week. Jam sessions are held on Sundays.

## GEORGIA

### Velvet Note

4075 Old Milton Pkwy.  
Alpharetta, GA  
(855) 583-5838

[thevelvetnote.com](http://thevelvetnote.com)

Velvet Note, 30-minutes outside midtown Atlanta, sits in a nondescript shopping center. But the artists it hosts, including Christian McBride and Wycliffe Gordon, are memorable. Thursday nights are open-mic.

## LOUISIANA

### Blue Nile

532 Frenchmen St.  
New Orleans, LA  
(504) 948-2583

[bluenilelive.com](http://bluenilelive.com)

One of the oldest music clubs on Frenchmen Street, the Blue Nile routinely books local, national and international artists. Musicians perform every night of the week on two stages.

### d.b.a

618 Frenchmen St.  
New Orleans, LA  
(504) 942-3731

[dbaneworleans.com](http://dbaneworleans.com)

Established in 2000, d.b.a. ownership touts that they own one of the first bars in New Orleans to go smoke-free. Musicians booked regularly include the Treme Brass Band, Walter "Wolfman" Washington and Little Freddie King.

### Fritzel's European Jazz Pub

733 Bourbon St.  
New Orleans, LA  
(504) 586-4800

[fritzelsjazz.net](http://fritzelsjazz.net)

This Dixieland and traditional jazz haunt is billed as the oldest operating jazz club in New Orleans. Located in a historic building from the 1830s, Fritzel's has been booking live jazz in the space since 1969.

### The Maison

508 Frenchmen St.  
New Orleans, LA  
(504) 371-5543

[maisonfrenchmen.com](http://maisonfrenchmen.com)

Featuring live music seven nights a week, The Maison books jazz during the dinner hours. After dinner, the venue's two stages are reserved for brass bands, funk acts and national touring groups.

### The Maple Leaf Bar

8316 Oak St.  
New Orleans, LA  
(504) 866-9359

[mapleleafbar.com](http://mapleleafbar.com)

When this Carrollton bar and venue opened in the mid-'70s, Andrew Hall's Society Jazz Band kicked off a seven-year run of weekly gigs. The Leaf now attracts jazz, r&b and zydeco acts that try to live up to the Society band's longevity.

### Irvin Mayfield's Jazz Playhouse

300 Bourbon St.  
New Orleans, LA  
(504) 553-2299

[sonesta.com/us/louisiana/new-orleans/royal-sonesta-new-orleans/jazzplayhouse](http://sonesta.com/us/louisiana/new-orleans/royal-sonesta-new-orleans/jazzplayhouse)

The Jazz Playhouse, located in the Royal Sonesta Hotel, was founded by trumpeter Irvin Mayfield, who ended his seven-year residency at the club last fall. The music goes on with acts like The James Rivers Movement and Gerald French and the Original Tuxedo Jazz Band.

### Palm Court Jazz Cafe

1204 Decatur St.  
New Orleans, LA  
(504) 525-0200

[palmcourtjazzcafe.com](http://palmcourtjazzcafe.com)

Offering traditional jazz performance by local and regional acts five nights a week, the French Quarter venue has been called a "mecca for jazz."

### Preservation Hall

726 St. Peter St.  
New Orleans, LA  
(504) 522-2841

### preservationhall.com

Open nearly every night of the year for between three and four performances, it's no wonder Preservation Hall is one of the most revered places to hear jazz in New Orleans. The all-ages venue books national, regional and local acts.

### Prime Example

1909 N Broad St.  
New Orleans, LA  
(504) 701-9007

[primeexamplejazz.com](http://primeexamplejazz.com)

Holding a jam session each Tuesday, Prime Example stacks the rest of the week with at least two shows that put the spotlight on New Orleans jazz artists.

### SNUG HARBOR JAZZ BISTRO

626 Frenchmen St.  
New Orleans, LA  
(504) 949-0696

[snugjazz.com](http://snugjazz.com)

This venue has presented jazz for more than 30 years, booking artists like Henry Butler, Ingrid Jensen and Dr. Lonnie Smith, with music every night of the week. In December, Ellis Marsalis, Delfeayo Marsalis, Jason Marsalis, Stanton Moore and Cindy Scott played.

### Spotted Cat

623 Frenchmen St.  
New Orleans, LA  
(504) 943-3887

[spottedcatmusicclub.com](http://spottedcatmusicclub.com)

Hosting local and national jazz and blues acts every night of the week, the Spotted Cat—or "The Cat," as its known to locals—picks in musicians for three sets nightly. Recent shows included performances by Meschiya Lake & The Little Big Horns and The New Orleans Cottonmouth Kings.

### Three Muses

536 Frenchmen St.  
New Orleans, LA  
(504) 252-4801

[3musesnola.com](http://3musesnola.com)

7537 Maple St.  
New Orleans, LA  
(504) 510-2749

[threemusesmaple.com](http://threemusesmaple.com)

Chef Daniel Esses prepares the food at Three Muses for customers looking for a blend of local jazz and brass bands. Recent performers included Tom McDermott, John Rodli and the Shotgun Jazz Band.

### Tipitina's

501 Napoleon Ave.  
New Orleans, LA  
(504) 895-8477

[tipitinas.com](http://tipitinas.com)

Named after the New Orleans standard "Tipitina" (composed and recorded by Professor Longhair), this venue began as a neighborhood juke joint and is now a city staple. The Tipitina's Foundation, dedicated to preserving Louisiana's musical culture, provides instruments to local public schools.



## MISSISSIPPI

### Ground Zero Blues Club

387 Delta Ave.  
Clarksdale, MS  
(662) 621-9009

[groundzerobluesclub.com](http://groundzerobluesclub.com)

Morgan Freeman, a long-time Mississippi resident, owns Ground Zero, a club that sits at the birthplace of Delta blues. Located next door to the Delta Blues Museum, the venue books bands like Terry Wall & The Wallbangers and Heavy Suga' & The Sweetones.

## NORTH CAROLINA

### Beyù Caffé

341 W. Main St.  
Durham, NC  
(919) 683-1058

[beyucaffe.com](http://beyucaffe.com)

The jazz club in the venue, which is really a combination restaurant/club/coffee shop, hosts acts that lean toward the funk and fusion ends of the jazz realm. The club's Be Connected series has featured a conversation with the lead singer of My Brightest Diamond and a special presentation of Gerald Clayton's Piedmont Blues.

## SOUTH CAROLINA

### THE JAZZ CORNER

1000 William Hilton Pkwy.  
Hilton Head Island, SC  
(843) 842-8620

[thejazzcorner.com](http://thejazzcorner.com)

Even jazz buffs on vacation need a reliable spot to hear some music, and the Jazz Corner has been filling that need for Hilton Head Island visitors since 1999. A handful of the musicians that play the venue end up with weekly residencies, and national and regional jazz musicians perform seven nights a week.

## TENNESSEE

### Alfred's on Beale

197 Beale St.  
Memphis, TN  
(901) 525-3711

[alfredsonbeale.com](http://alfredsonbeale.com)

Alfred's opened on the famous Beale Street in 1986 as the home of the Memphis Jazz Orchestra. The 17-piece big band plays at the club on most Sundays, and the club books a variety of acts during the rest of the week.

### The Jazz Cave

1319 Adams St.  
Nashville, TN  
(615) 242-5299

[nashvillejazz.org](http://nashvillejazz.org)

The Nashville Jazz Workshop offers jazz vocal and instrumental classes, presents community workshops and books shows at The Jazz Cave.

## TEXAS

### Carmen's De La Calle

320 North Flores  
San Antonio, TX

(210) 281-4349

[carmensdelacalle.com](http://carmensdelacalle.com)

Each Thursday, this Spanish restaurant hosts jazz performances. Other nightly performances are dedicated to flamenco and world music.

### Cezanne

4100 Montrose Blvd.  
Houston, TX  
(832) 592-7464

[cezannejazz.com](http://cezannejazz.com)

Cezanne shines the spotlight on regional jazz talent on Friday and Saturday nights for a \$10 cover.

### Elephant Room

315 Congress Ave.  
Austin, TX  
(512) 473-2279

[elephantroom.com](http://elephantroom.com)

This basement jazz bar serves up a wide variety of local jazz and blues acts, including Tonic Big Band and Blackbird 3. Admission is free on weekdays, and there's a small cover charge on the weekend.

### Scat Jazz Lounge

111 W. 4th St.  
Fort Worth, TX  
(817) 870-9100

[scatjazzlounge.com](http://scatjazzlounge.com)

Located in the basement of the historic Woolworth building, Scat focuses on straight-ahead jazz. Local, regional and national acts perform six nights a week.





Helen Sung performs at the Sequoia Room in Fort Bragg, California.

# Sequoia Room Caters to Artists, Listeners

**D**oug Moody has successfully combined his passions for business, jazz, philanthropy and beer-crafting into a single lifestyle. As co-owner and senior vice president of North Coast Brewing Co. in Fort Bragg, California—located on the Pacific coast about 175 miles north of San Francisco—he has effectively committed his company's name-brand support to a host of jazz initiatives throughout the United States as well as close to home.

One of Moody's endeavors is the Sequoia Room, Northern California's newest jazz club. "Probably my favorite thing to do in this world is to listen to great live jazz while enjoying a great craft beer," Moody said. "And since the closest jazz club was nearly 200 miles away, we decided to build one right here in Fort Bragg."

Moody and his business partner, Mark Ruedrich, North Coast's president, founder and original brewmaster, spared no expense in converting the banquet room of the company's Taproom into a bona fide jazz club. Seating 70 comfortably, the Sequoia Room is one of the finest-sounding jazz clubs in the country. "It was important that if we were going to do this, we were going to do it right, that is, truly serve the music, the musicians and the audience," Moody explained. "So we brought in the best sound and light people, bought a beautiful grand piano, bass amp and drum kit, and decorated the room with a cozy jazz vibe. We always have the piano meticulously tuned, do a thorough sound check and adjust the stage lighting for each artist; and we employ one of

the best sound engineers in the area. We even have a fixed video camera focused on the pianist's fingers so everyone in the room can see on the screen what he or she is playing."

Since opening in March 2015, the Sequoia Room has experienced notable success, often hosting sold-out performances. However, the room does not depend strictly on the door and food-and-beverage receipts to keep its doors open. Rather, the club is subsidized in part by North Coast's marketing budget. "We don't expect the room alone to cover our costs," Moody explained. "This is really a labor of love and a marketing program for our commitment to jazz. I'm really proud of the scene we've created here, as our goal from the beginning has been to create an environment that allows these remarkable artists to perform at the absolute highest level. We feel that by paying them well, providing them with great ocean-view accommodations and offering them great food and craft beer helps make that happen. They also have a beautiful room in which to perform with state-of-the-art sound and lights, and an audience that comes to listen."

Artists who have performed at the venue include Alan Broadbent, the Brubeck Brothers, Chico Freeman, Giacomo Gates, Terreon Gully, Holly Hoffmann, Jeremy Pelt and Helen Sung.

"I have never met a more altruistic person than Doug Moody," remarked saxophonist Claire Daly. "His passion for the music and his support of the jazz community are second to none. The Sequoia Room is not only a wonder-

ful place to play, it's an old-school experience of being respected and treated as such."

Moody and North Coast are deeply committed to jazz philanthropy. Maker of Brother Thelonious Belgian Style Abbey Ale, North Coast donates a percentage from every case sold to the education programs of the Thelonious Monk Institute of Jazz—a contribution recently exceeding the \$1 million mark. "The partnership between the Thelonious Monk Institute of Jazz and the North Coast Brewing Company is such a necessary one on a really basic level," said Monk Institute Chairman Herbie Hancock. "They really help us keep the lights on."

North Coast is also the official beer sponsor of many jazz festivals, including those based in Monterey, California, and Newport, Rhode Island. It also underwrites jazz programming for radio stations nationwide, including KOZT in Northern California, where Moody personally hosts the Sunday-night show *Jazz from the Coast* (which streams online at [kozt.com](http://kozt.com)).

Moody lives his passion, enriching copious lives in the process. "It's not just about producing a great product like Brother Thelonious and making money, but what you do with that money, what you do with your life," Moody said. "For me it's about the good you can do, the difference you can make. I feel it's an honor and a privilege, not to mention an absolute joy, to support the art form, the artists who play it, and especially the students who want to bring it into the future."

—JB Dyas, *PhD*



# MIDWEST

## ILLINOIS

### Andy's Jazz Club

11 E. Hubbard St.  
Chicago, IL  
(312) 642-6805

[andysjazzclub.com](http://andysjazzclub.com)

For more than four decades, this downtown club has presented Chicago's top musicians playing everything from traditional jazz and swing to bebop. Regular local performers include the Mike Smith Quartet and the Eric Schneider-Pat Mallinger Quintet.

### B.L.U.E.S.

2519 N. Halsted St.  
Chicago, IL  
(773) 528-1012

[chicagobluesbar.com](http://chicagobluesbar.com)

Wednesday is the night for blues jamming in Chicago's Lincoln Park neighborhood. In addition to its weekly sessions, B.L.U.E.S. books local and regional talent most nights each week. The bill is filled with acts like Vance "Guitar" Kelly, Pistol Pete and Ronnie Hicks.

### Buddy Guy's Legends

700 S. Wabash Ave.  
Chicago, IL  
(312) 427-1190

[buddyguy.com](http://buddyguy.com)

This world-renowned venue hosts emerging blues artists and national acts in addition to a monthlong Buddy Guy residency each January. Recent performers include Bobby Rush, Linsey Alexander and Omar Coleman.

### Constellation

3111 N. Western Ave.  
Chicago, IL  
(312) 555-5555

[constellation-chicago.com](http://constellation-chicago.com)

Four-year-old Constellation, which is located on Chicago's Northwest side, was founded by drummer/composer Mike Reed to create a space for progressive jazz and contemporary classical music. Artists include the Hamid Drake, Michael Zerang and Matt Ulery.

### The Green Mill

4802 N. Broadway Ave.  
Chicago, IL  
(773) 878-5552

[greenmilljazz.com](http://greenmilljazz.com)

This historic venue, the longest continuously running jazz club in Chicago, offers the music of today, while also maintaining the spirit of the 1930s and '40s, thanks to its decor. The venue books the best in local, regional and national talent, covering a broad spectrum of jazz styles. Recent shows have included performances by Matt Wilson and Bob Mintzer.

### The Iron Post

120 S. Race St.  
Urbana, IL  
(217) 337-7678

[facebook.com/theironpost](http://facebook.com/theironpost)

Located in downtown Urbana, this college-town restaurant and bar presents music



The Green Mill in Chicago

MICHAEL JACKSON

nearly every day of the week. Recent performers include the Jeff Helgesen Quintet and the University of Illinois Sax Combo. The "jazz jam" happens every Wednesday night in January and February.

### Jazz Showcase

806 S. Plymouth Ct.  
Chicago, IL  
(312) 360-0234

[jazzshowcase.com](http://jazzshowcase.com)

Founded in 1964 by impresario and NEA Jazz Master Joe Segal, the Jazz Showcase routinely books nationally known artists for extended residencies. Stefon Harris recently played for four consecutive nights with the Columbia Jazz Ensemble, and the venue also recently hosted the Larry Coryell Trio and pianist Monty Alexander.

### Kingston Mines

2548 N. Halsted St.  
Chicago, IL  
(773) 477-4646

[kingstonmines.com](http://kingstonmines.com)

In operation for more than four decades, Kingston Mines is a well-known blues bar that hosts live music on two stages. Live music is booked seven days a week and lasts until around 4 a.m. Recent performers include the Mike Wheeler Blues Band, Eddie Shaw and Byther Smith.

### SPACE

1245 Chicago Ave.  
Evanston, IL  
(847) 492-8860

[evanston.space.com](http://evanston.space.com)

Presenting a wide variety of genres, SPACE is an intimate venue that offers great sight lines and an excellent sound system. Top jazz acts like The Bad Plus, Gary Burton, Stanley Clarke and Cécile McLorin Salvant have played there, as have many blues and Americana stars.

### Winter's Jazz Club

465 N. McClurg Ct.  
Chicago, IL  
(312) 344-1270

[wintersjazzclub.com](http://wintersjazzclub.com)

This new venue, with the motto "Live Jazz overlooking the Ogden Slip," presents straight-ahead jazz in an intimate setting. The listening room seats 125 and the bar seats 24. There's an emphasis on vocalists, and the booked December shows included Alyssa Algood, Alfonso Ponticelli, Kimberly Gordon, Rose Colella, Spider Saloff and Paul Marinaro.

## INDIANA

### Chatterbox Jazz Club

435 Massachusetts Ave.  
Indianapolis, IN  
(317) 636-0584

[chatterboxjazz.com](http://chatterboxjazz.com)

Offering jazz each night of the week, Chatterbox is located in the center of the Massachusetts Avenue cultural district. There is no cover charge on Sunday through Thursday.

### THE JAZZ KITCHEN

5377 N. College Ave.  
Indianapolis, IN  
(317) 253-4900

[thejazzkitchen.com](http://thejazzkitchen.com)

The Jazz Kitchen has been the place to see the best in jazz in Indianapolis for more than two decades. Acts like John McLaughlin, Terri Lyne Carrington and Walter Beasley have recently played at the Jazz Kitchen.

## MICHIGAN

### Baker's Keyboard Lounge

20510 Livernois Ave.  
Detroit, MI  
(313) 345-6300

### **theofficialbakerskeyboardlounge.com**

This 99-seat club, decorated in an Art Deco style, began booking pianists in 1934. Though it began life as a venue that focused on pianists, the lounge, which has a piano-shaped bar, books a range of jazz acts.

### **Bert's Market Place**

2727 Russell St.  
Detroit, MI  
(313) 567-2030

### **bertsentertainmentcomplex.com**

Bert's Market Place, which is located in Detroit's Eastern Market District, is a combo soul food restaurant/cocktail lounge/theater that hosts jazz each Thursday and Friday. Blues acts play on Saturday.

### **Cliff Bell's**

2030 Park Ave.  
Detroit, MI  
(313) 961-2543

### **cliffbells.com**

The original club was founded in 1935, and the current incarnation of Cliff Bell's opened in 2005. The venue, which is located in the heart of Detroit's entertainment district, books mostly local acts. Nationally known acts have stopped by, too; The Bad Plus recently performed there recently.

### **Dirty Dog Jazz Cafe**

97 Kercheval Ave.  
Gross Pointe, MI  
(313) 882-5299

### **dirtydogjazz.com**

This English-style pub, which opened in

2008, has hosted the top local and regional musicians, including Alvin Waddles and Vanessa Rubin.

### **Jazz Café at Music Hall**

350 Madison St.  
Detroit, MI  
(313) 887-8500

### **jazzcafedetroit.com**

For nearly a decade, The Jazz Café at Music Hall has served Detroit residents looking for jazz and culture. The venue offers a variety of musical performances, poetry readings and, of course, top-notch jazz.

### **Kerrytown Concert House**

415 N. 4th Ave.  
Ann Arbor, MI  
(734) 769-2999

### **kerrytownconcerthouse.com**

This 110-seat venue is home to the renowned Edgefest jazz festival. Steps away from Michigan Stadium, Kerrytown presents established jazz acts, classical musicians and cabaret artists. Jamie Baum and Rudy Royston were booked for shows in December.

## **MINNESOTA**

### **Dakota Jazz Club**

1010 Nicollet Avenue  
Minneapolis, MN 55403  
(612) 332-5299

### **dakotacooks.com**

The Dakota Jazz Club, one of the top venues in the country, opened in 1985. After

more than three decades of presenting internationally acclaimed musicians from numerous genres, the club continues to thrive. In December, Tower of Power played four nights of shows, and John Scofield will play two sets on Feb. 25.

### **Jazz Central Studios**

407 Central Ave. SE  
Minneapolis, MN  
(616) 729-1799

Jazz Central Studios is a nonprofit that lists its mission as "strengthening the Twin Cities jazz community by offering a live performance/educational environment that nurtures artistic growth." As a venue, it books mostly local and regional jazz artists.

## **MISSOURI**

### **The Blue Room**


1616 E. 18th St.  
Kansas City, MO  
(816) 474-8463

### **club.americanjazzmuseum.org**

The Blue Room, which is named after a storied hotel that brought music to the city in the 1930s, is the performance space of the American Jazz Museum. Big bands perform the last Monday of every month.

### **Ferring Jazz Bistro**

**The Harold & Dorothy Steward Center for Jazz**  
3536 Washington Avenue  
St. Louis, MO 63103



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(314) 571-6000

[jazzstl.org](http://jazzstl.org)

The revamped Jazz Bistro is part of the Harold & Dorothy Steward Center for Jazz. The venue hosts national acts like the Vijay Iyer Trio, Dianne Reeves, the Matt Wilson Trio and Kurt Elling in a 200-seat venue.

### Murry's

3107 Green Meadows Way

Columbia, MO

(573) 442-4969

[murrysrestaurant.net](http://murrysrestaurant.net)

For more than three decades, this 130-seat venue has been making good on its promise of "good food, good jazz and good people." The venue has a frequent solo and combo performer in pianist Tom Andes, and Leighton Rhoden performs on Tuesdays and Thursdays. Murry's has served as the main concert space for the "We Always Swing" Jazz Series since 1997.

## OHIO

### BLU Jazz+

47 E. Market St.

Akron, OH

(330) 252-1190

[blujazzakron.com](http://blujazzakron.com)

The photo gallery and music venue BLU Jazz+ is located in the historic arts district of downtown Akron. Open Wednesday through Saturday, the venue presents local and internationally known jazz artists, such as JD Allen and Joey DeFrancesco.

### Nighttown

12387 Cedar Rd.

Cleveland, OH

(216) 795-0550

[nighttowncleveland.com](http://nighttowncleveland.com)

Nighttown, which is named for the red-light district in James Joyce's *Ulysses*, has been an Irish staple in Cleveland for more than five decades. The owners book national and international jazz, rock and world music artists. Jazz stars like Ken Peplowski and Dominick Farinacci have played there.

## WISCONSIN

### The Jazz Estate

2423 N. Murray Ave.

Milwaukee, WI

(414) 964-9923

[jazzestate.com](http://jazzestate.com)

The Jazz Estate has been hosting some of the best local and national jazz musicians for decades. Past performers include Chris Potter, Danilo Pérez, Eric Alexander, Conrad Herwig, Brian Lynch, Arturo O'Farrill and Jim Rotondi.

### Jazz Gallery Center for the Arts

926 E. Center St.

Milwaukee, WI

(414) 374-4722

[riverwestart.org](http://riverwestart.org)

The Jazz Gallery presents local musicians, as well as a few national acts, such as Jackie Allen. There is a strong emphasis on community-building and the arts. In addition to presenting concerts, the center showcases local visual art and instruction.



Trumpeter Chris Botti (right) performs with his band, including violinist Lucia Micarelli (left), at Blue Note Napa, a new jazz venue in Napa, California.

COURTESY BLUE NOTE NAPA

# Blue Note Takes Root in Napa

On opening night of Blue Note Napa in late October, a fashionable and excited crowd queued on the Main Street sidewalk for the Chris Botti band's late set. The outdoor hanging banners looked familiar to those who had visited other Blue Note locations, and the indoor decor of the ground floor venue had many of the flagship Greenwich Village location's visual trademarks.

The trumpeter's group seemed especially energized on Oct. 25. Violinist Lucia Micarelli, who portrayed Annie in the HBO series *Treme*, was back with the band for its three-night run at the new club. And Taylor Eigsti, a Bay Area native who platoons the piano chair with Geoffrey Keezer, was on hand to make his Northern California debut with Botti's hearty road warriors.

"It has a lot of the same sort of charm and flavor of the New York club," Botti observed. "Even the chairs are all in the same place." Rectangular tables are lined up by the bandstand, as is the case in New York, in front of a series of booths and two rows of bar seating.

"We work with the licensees on everything in terms of the design and the sound and the lights," explained Steve Bensusan, Blue Note Entertainment Group president. "There are certain elements that are pretty consistent in terms of the tables and the table medallions and how we like to have the curtain and the sign right behind the artists' heads."

Blue Note Napa joins a roster that also includes three locations in Japan (Tokyo, Osaka and Nagoya), as well as clubs in Hawaii, Beijing and Milan. Situated in picturesque downtown Napa, the 150-capacity room is part of the 137-year-old Napa Valley Opera House.

The idea of opening a jazz space in Northern California's famed wine country came to Blue Note Napa Managing Director Ken Tesler about five years ago. The East Coast native had regularly been visiting his brother, who moved

out to the San Francisco Bay Area a decade-and-a-half ago, and would take advantage of the proximity to Napa's signature wineries.

"During one of those numerous wine-tasting trips, it came to me that a Blue Note would do wonderfully out here," Tesler said. "And I'd love to move out here and run it."

"I've been doing business with the Bensusans—the family that owns the Blue Note brand—going on 10 years and was very familiar with the brand," he continued. Tesler was producer and promoter for the popular All Points West Music & Arts Festival, which ran from 2008 through 2009, and was also hired to produce the Rock the Bells hip-hop festival and the Governor's Ball Music Festival.

When City Winery terminated its occupancy of the Napa Valley Opera House at the end of 2015, Tesler was able to secure his ideal location. Tesler moved West the following April and started ramping up staffing. He also began booking touring acts and local musicians, which is done through the central New York office. By spring, he plans to have 6:30 p.m. and 9 p.m. sets Tuesday through Sunday nights, with brunch shows Saturday and Sunday.

The food and beverage offerings on opening night were appropriately noteworthy for the setting. "The food blows away any jazz club I've ever been to," Botti opined. "Napa's a 'foodie' city, so most of those tourists have a very refined taste for wine and food."

Blue Note Napa has dates booked as far out as June, with the Pat Martino Trio playing in mid-March and Delfeayo Marsalis' quartet performing in late May.

Bensusan revealed that the Blue Note franchise plans to open a Denver location in mid-2018. "We're really trying to fill in the gaps with Blue Notes in places where it would make sense to route artists," he said. "We are ... putting out the word that we are looking for local partners and local franchisees."

—Yoshi Kato

# WEST



Yoshi's in Oakland, California

## ARIZONA

### Elliott's On Congress

135 E. Congress St.  
Tucson, AZ  
(520) 622-5500

[elliottsoncongress.com](http://elliottsoncongress.com)

Elliott's holds the Jazz Guild jam every Monday night starting at 9 p.m. Tommy Tucker plays blues on Tuesdays.

### The Nash

110 E. Roosevelt St.  
Phoenix, AZ  
(602) 795-0464

[thenash.org](http://thenash.org)

The Nash is owned by the nonprofit Jazz in Arizona. Managing Director Kate Hastings helps Executive Director Joel Robin Goldenthal book touring acts, local players, student musicians and educational programs.

### Pastiche

3025 N. Campbell Ave.  
Tucson, AZ  
(520) 325-3333

[pastiche.com](http://pastiche.com)

Weekends are given over to jazz at this restaurant near the University of Arizona campus. Drummer Pete Swan performs on Fridays and Sundays.

## NORTHERN CALIFORNIA

### BACH DANCING & DYNAMITE SOCIETY

311 Miranda Road  
Half Moon Bay, CA  
(650) 726-4143

[bachddsoc.org](http://bachddsoc.org)

The Bach Dancing & Dynamite Society presents concerts every Sunday afternoon. The nonprofit organization has been presenting jazz, classical and world music at the Douglas Beach House for more than 50 years. Among the jazz stars who have appeared there are Billy Hart, Sonny Fortune and Grace Kelly. Upcoming shows include Donny McCaslin (Feb. 12), The Cookers (Feb. 19) and Nicholas Payton (Feb. 26).

### Blue Note Napa

1030 Main St.

Napa, CA  
(707) 880-2300

[bluenotenapa.com](http://bluenotenapa.com)

Situated in the first floor of the historic Napa Valley Opera House, Blue Note Napa is an extension of the famed New York nightclub. Karrin Allyson is scheduled for Jan. 12-15.

### KUUMBWA JAZZ CENTER

320 Cedar St.  
Santa Cruz, CA  
(831) 427-2227

[kuumbwajazz.org](http://kuumbwajazz.org)

Kuumba Jazz, which formed in 1975, is a nonprofit organization that presents a variety of community-enrichment events at its venue. It books regional and national jazz acts in its 200-seat listening room. Recent performers include Chester Thompson and Mike Stern. The organization also books large acts at nearby venues.

### Savanna Jazz

1189 Laurel St.  
San Carlos, CA  
(415) 624-4549

[savannajazz.com](http://savannajazz.com)

This venue combines a sports bar with a jazz club. Guitarist and author Pascal Bokar runs the club, and he performs frequently with his band. Bokar books local, regional and international jazz talent.

### SEQUOIA ROOM

444 N. Main St.  
Fort Bragg, CA  
(707) 964-3400

[northcoastbrewing.com/calendar](http://northcoastbrewing.com/calendar)

On Friday and Saturday nights, the North Coast Brewing Company's Sequoia Room presents live jazz. For dinner jazz, there is no cover, but occasionally the venue will book ticketed concerts with nationally known acts. Among the jazz stars who have performed there are the Brubeck Brothers, Chico Freeman, Helen Sung and Jeremy Pelt.

### The Sound Room

2147 Broadway  
Oakland, CA  
(510) 496-4180

[soundroom.org](http://soundroom.org)

Bay Area Jazz and Arts, a nonprofit organization, presents and promotes jazz at The Sound Room. Students from the Oakland School for the Arts perform once a month.

### YOSHI'S

510 Embarcadero West  
Oakland, CA  
(510) 238-9200

[yoshis.com/oakland](http://yoshis.com/oakland)

Yoshi's, which started in 1972, is still going strong after its attempt at the San Francisco market foundered in early 2015. The Oakland hot spot seats 310 patrons, who can eat Japanese cuisine as they listen to the hottest jazz musicians and comedians in the nation. The Tommy Igoo Groove Conspiracy and the Count Basie Orchestra both recently performed at Yoshi's.

## SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA

### The Baked Potato

3787 Cahuenga Blvd.  
Studio City, CA  
(818) 980-1615

[thebakedpotato.com](http://thebakedpotato.com)

Don Randi of The Wrecking Crew opened the Baked Potato more than 45 years ago, and it has since become the go-to place for fans of jazz and baked potatoes. The Thom Rotella 4-tet with Ernie Watts recently performed.

### Blue Whale

123 Astronaut E. S. Onizuka Street #301  
Los Angeles, CA  
(213) 620-0908

[bluewhalemusic.com](http://bluewhalemusic.com)

Situated in the Little Tokyo neighborhood of Los Angeles, this space serves as an art gallery and live jazz venue. Among the jazz shows in December were Steve Coleman, Anthony Wilson and Walter Smith III.

### Catalina Bar & Grill

6725 W. Sunset Blvd.  
Los Angeles, CA  
(323) 466-2210

[catalinajazzclub.com](http://catalinajazzclub.com)

Catalina Bar & Grill has hosted all the jazz greats over the years. Recent performers include Ron Carter, Gordon Goodwin's Big Phat Band and the Mike Stern Quartet.

### LOBERO THEATRE

33. E Canon Perdido St.  
Santa Barbara, CA  
(805) 963-0761

[lobero.com](http://lobero.com)

Constructed in 1873, the historic Lobero Theatre has hosted such luminaries of yesteryear as Clark Gable, Ingrid Bergman and Igor Stravinsky. In the middle of last century, the venue began showcasing the biggest names in jazz. Contemporary bookings mix jazz, rock and classical performers with other cultural events. Upcoming shows include Lucinda Williams (Jan. 17) and Hot Tuna (Feb. 17).

### Upstairs at Vitello's

4349 Tujunga Ave.  
Studio City, CA  
(818) 769-0905

[vitellosjazz.com](http://vitellosjazz.com)

This Italian restaurant was known as the Rat Pack's hangout. Today, the E Spot Lounge, located just above the restaurant, is a place for jazz, blues, Latin and r&b.

### Vibrato Grill Jazz

2930 N. Beverly Glen Circle  
Los Angeles, CA  
(310) 474-9400

[vibratogrilljazz.com](http://vibratogrilljazz.com)

Legendary trumpeter Herb Alpert's L.A. restaurant presents nationally known jazz talent along with big names from the world of pop and classic rock.

## COLORADO

### DazzleJazz



930 Lincoln St.  
Denver, CO  
(303) 839-5100

**dazzlejazz.com**

DazzleJazz books jazz seven nights a week. Upcoming shows include Karrin Allyson (Jan. 24–25) and John Abercrombie (Feb. 17–18).

**El Chapultepec**

1962 Market St.  
Denver, CO  
(303) 295-9126

**thepeclodo.com**

El Chapultepec features regular live jazz, late hours and Mexican food. Mondays are reserved for an open jazz jam.

**Nocturne**

1330 27th St.  
Denver, CO  
(303) 295-3333

**nocturnejazz.com**

Nocturne presents local and national jazz Tuesday through Saturday. Don Byron's band enjoyed a residency in December.

**NEW MEXICO**

**Outpost**

210 Yale SE  
Albuquerque, NM  
(505) 268-0044

**outpostspace.org**

The nonprofit organization Outpost hosts more than 100 jazz, folk, blues and world music shows each year. The group also offers educational programs for all ages.

**OREGON**

**Jimmy Mak's**

221 NW 10th Ave.  
Portland, OR  
(503) 295-6542

**jimmymaks.com**

Located in the artsy Pearl District, this club is Portland's hot spot for jazz. Drummer Mel Brown performs on Tuesdays with his septet and Wednesdays with his quartet.

**Jo Bar & Rotisserie**

715 NW 23rd Ave.  
Portland, OR  
(503) 222-0048

**jobarpx.net**

Jo Bar hosts live jazz each weekend and at 7 p.m. on Wednesdays. On Sundays, the venue offers an 11:30 a.m. brunch concert. George Colligan is booked for Jan. 4.

**Wilfs Restaurant & Bar**

800 NW 6th Ave.  
Portland, OR  
(503) 223-0070

**wilfsrestaurant.com**

Staying strong for more than four decades, Wilfs presents jazz Wednesday through Sunday. The restaurant books mostly local and regional acts.

**WASHINGTON**

**Dimitriou's Jazz Alley**

2033 Sixth Ave.  
Seattle, WA  
(206) 441-9729

**jazzalley.com**

Dimitriou's has been a Seattle staple for more than three decades. The 2016 season featured performances by the Charlie Hunter Quartet and the Roy Hargrove Quintet. Upcoming shows include Jamison Ross (Jan. 17–18) and Eric Johnson (Jan. 30).

**Egan's Ballard Jam House**

1707 NW Market St.  
Seattle, WA  
(206) 789-1621

**ballardjamhouse.com**

During the day, Egan's opens its doors for rehearsals and workshops, and at night, it presents local acts, student ensembles and jam sessions.

**The Royal Room**

5000 Rainier Ave S  
Seattle, WA  
(206) 906-9920

**theroyalroomseattle.com**

The Royal Room is an all-ages club where patrons can eat and hear live music seven nights a week. The venue also presents nationally touring acts and books shows as part of the Earshot Jazz Festival.

**Tula's**

2214 Second Ave.  
Seattle, WA  
(206) 443-4221

**tulas.com**

Tula's, which hosts jazz each night of the week, is one of the venues for the annual Earshot Jazz Festival. The venue books a lot of regional and national talent.



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**HADAR NOIBERG TRIO**

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Rudresh Mahanthappa (left) is one of the hundreds of jazz stars who have played at Fasching.

# Fasching Fosters Creativity

Sweden's renowned Fasching—a perennial *DownBeat* pick for one of the world's top jazz clubs—will celebrate its 40th anniversary in 2017. But its home, a downtown building in Stockholm, dates back much earlier, having been constructed in 1906.

The events that took place between 1906 and the opening of the venue (on May 2, 1977) could make for a novel of sorts, filled with many intriguing twists and colorful personalities.

"From the start, it was a restaurant/café for Oscar's Theatre next door," said Eric Birah, Fasching's CEO. "Back then, there was a staircase from the inside of Oscar's into Fasching. There's always been a restaurant/bar/club of some sort here since 1906."

The name of the venue translates to "festival," which is appropriate these days, as Fasching has served as the headquarters for the Stockholm Jazz Festival since 2009.

As for the roots of Fasching, according to Bengt Hammar, who served as managing director, programmer and head of marketing from 1982 until 2001, "The jazz musician's community of traditional modernists [Forenigelsen Sveriges Jazzmusiker, or FSJ] had been looking for many years for a permanent stage. They'd been moving around from place to place, getting temporary gigs at museums, clubs and restaurants. Eventually, in 1975, they found the discotheque Fasching, and began renting Mondays through Thursdays for concerts in the club. The interior decor was in a Tyrolean

style, and painted grey and pink.

"In 1977," he continues, "FSJ took over the lease with the financial help of a joint action from the mayor's office and the government. Since then, the club has been owned by the musicians. And, by the way, we repainted the interior black."

Magnus Palmquist, who eventually succeeded Hammar as artistic director at Fasching (in addition to programming the Stockholm Jazz Festival), notes, "Fasching was founded by and for musicians as a counter-movement to the entertainment-based jazz venues that dominated Stockholm at the time. Fasching became the breeding ground for music that lived, breathed and evolved within itself and without any commercial pressure—music that couldn't then or can't now easily be categorized just as 'jazz.'"

Palmquist, who came onboard in 2008, said that the club provides an important forum: "I feel that a quite new and strong movement in jazz and improvisational music is taking form, where jazz is officially allowed to influence many other musical styles and genres in a perhaps more dominant way than ever before. I definitely want that expressive flow to show in the Fasching program."

He added, "Most artists who have passed through Fasching's walls have been the leaders of their musical movement of that specific era."

As for the 40th anniversary, the folks at Fasching are busy making plans, while remodeling has continued apace. "The inside has

looked different over the years," said Birah. "At one point many years ago, the stage was on the short side of the room. The balcony used to go over the big bar. Now we have built a bar in the entrance in the main hall and are taking the facade back to its original look from 1906. And we are getting new glass, doors and a new sign."

Securing the intentions of everyone who had a dream that started in 1977, former Fasching CEO (from 2007 to 2015) Lena Aberg Frisk aptly states, "Fasching has become a vibrant place, where musicians and listeners from different parts of the world, from different generations and from different genres, meet."

Artists who have graced the stage include legends such as Wayne Shorter, Chick Corea, Herbie Hancock, Ornette Coleman, Carla Bley, Chet Baker and Sun Ra. It has also hosted younger stars from the States, such as Joshua Redman, Kamasi Washington and Robert Glasper, as well as artists from around the world, including Paolo Fresu, Richard Galliano, Jan Lundgren, Maria Faust, the Goran Kajfes Subtropic Arkestra and Hermeto Pascoal e Grupo.

The Brazilian-born Pascoal has played the club multiple times. "Fasching was our home in Sweden," he says. "We always looked forward to spending a few days performing at this great venue. We had some unforgettable parties there—onstage, and offstage as well!"

—John Ephland



# INTERNATIONAL



COURTESY UPSTAIRS JAZZ BAR & GRILL

Upstairs Jazz Bar & Grill in Montreal

## ARGENTINA

### Notorious

Av. Callao 966  
Buenos Aires  
54 11 4813 6888

[notorious.com.ar](http://notorious.com.ar)

One of Buenos Aires' premier jazz venues, this spot functions as a record store up front, and in the back, it boasts a cafe overlooking a garden. The venue hosts live shows nearly every night.

### Thelonious Club

Jerónimo Salguero 1884  
Buenos Aires  
54 11 4829 1562

[thelonious.com.ar](http://thelonious.com.ar)

Named for pianist Thelonious Monk, this club is a celebrated place to hear forward-thinking Argentinian jazz. Thelonious features live jazz bands Wednesday through Sunday nights.

## AUSTRALIA

### Bennetts Lane

25 Bennetts Lane  
Melbourne, Victoria  
61 3 9663 2856

[bennettslane.com](http://bennettslane.com)

Bennetts Lane combines two venues that provide listeners with a range of live music every night of the week. The Jazz Lab presents local and regional performers, as well as well-known touring acts. Recent shows have included groups like the ATM15 Big Band, the John Hoffman & Tony Gould Quartet, and the Daniel Susnjar Afro-Peruvian Jazz Group.

### Foundry616

616 Harris Street  
Ultimo/Sydney  
02 9211 9442

[foundry616.com.au](http://foundry616.com.au)

Foundry616 is a key venue for the Sydney International Women's Jazz Festival, which happens each November. The club

celebrated its third birthday last fall. Recent performers included the Sean Mackenzie Trio and the Steve Barry Quartet.

### Pop & Co Tapas & Music Bar

92 Abbott Street  
Cairns, Queensland  
61 7 4019 6132

[facebook.com/Pop-Co-Tapas-Music-Bar-319367861414036/](https://facebook.com/Pop-Co-Tapas-Music-Bar-319367861414036/)

Located at what was formerly Bernie's Jazz & Piano Café, this venue presents live music Thursday through Sunday each week.

### The Sound Lounge

City Road and Cleveland St.  
Chippendale, New South Wales  
61 2 9351 7940

[sima.org.au](http://sima.org.au)

This café-style lounge, which seats 120, is affiliated with the Sydney Improvised Music Association. Sydney-based and visiting jazz musicians are booked Friday and Saturday nights.

### VENUE 505

280 Cleveland St.  
Surry Hills, New South Wales  
04 19 294 755

[venue505.com](http://venue505.com)

First operating as an underground performance space, Venue 505 has had a permanent home for more than five years. It presents live music six nights per week. In addition to booking the best local and regional jazz musicians, the club provides a space where cross-genre collaboration flourishes. Its sister venue, called the "Old 505 Theatre," is devoted to independent theatrical productions.

## AUSTRIA

### Blue Tomato

Wurmsergasse 21  
Vienna  
43 1 985 5960

[bluetomato.cc](http://bluetomato.cc)

For more than three decades, the Blue Tomato has been presenting a variety of live music acts in numerous genres, including jazz and classical music. Patrons can enjoy both an indoor space and a garden area.

### Jazzit

Elisabethstraße 11  
Salzburg  
43 662 883264

[jazzit.at](http://jazzit.at)

For more than 40 years, Jazzit has been presenting avant-garde and improvised jazz musicians to eager audiences. In the past, Cecil Taylor and Lester Bowie have played at the venue. In December, Jazzit booked pianist Alexander von Schlippenbach's trio with saxophonist Evan Parker and drummer Paul Lytton. The duo of Georg Breinschmid (double bass) and Thomas Gansch (trumpet) is scheduled for Jan. 29.

### Jazzland

Franz Josefs-Kai 29  
Vienna  
43 1 533 2575

[jazzland.at](http://jazzland.at)

Jazzland opened in 1972, making it the oldest jazz club in Austria. The best jazz musicians in Austria frequently play at the club, and touring acts from the United States stop by when they're in Europe.

### PORGY & BESS

Riemergasse 11  
Vienna  
43 1 512 88 11

[porgy.at](http://porgy.at)

Artists like the James Carter Organ Trio, Victor Wooten and John Zorn have recently played at this venue, which attracts top-notch international talent. Porgy & Bess has been an international jazz stomping ground since 1993. Upcoming shows include the Allan Harris Quartet (Jan. 17) and the New Sanctuary trio: Dave Douglas, Marc Ribot and Susie Ibarra (Jan. 26).

### STOCKWERK JAZZ

Jakominiplatz 18  
Graz  
43 316 821433

[stockwerkjazz.mur.at](http://stockwerkjazz.mur.at)

For more than two decades, Stockwerk Jazz has been presenting the best in regional and international jazz talent. Eddie Luis and his Jazz Passengers, the Styrian Improvisers Orchestra and Ken Vandermark's Made to Break all performed recently. Upcoming shows include Jerry Bergonzi (March 14) and the Eric Revis Quartet (April 7).

### Treibhaus

Angerzellgasse 8  
Innsbruck  
43 512 572000

[treibhaus.at](http://treibhaus.at)

Treibhaus, which is German for greenhouse, is an aptly named club. The functioning greenhouse presents a variety of international talent for eager jazz listeners.



COURTESY THE JAZZ DOCK

The Jazz Dock in Prague

## BRAZIL

### Bourbon Street Music Club

Rua dos Chanés, 127 – Moema  
São Paulo  
55 11 5095 6100

[bourbonstreet.com.br](http://bourbonstreet.com.br)

Bourbon Street management has strived for more than two decades to bring a New Orleans flair to Brazil. The club books jazz, rock and pop acts.

### The Maze

Rua Tavares Bastos 414/66  
Catete  
Rio de Janeiro  
55 21 2558 5547

[jazzrio.com](http://jazzrio.com)

This bed and breakfast, art gallery and restaurant is also an internationally known jazz venue. It books local jazz performers multiple nights each month.

## CANADA

### DIESE ONZE

4115-A rue St Denis  
Montreal  
(514) 223-3543

[dieseonze.com](http://dieseonze.com)

This friendly “jazz cellar” presents a wide range of jazz styles. Past performers have included the guitar duo of Michael St. Pierre and Lise-Anne Ross, saxophonist Al McLean and a quintet performance featuring trumpeter Ingrid Jensen and saxophonist Christine Jensen. Tuesday night is jam-session night. This venue was quite lively during the 2016 Montreal Jazz Festival.

### FRANKIE'S JAZZ

765 Beatty St.  
Vancouver, British Columbia  
(604) 688-6368

[frankiesitaliankitchen.ca](http://frankiesitaliankitchen.ca)

The Coastal Jazz and Blues Society books acts at Frankie's four nights a week. The organization, founded in 1985, has a mission to “establish Vancouver as a center for the creation and exchange of sounds and ideas between the local, national and international music communities.”

### L'Astral

305 Ste. Catherine St. W.  
Montreal, Quebec  
(514) 288-8882

[sallelastral.com](http://sallelastral.com)

Presenting more than just jazz, L'Astral has focused on bringing quality live music to Montreal since 2009. Recent shows included performances by the Orchestre National de Jazz and the Simon Denizart Trio.

### The Rex Jazz & Blues Bar

194 Queen St. W.  
Toronto, Ontario  
(416) 598-2475

[therex.ca](http://therex.ca)

Since 1992, the Rex has been presenting a wide range of musicians, but is billed as “where jazz lives.” On a recent evening, the club booked shows by the Hogtown Syncopators, the Bugaloo Squad and Nuf Said.

### Upstairs Jazz Bar & Grill

1254 MacKay St.  
Montreal, Quebec  
(514) 931-6808

[upstairsjazz.com](http://upstairsjazz.com)

Recent performers at this 20-year-old club, which bills itself as a great listening venue, include Alex Pangman and Gary Schwartz. Jam sessions happen on Monday nights. In the past, this venue has hosted internationally known musicians like Ingrid Jensen, Antonio Sanchez and Donny McCaslin.

### Yardbird Suite

11 Tommy Banks Way  
Edmonton, Alberta  
(780) 432-0428

[yardbirdsuite.com](http://yardbirdsuite.com)

Running strong for more than three decades, the venue, which is run by volunteers, is the home base for the Edmonton Jazz Society. Jam sessions occur on Tuesday nights. The Yardbird Festival of Canadian Jazz is held in every November.

## CHINA

### The Cotton Club

No. 1416 Huaihai Road  
Shanghai  
86 21 64377110

[thecottonclub.cn](http://thecottonclub.cn)

As the story goes, the Shanghai jazz boom of the 1930s brought the American music to China. Sometime after its rise to popularity, jazz music disappeared. This club bills itself as one of the first clubs to bring jazz to China after a 40-year absence. It features a revolving cast of instrumentalists and singers.

### Fringe Club

2 Lower Albert Road, Central  
Hong Kong  
852 2521 7251

[hkfringeclub.com](http://hkfringeclub.com)

Founded in 1984, Fringe Club is located in what was formerly an early 20th century dairy shop. The venue presents a range of jazz and other genres, with a long history of supporting creative expression.

## COSTA RICA

### Jazz Cafe

Carretera Interamericana  
San Pedro, Montes de Oca Canton  
506 2253 8933

[jazzcafecostarica.com](http://jazzcafecostarica.com)

Located right outside the capital city, this

220-seat club is a hangout for expats and locals that also attracts a fair amount of tourists. The management books a variety of jazz, blues, salsa and rock musicians.

## CZECH REPUBLIC

### AghaRTA Jazz Centrum

Zelezna 16  
Prague  
420 222 211 275

[aghartar.cz](http://aghartar.cz)

This Old Town club plays host to Prague Jazz Festival shows. Recent concerts included the Jiri Hala Jazz Project and the Jaroslav Simicek Quartet.

### The Jazz Dock

Janackovo Nabrezi 2  
Prague  
420 774 058 838

[jazzdock.cz](http://jazzdock.cz)

This indoor/outdoor club on the Vltava River is breathtaking, and the bookings, which celebrate a variety of genres, are top-notch as well. The Jeff “Tain” Watts Trio recently performed at the Dock.

### Lucerna Music Bar

Vodi kova 36  
Prague  
420 224 225 440

[musicbar.cz](http://musicbar.cz)

This club hosts a variety of talent from all over the world. While it might be hard to find jazz musicians performing here on any given night, the venue has a history of presenting internationally known acts.

## DENMARK

### Copenhagen Jazzhouse

Niels Hemmingsens Gade 10  
Copenhagen  
45 3315 4700

[jazzhouse.dk](http://jazzhouse.dk)

Originally opened in 1991, the club renovated its brand and mission in 2012. Its website says the venue is now “a place for experiments, constantly exploring the shapes of jazz to come.”

### Jazzhus Montmartre

St. Regnegade 19A  
Copenhagen  
45 31 72 34 94

[jazzhusmontmartre.dk](http://jazzhusmontmartre.dk)

Founded in 1959, the club opened up in renovated digs seven years ago. The venue has a deep connection to jazz history—Dexter Gordon and Ben Webster based their European jazz invasion from the Jazzhus—and today, management books groups like the Ernie Wilkins Almost Big Band and the Liane Carroll Trio.

## ENGLAND

### The 606 Club

90 Lots Road  
London  
44 20 7352 5953

[606club.co.uk](http://606club.co.uk)

Founded on a pledge to only book British artists, Steve Rubie has maintained that promise since he opened the club in the mid-1970s. Jazz, gospel and other genres are all part of the menu at the 606 Club.



### Cafe OTO

18–22 Ashwin St.  
Dalston  
London  
44 20 7923 1231

[cafeoto.co.uk](http://cafeoto.co.uk)

Bookings here trend toward the experimental and avant garde in genres from jazz to rock. Concerts happen almost every night.

### Jazz Cafe

5 Parkway  
London  
44 20 7485 6834

[thejazzcafelondon.com](http://thejazzcafelondon.com)

The Jazz Cafe hosts a blend of jazz, hip-hop, blues, r&b and pop acts. Roy Ayers, Jamie Cullum and Courtney Pine performed recently.

### PizzaExpress Jazz Club

10 Dean St.  
London  
44 20 7437 9595

[pizzaexpress.com](http://pizzaexpress.com)

Sitting below a PizzaExpress restaurant, this venue hosts artists dabbling in a variety of genres. The Soul Grenades, the Fontanelles and the Mark Jennett Quartet played the club recently.

### Ronnie Scott's Jazz Club

47 Frith St.  
London  
44 20 7439 0747

[ronniescotts.co.uk](http://ronniescotts.co.uk)

Rich in history, Ronnie Scott's has been a London beacon for international artists for nearly 60 years, including legends like Jeff Beck, Georgie Fame and Booker T. Jones. For jazz-loving tourists in London, Ronnie Scott's is a "must-see" location on their agenda. Upcoming shows include Manu Katché (Jan. 9–10), Marcia Ball (Jan. 19–20) and the James Carter Organ Trio (Jan. 21).

### The Vortex

11 Gillett Square  
London  
44 20 7254 4097

[vortexjazz.co.uk](http://vortexjazz.co.uk)

With bookings steeped in contemporary jazz, the Vortex has stood as one of the top venues in London for more than two decades. A jazz jam happens every Sunday. The trio Sun of Goldfinger (guitarist David Torn, saxophonist Tim Berne and drummer Ches Smith) is scheduled for Jan. 22–23.

## FINLAND

### Rytmihäiriöklubi / Juttutupa

Säästöpankinranta 6  
Helsinki  
358 20 7424240

[juttutupa.com](http://juttutupa.com)

Presenting jazz inside the restaurant Juttutupa since 1997, Rytmihäiriöklubi is an important part of the jazz scene in Helsinki. Bookings emphasize young Finnish jazz artists, and a broad range of jazz styles are presented.

### Storyville

Museigatan 8  
Helsinki  
358 50 363 2664  
[storyville.fi](http://storyville.fi)

# Bimhuis Eschews Trends

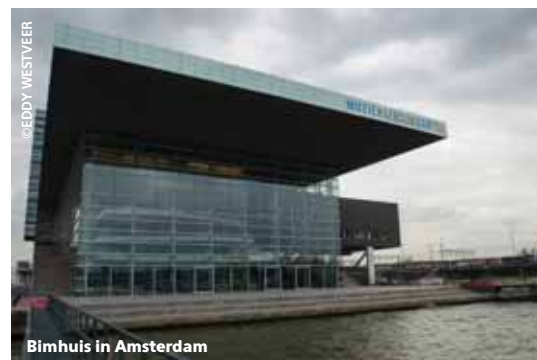
Last October, 22 of Europe's most diverse and exciting improvisers aged 35 and under converged in Amsterdam to participate in the third iteration of a project called the October Meeting. The last time the collaborative summit took place was back in 1991, and the venue that hosted both events is the legendary Bimhuis. The venue opened in 1974, filling a gaping hole in Amsterdam—one of the most progressive jazz cities in all of Europe—left by a number of canceled series in the year prior.

Several years earlier, a number of musicians—including drummer Han Bennink and saxophonist Willem Breuker—had led something of a putsch to expand the purview of the Dutch jazz organization SJIN, or Stichting Jazz. This led to the formation of a splinter group that championed improvised music: Beroepsvereniging voor Improviserende Musici (BIM).

Thanks to city funding, plans for a venue dedicated to the new music—from the Netherlands, around Europe and the United States—were realized. The Bimhuis finally opened in an old furniture showroom on Oude Schans, just blocks from the Red Light District. The rest, as they say, is history. Few venues on either side of the pond have carved out such an illustrious history, maintaining inexorable ties to jazz tradition while boldly embracing endless forward-looking iterations.

Naturally, the Bim became ground zero for the vibrant jazz and improvised music scene in Amsterdam, with countless performances by Bennink, pianist Misha Mengelberg and their ICP Orchestra; Breuker's free-wheeling Kollektief; Maarten Altena's Octet; and groups led by musicians like Guus Janssen, Sean Bergin and Neddy Elstak. But it also presented new talent from the United States along with storied vets like Dexter Gordon, Chet Baker and Von Freeman, as well as the cream of crop of European improvisers: Peter Brötzmann, Evan Parker and Derek Bailey. It also functioned as a vibrant meeting place where new formations were born, musicians checked out new talent, and conflicts were born and (occasionally) solved.

Maintaining a cutting-edge performance space for 42 years is no cakewalk, and almost from the beginning the direction and programming of the Bimhuis has benefitted from the vision of Huub van Riel, who came onboard in 1976. As the years passed, he rigorously kept plugged in to developments, yet his impeccable taste eschewed facile trends. Van Riel's track record is exemplary: While the programming has made space for blues and world music over the years—as well as avant-garde



rock with deep affinities and associations for improvised music—there has never been any doubt that Bimhuis is first and foremost a jazz venue. The original location underwent various renovations during its history, including a major overhaul in 1984 to create an amphitheater feel. But the most tumultuous change came in 2005 when Bimhuis moved into new digs, high in the sky as a black box space literally protruding from the new waterfront Muziekgebouw aan 't IJ, an institution devoted primarily to contemporary classical music.

The high-tech space couldn't help but lose the gritty ambience of the original location, but the amenities, sightlines and sound of the current space are superb. "The main thing was keeping everything that worked the same—not to transform it into another venue, but improve the old one, to keep the old audience while adding new listeners," van Riel said. "The essential elements are the informality, [the] relaxedness, combined with total concentration on the stage. In terms of programming, we got new possibilities: cooperation with Muziekgebouw to use each other's spaces. We do some big-name concerts there [where the capacity is double the Bim's 375], and we cooperate in lots of projects. Starting in 2017 we'll do an adventurous music festival that will make use of the entire building."

Many of the concerts at Bimhuis are broadcast live and archived through its own Bimhuis Radio ([bimhuis.nl/bimhuisradio](http://bimhuis.nl/bimhuisradio)).

The original October Meeting took place in 1987, with the second happening four years later. Such endeavors have been important to keeping the Bim viable. "I consider these projects and a variety of 'lab' series essential to what I consider the main role for the Bimhuis," van Riel said. "I feel that the place should be looked at, by musicians and audiences alike, as a tool much more than a goal in itself—to be functional for the development of the music. Facilitating a landscape in which adventure and risk-taking will be encouraged and can be rewarded."

—Peter Margasak



LUCAS CUTAIA

The Pipi Piazolla Trio onstage at Thelonious Club in Buenos Aires

Storyville, which is open until 4 a.m. and hosts jazz four nights a week, strives to create the Dionysian feel of the fabled New Orleans hotspot. The club presents a wide variety of acts, from Dixieland to swing, blues to rock.

## FRANCE

### Duc Des Lombards

42 Rue des Lombards  
Paris  
1 4233 2288

[ducdeslombards.fr](http://ducdeslombards.fr)

Located in the heart of Paris, the club has sets six nights a week and after-hours jam sessions on Friday and Saturday. Recent performers included Sachal Vasandani, Theo Crocker and Fred Hersch.

### Le Caveau de la Huchette

5 Rue de la Huchette  
Paris  
33 1 4326 6505

[caveaudelahuchette.fr](http://caveaudelahuchette.fr)

Le Caveau de la Huchette sits in a building originally constructed in the 1500s, but the club itself has only been around since 1946. Still, that makes it one of the longest-surviving jazz clubs in the world. The club has a storied jazz history, but now hosts a wide range of musical acts.

### New Morning

7-9 Rue des Petites Écuries  
Paris  
33 1 45 23 51 41

[newmorning.com](http://newmorning.com)

Founded in 1981, this Parisian jazz mainstay also occasionally hosts internationally known rock, funk, hip-hop and pop acts. Fred Wesley Generations recently played the club.

### Sunset-Sunside

60 Rue des Lombards  
Paris  
33 0 1 40 26 46 60

[sunset-sunside.com](http://sunset-sunside.com)

Open for 33 years, Sunset-Sunside has stood the test of time by being a proponent of French jazz artists. National acts also play the venue.

## GERMANY

### A-Trane

1 Bleibtreustraße St.  
Berlin

49 30 3132550

[a-trane.de](http://a-trane.de)

A-Trane, which opened in 1992, is one of the main venues that presents Jazzfest Berlin shows. Recent artists performing at the club included Donny McCaslin, Christof Lauer and Neil Cowley.

### Aufsturz

Oranienburger Straße 67  
Berlin  
49 30 2804 74 07

[aufsturz.de](http://aufsturz.de)

Some have dubbed Aufsturz "the paradise of beer" due to its 100 selections. For jazz lovers, it's also a musical paradise. This club, gallery, bar, recording studio and lecture hall opened in 2004. In addition to concerts, the venue hosts a weekly swing dance party.

### B-Flat

Dircksenstraße 40  
Berlin  
49 30 2833 123

[b-flat-berlin.de](http://b-flat-berlin.de)

A group of Berlin-based musicians got together a little more than 20 years ago to create a home for jazz in Berlin. Wednesdays are jam-session nights. For the rest of the week, touring musicians and local acts take the stage.

### Jazz im Prinz Karl

Gradmann Weg 7  
Tübingen  
07 07 1376 01

[jipk.net](http://jipk.net)

For more than four decades, this venue has brought the biggest names in international jazz to the city.

### Jazzkeller

Kleine Bockenheimer Str. 18a  
Frankfurt  
49 69 288537

[jazzkeller.com](http://jazzkeller.com)

Founded by German trumpeter Carlo Bohländer more than 60 years ago, this basement space presents jazz five nights a week. Local acts recently mixed with internationally acclaimed artists, such as Peter Bernstein and Cyrus Chestnut. Upcoming shows include the Uta Dobberthien Quintet (Jan. 14), the Christoph Spendel Electric Quartet (Jan. 28) and the Gary Smulyan Quartet (Feb. 16).

### Quasimodo

Kantstraße 12A  
Berlin  
49 30 318 045 60

[quasimodo.de](http://quasimodo.de)

Open for nearly five decades, Quasimodo is one of the main Berlin jazz spots. Jazzfest Berlin uses the club as one of its annual venues. In addition to jazz, the club books funk, soul and blues musicians.

### Stadtgarten

Venloer Straße 40  
Köln  
49 0221 952994 0

[stadtgarten.de](http://stadtgarten.de)

Stadtgarten's primary focus is jazz, but management books a variety of artists covering a wealth of genres. The Pablo Held Trio and trumpeter Peter Evans recently played the club.

### Unterfahrt

Einsteinstrasse 42  
Munich  
49 0 89 448 27 94

[unterfahrt.de](http://unterfahrt.de)

This live jazz venue also doubles as an art gallery. National touring musicians make it a point to stop in here when in the city. Recent global acts to perform included John Pizzarelli, the Julian Lage Trio and Christian Scott aTunde Adjuah.

## GREECE

### Half Note Jazz Club

Trivonionou 17  
Athens  
30 21 0921 3310

[halfnote.gr/eng](http://halfnote.gr/eng)

Half Note regularly presents the best Greek jazz musicians, but occasionally books international acts. In addition to jazz, the owners also book blues and world music.

## HUNGARY

### Budapest Jazz Club

Hollan Erno Utca 7  
Budapest  
36 70 413 9837

[bjc.hu](http://bjc.hu)

While it's been open for less than 10 years, the Budapest Jazz Club has already made quite an impact on the city's jazz scene. The Budapest has jam sessions three nights a week and classical music every Sunday.

## ISRAEL

### Shablul Jazz

Airport Hangar 13  
Tel Aviv  
972 3 546 1891

[shabluljazz.com](http://shabluljazz.com)

More than 10 years ago, Israeli jazz lovers founded a space that provides a creative outlet for local musicians. Alongside many jazz performers, Shablul also books rock, funk, soul, Brazilian and world-music acts.

## ITALY

### Alexanderplatz

Via Ostia, 9  
Rome  
06 39 06 8377 5604



#### **alexanderplatzjazzclub.com**

At more than 30 years old, Alexanderplatz can lay claim to being the oldest jazz club in Italy. A small club tucked away on a side street, Alexanderplatz is located near St. Peter's Basilica. The club presents Italian jazz musicians and the occasional international act.

#### **Cantina Bentivoglio**

Via Mascarella, 4/B  
Bologna

39 051 265416

#### **cantinabentivoglio.it**

This 150-seat jazz venue doubles as a wine cellar, with more than 400 varieties of wine, and it has a restaurant. The Nico Menci Bebop Monamour Trio recently played there.

#### **JAZZ CLUB FERRARA**

Via 167, Rampari di Belfiore  
Ferrara

39 339 788 6261

#### **jazzclubferrara.com**

Situated within St. John's Tower, this club has presented jazz since 1999. Kurt Rosenwinkel recently performed at the club, but mostly management books local jazz musicians. Monday is jam-session night.

#### **La Salumeria Della Musica**

Via Pasinetti 4  
Milan

39 02 5680 7350

#### **lasalumeriadellamusica.com**

For more than 20 years, this Milano jazz club has been welcoming international jazz

musicians into its cozy surroundings. In addition to jazz, management books rock and pop acts.

#### **JAPAN**

##### **Alfie Jazz House**

6-2-35 Roppongi  
Hama Roppongi Bldg. 5F

Tokyo

81 3 3479 2037

#### **facebook.com/pages/**

**Alfie/147192971998741**

Local jazz musicians are booked at Alfie, which was founded by late Japanese drumming sensation Motohiko "Toko" Hino. Alfie's is the jazz hotspot of Tokyo's Roppongi district.

##### **Body And Soul**

6-13-9 Minamiaoyama

Tokyo

81 3 5466 3348

#### **bodyandsoul.co.jp**

Body And Soul books two shows a night, six days a week, highlighting local jazz musicians. Touring acts come through on a monthly basis.

##### **Downbeat**

Miyamoto Bldg, 2F 1-43

Yokohama

045 241 6167

#### **yokohama-downbeat.com/index.html**

Sometimes referred to as "Japan's jazz hub," this venue has been presenting live jazz since 1956.

#### **Jz Brat**

26-1 Sakuragaokach

Shibuya

Tokyo

81 03 5728 0168

#### **jzbrat.com**

Jz Brat focuses on jazz, but management also books bands dabbling in a variety of genres, including rock, r&b, house and hip-hop. The club is on the second floor of the the tallest building in Tokyo's Shibuya shopping district.

##### **Shinjuku Pit Inn**

2-12-4 Accord Bldg. B1

Shinjuku shinjuku-ku

Tokyo

81 3 3354 2024

#### **pit-inn.com**

Shinjuku Pit Inn bills itself as a listening room and says it is to Tokyo what the Village Vanguard is to New York. The club features mostly local jazz artists.

#### **MEXICO**

##### **La Casa del MENDRUGO**

Calle 4 Sur 304, Centro Histórico

Puebla de Zaragoza, Puebla

52 222 232 5148

#### **casadelmendrugoc.com**

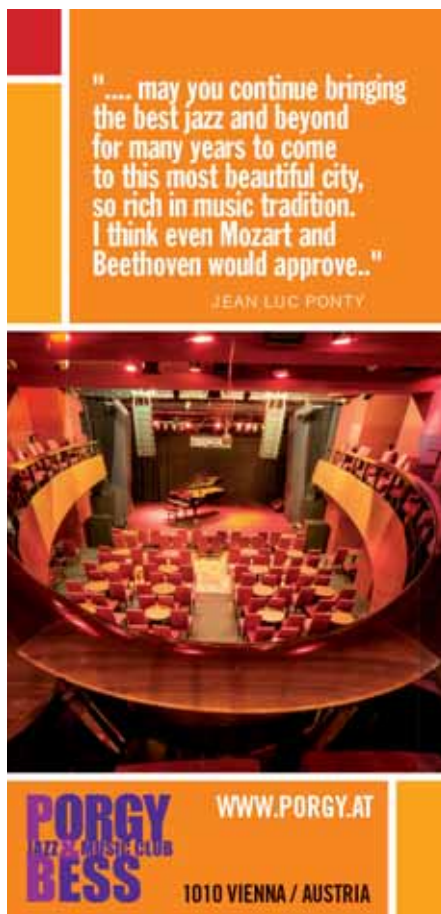
Dating back to the 1600s, La Casa del MENDRUGO currently serves as a restaurant, gallery, museum and jazz lounge. Tourists and locals can hear live jazz and experience a small part of the city's rich history.



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James Moody  
Jimmy Smith  
Billy Cobham

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<http://ButmanClub.RU>

## Zinco Jazz Club

Calle Motolinia 20, Centro  
Mexico City  
52 55 5512 3369

[zincojazz.com](http://zincojazz.com)

Zinco is a supper club that presents a variety of genres, including jazz and funk. Recent performers include the Tavo Nandayapa Quartet and the Miguel Alzerreka Quintet.

## THE NETHERLANDS

### Bimhuis

Piet Heinkade 3  
Amsterdam  
31 20 788 2150

[bimhuis.com](http://bimhuis.com)

While Bimhuis has been around since 1974, the venue obtained top status when it moved into its architecturally resplendent home right on the water in 2005. Bimhuis presents more than 300 concerts each year, billing local, European and international artists. Upcoming shows include Sons of Kemet (Jan. 19), Craig Taborn (Jan. 27) and the Pablo Held Trio (Feb. 23).

## NORWAY

### Victoria Nasjonal Jazz Scene

Karl Johans Gate 35  
Oslo  
47 23 89 69 23

[nasjonaljazzscene.no/en](http://nasjonaljazzscene.no/en)

Around 300 jazz lovers can pack this club, Norway's most prominent proponent of jazz, on any given night to hear a range of internationally known jazz musicians. Recent visitors to the Victoria included guitarists Bill Frisell and Marc Ribot.

## PORTUGAL

### HOT CLUBE DE PORTUGAL

Praca de Alegria 48  
Lisbon  
351 21 361 9740

[hcp.pt](http://hcp.pt)

Broadcaster Luis Villas-Boas founded the club nearly seven decades ago, and the club had stayed in the same location until 2009, when it was forced to move locations due to flood damage. Jam sessions are held every Tuesday.

## RUSSIA

### IGOR BUTMAN JAZZ CLUB

Verkhnyaya Radischevskaya St., 21  
Moscow  
7 495 792 210 9

[butmanclub.ru](http://butmanclub.ru)

Saxophonist/bandleader Igor Butman's club at Taganka is dedicated to showcasing the best in Russian jazz with the occasional international touring artist. Recent performers included the Dmitry Ilugdin Trio, U.S.-based vocalist Maya Azucena and the Oleg Butman Trio, and the Daniel Kramer Trio.

### JFC Jazz Club

Shpalernaya St. 33  
St. Petersburg  
7 812 272 9850

[jfc-club.spb.ru](http://jfc-club.spb.ru)

JFC is a top spot in the cultural capital of Russia to hear musicians playing in a variety of genres. Past performers include



Branford Marsalis onstage at Porgy & Bess in Vienna

COURTESY PORGY & BESS

the Mussorgsky Jazz Orchestra, the blues trio Folkline and the Easy Winners Ragtime Band.

## SCOTLAND

### The Jazz Bar

1A Chambers Street  
Edinburgh  
44 0 131 220 4298

[thejazzbar.co.uk](http://thejazzbar.co.uk)

Booking multiple sets every night of the week, the Jazz Bar programs a variety of genres. Recent performers include the funk band the Sunday Sinners, a local 17-piece big band, which plays each Monday, and the blues musician John Hunt.

## SOUTH AFRICA

### The Orbit

81 De Korte St.  
Johannesburg  
27 11 339 6645

[theorbit.co.za](http://theorbit.co.za)

Featuring live music nearly every night of the week, The Orbit is a welcoming, regional jazz spot. The owners have been presenting jazz in the area for more than a decade.

## SPAIN

### Cafe Central

Plaza del Angel 10  
Madrid  
34 913 69 41 43

[cafecentralmadrid.com](http://cafecentralmadrid.com)

This Art Deco café has been booking a variety of acts for more than 35 years. Recent performers included the Hot Club de Norvege and the Ben Sidran Quartet.

### Harlem Jazz Club

Carrer de Comtessa de Sobradiel 8  
Barcelona  
34 933 10 07 55

[harlemjazzclub.es](http://harlemjazzclub.es)

In 2017, the Harlem Jazz Club will celebrate its third decade of bringing blues, funk, swing, modern jazz and soul to the city. Organizers present a blues jam session each Monday.

## SWEDEN

### Fasching

Kungsgatan 63  
Stockholm

46 8 20 00 66

[fasching.se](http://fasching.se)

This club has been the center of the Scandinavian jazz universe for four decades. The club also serves as a venue for the Stockholm Jazz Festival. The Sven Zetterberg Blues Band will perform there on Jan. 20, and jazz drummer Jeff "Tain" Watts will lead his trio on Jan. 29.

### Glenn Miller Café

Brunnsgatan 21  
Stockholm  
46 8 10 03 22

[glennmillerprogram.se](http://glennmillerprogram.se)

A hip venue as well as a restaurant, this cafe has become a staple for jazz in Sweden.

## SWITZERLAND

### Marian's Jazz Room

Engestrass 54  
Bern  
41 31 3096 111

[mariansjazzroom.ch](http://mariansjazzroom.ch)

Founded in 1992 in the Innere Enge Hotel, Marian's Jazz Room brings all variety of jazz to Bern from September to May. Marian's presents two concerts a day, five days a week, from internationally known performers like Julian Lage and Sullivan Fortner.

## THAILAND

### Saxophone Pub

3/8 Phayathai Rd. Victory Monument  
Bangkok  
+66 022 465 472

[saxophonepub.com](http://saxophonepub.com)

Celebrating its 30th anniversary in 2017, the Saxophone Pub has become a hangout spot for locals, expats and tourists. It showcases Thailand's best jazz acts.

## TURKEY

### Nardis Jazz Club

Kuledibi Sok. No:8  
Istanbul  
90 212 244 6327

[nardisjazz.com](http://nardisjazz.com)

Nardis seats 120 and spotlights artists working in a variety of types of jazz each night of the week. Recent performances included sets from Spin, the Sibel Kose Group and the Cosmic Tunnels Band.



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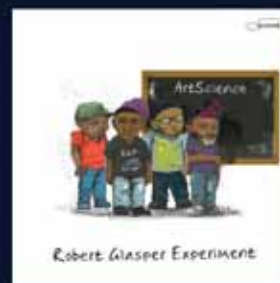
## NORAH JONES DAY BREAKS

The **9-time GRAMMY winner** comes full circle returning to her jazz roots on an album featuring **WAYNE SHORTER, DR. LONNIE SMITH, BRIAN BLADE** and others, proving her to be this era's quintessential American artist with a sound that fuses elements of several bedrock styles of American music.



## JOSÉ JAMES LOVE IN A TIME OF MADNESS

The **critically-acclaimed** vocalist makes a triumphant return, venturing deeper into modern R&B while staying true to his Jazz and Soul roots. Featuring vocalists **MALI MUSIC** and **OLETA ADAMS**, this 12 track collection takes listeners on an autobiographical exploration of the various forms of love and the places it can go.



## ROBERT GLASPER EXPERIMENT ARTSCIENCE

**2-time GRAMMY winners** return with another genre-defying album that weaves through R&B, hip-hop, and jazz, and sheds outside performers in favor of the vocal talents of Experiment band members **ROBERT GLASPER, CASEY BENJAMIN, DERRICK HODGE** and **MARK COLEBURG**.



## NELS CLINE LOVERS

The **Wilco guitarist** and arranger **MICHAEL LEONHART** assembled 23 musicians for an **expansive double-album** featuring originals, American Songbook standards and songs by **SONIC YOUTH, ARTO LINDSAY, JIMMY GIUFFRÉ** and others.



## GREGORY PORTER TAKE ME TO THE ALLEY

**Grammy-winning** vocalist solidifies his standing as his generation's most soulful jazz singer-songwriter with the much anticipated follow-up to his **internationally acclaimed million-selling Blue Note debut Liquid Spirit**.



## KANDACE SPRINGS SOUL EYES

The singer and pianist makes her full-length debut with an album that touches upon soul and pop while channeling her jazz influences and her Nashville upbringing. Produced by Grammy-winner **LARRY KLEIN** and featuring guests including trumpeter **TERENCE BLANCHARD** and guitarist/songwriter **JESSE HARRIS**.



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76 / Blues  
78 / Beyond  
80 / Historical  
82 / Books

## Reviews &gt;

## Kenny Burrell

### *Unlimited 1*

HIGH NOTE 7298

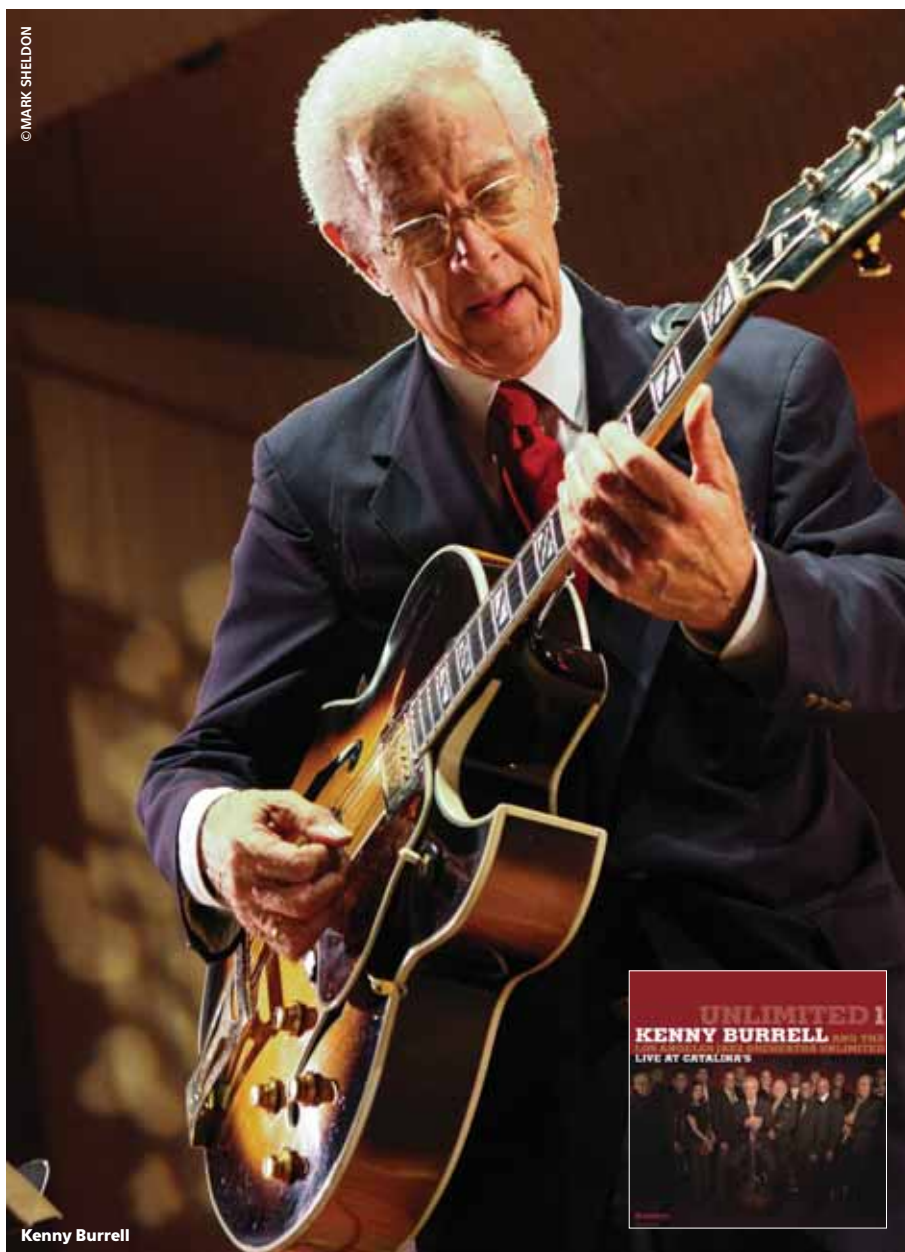
★★★★

Kenny Burrell is the last of the generation directly influenced by guitarist Charlie Christian, whose brief career flashed like a supernova between 1939 and '41 but left the electric guitar behind as his personal monument. It's good to have Burrell around, still racing coolly over the frets or caressing lyrically here on "A' Train" and "Passion Flower."

But this is not really a Burrell package. His larger mission is to offer his famous brand and UCLA faculty prestige in support of the Los Angeles Jazz Orchestra Unlimited, the band he helped found in 2013 and has sought to build into a repertory unit on the order of Jazz at Lincoln Center Orchestra West. I know such ventures come with a musty academic epistemology to some. A true jazz orchestra, they would say, should have a soul of its own and not go about renting out its identity to past heroes and future prospects. But, like it or not, as mortality has claimed the great originals of jazz history, the move to institutionalize that history has made the classroom and repertory orchestra among the music's busiest venues.

That said, there's nothing classroomish about this excellent band, which can infuse a jazz standard such as Oliver Nelson's "Stolen Moments" with both respectful observance and creative latitude. Using the 1961 Impulse! recording as its model, the reeds project Nelson's original tenor solo to section strength, while Bobby Rodriguez and Justo Almario fill the shoes of Freddie Hubbard and Eric Dolphy in their own way.

Even a warhorse like "Take The 'A' Train" finds fresh trails, galloping through the 1941 Ellington chart and original Ray Nance trumpet solo before turning the brass loose in a series of eights and a collective four-horn jam. The other firecracker is "Fourth Dimensions," a Don Sickler reinvention of Burrell's 1950 debut recording, "Kenny's Sound" (also the first session of Tommy Flanagan). The original is sufficiently obscure now that Sickler's hard-swing-



© MARK SHELDON

Kenny Burrell

ing chart qualifies as a new original.

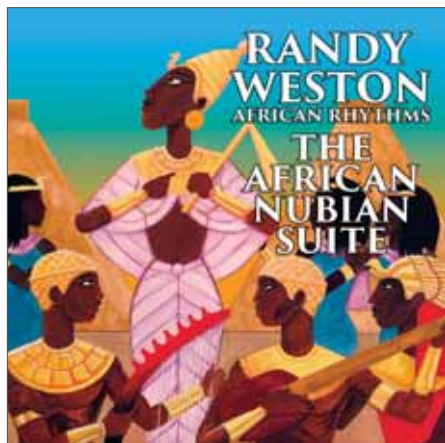
One doesn't normally come to Burrell to hear him sing. He sounds a bit too heavy, for example, to provide the requisite hipness on Oscar Brown Jr.'s "Jeannine." But this is a densely packed CD that can indulge a few moments of non-essentials.

—John McDonough

**Unlimited 1:** Stolen Moments; Jeannine; Be Yourself; Remembering; Mama Ya Ya; Fourth Dimensions; Adelante!; Soulero; Passion Flower; Take The 'A' Train; Things Ain't What They Used To Be. (75:50)

**Personnel:** Kenny Burrell, guitar, vocals (2, 4); Bobby Rodriguez, Mike Price, Dave Richards, Don Papenbrook, Tom Marino, trumpets; Nick De Pinna, Ryan Porter, trombones; Justo Almario, Scott Mayo, Hitomi Oba, Andrea Delano, Charles Owens, saxophones; Billy Mitchell, piano; Trevor Ware, bass; Clayton Cameron, drums; Barbara Morrison, vocals (10).

**Ordering info:** [jazzdepot.com](http://jazzdepot.com)



## Randy Weston *The African Nubian Suite* AFRICAN RHYTHMS RECORDS

★★★★

Scholarship has been implicit in Randy Weston's music from the get-go. From rhythmic inspiration to melodic brainstorming, Africa and its diaspora has guided the 90-year-old pianist's art since he placed "Zulu" on his third album as a leader in the mid-1950s. Now, after cutting more than 45 records, he gets explicit on a two-disc portrait of a 2012 presentation. Uniting academics, writers and musicians, this amalgam of voices is an expressive

## Aggregate Prime *Dream Deferred*

ONYX 007

★★★★½

On its debut album, Ralph Peterson's new quintet Aggregate Prime strikes a tense truce between percussive turmoil and lyrical clarity, a mix that suggests the kind of clear-eyed fortitude demanded in troubling times like these, when Langston Hughes' dream of justice and equality has been yet again deferred. No surprise, then, that Peterson begins with Eric Dolphy's "Iron Man," a tune written in similarly challenging times (the 1960s) and in a free-bop style that informs both the theory and the practice of this session.

Sometimes, Peterson's formidable muscle and fondness for agitated asymmetry become distracting, but when the soloists sink their teeth into the material, the music vibrates with joy. Gary Thomas' grasp of Dolphy's leaping intervallic flute style on "Iron Man" and on Peterson's beautiful "Queen Tiye" is particularly satisfying, as is Thomas' dancing interplay with pianist Vijay Iyer on the Dolphy tune. Mark Whitfield's guitar glow is one of the pleasures of the album, including a sweet outing on the title track and a swinging excursion on bassist Kenny Davis' "Fearless" with Davis walking beneath. Peterson himself occasionally

overview of the continent's cultural impact on civilization.

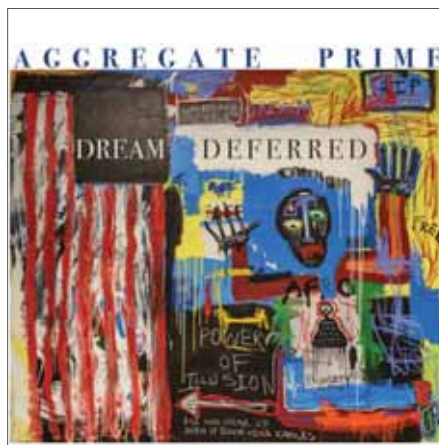
With dollops of erudition interspersed with the music itself, the show's layout is novel—a multi-narrator TED Talk with particulars being cited in real time. I used the word *presentation* rather than *performance* above. Though ensemble efforts open and close the disc, an extensive string of solos and duets drive it, and they're positioned as examples of specific historical turning points referenced in the commentary of Weston's guests, such as Dr. Wayne Chandler. Between resonant Ethiopian tones and seductive Moroccan gnawa melodies, Gambian folk and Min Xiao-Fen's delicate pipa strings—the music on this disc is unusually fetching. By the time the late poet Jayne Cortez ignites the show with her fiery lines about women and their various forms of wisdom, Weston's exultant history lesson has accomplished its goal of vivifying accomplishments galore.

—Jim Macnie

**The African Nubian Suite:** Disc One: Nubia; The Call; Ardi; Sidi Bilal; Spirit Of Touba; The Shang; Children Song (56:06). Disc Two: Blues for Tricky Sam; Cleanhead Blues; Nanapa Panama Blues; Monologue; The Woman; The African Family Part I; The African Family Part II; Soundlata; Love, The Mystery Of. (53:05)

**Personnel:** Randy Weston, piano; Wayne B. Chandler, narrator; Ayodele Maakheru, nefer; Cecil Bridgewater, trumpet; Candido, percussion; Howard Johnson, tuba; Lhoussine Bouhamidy, ganawa; Salieu Suso, kora; T.K. Blue, flute, alto saxophone; Min-Xiao Fen, pipa; Martin Kwaku Obeng, balafon; Robert Trowers, trombone; Billy Harper, tenor saxophone; Alex Blake, bass; Jayne Cortez, poet; Lewis Nash, drums; Neil Clarke, African percussion; Ayanda Clarke, African percussion.

**Ordering info:** [randyweston.info](http://randyweston.info)



steps out, injecting pockets of air and well-chosen single strokes into his unremitting, multi-directional rumble.

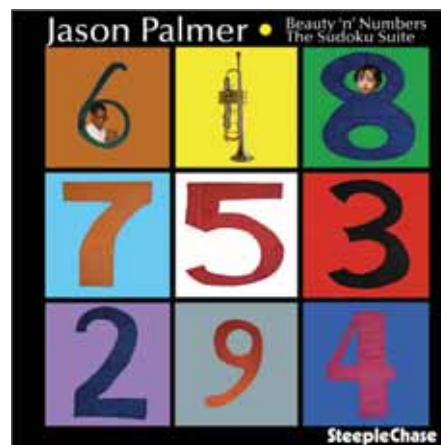
As an ensemble, though, Aggregate Prime can sometimes feel choppy and jumbled, and that's a shame, because in other respects this album bristles with the anxiety of the moment at a time when we very much need music to help navigate the turmoil.

—Paul de Barros

**Dream Deferred:** Iron Man; Emmanuel The Redeemer; Strongest Sword/Hottest Fire; Dream Deferred: Father Spirit; Fearless; Queen Tiye; Who's In Control; Monief Redux. (62:35)

**Personnel:** Ralph Peterson, drums; Gary Thomas, tenor saxophone, flute; Vijay Iyer, piano; Mark Whitfield, guitar; Kenny Davis, bass.

**Ordering info:** [ralphpetersonmusic.com](http://ralphpetersonmusic.com)



## Jason Palmer *Beauty 'N' Numbers: The Sudoku Suite* STEEPLECHASE JAZZ

★★★★

Before saying anything about the compositional method behind the pieces on *Beauty 'N' Numbers*, I'm going to write a few words about the way it sounds. It's such a lovely record it would be a shame to miss the music for the conceit. Trumpeter Jason Palmer assembled a suite of subtle, unassuming charts for his quartet, which they positively devoured in the studio.

An ambitious young leader with eight CDs under his belt, Palmer is possessed of a delicate touch on the horn, tossing passing notes like skipping a stone. He's rarely brash, but his upper register work is fluid and exceptionally controlled. And he's a terrific improviser, as demonstrated on the unaccompanied opening to "Of Fun And Games," which is fluttery and virtuosic even in its softness. Palmer's working band takes to his music expertly, navigating its internal logic and making a piece like "So," with an unfamiliar design, feel natural as day.

If you read the track titles in a row, as below, you get a pretty good idea about Palmer's impetus for writing what he subtitled "The Sudoku Suite." Having identified his condition, he used the numbers game to simultaneously self-treat and compose music, having devised a way to think of the digits in relation to the tunes.

It rarely feels like math, though there are some intricate patterns. Unexpected turns often come from constraints, and the music navigates between a hip feel and something quite personal, intimate, and unique to Palmer. With or without the notion of arithmetic, there is indeed beauty in these numbers.

—John Corbett

**Beauty 'N' Numbers:** Beauty 'N' Numbers; Obsessive; Compulsive; Disorder; Is; Now; Under; Control; Thanks; To The; Guidance; Of Fun And Games; So; If You Would; Allow Me To Be; In The Moment. (75:76)

**Personnel:** Jason Palmer, trumpet; Mike Moreno, guitar; Edward Perez, bass; Lee Fish, drums.

**Ordering info:** [steeplechase.dk](http://steeplechase.dk)



# The Hot Box

Critics	John McDonough	John Corbett	Jim Macnie	Paul de Barros
<b>Kenny Burrell</b> <i>Unlimited 1</i>	★★★★	★★★★½	★★★	★★★★
<b>Randy Weston</b> <i>The African Nubian Suite</i>	★★	★★★★½	★★★★	★★★★½
<b>Aggregate Prime</b> <i>Dream Deferred</i>	★★★★½	★★★★½	★★★★½	★★★★½
<b>Jason Palmer</b> <i>Beauty 'N' Numbers: Sudoku Suite</i>	★★★	★★★★	★★★★	★★★

## Critics' Comments

### Kenny Burrell, *Unlimited 1*

I normally prefer Kenny Burrell in a small band context, but the Los Angeles Jazz Orchestra Unlimited supports him splendidly through this chestnut-filled basket. His guitar is the spotlight, and he's still nimble as heck. —John Corbett

I'll take his guitar work over his big band experiments, but the deep swing of this outfit—and the verve they bring to this live date—is convincing. —Jim Macnie

Burrell, an elder who still plays with elegance and wit, fronts a modern big band with chewy arrangements of classics like "Stolen Moments" and "Passion Flower." Even the stage patter and Burrell's occasional vocal add intimacy to this enjoyable live recording. —Paul de Barros

### Randy Weston, *The African Nubian Suite*

If "all music comes out of ... Africa," as Weston asserts, you will find favor in this seminar in ethnomusicology, which is an epic version of what he was doing back in 1960 on *Uhuru Afrika*. In the presence of much talk, ancient cultural references and arcane forms, however, you may feel distant from the content. —John McDonough

What works in a live setting doesn't always translate to CD. I wish the educational material was in liner notes and the glorious music was subject to a nicer recording. —John Corbett

Afrocentric musicology and speechifying aside, this winning world panorama—featuring Candido on percussion, Saliou Souso on kora, Min Xiao-Fen on pipa, Billy Harper on tenor saxophone and Jayne Cortez on vocals—bristles with all-embracing joy. —Paul de Barros

### Aggregate Prime, *Dream Deferred*

Kicks off with a brief but remarkable exhibition of close-quarters ensemble interplay and some precision dialog between bass and brushes. This sets the tightly woven manner of the work, especially at the more zesty tempos. —John McDonough

A powerful and unexpected combo, with all the momentum of the Davis/Peterson team and the creative gumption of Iyer/Thomas. Whitfield is a perfect utility infielder. —John Corbett

Dude defines splash, and it saves him in a variety of situations, like the somewhat standard feel of this roiling program. The tunes may not be novel, but the squad's inventions keep your ears burning. —Jim Macnie

### Jason Palmer, *Beauty 'N' Numbers: The Sudoku Suite*

Palmer's horn rolls with a cool, quiet precision, often flowing out of annunciatory cadenzas that suggest more consequence than what materializes. Composing by algorithm seems more an intellectual than emotional process, and a distraction to the listener. —John McDonough

Palmer's attack is a cure-all for complacency, and the small ways that he and his squad bend the rules on this imaginative date reminds how he earned such a deep reputation on the Boston scene: by kicking ass. —Jim Macnie

As if he were thinking out loud, trumpeter Palmer brings a rich tone, shapely sense of design and a calm, interior mood that recall Dave Douglas to this intriguingly conceived suite. The quartet meshes beautifully, but sometimes lacks drama. —Paul de Barros



## HUSH POINT HUSH POINT III

SSC 1457 - IN STORES 1/20/17

The quartet of trumpeter John McNeil, saxophonist Jeremy Udden, bassist Aryeh Koblinsky and drummer Anthony Pinciotti have used rehearsal techniques to broaden their expression and develop a sort of group ESP. This work has produced brilliant compositions that require a high level of musicianship and group interplay. Hush Point's evolution can be heard on their innovative third recording, *Hush Point III*. Hush Point's initial blueprint was clarinetist/conceptualist Jimmy Giuffrè's spare tune "Iranic." They adopted the entirely acoustic lineup of woodwind, trumpet, bass and brushed drums, along with a very specific vibe generated by limiting dynamics in the drums to accentuate the sonic possibilities of the horns and bass.



## VICTOR GONÇALVES QUARTET

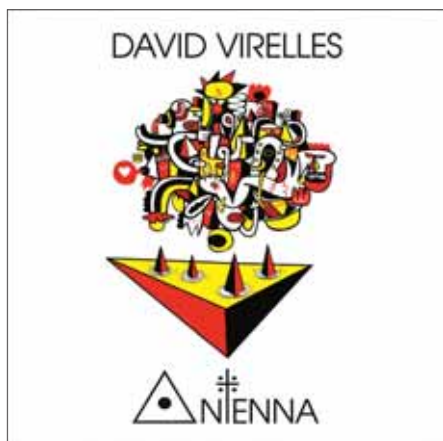
SSC 1462 - IN STORES 1/20/17

Vitor Gonçalves has done much to expand his musical worldview. His move to New York from Brazil has given listeners a new voice in contemporary Brazilian music and fresh sounds in the world of jazz. For his new recording, Gonçalves assembled an ensemble that would be capable of approaching his hybrid music with vigor and elasticity. The quartet that he enlisted includes guitarist Neufeld along with virtuosic bassist Thomas Morgan and the highly adaptable drummer Dan Weiss.



iTunes.com/HushPoint  
iTunes.com/VitorGoncalves  
www.sunnyviberecords.com





## David Virelles *Antenna*

ECM RECORDS 3901

★★★★★

If Cuban pianist David Virelles' ECM leader debut, *Mbókò*, was a fire, then *Antenna* is its smoke. Both albums employ Afro-Cuban influences to kaleidoscopic effect, but this one thrums. Known for pushing boundaries, Virelles is in fact deeply respectful of them, drawing from cultural reservoirs like a perfumer distinguishing essential sonic oils from a potent mix.

At 22 minutes, this album may seem like a

flash in the pan, but the quality of its ingredients is so exquisite that repeat listening is required to savor them all. Emphasis here is on materiality of sound, as Virelles manipulates recordings of saxophonist Henry Threadgill (whose arpeggio-wrapped alto saxophone in "Water, Bird Headed Mistress" recalls the sojourns of label compatriot John Surman), drummer Marcus Gilmore and vocalist Román Díaz with meticulous abandon. Cellist and co-producer Alexander Overington, along with guitarist Rafiq Bhatia, set fire to everything they touch on "Threshold," while poet Etían Brebaje Man raps his way through "Rumbakúá" like a lightning rod of perseverance.

"El Titán De Bronce" is the closest in spirit to Virelles' acoustic assemblies. It walks the line between groove and breakdown with a rough-and-tumble beauty that is very much his own. Virelles frames the set with two mash-ups of field recordings and the beats of a virtual percussion ensemble he dubs Los Seres. A new direction for ECM, but a reliably engaging one for Virelles.

—Tyran Grillo

**Antenna:** Binary; Water; Bird Headed Mistress; Threshold; Rumbakúá; El Titán De Bronce; Text. (21:44)

**Personnel:** David Virelles, keyboards, electronics; Alexander Overington, electronics, samples, cello; Henry Threadgill, alto saxophone (2); Román Díaz, vocals (3); Marcus Gilmore, drums (3, 5), MPC (4); Rafiq Bhatia, guitar (3, 5); Etían Brebaje Man, vocals (4); Mauricio Herrera, percussion (4); Los Seres, percussion (1, 6).

Ordering info: [ecmrecords.com](http://ecmrecords.com)

## Dave Liebman Group

### *Expansions Live*

WHALING CITY SOUND 008

★★★★★

The Dave Liebman Group's new live double album pushes some interesting buttons. The musicians excel both at extemporizing freely and playing within a song structure, flexible as that structure may be. In all settings, freedom is the grail, whether painting a broad conceptual vista or conjuring fine details in the moment.

There's also something nostalgic about *Expansions Live*. Even the notion of dividing the material into "acoustic" and "electric" discs nods toward the late '60s, when young jazz players gleefully outraged traditionalists by plugging in and cranking up.

The second disc features Liebman's electric music, and though it is indeed electrifying, it ignores the high-voltage, rock-oriented work of Return To Forever, Mahavishnu Orchestra and Tony Williams' Lifetime. Instead, it goes back to the Miles Davis wellspring. Keyboardist Bobby Avey provides the dominant texture on these tracks. His ring-modulated Rhodes electric piano casts spells of mystery throughout the music, like drums in some shadowy distance.

Whereas the electric disc features soloists



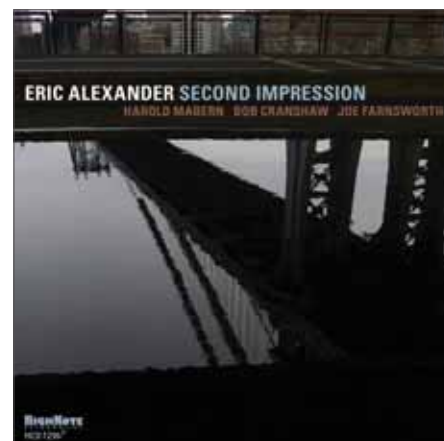
stirring through deep, tactile atmospherics, the acoustic album moves between unfettered atonal inventions. Liebman leads the way into an exploration based less on the notes than on the spirits they summon. It's an elusive approach, one that requires much from gifted players but rewards listeners even more.

—Bob Doerschuk

**Expansions Live:** Acoustic Disc One: Introduction Of Band Members; JJ; Continues To Ignore; All Blues; Vendetta; Good Bait; Selim; India (62:42). Electric Disc Two: Surreality; The Moors; Footprints; Ugly Beauty; Liberian Hummingbird; Love Me Tender; Danse De La Fureur (60:27).

**Personnel:** Dave Liebman, soprano saxophone, flute; Matt Vashlishan, alto saxophone, clarinet, flute; Bobby Avey, piano, keyboards; Tony Marino, bass; Alex Ritz, drum, frame drum.

Ordering info: [whalingcitysound.com](http://whalingcitysound.com)



## Eric Alexander *Second Impression*

HIGH NOTE 7296

★★★★½

Since he began recording under his own name almost 25 years ago, tenor saxophonist Eric Alexander has led at least 15 sessions with double bassist John Webber and drummer Joe Farnsworth—frequently rounded out by pianist and mentor Harold Mabern (the respected pianist was a teacher for classmates Alexander and Farnsworth at William Paterson University).

*Second Impression* features Mabern, Farnsworth and, in what was likely his final recording session, bassist Bob Cranshaw, who was name-checked in the spoken-word introduction to the Alexander composition "Blueski For Vonski" on his 2014 *Chicago Fire* album.

The "second impression" may subconsciously be a nod to a trio of atypical tracks that feature Cranshaw on an electric bass guitar and Mabern on a Fender Rhodes that were both found in the studio, as the liner notes explain. Farnsworth's funky "Jennie's Dance" struts assuredly with an authoritative and somewhat surprising extended solo by the pianist on that cult-worthy keyboard.

Sammy Fain and Paul F. Webster's "Secret Love" is buoyed by the partially electrified rhythm section. Alexander solos with elan while Mabern glides in another expanded exploration just prior to Farnsworth's demonstration in rhythmic fluency.

The Wes Montgomery classic "Full House" closes out *Second Impressions* with flair; the bandleader's spry tone matches the spirit of the piece, and Cranshaw seems to subtly propel the group forward with his note choices and reliable ease.

—Yoshi Kato

**Second Impression:** Second Impression; So Many Stars; Blues For Mo; Jennie's Dance; Secret Love; T-Bone Steak; Frenzy; Everything Happens To Me; Full House. (54:51)

**Personnel:** Eric Alexander, tenor saxophone; Harold Mabern, piano (1–3, 6–8); Fender Rhodes (4, 5, 9); Bob Cranshaw, acoustic bass (1–3, 6–8); bass guitar (4, 5, 9); Joe Farnsworth, drums.

Ordering info: [jazzdepot.com](http://jazzdepot.com)



## Ben Allison *Quiet Revolution*

NEWELLE RECORDS 005

★★★★

Newvelle Records is a vinyl-only jazz label that sells its audiophile pressings on a subscription basis, a business model that promises high-end sound while assuming an equal level of excellence from the music. And if bassist Ben Allison's *Quiet Revolution* is typical of the rest of the label's first five-album season, Newvelle succeeds on both fronts.

Employing a drummer-less trio and drawing from the compositions of Jim Hall and Jimmy Giuffre, the album is a delightfully intimate affair. Not only is the soundstage exceptionally vivid, but between Ted Nash's understated saxophone blowing and Steve Cardenas' preference for unamplified guitars, the dynamics are as natural as they are low-key.

That pays off in the depth of interplay. Hall's "Waltz New" shifts from a unison lead to an intricate collective improvisation, with echoes of "Someday My Prince Will Come" swirling through intertwining lines. The unadorned comity of the playing is so convincing that the rendition of "Love Theme From Spartacus" comes almost as a shock—not because it veers from the Hall/Giuffre concept, but because the overdubbed saxophones and clarinet shatter the illusion that three stellar musicians were jamming in your living room.

—J.D. Considine

**Quiet Revolution:** All Across The City; Move It; Waltz New; Sleeping Tiger; Pony Express; Careful; The Train And The River; Lookin' Up; The Truth Is Stranger Than Fiction; Love Theme From Spartacus.

**Personnel:** Ben Allison, bass; Ted Nash, saxophones, clarinet; Steve Cardenas, guitar.

**Ordering info:** [newvelle-records.com](http://newvelle-records.com)



## Enoch Smith Jr. *The Quest: Live At APC*

MISFITME MUSIC

★★★★½

When Enoch Smith Jr. is not busy with his day job at Allentown Presbyterian Church in New Jersey, the musician finds time to nurse a blossoming career as a bandleader outside of the house of faith. *The*

*Quest: Live At APC* is Enoch's fourth album, all of which have been released on his own label, Misfitme Music. On this record, his strong suit is blending the sounds of gospel with a traditional jazz trio.

Smith's piano playing is at the forefront of the opening number, "Searching For God," a blues joint that cooks into something special around the three-minute mark. It's difficult to imagine how one person could play the piano parts, as Enoch's dueling hands create and release tension during the most involved portions of the track.

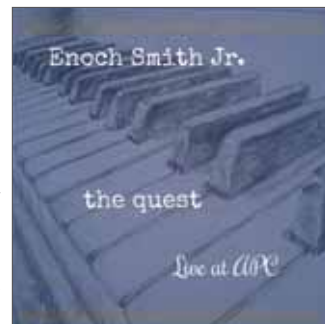
Enoch once wrote a column for DownBeat that stated, "It's my belief that jazz would not exist in the form it does today if not for black gospel music and its contributors." It would be hard to counter this statement after listening to "Open Your Eyes, You Can Fly," a stripped-down cover of the fusion tune by Chick Corea and Neville Potter. If nothing else, the inspiration of gospel is alive and well in this jazz release.

—Chris Tart

**The Quest—Live At APC:** Searching For God; Open Your Eyes You Can Fly; With Me (Intro); With Me; Creator; Home; Jesus Loves Me; The Quest; Love Lude; Wheels Up; Jesus Loves Me (Alternate Take). (41:00)

**Personnel:** Enoch Smith Jr., piano; Noah Jackson, Mimi Jones, bass; Andrew Atkinson, John Davis, drums; Sarah Elizabeth Charles, Emily Braden, voice.

**Ordering info:** [misfitme.com](http://misfitme.com)



## Moutin Factory Quintet *Deep*

BLUJAZZ

★★★★

Twin brothers François and Louis Moutin are the pulsing heart of The Moutin Factory, a lithe post-bop quintet whose new album, *Deep*, welds soaring optimism to harmonic nuance and rhythmic daring.

From its tempestuous opening, "Love Stream," to its probing closer, "In The Name Of Love," the disc is full of tracks that are never far from the point of sublimation. The spark is obvious on tunes like "Hell's Kitchen," which bustles with the energy of the titular Manhattan neighborhood, and "Shift," with its hive-like frenzy. But there's also a palpable energy to slower songs like "Hope Street" and especially "In The Name," which, after a soulful unaccompanied bass solo, derives its fuel from the piercing tone of Manu Codjia's guitar.

Saxophonist Christophe Monniet and pianist Jean-Michel Pilc contribute dynamic solo voices throughout, but the most impressive element of this album is the band's ability to cohere so tightly as they hurdle through space. For pure fun, check out the bass feature "Fat's Medley," a reverently tongue-in-cheek homage to Mr. Waller that accelerates to light-speed.

—Brian Zimmerman

**Deep:** Love Stream; Hope Street; Fat's Medley; Exploded View; A Soothing Thrill; Hell's Kitchen; Shift; Bliss; In The Name Of Love. (63:50)

**Personnel:** François Moutin, bass; Louis Moutin, drums; Manu Codjia, guitar; Jean-Michel Pilc, piano; Christophe Monniet, saxophones.

**Ordering info:** [blujazz.com](http://blujazz.com)



## Jorge Rossy *Stay There*

PIROUET 3096

★★★★

Barcelona native Jorge Rossy continues his fascinating career arc with both his fourth album as a leader and his recorded debut on vibraphone. His Rossy Vibes Quintet consists of three close peers. Rossy has known tenor saxophonist Mark Turner, guitarist Peter Bernstein and double bassist Doug Weiss for over 25 years. Veteran drummer Al Foster, with whom Weiss has been playing since 1995, provides a solid foundation for this atypical instrumentation.

*Stay There* features seven Rossy originals plus Foster's charming "Pauletta" (with its sinuous saxophone line), Guillermo Klein's flowing "Artesano" (dedicated to the bandleader by the Argentine pianist and composer) and "The Newcomer," a relaxed piece penned by pianist Mercedes Rossy, Jorge's late sister.

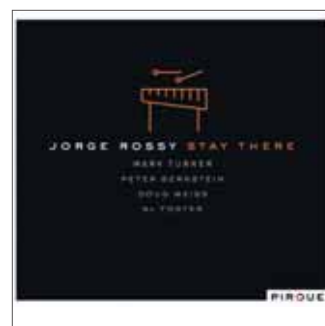
"W Waltz" boasts an extended solo that showcases Rossy's clean percussion style and Bernstein's keen comping approach before the guitarist embarks on a thoughtful exploration of his own. The title track closes out the album with a perhaps wistful grace of five veteran players who are happily and wholly at ease with one another.

—Yoshi Kato

**Stay There:** Who Knows About Tomorrow; Portrait; Artesano; Blessed; Mark's Mode; The Newcomer; W Waltz; Pauletta; Mmmyeah; Stay There. (51:36)

**Personnel:** Jorge Rossy, vibes, marimba; Mark Turner, tenor saxophone; Peter Bernstein, guitar; Doug Weiss, bass; Al Foster, drums.

**Ordering info:** [pirouet.com](http://pirouet.com)





## Symphonies of Swing

Jazz holds a tenuous position in relation to classical music. Few would disagree that the two were once intertwined—one can hear, for example, the influence of the European piano tradition and early American military music in jazz pioneers like Scott Joplin, Jelly Roll Morton and King Oliver. Yet despite this early confluence—and the brief emergence of Third Stream—jazz and classical have evolved within separate tributaries. This batch of jazz musicians, inspired by modernism and equipped with new tools for orchestration, are reaching back out across the aisle to engage with classical music in progressive new ways.

Boston-based guitarist **Eric Hofbauer** has released two previous albums under his *Prehistoric Jazz* series, which found the young composer reinventing the music of Shostakovich, Webern and Messaien. For the series' third installation, ***Prehistoric Jazz Vol. 3—Three Places In New England* (Creative Nation 028; 39:39 ★★★★★)**, Hofbauer has chosen to re-contextualize a three-part suite by American modernist composer Charles Ives. Much is gained in translation. The delicate string passages of the original are rendered here through gossamer guitar chords and billowing clarinet, and piquant brass statements are transformed into smeary plunger-muted trumpet solos. Beneath it all thrums the pulse of unabated swing, which Hofbauer doesn't so much append to the music as unearth it from its source.

Ordering info: [erichofbauer.com](http://erichofbauer.com)

Keyboardist **Richard Sussman** pursues a different path on ***The Evolution Suite* (Zoho 201614; 75:19 ★★★★★)**, penning a collection of nine originals (including the five-part suite that is the album's namesake) that envision what the future of chamber jazz might look like. His orchestrations blend instruments of the classical tradition with the futuristic sounds of elec-

tronics and synths, which is how songs like "Movement I: Into The Cosmic Kitchen" come to sound like a dialog between Schoenberg, Cage and Weather Report.

Ordering info: [zohomusic.com](http://zohomusic.com)

Australian saxophonist **Jacám Manricks** provides his own definition of classical/jazz hybridity with ***Chamber Jazz (Self Release; 71:17 ★★½)***, a taut, neatly executed album that advances the notion of jazz as a chamber music. The quartet assembled here—Manricks on various woodwinds, Ari Hoenig on drums, Ginaluca Renzi on bass and Kevin Hays on keyboards—stresses musical communication over flashes of virtuosity. Meticulous interactions between Manricks' soprano saxophone and Hoenig's snare drum on "Cloud Nine" are marvels of rhythmic interplay.

Ordering info: [jacammanricks.com](http://jacammanricks.com)

As **DYAD**, pianist Eric Olsen and saxophonist Lou Caimano have released two albums on which they explore composers as diverse as Duke Ellington and Giacomo Puccini. On their latest disc, ***DYAD Plays Jazz Arias* (Ringwood Records; 53:29 ★★½)**, the duo tackles historically significant arias, self-contained pieces written for voice and originally intended for inclusion in an opera. Even in the rarefied air of classical-jazz crossover, this approach is a novel one, but in this case, the premise is more compelling than the execution. Trumpeter Randy Brecker enlivens a few numbers (including a bracing take on "Finch'han Dal Vino" from *Don Giovanni*), and saxophonist Ted Nash sounds positively tempestuous on "Dio! Mi Potevi Scagliar," from Verdi's *Othello*. But on other tracks, the musicians seemed weighed down by their own heavy ideas and grandiose diction. Far better when they unwind on "Meditation," with its bluesy, windblown freedom. **DB**

Ordering info: [dyadplays.com](http://dyadplays.com)



## The Fat Babies *Solid Gassuh*

DELMARK 257

★★★★★

Classic jazz, which is a good term for jazz styles that originated before the swing era, can be thought of as the true underground music of the 21st century. Largely absent from television and (with a few exceptions) radio and the press, it inhabits a parallel world from that of more modern jazz. Classic jazz has its own festivals, record labels, cruises, clubs, publications and modern-day heroes. The music did not end in 1930 or 1970, as proven by the existence of The Fat Babies and other worthy bands.

Based in Chicago—a city that spawned its own brand of trad jazz—The Fat Babies were founded by bassist Beau Sample six years ago. Since that time, they have built up a large repertoire and demonstrated quite a bit of versatility. *Solid Gassuh* features The Fat Babies emulating many different groups, mostly from the 1926–'32 period. Rather than being hard-charging Dixieland, the performances mostly have The Fat Babies sounding like a relaxed but hot dance band from the time, despite only having three horns. While the group sometimes uses transcriptions from vintage records, their solos are creative within the genre, rather than pure copies.

With the exception of "Did You Ever See A Dream Walking?" (a dance band chart with Asaro contributing a period vocal) and an exuberant version of "Maple Leaf Rag," none of these pieces would qualify as standards. Certainly, one does not often hear "Pencil Papa," "Sing Song Girl" and "Parkway Stomp" covered by contemporary bands, even in the trad-jazz world. *Solid Gassuh* is a must for anyone interested in early jazz. —Scott Yanow

**Solid Gassuh:** Doctor Blues; After A While; Feelin' Good; Did You Ever See A Dream Walking; Original Charleston Strut; Pencil Papa; I Miss A Little Miss; Parkway Stomp; You Were Only Passing Time With Me; Alabamy Bound; Slow River; Delirium; Egyptian Ella; Sing Song Girl; Maple Leaf Rag. (47:45)

**Personnel:** Andy Schumm, cornet; Dave Bock, trombone; John Otto, clarinet, alto saxophone; Paul Asaro, piano, vocals; Jake Sanders, banjo, guitar; Beau Sample, bass; Alex Hall, drums.

Ordering info: [delmark.com](http://delmark.com)





## Jerome Jennings *The Beast*

IOLA RECORDS

★★★★

*The Beast* is a beauty. Whether digging up some worthy but forgotten tune from years past or performing originals, the musicians on this album—led by adventurous drummer Jerome Jennings—draw from the canon of Cannonball Adderley, Art Blakey and others who defined the art of small-ensemble jazz. Taste guides their execution of written passages as well as their solos, which also display unflinching inventiveness.

## Steve Slagle *Alto Manhattan*

PANORAMA 006

★★★★

While he was born in Los Angeles and grew up in Philadelphia, Slagle has been a resident of New York since 1976, and a 20-year resident of Upper Manhattan. *Alto Manhattan* pays tribute to the area in which he lives and the feeling of family that he has with the musicians and friends he calls neighbors.

The majority of the tracks on *Alto Manhattan* feature Slagle as the alto voice in a quartet with pianist Lawrence Fields, bassist Gerald Cannon and drummer Bill Stewart. Joe Lovano guests on three songs as does Roman Diaz on congas, with Slagle switching to flute for the final two numbers.

The program begins with the sextet romping on the minor blues “Family,” which serves as a solid warmup for the album. The title track, an uptempo cooker that is a relative of “Impressions,” is heard twice with Lovano on tenor joining in on the second version. This concise jam features heated if brief solos with Fields sounding like early McCoy Tyner.

“Holiday,” a tribute to Toots Thielemans, features Slagle and Lovano on flute and G mez-

Maybe the greatest of the many plaudits *The Beast* deserves is that it’s not a drum-centered album. This is about more than spotlighting Jennings’ beautiful playing; the aim here is to create great music through unity. The gifts of each participant get full exposure, but what’s left once the last notes sound is the realization that they set a high goal for themselves—and made achieving it sound easy.

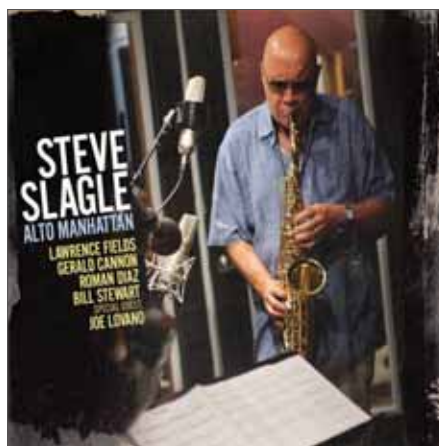
Each song feels effortless—another treat in this aural feast. Jennings teases us to smile when he borrows, of all things, the tune played by Mr. Softee trucks on hot summer days for “Ice Cream Dreams.” He replicates a conversation between a young girl and her father, a friend of Jennings’ now deceased, on “Cammy’s Smile.” He brings in Jazzmeia Horn for the vocal on “You Don’t Know What Love Is,” and while she hasn’t quite found a signature style yet, she does have astonishing ears as she slides into the horn section harmony. Much more can be said about this album, though not nearly as much as the music says on its own. Really, it’s all that good.

—Bob Doerschuk

**The Beast:** Love The Drums; Cool It Now; Ice Cream Dreams; You Don’t Know What Love Is; Did You Call Her Today; The Core; Cammy’s Smile; The Beast; New Beginnings. (62:34)

**Personnel:** Jerome Jennings, drums, percussion; Sean Jones, trumpet, flugelhorn; Howard Wiley, tenor saxophone; Dion Tucker, trombone; Christian Sands, piano; Christian McBride, bass; Jazzmeia Horn, vocals (4).

Ordering info: [jeromejennings.com](http://jeromejennings.com)



zo-soprano saxophone. The medium-tempo ballad has the horns accompanied by some stirring conga playing, and the album concludes with “Viva La Famalia,” a showcase for Slagle’s fluent flute.

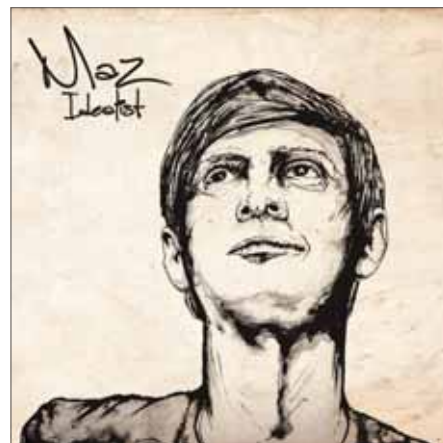
*Alto Manhattan* contains plenty of variety while being consistently satisfying.

—Scott Yanow

**Alto Manhattan:** Family; Alto Manhattan; I Know That You Know; Body And Soul; Inception; Guess I’ll Hang My Tears Out To Dry; Alto Manhattan; Holiday; Viva La Famalia. (51:53)

**Personnel:** Steve Slagle, alto saxophone (1–7), flute (8, 9); Lawrence Fields, piano; Gerald Cannon, bass; Bill Stewart, drums; Roman Diaz, congas (1, 8, 9); Joe Lovano, tenor saxophone (1, 7), G mezzo-soprano saxophone (8).

Ordering info: [steveslagle.com](http://steveslagle.com)



## Mike “Maz” Maher *Idealist*

GROUNDUP/VERVE LABEL GROUP

★★★★

Mike “Maz” Maher has played a prominent role in Snarky Puppy’s rise, blowing the trumpet in concerts around the globe as the group became darlings of the festival circuit. With *Idealist*, Maz is putting the trumpet down and grabbing a vocal microphone for songs that bounce between ethereal pop and psychedelic soft rock.

Lyrical driven, the subject matter is political by nature, but without crossing the line into preachy territory. The opening track, “Dream Away,” touches on the worlds inside of your head and how they have the power to transcend into reality. “When you assemble publicly you better learn some self-defense,” he croons on “These Words,” clearly bothered by police responses to Black Lives Matter protests, and more recently the pipeline standoff. “Oh Jesus, please turn these bombs into wine,” he pleads on “Bombs Into Wine.”

In the liners, Maz claims to have been highly influenced by Pink Floyd, which is visible in certain elements of the record. On “Picture,” a spirited vocalist sings in the background during the song’s most dramatic parts. “Dying Star” is slow, with squealing guitars and a cinematic touch. He writes, “I didn’t model this album on any one band, but I’d say it shares that idea of ‘musical space’ that Floyd had.”

By ditching the sound that brought him to prominence, Maz has explored a new path that works surprisingly well. Equal parts psychedelic jazz-rock and soulful r&b, *Idealist* is a worthy addition to the releases that the Snarky Puppy/GroundUP Music umbrella has produced.

—Chris Tart

**Idealist:** Dream Away; Picture; Bombs Into Wine; Dying Star; The Rain In June; Replica; These Words; Arizona. (40:00)

**Personnel:** Mike “Maz” Maher, vocals, glockenspiel (2), go-go bells (6); Melissa McMillan, Shayna Steele, vocals; Bob Lanzetti, guitar, hammertone (1); Mark Letter, guitar (8); Philip Sterk, pedal steel (6); Justin Stanton, keyboards; Bobby Sparks, Hammond B-3 organ (3, 5); Shaun Martin, Moog Little Phatty, Upso vocoder (5); Michael League, electric bass (3, 4, 7, 8), Moog bass (1, 5, 6); Jonathan Maron, bass (2); Robert “Sput” Searight, drums; Nate Werth, percussion (2, 3, 6, 7).

Ordering info: [groundupmusic.net](http://groundupmusic.net)

# Empowerment

**Teresa James & The Rhythm Tramps, *Bonafide* (Jesi-Lu 1016; 53:18 ★★★★★)**

Twenty years and nine albums after starting out in Houston, Teresa James thrives as a passionate blues-soul singer who has an aversion to complacency. Long based in Los Angeles, she works up potent dramatic tension in bassist Terry Wilson's songs about modern romance and fast living in Hollywood and Las Vegas. The expressive quality of her timbre spurs her makeovers of John Hiatt's signature song "Have A Little Faith In Me" and proto-rock band The "5" Royales' "I Like It Like That." Wilson and the other A-list musicians in her Rhythm Tramps have absorbed influences from Memphis soul and Texas blues.

Ordering info: [teresajames.com](http://teresajames.com)

**Deb Ryder, *Grit Grease & Tears* (Be-jeb Music 110; 52:25 ★★½)** On her third release, Deb Ryder sings blues-funk shuffles and other high-quality originals with authenticity and high spirit as drummer-producer Tony Braunagel and other Southern Californians drive the action. "Sweet Mary Ann," saluting the "prettiest girl in town," is a perfect vehicle for Ryder's commanding prowess. Small complaint: One of her gestures of vocal grit, a rippling rasp suggesting Koko Taylor, sounds overly mannered.

Ordering info: [debryder.com](http://debryder.com)

**Sari Schorr, *A Force Of Nature* (Manhattan 2044; 56:55 ★★½)** Noted British blues producer Mike Vernon, long ago associated with Peter Green's Fleetwood Mac and John Mayall, supervised this session in Spain starring opera-trained singer Sari Schorr. For most of this debut album, Schorr, a New Yorker, belts out blues-rock aggressively, bludgeoning the skulls of listeners who are partial to a more nuanced approach. Sharing her oft-exaggerated excitement, among others, are U.K. guitar sensation Innes Sibun.

Ordering info: [sarischorr.com](http://sarischorr.com)

**Joanna Connor, *Six String Stories* (M.C. Records 0080; 48:58 ★★)** Joanna Connor's first studio effort in 13 years strains after mediocrity. Her empty guitar conflagrations and wayward vocals scorch forgettable songs she's composed with producer/band member Marion Lance Lewis. Connors does a lot of nothing with Jill Scott's "Golden" and Elmore James' "The Sky Is Crying." Only "Heaven" offers temporary relief, its appealing Hugh Masekela-in-Cape Town thrust taking an unexpected turn into a gospel finale featuring testifier Lewis and his singing family.

Ordering info: [mc-records.com](http://mc-records.com)

**Nancy Wright, *Play Date!* (Direct**



Nancy Wright

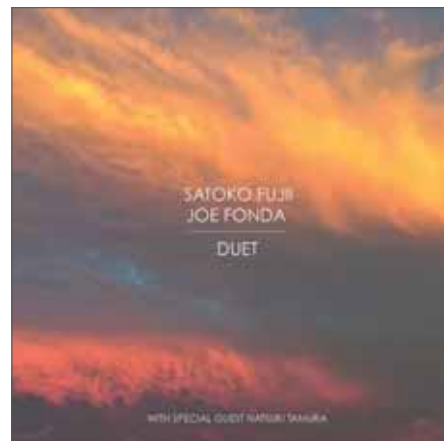
**Hit/VizzTone 111; 55:55 ★★★★★)** On a rare solo album recorded during breaks from work with other bands in Northern California, Nancy Wright shouts and purrs through her tenor saxophone like a musician whose intelligence has evolved to match her technique. Whether performing Chicago and West Coast blues material out of the archives or playing her own vibrant tradition-based songs, she uses tension to mark out stylistic territory somewhere between the camps of Junior Walker's r&b, Willis Jackson's jazz and Eddie Shaw's blues. Wright is a perfectly good mezzo-soprano vocalist, proven by several selections, yet she reaches out to full-time songsters Frank Bey, Wee Willie Walker and Terrie Odabi to add hearty expression to a track each. Tommy Castro and Joe Louis Walker are among the seven excellent guest guitarists on hand.

Ordering info: [vizztone.com](http://vizztone.com)

**Tami Neilson, *Don't Be Afraid* (Outside Music 23339; 40:19 ★★½)** A Canadian living in New Zealand when not touring, Tami Neilson has a great big canyon of a voice that she narrows to accommodate whatever dynamic the music demands. The outstanding numbers are "Don't Be Afraid," a rock-ribbed pledge to love authored by her late musician father, and "Holy Moses," an original almost apocalyptic in its jangly nervous intensity. The singer's honest expressionism runs through nine more songs, too. Ill-treated by lukewarm audio production, Neilson's four Down Under accompanists appear unsure if their stock-in-trade is blues or country music.

Ordering info: [outside-music.com](http://outside-music.com)

DB



## Satoko Fujii/Joe Fonda *Duet*

LONG SONG RECORDS 140

★★★★★

Over the decades, Japanese pianist Satoko Fujii has demonstrated an uncanny power and musicality as a considerable force in the avant-garde end of the jazz spectrum. At once an assertive and keenly conversational player, she readily adapts to varied settings, including the fascinating quartet Kaze, with her husband, trumpeter Natsuki Tamura. With the bold and luminous new album *Duet*, she beautifully pares down to an intimate but uncharted and wide-ranging improvisational encounter with a fellow free-zoning master, bassist Joe Fonda, whose rich resume includes a long stint playing with maverick jazz icon Anthony Braxton.

Given Fujii and Fonda's easy rapport and empathetic language, it's surprising to learn this was their first meeting. Recorded at Woodfords Congregational Church in Portland, Maine, in November 2015, *Duet* marks the second date of their inaugural duet tour together, and ranks among the more significant piano-bass recordings of recent vintage.

They get along beautifully, and courageously, from the earliest moments of the extended, suite-like opening track, "Paul Bley" (dedicated to the late pianist-adventurer). Over the course of close to 40 minutes, the pair navigates a shifting terrain of emotionality and musical atmospheres. With the nonintrusive addition of sonically elastic trumpeter Tamura, the album's 11-minute second track is aptly named "JSN" (the three players/improvisers' initials). Here, opening introspective piano lines imply that the search is on, building in visceral intensity and sliding into primal trumpet/flute dialogue and prepared piano, fading into some enigmatic realm. This music is commanding, yet infused with a wide-open spirit.

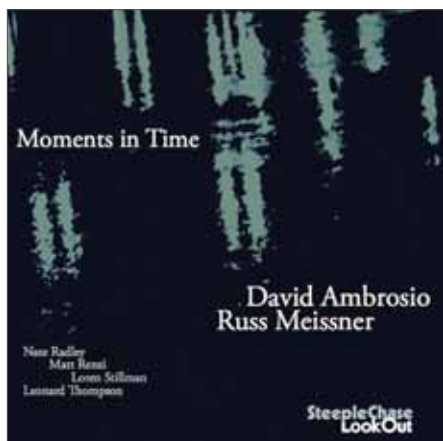
—Josef Woodard

**Duet:** Paul Bley, JSN. (48:30).

**Personnel:** Satoko Fujii, piano; Joe Fonda, bass, flute; Natsuki Tamura, trumpet (2).

Ordering info: [longsongrecords.com](http://longsongrecords.com)





**David Ambrosio/Russ Meissner Sextet**  
***Moments In Time***

STEEPLECHASE 33128

★★★★½

**JC4**

***Can You Believe It?***

RED PIANO RECORDS 14599-4422

★★★★½

Bassist David Ambrosio and drummer Russ Meissner have shared bandstands for 20 years. Their “I’ll finish your sentence” simpatico is evi-

dent on two recent discs: *Moments In Time*—the pair’s first outing as co-leaders—and a set with the JC4, *Can You Believe It?*

The duo’s fluidity in navigating meters and creating seamless transitions informs the engaging, shimmering sound of *Moments*. Their compositions make colorful use of the tonal/textural possibilities in the formidable two-sax frontline of Matt Renzi (tenor) and Loren Stillman (alto). Pianist Leonard Thompson and guitarist Nate Radley round out the sound, artfully complementing each other.

The opener, “Permaculture,” gradually unfolds around a single repeated guitar note until each instrument becomes percussive, unraveling into a free-ish swirl from which melodic themes appear and dissipate. In contrast, “Hourglass” jumps right in with upbeat melodicism, topped off by Radley’s joyful guitar solo. On “No V,” Ambrosio and Meissner streamline the tricky, angular funk-inflected lines and the bassist’s rhythmic solo keeps the energy popping.

Trombonist, composer and arranger JC Sanford’s foundations in classical composition and jazz performance led to his demand as a conductor for progressive orchestras, including the John Hollenbeck Large Ensemble, Joel Harrison’s Infinite Possibility and the Alice Coltrane Orchestra. His 2014 leader debut,

*Views From The Inside*, also featured a large-scale unit.

In this follow-up, Sanford’s music is stripped down to a quartet, allowing us to more fully appreciate his musical core. A protégé of Bob Brookmeyer, Sanford has a warm, unforced sound. He solos with clear direction while avoiding overplay, as demonstrated on his ballad “Forest Hills.” He can also play fiercely “free” when called upon, as on “Ja-Chan On Patrol,” a number evoking his mouse-stalking housecat with its lurching stop-and-start time.

Again, Meissner and Ambrosio ably bridge the poles, keeping things open yet grounded, probing yet cohesive. Whether navigating the funky 7/4 of “Dumpac” or the loose interplay of “Yamete,” the two bolster the ensemble and prod soloists with their breathing, yet commanding, pulse.

—Jeff Potter

***Moments In Time:*** Permaculture; Hourglass; No V; First Time On The Moon; 12th Street; Far West; Rogers Ave; Moments In Time; Vibey 7. (66:32)

**Personnel:** Loren Stillman, alto saxophone; Matt Renzi, tenor saxophone, English horn; Leonard Thompson, piano; Nate Radley, guitar; David Ambrosio, acoustic bass; Russ Meissner, drums.

**Ordering info:** [steeplechase.dk](http://steeplechase.dk)

***Can You Believe It?:*** Can You Believe It?; Forest Hills; Dumpac; Ja-Chan On Patrol; Yamete; Easy For You; Chico’s First Date. (58:49)

**Personnel:** JC Sanford, trombone; Mike Baggetta, guitar; David Ambrosio, bass; Russ Meissner, drums.

**Ordering info:** [redpianorecords.com](http://redpianorecords.com)

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## A Little Bit of Everything

In jazz, the use of polyrhythms, syncopation, swing and improvisation can be traced back to New Orleans, where the music of Cuba, Africa, the Americas and Europe came together. But improvisation is a common trait in music from all over the planet. As our knowledge of global music expands, it has become increasingly obvious that musical categories are becoming ever more porous. These five new releases reflect the musical diversity of our times.

**Tanya Tagaq, *Retribution* (Six Shooter 54:32; ★★★★★)** Tagaq is an Inuit throat singer from Canada who adapted the vocal traditions of her people and transformed them into something all her own. Like Tuvan throat-singers, she creates resonant notes full of overtones and whistling reverberations that make it sound like she's singing two notes at once. Tagaq has an astonishing technique and vocal range, and her wordless message—delivered in a range from guttural moans to shrieking falsetto—has a global resonance.

Ordering info: [sixshooterrecords.com](http://sixshooterrecords.com)

**James Chance & The Contortions, *The Flesh Is Weak* (True Groove 37:34; ★★★★★)** When saxophone player James Chance and his band appeared on the New York scene in 1976, his subversive blend of free-jazz, no-wave noise and punk pummeled audiences into submission. His James Brown-meets-Pharoah Sanders approach was unique for the time, but today, those early recordings sound almost sedate. The driving, rock-heavy tunes on his new album still contain unexpected jolts of noise and atonal improvisation, but "Melt Yourself Down" and "Disciplinary Action" aren't that far from the mainstream.

Ordering info: [truegroove.nyc](http://truegroove.nyc)

**Tinariwen, *Elwan* (Anti- 47:16; ★★★★★)** The Tuareg musicians of Tinariwen grew up in the desert between southern Algeria and northeastern Mali. The band's guitarists—Ibrahim Ag Alhabib, Alhassane Ag Touhami, Elaga Ag Hamid and Abdallah Ag Alhousseyni—generate a trance-like pulsation, marked by sinuous, intertwining leads. Their new album is steeped in desolation, and the droning guitars and aching vocals that drift through the strangely uplifting melodies of "Arhegh Ad Annagh" and "Imidiwān N-ākall-In" lament lives desolated by warfare.

Ordering info: [anti.com](http://anti.com)

**Sting, *57th & 9th* (A&M/Interscope 33:05; ★★★★★)** This is the first rock album Sting has made in 13 years, and his most introspective. He addresses climate change, mortality and the current refugee crises with arrangements that hark back to his early days, although the reggae syncopations of The Police are absent. Moroccan percussionist Rhani Krija brings an Arabic/Latin feel to "Inshallah," a quiet prayer for the safety of the countless refugees currently wandering the earth.

Ordering info: [sting.com](http://sting.com)

**Peia, *Beauty Thunders* (Peiasong 46:24; ★★★★★)** While studying opera at the New England Conservatory, Peia discovered Irish, Peruvian and Indian classical music, sounds that spoke to her shamanistic and ecological impulses. On this album, she uses bowed acoustic bass, harmonium, bodhran and charangon to generate an otherworldly ambience. Peia sings like a stringed instrument, creating countermelodies that dance through the arrangements with an air of blissful sorrow.

Ordering info: [peiasong.com](http://peiasong.com)

DB



### Anna Webber's Simple Trio *Binary*

SKIRL RECORDS

★★★★

Anna Webber has been living in New York City since 2008, arriving from British Columbia. Her Simple Trio includes pianist Matt Mitchell and drummer John Hollenbeck, and this three-some now benefits from some long-term lineup stability. Webber wrote all of the tunes on this album, where very short pieces are matched with extended compositions. Playing tenor saxophone and flute, she negotiates these angular, precise tracks with finesse against an intricate percussion and piano accompaniment.

Webber used the Internet as an inspiration and practical method prompter in a variety of ways, including the direct intervention of a random binary digit generator. The hyperactive "Rectangles 2" is just over a minute in length, but the following "Impulse Purchase" lasts more than 14 minutes, initially calm and sparse, a dialogue between tenor and piano, with drums joining in eventually. A tentative exploration entails a careful marking of territory, growing toward a wandering increase in activity, ultimately careening toward its goal.

"Rectangles 1b" has tiny chimes and delicate skin-rubs, Webber overblowing softly, Mitchell cautiously making shapes. "Underhelled" is a cerebral canter evoking the rigors of Dutch composer Louis Andriessen.

The dynamics are tense throughout this album, like a tightly coiled spring. Flute filaments scatter over "Meme," while "Disintegratiote" marks a return to rugged tenor excess. This end-rush of tracks raises the energy level considerably, but the introspective "Rectangles 1a" concludes, allowing listeners to relax their clenched and twisted muscles.

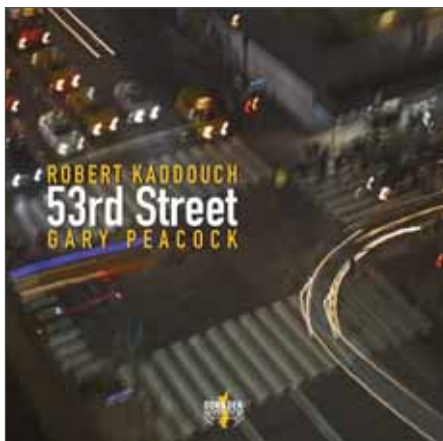
—Martin Longley

**Binary:** Rectangles 2; Impulse Purchase; Rectangles 3a; Rectangles 1b; Underhelled; Tug O' War; Rectangles 3b; Binary; Meme; Disintegratiote; Rectangles 3c; Rectangles 1a. (60:05)

**Personnel:** Anna Webber, tenor saxophone, flute; Matt Mitchell, piano; John Hollenbeck, drums.

Ordering info: [skirlrecords.com](http://skirlrecords.com)





## Robert Kaddouch & Gary Peacock *53rd Street*

ODRADEK 507

★★

## *High Line*

ODRADEK 508

★★★★

In this centennial year of Thelonious Monk's birth it is incumbent on us to remember how important it is to stay open to novel means of expression on traditional instruments. Life would be dull indeed without the discovery of

unique voices like Mary Halvorson or Mark Guiliana. That said, there remains a need for originality to coexist with technical facility, particularly if an artist chooses to position himself alongside a proven master.

In his liner notes to this pair of duet performances with veteran bassist Gary Peacock, pianist Robert Kaddouch writes of a desire to maintain purity in his improvisations, which he compares to the expression of children. It would be unfair to imply that his playing is childlike, but there is a lack of fluidity and variety in his playing that undermines his desire to walk a "high line" of risk-taking harmonic invention. Simply put, Kaddouch can't swing, as his playing on his original "53rd Street" demonstrates. His preferred approach is to roll out long strings of right-handed notes, frequently extending to the extreme high end of the keyboard. These linear melody lines are highly articulated, but the effect is of someone being very deliberate about the notes played as opposed to someone who is playing the notes effortlessly, with little interplay between left and right.

With Peacock locked in, that shouldn't be much of an issue, but there seems to be little connection with the bassist. Peacock, who has sounded integral to the improvisations of Paul Bley, Marilyn Crispell, Keith Jarrett and

so many other pianists, appears to be playing independently, and Kaddouch seldom allows him to take a lead role. Peacock takes no solos and shows little motivic progression of his own.

On the shorter, more impressionistic *High Line*, the pair moves closer to true collaboration, and Kaddouch sometimes displays a circular, chiming attack that is a relief from his pedestrian-sounding treble lines. On "Windline," he makes some interesting harmonic choices and enters into more interplay than anywhere else on these two recordings. As the title suggests, "Gary's Line" finds the bassist steering as much as he follows, and while Kaddouch occasionally plays himself into a dead end, his use of chords here leavens his shaky lead lines.

In theory, Kaddouch's approach to music making—the desire to sound as free as a child, to mix Jewish folk music with traditional Western songs—is intriguing, but his chops don't seem up to the challenge he sets out for himself.

—James Hale

**53rd Street:** 53rd Street; Jingle Bells; A Foggy Day; On The Sunny Side Of The Street; A La Clairefontaine; Agile; Ani Pourim; V'haer Eneinu; Besame Mucho; Lover Man; Ygdal; What Is This Thing Called Love? (60:20)

**Personnel:** Robert Kaddouch, piano; Gary Peacock, bass.

**High Line:** Blues; Snowline; Gary's Line; Windline; Skyline; MS1014; High Line; High Line II; High Line III. (41:13)

**Personnel:** Robert Kaddouch, piano; Gary Peacock, bass.

**Ordering info:** [odradek-records.com](http://odradek-records.com)

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## Jarrett's Pivotal Moment

ECM Records has released a plethora of **Keith Jarrett** live recordings over the years. But the latest is undoubtedly a crown jewel. ***A Multi-tude Of Angels* (ECM 70:41, 77:15, 74:01, 75:22 ★★★★★)**, a four-CD box set produced and engineered by Jarrett, comprises four otherworldly solo concerts from 1996 that he played at smaller opera-like houses in four different Italian cities (Modena, Ferrara, Torino, Genova) on Oct. 23, 25, 28 and 30.

In his self-penned liner notes, Jarrett calls the epic concerts the "pinnacle" of his career, recorded during a time when he was "playing for my life." Collectively, they represent the last concerts he played without breaks within sets. Jarrett plays straight through—no stops—so that each piece floats in a consummate improvisational brilliance. Above all presides a joyful expression of spiritual creativity steeped in the sensibility of the here and now.

The concerts, still vivid after 20 years, were recorded by Jarrett himself on a DAT machine. They are the final shows he performed before he went on a multiyear public performance hiatus because of the debilitating effects of chronic fatigue syndrome. (He reemerged on record with the gorgeous *The Melody At Night, With You* in 1999 and reunited with his Standards Trio of bassist Gary Peacock and drummer Jack DeJohnette that same year.) He underscores the significance of this moment in the liners, claiming that "this is a major event for me."

Given the circumstances, one might expect Jarrett to stay in the contemplative

zone he establishes in the first piece in Modena (simply called "Part I"). It has a feel of anguished journey-music with gentle single-note ruminations and relaxed crescendos—wistful and moving at the same time. However, in "Part II" he opens playfully with keyboard pounces, chase-like scampers and a tumble of dissonance—all played with his signature vocal inflections, which irritate some, but here add another intimate element to his state of being.

Jarrett's show in Ferrara features the best track of the box, "Part II," where in the midst of him crooning and tapping his feet in rhythm, he plays into a rollick, with an almost hoedown bluesy feel. It's a tour de force that, in certain stretches, finds him wrestling with a stutter-step rhythm and a flurry of high notes.

The Torino concert features Jarrett intuiting wispy strains of melody in "Part I" and fast, peppery passages in "Part II." Here, a touch of the avant-garde intersects with a saloon-style piano roll that leads to a stretch of tranquility, opening to a funky plateau. The Genova show begins with a sparkling excursion across the keyboard. It leads to "Part II," which calms with a quiet melancholic longing and a strong-fingered rhythmic resolve. It's a fitting capstone to Jarrett's four-stop odyssey.

What's remarkable about this box is how commanding Jarrett is when creating such delicate and memorable music, continually pausing the flow and unspooling it anew from a well of melody and rhythm.

Ordering info: [ecmrecords.com](http://ecmrecords.com)

DB



## Micic/Abercrombie/ Bernstein/ Lund *Inspired*

ARTISTSHARE

★★★★

Tribute recordings so frequently come across as overly contrived projects with only minimal commitment by the artists involved that you have to readjust your perceptions when you encounter a genuine one. On the surface, bringing together four highly disparate guitarists to celebrate one artist might seem as high concept as these types of projects come, but the focus is the late Jim Hall—and few jazz masters in the past 20 years have wielded so much influence or attracted so much love.

Veteran Americans John Abercrombie and Peter Bernstein are directly part of Hall's lineage of combining harmony, melody and guitar voicings in interesting ways. Norwegian Lage Lund and Serbian Rale Micic are a generation removed, but have displayed an interest in pushing Hall's legacy into the future. Each of the four gets a solo piece, six duets present various combinations, and the four combine for an exploration of the harmonic possibilities of Hall's 1963 composition "All Across The City."

*Inspired* runs a certain risk of being of interest only to guitarists—it is, at its extreme, the ultimate six-stringers' nerd-out session—but the ability of the players to find a variety of ways to combine different motivic approaches generates interest. The combination of Abercrombie and Lund on "I'm Getting Sentimental Over You" is a particular highlight, as the two display an exceptional level of creative interplay and responsive listening.

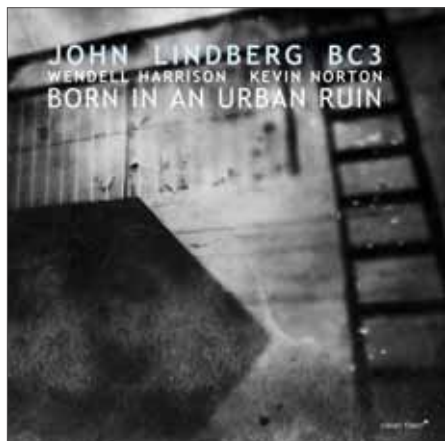
This is a recording that exudes warmth, going beyond the sweet-toned instrumentation to the depth of feeling these four guitarists have for the subject of their tribute. —James Hale

**Inspired:** Dream Steps; Alone Together; Bon Ami; My Funny Valentine; I'm Getting Sentimental Over You; All Across The City; My Ideal; I Should Care; Body And Soul; I Hear A Rhapsody; Embraceable You. (\$55.53)

**Personnel:** Rale Micic, John Abercrombie, Peter Bernstein, Lage Lund, guitars.

Ordering info: [artistshare.com](http://artistshare.com)





## John Lindberg BC3 *Born In An Urban Ruin*

CLEAN FEED 388

★★★★

## John Lindberg Raptor Trio *Western Edges*

CLEAN FEED 389

★★★½

Two different trios, two disparate approaches. For many musicians, the simultaneous delivery of such dissimilar recordings would be a water-

shed moment, but for bassist John Lindberg, these are just two more entries in an already crowded discography. On top of 40-plus recordings under his own name, Lindberg appears on dozens of albums—by Anthony Braxton, Wadada Leo Smith, the Human Arts Ensemble, the New York String Trio—that run the gamut of contemporary improvised music.

For BC3, Lindberg takes a quasi-chamber-music approach. Wendell Harrison, whose tenor saxophone is a familiar sound on the Detroit scene, here uses only clarinet and bass clarinet, while drummer/percussionist Kevin Norton mostly sticks to vibes. Although the instrumentation may evoke post-war serialists, only “Devastation Of Vegetation,” which employs double bass multiphonics and tongue-slapping bass clarinet, approaches that degree of avant-gardism.

Instead, most of *Born In An Urban Ruin* strikes a balance between inside and out, anchoring free improvisation on sturdily melodic themes that often recur. “The Left Wrist,” a three-part tribute to trumpeter Roy Campbell Jr., is probably the best example, veering as it does between strongly rhythmic diatonic riffs and angular motifs that push chromaticism to the edge of tonality.

Lindberg’s Raptor Trio uses a more conventional lineup, with Lindberg flanked by bari-

tone saxophonist Pablo Calogero and drummer Joe LaBarbera, and the music, too, follows more of the traditional tropes. “Ashoka,” a lumbering, slow-swinging tune by Calogero, immediately sets the album in post-Coltrane territory, but it isn’t the saxophone work that makes the connection; rather, the similarity has more to do with the rhythm section. In the tradition of Jimmy Garrison, Lindberg’s bass offers a contrapuntal line, with skittering figures in thumb position over a booming E pedal, while LaBarbera’s drums deliver roiling polyrhythms.

Lindberg describes the Raptor Trio as embodying a “West Coast aesthetic,” and there is an underlying “cool” to the sound here. Still, there’s plenty potential for combustion in the chemistry between these three, and tracks like “Raptors” positively quiver with edgy rhythmic interplay. —J.D. Considine

**Born In An Urban Ruin:** Swooping Deep (Clarinet Version); Vermont Roadside Family; The Left Wrist (For Roy Campbell, In Memoriam) Part I; Part II; Part III; The Excavation; Swooping Deep; Devastation Of Vegetation; Born In An Urban Ruin; Swooping Deep (Bass Version). (49/33)

**Personnel:** John Lindberg, double bass; Wendell Harrison, clarinet, bass clarinet; Kevin Norton, vibraphone, percussion.

**Western Edges:** Ashoka; Ethereal Extensions (For Carleton Watkins, In Memoriam); Twixt D And E; Raptors; The Great Escape; Rumble Paint; At Home. (42/44)

**Personnel:** Pablo Calogero, baritone saxophone; John Lindberg, double bass; Joe LaBarbera, drums.

**Ordering info:** [cleanfeed-records.com](http://cleanfeed-records.com)

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# A Story Behind Every Song

Back in the early 20th century, a composer's melody was wedded to a lyricist's words to create a new song. Their collaboration was usually written for a theatrical show, film, radio, or a specific band or singer. The song's success was ultimately measured by whether it caught on as a standard and was adopted by many other performers.

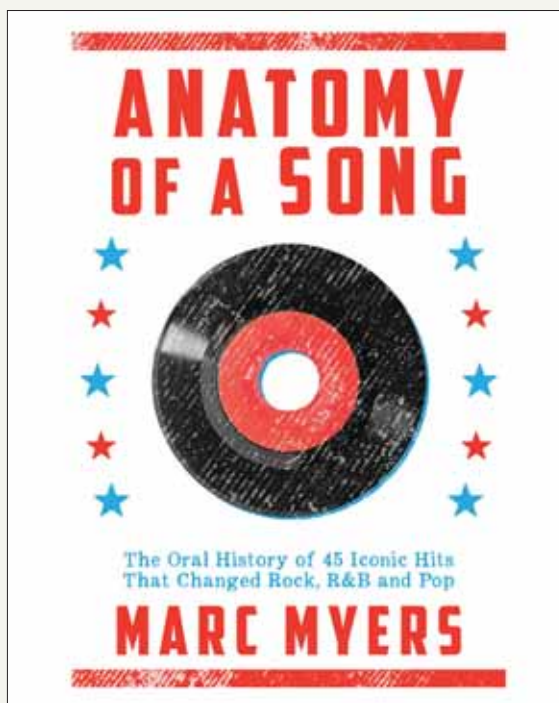
The 45 tunes colorfully and definitively discussed in **Marc Myers' *Anatomy Of A Song* (Grove Press)** date from 1952-'91, with all but eight being from 1961-'79. By that period, the main goal of a new song was to result in a hit record. In addition to the melody and lyrics, important consideration had to be given to the recording's tempo, arrangement, instrumentation, balance, sound quality and rhythm.

Every moment of a recorded performance, particularly during the era of the 3-minute 45 r.p.m. record, counted in pop music.

Born in Myers' Wall Street Journal column of the same name, these short stories (generally five to seven pages long) each begin with an introduction that sums up the time period in pop history and how the hit song fit into the trend of the time. The remainder of each chapter consists of excerpts taken from interviews with writers, musicians, engineers and others who were intimately involved in the process of creating and recording the song.

Myers knows the history of pop music extremely well and is expert at discussing exactly what trends were significant during a particular year. The only historical error that pops up is minor, when Myers referred to the "Western-swing tradition pioneered in the 1940s by Jimmie Rodgers, Hank Williams, Milton Brown and Bob Wills." More accurately, Western swing was founded in the 1930s by Brown (who died in 1935) and Wills.

The interview excerpts are informative and enthusiastic. Along the way, one hears from such notables as Dion, Smokey Robinson, Robby Krieger, Grace Slick (who is quite humorous), Linda Ronstadt, Loretta Lynn, Keith Richards, Jimmy Page, Mick Jagger, Rod Stewart, Joni Mitchell, Mavis Staples,



Stevie Wonder, Debbie Harry, Elvis Costello, Merle Haggard, Cyndi Lauper and Bonnie Raitt, plus many others who played a part in one of these tunes.

The 45 songs, which are discussed in chronological order, are drawn from the worlds of rock, pop, doo-wop, country and r&b. Jazz is occasionally mentioned in passing when it influenced the birth of a particular piece, but is otherwise not included.

Among the songs covered are "Lawdy Miss Clawdy," "My Girl," "White Rabbit," "Light My Fire," "(Sittin' On) The Dock Of The Bay," "Proud Mary," "Another Brick In The Wall" and "Time After Time." Even when one is not familiar with or enamored by a particular song, the stories behind them often prove intriguing and surprising enough as to generate a very human connection.

To mention one, Haggard's lifelong friend and bus driver Dean Holloway was once heard by the guitarist complaining about Los Angeles. Within an hour, Haggard had not only written a hit song based on the comments ("Big City") but had made its recording. He listed his friend as co-composer, resulting in Holloway making a half-million dollars in royalties—which changed his life for the better. **DB**

Ordering info: [groveatlantic.com](http://groveatlantic.com)



## Nick Sanders & Logan Strosahl *Janus*

SUNNYSIDE 1469

★★★★

The heralded Roman god who lends his name to the title (and image to the packaging) of pianist Nick Sanders and saxophonist Logan Strosahl's debut duo recording provides listeners with some guidance as to what they can expect from this impressive album. The long-time friends and collaborators and former New England Conservatory classmates reflect Janus' deific seniority and stature by drawing on source material that spans eight centuries.

Written by Guillaume de Machaut in the mid-1300s, "Rose, Liz, Printemps, Verdures" rolls out with a requisite discipline before passing through modern improvisational territory and then resolving back into Renaissance era tranquility. The alternately flowing and jolting "Sigma," composed by Sanders, refers to a villain in the *Mega Man* video game franchise. The playful, Strosahl-penned title track showcases the pair's locked-in playing style and instinctive, almost sibling-like ability to respond to one another throughout the piece.

Janus was an incorporeal gatekeeper and the symbol of beginnings, so it's appropriate that Strosahl and Sanders tackle a couple of standards that embody the Great American Songbook: There's an uplifting lightness of step in Strosahl's tone on "Old Folks" that is further supported by Sanders' crisp accompaniment and solo. "Stardust" is refreshed by the impressive rapport and natural pathos that the two enjoy. And with its hooks and twists, Monk's "Thelonious" serves as a natural outlet for the duo's give-and-take partnership.

—Yoshi Kato

**Janus:** Sigma; Allemande; Thelonious; R.P.D.; Mazurka; Old Folks; Be-Bop Tune; Rose, Liz, Printemps, Verdures; Selections From Vingt Regards Sur L'Enfant-Jesus; Janus; Stardust; Les Amusemens. (41:48)

**Personnel:** Nick Sanders, piano; Logan Strosahl, alto saxophone, tenor saxophone.

Ordering info: [sunnysidezone.com](http://sunnysidezone.com)



## Markus Rutz *Second Impression*

SELF RELEASE

★★★★½

Markus Rutz may not have deep roots in Chicago—the trumpeter and composer was born in Wisconsin, and studied jazz both there and at the University of New Orleans—but his debut, *Second Impression*, is very much a valentine to the Second City. With songs alluding to Chicago neighborhoods (“Bronzeville Bossa”), heritage (“Samba Of Big Shoulders”) and cultural icons (“Pullman Car”), it almost warrants an endorsement from the Chamber of Commerce. But the sound of Rutz’s Chicago draws neither on the blues tourists seek nor the free-jazz of the AACM. Instead, it opts for a tuneful, rhythmically sly twist on mainstream jazz, evoking the comforts of hard-bop without resurrecting its clichés.

Rutz has a big, dark tone and a fluid ease to his phrasing that makes him seem relaxed even when unleashing a volley of 16th notes, while saxophonist Brice Winston echoes the blues-saturated shout of Gene Ammons without compromising his cool. Bassist Jeff Pedraz is a pleasant surprise, delivering solid, supple time along with some lovely arco work on “Watching Drye Paint.”

—J.D. Considine

**Second Impression:** Blues Wright From The Prairie; Blues Modes (From The Underdog); Bronzeville Bossa; Samba Of The Big Shoulders; Watching Drye Paint; A Shortstop In Cleveland; Red Beans And Brice; The Pullman Car; A Shortstop In Cleveland (Alternate Take). (51:38)

**Personnel:** Markus Rutz, trumpet, flugelhorn; Brice Winston, tenor saxophone, soprano saxophone; Dennis Luxion, piano, arranger (6, 9); Jeff Pedraz, bass; Scott Hesse, electric guitar (2, 6, 9); Paulinho Garcia, acoustic guitar, voice (3, 4); Heitor Garcia, pandeiro, ganzá, tamborin, rebolo (3, 4); Isaiah Spencer, drums (1, 2, 6, 8, 9); Greg Artry, drums (3, 4, 5, 7).

Ordering info: [markusrutzmusic.com](http://markusrutzmusic.com)



## The Wee Trio *Wee+3*

BIONIC

★★★★★

For its fifth album as a unit, The Wee Trio—James Westfall (vibes), Dan Loomis (bass) and Jared Schonig (drums)—has chosen to double down. Literally. The group has expanded twofold for this outing, recruiting colleagues Nicholas Payton (trumpet), Nir Felder (guitar) and Fabian Almazan (piano) to appear as guest soloists on individual tracks. The result is a spirited, intellectually rigorous 11-piece program that reflects the diversity of the individuals involved while pointing to a shared aesthetic of lush grooves and winsome improvising.

The most engaging tracks on this disc work in dual mediums, mixing broad, watercolor ensemble play with pinpoint soloing and strong individual statements. “Rt3” begins in a mist of ambient sound, but then begins to crystallize around Felder’s rigorous harmonic structures. Similarly, “Climb,” featuring Almazan, rides in on a wave of chiming chords and crisp drums, but just as quickly dissolves into torrents of thrashing bass and pounding toms. But the Wee Trio is also capable of digging in deep, and that tenacious thirst for groove—along with its magnanimity—is among its greatest strengths.

—Brian Zimmerman

**Wee+3:** Rt3; Titan Up; Climb; Sabotage; No Justice; Belle Femme De Voodoo; Lola; Sound Evidence; Redwood; Gibbs Street; Apparition. (62:31)

**Personnel:** James Westfall, vibes; Dan Loomis, bass; Jared Schonig, drums; Nir Felder, guitar (1, 6, 10, 11); Fabian Almazan, piano (2, 3, 9); Nicholas Payton, trumpet (4, 5, 6).

Ordering info: [theweetrio.com](http://theweetrio.com)



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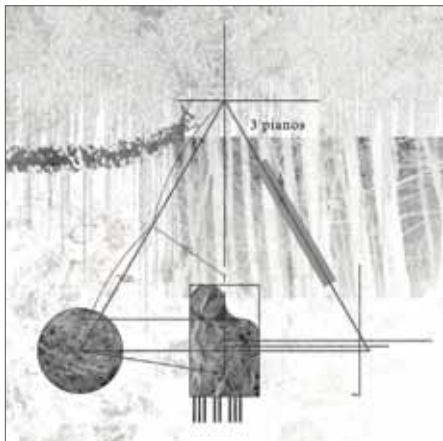
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## Tanaka/Lindvall/ Wallumrod *3 Pianos*

NAKAMA 007

★★★★

An unlikely union, *3 Pianos* brings together kindred spirits with a shared aesthetic that betrays convention. Japanese pianist Ayumi Tanaka, Swedish pianist Johan Lindvall and Norwegian jazz pianist Christian Wallumrod (all now based in Norway) manage to play as if one piano were in the recording studio. The results are at times fascinating when they aren't charming or outright playful.

## Supersilent *13*

SMALLTOWN SUPERSOUND 282

★★★★

As a rule, Supersilent's name doesn't match up with its aesthetic. This much we know about the striking and uncompromising Norwegian free improvisation group, which can be known for producing a super-dense and noisy sound. Yet as with everything Supersilent does, the squall is not without a keen sense of sonic poetry.

The fascinating sound range continues. With a history going back nearly two decades and now consisting of trumpeter Arve Henriksen, artful electronics-wielder Helge Sten and keyboardist Ståle Storløkken (heard in Humcrush with Sidsel Endresen), the group has entranced and mystified fans and critics over the course of a dozen albums for the Rune Grammofon label. Enter the album numerically titled *13*, the group's first for the label out of Oslo, and ranking amongst their finest—and most enigmatic—to date.

Recorded mostly in 2014, with a couple of tracks from 2009—just after the departure of drummer Jarle Vespestad—*13* consists of nine tracks, each identified by a number and each with a different musical agenda. The diverse set of textures and ambiances add up to a cohesive

The trio approaches the piano as a sound source with a particular timbral range, not as a conventional rhythm instrument. In fact, pulse is almost buried throughout the seven pieces of composed and improvised music. And while the album dispenses with theme, melody, tempo and any sense of formalism, there are minute variations—intermittent repetitions, with sustained moods inside each selection. In general, the moods tend to be of a serene, floating nature with the occasional spunky, more percussive approach.

That said, the three pianists exhibit incredible restraint, patience and a deep listening as one track leads into another. Harmonics and glissandi permeate “34” and “33,” the pianists sharing spritely counterpoint, bell-like tones, contrasting dynamics and gentle chords. The combination of three pianists untethered from key centers or chord changes might seem like a recipe for discordance and a frayed listening experience. Instead, a piece like “Till Patrick Modiano No. 2” highlights how a suspended sense of forward motion can transcend the mind's need for harmony and traditional organization.

—John Ephland

**3 Pianos:** Till Patrick Modiano No. 1; 34; Till Patrick Modiano No. 2; 31; Till Patrick Modiano No. 3; Romaine Brooks; 33. (35:13)

**Personnel:** Ayumi Tanaka, Johan Lindvall, Christian Wallumrod, piano.

**Ordering info:** [nakamarecords.no](http://nakamarecords.no)



“suite”-like whole. Hints of Indonesian gracefulness in “13.1” contrast with the roiling retro-synth ruckus of “13.3” and the avant-gothic organ gestures of “13.5.”

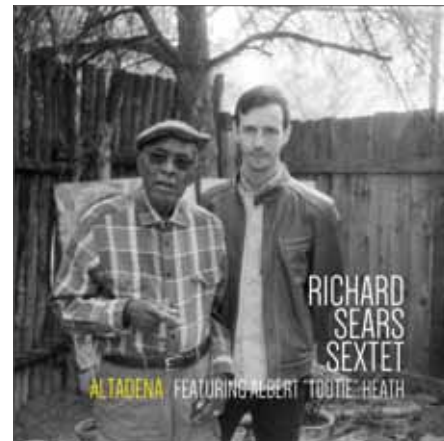
Supersilent proposes a personal variation on the theme of electronica. This model has plenty of musicality to draw on, resists the tyranny of lockstep grooving and heeds an in-house mantra about creating free-ranging music as a search party without end.

—Josef Woodard

**13:** 13.1; 13.2; 13.3; 13.4; 13.5; 13.6; 13.7; 13.8; 13.9. (57:00)

**Personnel:** Arve Henriksen, trumpet, electronics, percussion; Helge Sten, electronics, percussion; Ståle Storløkken, keyboards, percussion.

**Ordering info:** [smalltownsupersound.com](http://smalltownsupersound.com)



## Richard Sears Sextet feat. Tootie Heath

*Altadena*

ROPEADOPE

★★★★

Altadena is an area of Los Angeles County that Albert “Tootie” Heath has been calling home for about four decades. It is also the title of a five-part suite by Brooklyn-based pianist Richard Sears, originally commissioned by the Los Angeles Jazz Society in 2013 in tribute to Heath. Sears recorded it two years later—soon after legendary drummer turned 80.

With *Altadena*, Sears penned a constantly engaging work that brims with imagination and various influences, one that Heath can be proud to be part of—it will only enhance an already spotless reputation.

The leader can be credited for leading the drummer into territories that one would not immediately associate with him. In the company of younger musicians, Heath seems ready for a new beginning, and takes advantage of his vast experience to adapt to each situation instead of relying on an old bag of tricks.

Although the pianist's music has a strong melodic content, it does not preclude forays in freeform improvisation. Fortunately, the emotional range of the horn players is vast; they can build carefully crafted solos or let it rip with abandon. Steve Lugerner, Patrick Wolff and Kirk Knuffke are also expert at providing countermelodies or a complex background when they are not the leading voice. And each musician gets multiple opportunities to shine.

Each part of the suite follows a unique format, including a ballad and a tone poem. More surprising for an American musician, Sears' writing in the final section echoes the folk-infused compositions of French musicians such as reed player Louis Sclavis or bassist Henri Texier.

—Alain Drouot

**Altadena:** Part 1; Part 2; Part 3; Part 4; Part 5. (35:47)

**Personnel:** Richard Sears, piano; Steven Lugerner, alto saxophone, bass clarinet; Kirk Knuffke, cornet; Patrick Wolff, tenor saxophone; Garrett Lang, bass; Albert “Tootie” Heath, drums.

**Ordering info:** [ropeadope.com](http://ropeadope.com)





## Nate Smith *Kinfolk: Postcards From Everywhere*

ROPEADOPE

★★★★

In recent years, we've watched as jazz has been applied to mainstream genres with promising results. Albums by Robert Glasper Experiment and Kendrick Lamar have woven various styles of pop with jazz sensibilities, breathing new life into the way modern culture perceives jazz. The foundation of the urban pop/jazz hybrid has created room for lots of artists, and here's another one for you: Nate Smith.

## Paul Fonfara & Ipsifendus Orchestra *Seven Secrets Of Snow*

IPSIFENDUS RECORDS

★★★★

Minnesota-based composer Paul Fonfara received a grant from his home state's Arts Board to write a seven-movement suite based on short films by local filmmakers. The resulting project, *Seven Secrets Of Snow*, celebrates Minnesota's famous (some would say infamous) winter season, and the music within amounts to a satisfyingly cinematic experience.

The album approaches the notion of winter from numerous angles. "Miles Of Twine Revisited" has a serene, wonderstruck quality, owing largely to the clean, penetrating tones of Fonfara's woodwinds (he counts clarinet, bass clarinet and whistle among his stockpile of instruments) and the keening warble of Andy McCormick's musical saw. "The Grass Is Always Greener" and "Tar Sands" paint a similar picture, conveying winter as a time of solitude and natural splendor.

It's hard to pinpoint a specific influence on Fonfara's work. Klezmer is certainly a touchstone, as is European brass band music, but by and large the music is greater than the sum of its parts. The amalgam of styles is especial-

On his bandleader debut, *Kinfolk: Postcards From Everywhere*, drummer Smith does his best to translate a lifetime of experience into an hour-long album. Along the way, he gets help from some renowned jazz musicians, like bassist Dave Holland and saxophonist Chris Potter, as well as a rotating cast of solid vocalists.

"Disenchantment: The Weight" and "Morning And Allison" feature Brooklyn-based singer Amma Whatt, who brings some of her Afropop/soul-jazz style to the uplifting numbers. Vocalist Gretchen Parlato offers her dramatic croon to "Pages," which also features a pleasant section of short solos from Smith's roster of musicians: Kris Bowers on piano, Fima Ephron on electric bass, Jeremy Most on guitars and Jaleel Shaw on saxophones.

Despite the melancholy finale, "Home Free," the album is generally upbeat, with an emphasis on heady hip-hop beats and soul-jazz melodies. If you're looking to satisfy your groove craving, look no further. —Chris Tart

**Kinfolk: Postcards From Everywhere:** Intro: Wish You Were Here; Skip Step; Bounce Parts I + II; Mom: Postcards From Detroit/Floyd Salem; Retold; Disenchantment: The Weight; Spinning Down; Pages; From Here Interlude; Morning And Allison; Spiracles; Small Moves Interlude; Dad: Postcards From Isaac Street; Home Free. (57:00)

**Personnel:** Nate Smith, drums, percussion, Fender Rhodes, synths; Kris Bowers, piano, Fender Rhodes; Fima Ephron, bass; Jeremy Most, Lionel Loueke, Adam Rogers guitars; Jaleel Shaw, alto saxophone, soprano saxophone; Dave Holland, acoustic bass, (2, 8); Chris Potter, tenor saxophone, (3, 4); Gretchen Parlato, Michael Mayo, Amma Whatt, vocals.

Ordering info: [ropeadope.com](http://ropeadope.com)



ly potent on the album's upbeat pieces, like the "Magnificent Himaleti" and "Large Hearted," which evoke the leaping fires, hearty meals and white-knuckle sleigh rides of winter's gentler side. Cold has a way of making certain pockets of the world seem warmer, and Fonfara's album—far-reaching and vivid—captures the season in its entirety. —Brian Zimmerman

**Seven Secrets Of Snow:** Seven Secrets Of Snow; Miles Of Twine Revisited; Magnificent Himaleti; Housitania; The Grass Is Always Greener; Handholder; Large Hearted; Tar Sands. (44:12)

**Personnel:** Paul Fonfara, clarinet, bass clarinet, guitar, piano, whistle, vocals; Chris Hepola, drums, percussion, piano; Karen Majewicz, accordion; Andy McCormick, piano, saw, vocals; Philip Potyondy, trumpet, cornet; Christa Schneider, cello, vocals; Eric Struve, bass.

Ordering info: [paul-fonfara.bandcamp.com](http://paul-fonfara.bandcamp.com)

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## PRODUCTION **VALUES**

The Art of Recording  
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Gordon Goodwin (Photo by Rex Bullington)

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*Recording School*

# BIG PHAT

# PRODUCTION

# VALUES

## *The Art of Recording Contemporary Large Ensembles — By Gordon Goodwin*

**T**he art of recording large ensemble music has evolved over the years, along with the technology available to do it. The essential big band instrumentation has been fairly well established for 75 years, but the actual sound of a modern big band differs in many ways from its early ancestors.

Defining your own point of view about how you want your band to sound is your first task when organizing a recording session. The decision I made back in 1999 when we were putting together the first Big Phat Band session was that I wanted our album to combine the best qualities of a jazz record and a pop record. I used the records of Quincy Jones as a model, because he always seemed to have his feet planted securely in both worlds, combining the spontaneity of jazz with the attention to detail you see in the best pop music, especially in regard to production issues.

The legendary horn arranger and trumpeter Jerry Hey provided the best piece of advice to me when he recommended I ask Tommy Vicari to engineer the session. Vicari was Quincy's engineer, so there was some serendipity working there, I thought. And Vicari quickly became an important partner in defining what the Big Phat Band was going to sound like. Vicari's recordings have a remarkable clarity to them. When you listen to his mixes, you can hear everything. Want to dig out the second trumpet part? It's in there. The clarity and transparency he brings to a recording allowed my charts to really sparkle.







Goodwin (left) in the control room at Capitol Studios during a January 2015 recording session with the Big Phat Band. Behind him are drummer Bernie Dresel, video editor Jayson Rahmlow and recording engineer Tommy Vicari.

If there was a saxophone countermelody playing against a thick brass texture, you could still hear both of those easily. Vicari knew how to place the guitar and piano parts in the mix so that they co-existed and complemented each other, even when they were playing in the same register. However, we found that there was a price to be paid for this clarity because when a note was even slightly out of tune, you can hear it. If a rhythm was slightly less than tight, you could hear that, too. The transparency in Vicari's mixes actually made us better musicians because we knew we couldn't hide inaccuracies in the way you can in a more ambient mix.

The Phat Band has always recorded to Pro Tools. We have recorded in a number of studios in Los Angeles, but most often we record at Capitol Records in Hollywood. It's nice to know we are working in a room where all the gear is in good shape and is well maintained, where they have a good piano, and where the horn players feel comfortable. If a room is too dry, it can be difficult for the horns to hear each other and blend and play in tune. We typically set up a mic for each guy, along with another pair of mics to capture the sound of the room. Then it's a matter of taste as to how much of the room mics we use when we mix. Using a touch of the room mics in the mix helps round out the sound of the ensemble. This decision is often dependent on the style of the music. If we are recording a Count Basie-style chart, we may choose to use more room-mic sound, but a more contemporary sounding track may benefit from a tighter, dryer ensemble sound.

We always prefer to record the whole band at the same time, although with more contemporary grooves we may do a rhythm session first and overdub the horns later. This can also be a function of schedule and budget. If the horns

have a particularly challenging chart, you don't want to burn the rhythm section out by having to play the chart again and again until the horns get a good take.

Which leads to another topic: mistakes. Mistakes are a part of being human, and there is a philosophy in the jazz world that anything that happens during the course of a performance was supposed to happen and is what makes jazz so unique. Hard to argue. And yet, I find myself with a counterargument. Simply put, I believe that our audience deserves our absolute best effort. And for me, that means we come as close as we can to playing music that is without clams, that is in tune and has rhythmic accuracy.

At the same time, you also want the music to feel good. This becomes one of your big challenges as you lead your musicians into the sterile environment of the recording studio. People tend to stiffen up, and their performance shows that. You may get all the right notes without any obvious mistakes, but the music somehow lacks that magic that you get when performing live in front of an audience. As the leader it is important for you to set the proper tone, and keep your band relaxed so that they can forget about recording music and just start *playing* music.

When recording with the entire band, we go for full takes initially. Sometimes we may choose to re-record a particular section of a chart to have an option for editing, but you must be careful to set the same tempo and achieve the same intensity as the previous take so that they will cut together if need be. If we are recording a more contemporary style of music, we will use a click track. But using a click track with a swing feel can be risky, lest the music straighten up too much. There is a subtle ebb-and-flow to the tempo of swing music, and you

don't want to impede that with a click if you can help it. This means that you need to have a good headphone mix so that everyone can hear the bass and drums and react to one another as they would on the bandstand.

Have your music well rehearsed prior to going into the studio. A recording studio is a pretty expensive environment to be in and you don't want to be working on phrasing or checking for wrong notes with the clock running. I have a band full of experienced musicians and they all have opinions about the music, but in this setting, everything goes through the section leaders. Otherwise you are going to have too many chefs in the kitchen and things can bog down. We will do a take of a song, and then the section leaders Wayne Bergeron (trumpet), Andy Martin (trombone), Eric Marienthal (woodwinds) and the rhythm section guys will go in for the playback (although everyone is welcome to come into the booth for that). We will discuss what we want to change or adjust, and the section leaders convey that to their sections, and we go again.

Here's the thing about sessions: Things happen. You may have a five-minute chart and think, "I can get 10 takes of that in an hour!" But you will quickly find that there is always stuff to adjust and things to fix, and before you know it, an hour has gone by and you haven't given a downbeat yet. You need to budget for that and hope to get lucky. The Phat Band averages recording one chart per hour—tops. In a double session (six hours) we can count on getting about five songs on tape. Of course, much of our music has a lot of detail to it, and it takes a little longer to put together, even charts that we have been playing for a while. If your music is less challenging, you should be able to go a little faster. But you should endeavor to take the



time required to make your record as good as it can be. Records are a lasting document of your musical point of view, so don't settle for less than the best.

Recording improvised solos present another challenge in the studio because they are so dependent on inspiration. While you might get a great solo on your first take, the ensemble may still be a work-in-progress. Then on the next take the ensemble is tight and the soloist has a letdown. You have essentially four choices:

- 1) Go with the track with the good solo.
- 2) Go with the track with the good ensemble.
- 3) Keep doing takes until both the solo and the band are good.
- 4) Do an edit so that you preserve that inspired solo and also have the tight ensemble you want.

These are all legit choices, and here is where the rubber meets the road in this business. In a perfect world, you want both. Personally, I am not against doing an edit in the ensemble parts in order to protect an inspired performance by a soloist. Those kinds of solos are precious, and once again, it is the balance between those two components that make this music come alive. There are some kinds of improvised solos that can be overdubbed later without a noticeable effect on the music's unity.

Your decision about overdubbing will depend on many factors, including schedule, your soloist's comfort zone and your personal aesthetic about the topic. Personally, I think it is always better for musicians to play music together at the same time, but sometimes that isn't possible. Of course, another advantage to overdubbing after the basic tracking session is that you don't have to do it in a fancy room like Capitol Records. A smaller studio is a great option to do supplementary recording on your project, and your budget will thank you.

While we always record the ensemble all at once, there are certain instruments that we will overdub, usually those with more delicate textures such as flutes, clarinets, nylon string guitars, etc. You need isolation on these tracks, and having trumpets or drums bleeding into these mics will degrade your ensemble purity when you mix.

A word about Pro Tools. This is an amazing and seductive program. A skilled engineer can manipulate a performance in astounding ways, and this can be quite a useful tool at times. Say it's 1 a.m. and you are mixing a track and discover a wrong note. It's too late to call the musicians back in, and you have to turn the mix in the next morning. You are a few clicks away from tuning that note and moving on. I have no objection to this, assuming the wrong note was an aberration and you are not coloring the music in ways that it doesn't exist in its natural state. It is here where your taste and judgment

play a large role. Over the years, certain people have assumed that we do a lot of edits and fixing on the Big Phat Band records, and I can honestly say that we never alter the music in ways that we cannot replicate live. People who have heard our band live can attest that we sound the same onstage as we do on our recordings. This is how I define my use of this program, but you should determine for yourself how your use of Pro Tools makes your own music the best it can be.

After the recording is finished, your work is about half done, because mixing and mastering large ensemble music can be a time-consuming process. While experienced ensembles maintain a good internal balance as they play, there are always ways to improve on that when

live. Then listen to them in a new environment—your car, your home studio, with earbuds on your laptop. You'll be amazed as to how different your mixes sound in different media and contexts. This can be kind of maddening, but with experience you will find your sound and know what works and what doesn't.

Next up is mastering, which is a mysterious and amazing process. I always think our final mixes sound pretty good, and then our mastering engineer goes to work and they get even better. We have used several industry legends as mastering engineers, including Bernie Grundman, Doug Sax and, more recently, Paul Blakemore. These brilliant artists adjust the sound and balance from track to track, but also



Goodwin checks in with the Big Phat Band's saxophone section: Brian Scanlon (left), Sal Lozano, Eric Marienthal, Jeff Driskill and (out of frame) Jay Mason.

you mix. It is a painstaking process of going through the chart and making sure nobody is sticking out, ensuring that a chord is balanced—tons of small details that add up to a rich and nuanced mix of the song. It is here that you make decisions about reverbs and panning (e.g., kick drum and solos up the middle, trumpets up the middle, saxophones on the right, trombones on the left) and the more you dial down on the mix, the more stuff you will hear that you may want to address. Notes that didn't bug you at first now seem out of tune. Rhythms that seemed fine now reveal themselves to be sloppy. Once again, the amount of tinkering you do at this stage is a matter of taste and it is certainly possible to edit the life out of your track. Fortunately, Pro Tools has an "undo" button. You must find that sweet spot, where you have given your mix its due, but without crossing the line and creating some sterile contrivance.

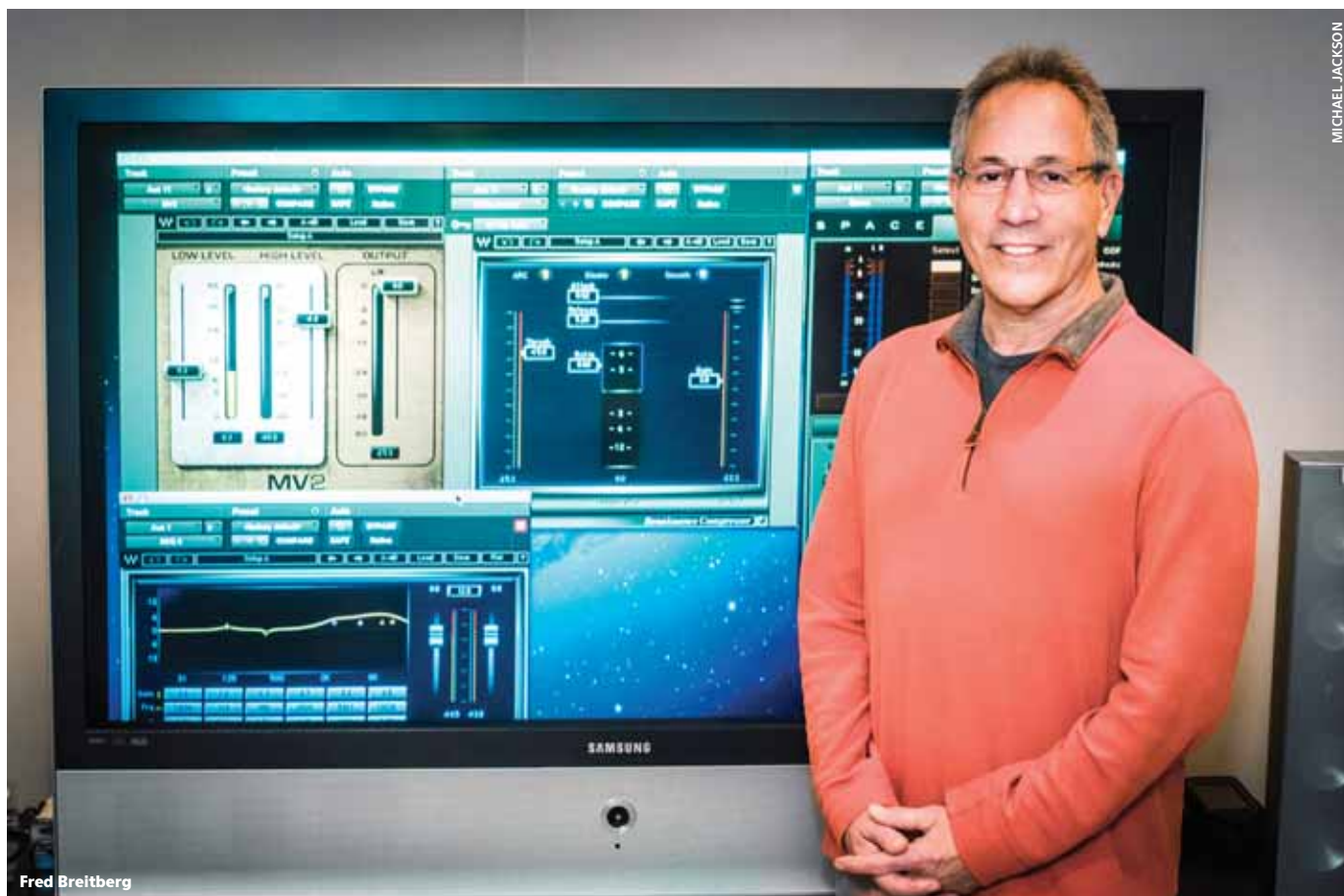
When your mixes are done, get away from them for a while. Let your ears regain perspec-

add a final dash of magic to the music, dealing with issues like tonal imbalances, which are hard to define, but once they are corrected, the music is much more pleasurable to listen to.

Recording large ensembles is a collaborative effort. It's a combination of the composing and arranging, the performances by the musicians, and the technical and artistic skills of your engineering team. I have been so fortunate to have the aid of such people as Vicari, Gregg Field, Dan Savant, Jorge Velasco, Michael Aarvold and many others as we do our best to document this music that we love. Good luck with your own recordings—we all look forward to hearing them.

DB

Keyboardist, woodwind player, bandleader and producer Gordon Goodwin has built a reputation throughout the music industry for his composing, arranging and playing skills. In addition to leading his 18-piece Big Phat Band and other ensembles, he has worked with Ray Charles, Christina Aguilera, Johnny Mathis, Toni Braxton, John Williams, Natalie Cole, David Foster, Sarah Vaughan, Mel Tormé, Brian McKnight and Quincy Jones. Goodwin's efforts have earned him 21 Grammy nominations and four Grammy wins, along with three Emmy Awards. Visit him online at [bigphatband.com](http://bigphatband.com).



MICHAEL JACKSON

# An Engineer's Approach to Modern Big Band Recording

There is a robust big band recording world that exists outside of the major centers of Los Angeles, New York and London. This article will attempt to provide a glimpse into this world from my hometown, Chicago.

It takes an incredible commitment to be a professional musician in the Chicago area. There is no scoring work for film or television. There is very little record company work that calls for legitimate, professional, sight-reading musicians. The amount of advertising work that exists in Chicago that used to rely on the professional, sight-reading musician has dwindled, especially due to the proliferation of producers who use sampled instruments in their compositions.

So, how do these musicians stay relevant and professional? They work as educators, play the Broadway shows that come to town, perform in jobbing bands and participate in the wide variety of big band entities that exist in the Chicago area.

These big bands typically play only about once a month at a night-club. This, however, affords the participating musicians a format where they can exercise their sight-reading chops and play great music. It is a place where musicians can compose and arrange their own work as well

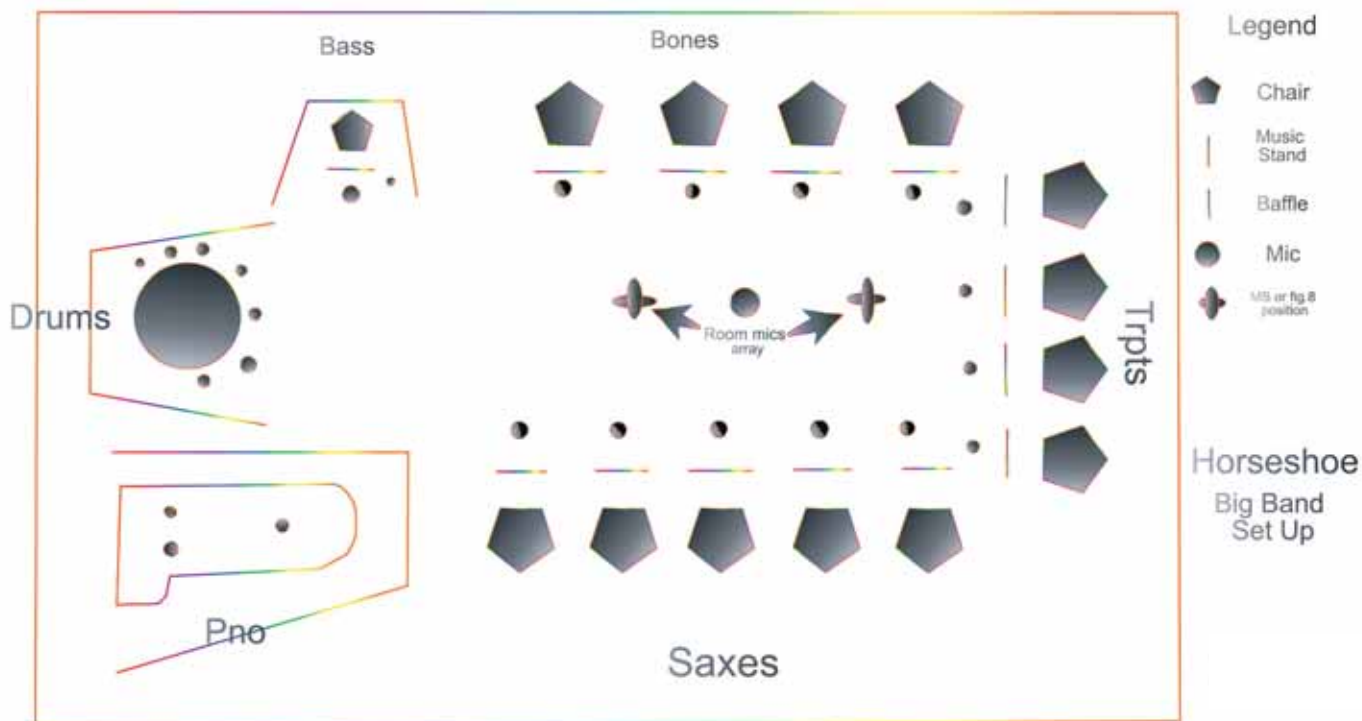
as play arrangements (or interesting rearrangements) of the classics.

In order to make a recording, these big bands must cobble together some kind of budget and accommodate the wide variety of musicians' schedules. Due to the self-funded nature of these projects, the budgets are generally small. They have to cover the musicians' budget, the tech budget and generally the manufacturing costs. Once the project is complete, they must find a label to release the project, or self-release. Then there's the challenge of promotion costs, sales, marketing, etc. It is a daunting commitment.

This is the environment within which I work. To respect and honor that commitment, I have to be in a position to deliver major-label-quality-sounding product—product that can compete side-by-side with the incredible product that is being recorded, mixed and mastered in state-of-the-art studios in L.A., New York and elsewhere by seasoned engineers with access to world-class microphone collections.

What I have to do is provide a recording environment that is the equivalent of these large pro rooms with great mic collections. In Chicago, the traditional recording environments that exist are basically medium-sized rooms. While they will fit an entire big band, the setups





are precariously close to the walls. Many times these studios are chosen because they have a good piano, enough music stands, and sufficient headphones and cue-mix capability to accommodate an orchestra of this size. Generally the microphone inventories, while decent, are insufficient to cover all the instrumentalists and singers with “A” line choices as well.

One thing I’ve done to support this effort is to assemble my own personal mic collection. This enables me to supplement the chosen studio’s mic collection. I have a variety of condensers, ribbons and dynamics. I prefer using ribbon mics on brass and reeds. Until recently I had a pristine collection of RCA ribbon mics that I maintained and used over many years. There were two 44s, seven 77s and a BK5. I always used the 77s in a figure-8 pattern, as they are more of a match for the 44s and are about 6dB hotter in output that way. It has also helped the phase relationship in a large, multi-mic scheme.

Several years ago, as I was about to go through another ribbon-mic collection re-ribboning ordeal, I came upon an opportunity to replace my collection. I had tried every ribbon mic manufactured. Only the AEA brand gave me the equivalent sound and mixing integrity that was comparable to the RCAs. However, they present the same basic challenges as the RCAs: lack of ribbon durability, low-ish output and too much weight for the type of small mic stands that are prevalent here in Chicago.

When presented with the opportunity to test the Shure ribbon mics, I discovered that not only do they sound great, but they are as warm as the vintage ribbons and have nearly double

the output, less distortion factor, a very narrow dead-side null and much more durable ribbons. They have the sound and mixing integrity that I require when choosing a mic for a purpose. I replaced my entire RCA collection with a collection of 13 Shure KSM 313s. This change was a definite step in a more modern direction for me. Now I can mic the entire brass and reed sections with this collection of the same microphone model. All 13 mics sound incredibly similar, articulate fast note passages wonderfully and, due to the increased null, provide me with better phase relationship than ever before. I then use the best condensers available (tube or FET) and the occasional dynamic for all my other miking needs.

My approach for recording big band is a combination of multitrack-type spot miking of the instruments and an overall room miking technique. Studio setup and musician floor-placement is important, and can contain some flexibility. I do not use isolation rooms for the trumpet, trombone and sax sections, or drums, as it decouples the organic nature of the big band sound and power. In general, there is a familiar big band setup configuration used when the bands perform in public: front row of saxes, middle row of trombones and rear row of trumpets. The trombone and trumpet sections are ideally elevated on risers. The rhythm section is generally stage right of the horns.

Regardless of whether you’re in a studio or live performance area, the further away from the walls one can set up, the better, as distance from the walls will help with discrete pickup isolation. Using this floor scheme when recording in studio, I will set the brass and reeds up

as in the familiar method described above, but array the rhythm section directly 180 degrees opposite of the brass and reeds so as to increase discrete microphone/track isolation. If you are working without risers, having the trumpets stand will help with bleed to the next row. While risers can provide a partial solution for using a more traditional horn-setup configuration, in medium-sized rooms they can compromise one’s already restricted floor space, and generally they are outside the budget point.

I mic the rhythm section with a close miking technique and loosely spot-mic the horns. For room miking I will use a stereo coincident pair for the horns, and one room mic above the rhythm section. I use rear baffle placement technique; line-of-sight isolation booths (if available) for piano, bass or both; and a PA-type (headphone-less) cue strategy whenever possible.

While I have used nearly every possible floor setup configuration to record big bands, I am currently setting the horns up in a “U” or horseshoe configuration, with the rhythm players opposite the trumpets, and the bones and saxes set perpendicularly in between them, their distance apart determined by the width of the trumpet row (see diagram above). This enables me to work the acoustics of pretty much any room or location environment. Although I do not use an isolation booth for drums, I will rear- and side-baffle them with low baffles for sight and oriented towards the band. I have techniques by which I am comfortable recording bass and piano in the room with the full band; however, if the line of sight is right I will use an isolation booth for either bass, piano or

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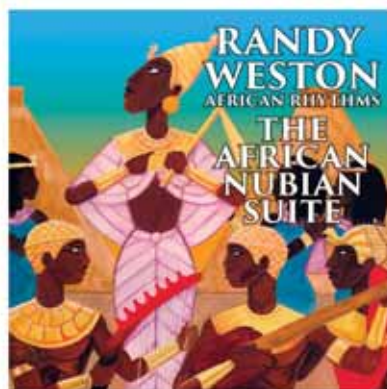
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both and then supplement their cue to the main room via live speaker monitoring. I also find that the musicians enjoy not having another row of players behind them blowing their heads off. This horseshoe type of musician floor plan also allows me to incorporate a five-room mic setup array. Essentially, I place two mid-side or Blumlein mic pair configurations, each covering an end of the space that the horns are facing. I also include an additional omnidirectional mic in between these mic positions. When I balance these room mics and include them in the mix with the spot mics, they add a very cool dimension.

Another important aspect is level to digital capture. Few of us are using tape anymore, and many of us are only using the mic pre feed, whether standalone or as part of a console to record/capture the audio data. The most important thing to understand about the level you input is to observe and respect the headroom of the system you're working with. In general, Pro Tools (for example) replicates more accurate playback when one does not push its headroom capability. (That is true for all elements in the recording chain.)

This observance of headroom is also important for mixing and mastering. I mix and master in my own boutique state-of-the-art Pro Tools HD control room environment. This enables me to take a traditional control room and its budget point out of the picture.

The mixing translation from my custom control room environment is extremely accurate. I emulate an analog board mixing model, with aux sends to reverb, delay and other effects, plug-in processing where necessary, and I am extremely conscious of the internal headroom characteristic of the system as I mix. When mastering, I do not use the L2 or any other brick-wall limiting method of making product louder. I have a selection of several high-end digital-to-analog converters that enable me to preserve the music's dynamic range and process above digital zero, emulating the methods of higher-end professional mastering environments. I recommend that if you are not a mastering engineer by trade, find someone who is. Your work will thank you. **DB**



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Chicago-based studio engineer Fred Breitberg has worked for Universal Recording Corp., Chess Records, Curtis Mayfield's Curtom Recording Studio, Streeterville Studios, Red Label Records and other major studios. Artists he has recorded include Dizzy Gillespie, Duke Ellington, Mahalia Jackson, Donny Hathaway, Muddy Waters, Howlin' Wolf, Aretha Franklin, Natalie Cole, Al Green, David Bowie, Koko Taylor, Albert Collins and Professor Longhair. He has engineered recordings for several of Chicago's top large ensembles, including the New Standard Jazz Orchestra, Chicago Jazz Orchestra, Jon Faddis & the Chicago Jazz Ensemble, Rob Parton's Jazztech Big Band, Frank Mantooth Jazz Orchestra, Bill Porter Big Band, Great Postmodern Nightmare Big Band, Kevin Mahogany Big Band, DePaul University Jazz Ensemble, Gull Lake Jazz Orchestra, Ron Hawking Big Band, Dick Reynolds Big Band and Columbia College Big Band. Currently, Breitberg's freelance career includes music recording plus post production and sound design for Chicago-area television stations owned and operated by ABC and CBS. Visit him online at freddiebaudio.com.



# THE INSIDE STORIES OF CLASSIC JAZZ RECORDINGS



Music scholar Michael Jarrett's new book brings together interviews with more than 50 producers, musicians, engineers and label executives.

When someone mentions record labels like “Blue Note,” “Prestige” or “Contemporary,” whose names come to mind? If you’re like the diehard collectors and jazz lovers who place holy-grail-like status on those vaunted label catalogs, Rudy Van Gelder and Roy DuNann loom large. These recording engineers created the sound for such masterpieces as *Blue Train* and *Sonny Rollins & The Contemporary Leaders*.

Often deemed of far less importance are the record producers who typically managed the sessions, helped choose the musicians and acted as representatives for the label. But to ignore the contributions and commitment of these behind-the-scenes figures would be a major oversight. Indeed, legendary producers such as Teo Macero, Bob Weinstock, Creed Taylor and Orrin Keepnews—and in the modern era, Craig Street, Bill Laswell and Michael Cuscuna—have played crucial behind-the-scenes roles in shaping the catalogs of recorded music that today constitute the jazz canon.

Michael Jarrett, a music scholar and professor of English at Pennsylvania State University, makes an important contribution to our collective understanding of an often overlooked corner of jazz in his excellent tome, *Pressed for All Time: Producing the Great Jazz Albums from Louis Armstrong and Billie Holiday to Miles Davis and Diana Krall* (University of North Carolina Press). Drawing together interviews with more than 50 producers, musicians, engineers and label executives, Jarrett lets his sub-

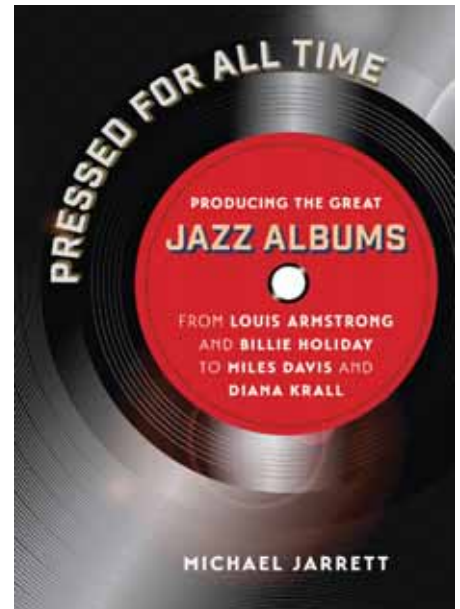
jects tell their own stories and share their experiences in crafting a quintessential American sound.

Clustered around specific records ordered chronologically, their comments tell the story of the jazz album and grant rare glimpses of how the recordings were fashioned. Jarrett leaves no stone unturned in his quest, from Billy Banks’ *Rhythmakers*’ “Margie” (1936) and Cannonball Adderley Quintet’s *Mercy, Mercy, Mercy! Live At “The Club”* (1966) to Herbie Hancock’s *Rockit* (1983) and Gregory Porter’s *Liquid Spirit* (2013).

“I started with a question that a lot of jazz fans have,” Jarrett said. “If you have a great improviser—say, Coltrane or Wayne Shorter—why do you even need a producer? What do these guys do? I also noticed that I loved everything Orrin Keepnews ever did. Or John Hammond. I knew they were important, but I didn’t know what they really did.”

There is a rich well of information disseminated in Jarrett’s vibrant book, which provides fascinating insights and fresh perspectives on more than 200 historically significant recordings. Pop the volume open at any page, and a great story emerges.

Creed Taylor on Ray Charles’ *Genius + Soul = Jazz* (Impulse!, 1961): “Quincy Jones and I talked about the arrangements. He was very slow; he took forever. He’d show up a day late, but of course what he showed up with was great stuff. I could ask him to change anything, and he very quickly did it. Like ‘Killer Joe.’ Quincy and



I agreed on just about everything, until he went to Hollywood. And then everything changed.”

Joe Zawinul on Weather Report’s “Barbary Coast” from *Black Market* (Columbia, 1976): “I learned how to love music and a groove from trains in Europe when I was a kid. On ‘Barbary Coast’ I set the music to the train sound. It was in the same groove. If you play that tempo, you can bring in the train whenever you want.”

Jay Newland on Keith Jarrett, Gary Peacock and Jack DeJohnette’s *Bye Bye Blackbird* (ECM, 1993): “I got a call from Manfred Eicher. He says, ‘I want everybody in a separate room—total isolation.’ Half an hour later, I get a call from Keith. He goes, ‘I don’t want any of that separate room thing. I want everybody in the same room, like we’re in a club.’ ... I guess Manfred mixed the multi-track a few times to do the ECM thing. It didn’t work because there was leakage and Keith didn’t like it. The board mixes became the record.”

*Pressed For All Time* is essential reading for every jazz aficionado.

“Whatever ‘jazz producer’ means, it’s completely eclectic as to what their roles constituted,” Jarrett mused. “It’s whatever was needed to get the job done. I was also struck by this notion that the great producers, from Tommy Lipuma to Don Schlitten, were both connoisseurs and they loved the music they recorded. They ate, slept and drank that music.” —Ken Micallef

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# Jane Ira Bloom's Soprano Saxophone Solo on 'Big Bill'

Jazz artists have been exploring the “chordless trio” for decades—at least since Sonny Rollins in the 1950s, and probably long before that.

For her 2016 album *Early Americans* (Outline), soprano saxophonist Jane Ira Bloom puts herself in this situation, and the extra space in the range between her high-pitched horn and the double bass creates significant ambiguity in the harmony. This means she has a lot of freedom as an improviser, and she faces many challenges as well. For Bloom's improvisation on her composition 'Big Bill,' she manages both to define and blur the key and harmony in some remarkable ways.

The bass part for the song implies an Am7-to-D7 progression (the “Oye Como Va” groove). When the notes of these chords are strung together, they create the A dorian scale (A–B–C–D–E–F#–G). For the most part, Bloom sticks to this scale. But she raises the seventh in two instances (measures 10 and 12) to suggest a melodic minor scale, and in three other bars (measures 18–20) she adds the flat fifth to an A minor pentatonic context (rather than the full dorian) to suggest the blues scale.

The A minor pentatonic exists within the A dorian scale, and Bloom plays some licks out of this interior sound. Her very first lick ascends the A minor pentatonic, stopping before resolving to the tonic (which would make it sound like C major if it weren't for the bass line). We also hear A minor pentatonic in other spots: the end of bar 4 to the middle of bar 5, and from bar 14 through to the already mentioned blues line that closes out her solo. Note that Bloom generally doesn't separate her minor pentatonics from the surrounding dorian material; she strings it all together.

Another scale that also exists within the A dorian is the D major pentatonic scale (also B minor). Bloom spends more time here than in either the A minor pentatonic or A dorian modes. Measure 13 descends the octave from B to B via this scale (morphing into A minor pentatonic). After tapping the A melodic minor in bars 9 and 10, she slips into D major pentatonic from the second note of bar 11 through the second note of bar 12 (after which she seamlessly transitions back into A melodic minor, using the common tones D, E and F# to get there). D is the



IV chord in this progression, yet Bloom's solo leans on this sound at least as much as that of the tonic. This creates a sort of ambiguity. For instance, the F# simultaneously sounds like a third (of the D) or a sixth (of the Am). Also, since there is just a bass line with no instrument stating the chords underneath Bloom, all this emphasis on D major can make the progression sound like D9/A rather than Am7-D7.

Bars 6-8 are a telling example of this ambiguity. There's a D major pentatonic lick that Bloom plays four times, but it includes the C natural, connecting it to the A minor pentatonic and A dorian. The addition of the C makes the lick sound a bit like D7, but since the D isn't played it also sounds like Am6/9. Even though she's using notes from the same A dorian scale, by grouping them in different subsets, Bloom creates the sense that there's much more going on than just a scale over a modal vamp.

Another noteworthy element of Bloom's improvisation is her phrasing. Her first line climbs up and lands squarely on the downbeat, a common means of creating a strong rhythmic resolution. But after opening with such a strong line, she never emphasizes the downbeat in such a manner for the remainder of her solo.

Most of her phrases cross over the bar line. One motif she explores is starting three 16ths before the downbeat and playing through into the next bar. Her second lick, starting before measure 3, does this, where she continues her 16th-note line into measure 3, where it morphs into some 16th-note syncopation. Curiously, before the next bar she plays two 16ths prior to the downbeat, and then continues the 16th-note syncopation, and gives us three 16ths again before measure 5. Here Bloom holds the last 16th into the downbeat, and goes with a 16th-note run up the scale in this bar (an

idea that terminates before the next downbeat, obscuring the "one" again). So, each of these phrases is in some ways the same but in some ways different, creating simultaneous senses of continuity and variation. We hear more variations of this motif of playing some 16ths in the final beat leading to the downbeat and then continuing through the next bar in some fashion going into measures 7, 8, 12 and 17.

That covers much of Bloom's improvisation, but the other phrases also run over the bar line. A particularly demonstrative one is from bars 9 through 11. After starting an ascending line just after the downbeat, we hear a long, dense string of mostly 16ths, going almost to the end of measure 10. Rather than ending there, she drops back into the syncopated 16ths she'd been exploring and runs that straight through into the middle of bar 11. This line crosses two bar lines without emphasizing a downbeat. This line is also the first time Bloom climbs to a high C, the only other time being two measures later. So she not only creates a rhythmic climax here, but combines it with a climax in range, making it doubly effective.

Her very last phrase, though more strong-beat oriented, still uses this rhythmic concept: After the repetitive blues lick, she lands squarely on the "one" of measure 21, but rather than making this a clean, strong ending on the downbeat, Bloom proceeds to play two more quarter notes so as to end in the middle of the bar. All of this playing over the bar line creates a nice effect against the strong pulse of the rhythm section, making Bloom's solo float above the groove.

DB

Jimi Durso is a guitarist and bassist based in the New York area. Visit him online at [jimidurso.com](http://jimidurso.com).

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# PreSonus Studio 192 Mobile

## Sonic Fidelity, Flexible Connectivity

The PreSonus Studio 192 Mobile USB 3.0 audio interface is designed to be the centerpiece of your home studio setup. It was modeled after the PreSonus' Studio 192 audio interface and put into a smaller package that is more suitable for desktop or portable use.

For a unit that is marketed as a portable solution, it has a lot of I/O options. On the back panel, there are the left and right main outputs, four balanced TRS line outputs to facilitate multiple sets of reference speakers, two balanced 1/4-inch TRS line inputs, word clock, S/PDIF and my personal favorite: ADAT Lightpipe. A USB3/2 I/O makes the unit both Mac- and Windows-compatible, and with all the included inputs you can simultaneously stream up to 26 inputs and 32 outputs at 48kHz, or eight inputs and 14 outputs at 192kHz.

The Studio 192 Mobile contains the same great Class-A XMAX microphone preamps that PreSonus is known for, only there are two on this unit compared to eight on the original Studio 192.

Other notable features include near-zero-latency monitoring, speaker switching, talkback control and a number of other parameters that can be controlled from Studio One or UC Surface, PreSonus' touch-screen solution.

The front panel of the Studio 192 Mobile has two XLR-1/4-inch multi inputs, along with three knobs for gain, monitoring and headphones. While all the knobs are plastic, they have a very sturdy feel with no play when dialing in a setting. The action is smooth and there is nothing in the moving parts that suggests they are not a long-term solution.

The unit is slightly narrower but the same height as a single rack space,

which makes it a touch larger than other units that have two XLR inputs on the front; even so, it was small enough that I was able to make space easily on my cluttered work desk.

Also included is PreSonus Studio One 3 Artist version, a \$99 value (one step above the free version). While not my regular DAW, I have been following the development of Studio One since PreSonus released the original free version a few years back. I have always been impressed by the amount of features in the free version, and also the completeness of the paid versions. The DAW market is starting to get pretty crowded, but Studio One was able to enter the market with a really strong product and has kept up with the ever-increasing demands of DAW users.

While there are benefits to using the Studio 192 Mobile with third-party DAWs, the greatest amount of integration will happen when you use the Studio One software with the unit. Just as Pro Tools does with its hardware, using Studio One with the Studio 192 Mobile (or its big brother) will give you the maximum amount of control and automation options that the unit was designed for, such as remote-controllable preamps.

And while there are many third-party expansion options, if you need more analog I/O, the DigiMax DP88 preamp/converter was designed to seamlessly extend the I/O on the Studio 192 Mobile with eight additional digitally controlled XMAX preamps.

The Studio 192 Mobile is a great value considering the quality of the unit, the preamps and the inclusion of the full featured Studio One 3 Artist version.

—Matt Kern

[presonus.com](http://presonus.com)



# Christopher Speakers CSP1 Reference Monitors

## 'Feel' the Sound, Hear the Nuance

I was pleasantly surprised when I saw the Christopher Speakers CSP1 reference monitors, designed by musician/inventor Chris Eagan, for the first time at Steakhouse Studio in North Hollywood. I had anticipated a medium-sized, two-way nearfield speaker, similar to what most professional engineers use on a daily basis. However, the CSP1s presented a satisfying first impression due to their slightly more than 4-foot height and 90 pounds of sturdy architecture featuring a three-way speaker.

I have found that one set of speakers does not adequately suit both professional and leisure listening needs. There are types of speakers that I consider a reliable working tool but are not my preferred choice for enjoying music casually—much like driving a pickup truck for work but preferring to drive a convertible on a day off.

This minor conundrum is one of the reasons you'll often see multiple sets of speakers in a recording studio. Part of the process is to be able to

hype up the music to enjoy it loudly sometimes, while other times, when critical listening and quality control are paramount, one requires another set of speakers known for their honesty and transparency. The CSP1s happen to do both remarkably well.

After critical inspection and listening to different types of music on the CSP1s, I was truly intrigued by the sound. I found that they provide the appropriate balance of sonic information to make efficient yet creative engineering decisions. Furthermore, I discovered the speakers to be satisfyingly warm in the lower frequencies, yet transparent and subtle in the higher frequencies. I was able to "feel" the sound, as well as audibly understand and take in all of the critical nuances of the transient information.

The CSP1s favor a purist approach, simple and uncompromising. It's a passive design, so it isn't self-powered. It doesn't introduce any unnecessary processing into the audio.



I particularly appreciate that the placement of the CSP1s' tweeters are centered while also positioned in between the low woofer and the mid cone. This arrangement makes a multiple surround speaker scenario much easier to lay out, since there is no need to offset the position of the speaker to compensate for a tweeter that would otherwise not be centered. Similarly, because of the tweeter position and successful frequency response matching tests, this also makes the CSP1s conveniently interchangeable between left and right. I found that the speakers were consistently accurate and uniform by comparison, and the stereo imaging and frequency response were impeccable at both loud and quiet playback volumes.

The CSP1s feature a useful custom high-frequency driver trim attenuator, a clean and helpful way to adjust the high end, depending on your listening environment and how far away you prefer to sit from the speakers. It sounded great on several positions and it made clever sense on how to fine-tune the speakers without adding additional audio signal processing. The only downside is that the attenuator knobs are not notched or labelled, so it might be difficult to tell how much you are adjusting them without a defined position or visual indicator.

Overall, I was impressed by the CSP1s' performance, and it was exciting to discover their capabilities. While not inexpensive (starting at \$9,995 for the pair), I rate the CSP1s as a feasible alternative to their PMC or ATC counterparts—which can be significantly more expensive. So, if you are in the market for such speakers, I highly recommend that you consider the Christophers for equivalent results at a more practical price. Plus, the CSP1s are made completely by hand in the United States.

—Jorge Velasco

[christopherspeakers.com](http://christopherspeakers.com)



## Mojave Audio MA-50

### *Versatile, Natural Transformerless Sound*

Technical Grammy award-winning microphone designer David Royer and Mojave Audio have released the MA-50, a large diaphragm transformerless microphone with a cardioid polar pattern that is considerably less expensive than other Mojave offerings. The transformerless mic is an unusual category for Mojave, but the goal was to make a mic that sounded expensive but could be an option for a home or pro studio.

Why a transformerless mic? Since transformers can give gear a certain “sound,” a transformerless mic could be the way to go when you are in the market for something that has a more neutral or transparent quality.

This is a very low-noise mic that has a large-diaphragm cardioid 3-micron capsule, making it a good candidate for use in a wide variety of situations. You can consider using this mic in places where you might use a small-diaphragm mic, such as a source with fast complex transients like an acoustic guitar. It also has a high max SPL handling of 125dB, which makes it an option for an overhead drum mic. This is where the versatility comes in.

The MA-50 has a classic design to it and comes with a sturdy carrying case and shockmount. There is nothing too fancy about the shockmount, but it's solidly constructed with a metal frame and rubber use for the cradle portion. It should last much longer than a shockmount using a fabric-type cradle that can sag over time.

I had the opportunity to use the MA-50 in a variety of situations and compare it to a variety of mics. It really held its own, even paired with mics that were more expensive by a factor of 2 or 3.

My main test is my own voice, since I do voice work for a variety of clients and I have a real familiarity with the sound source and what it's supposed to sound like. I set up my two usual go-to VO mics and the MA-50 and ran through a number of scripts. The MA-50 operated about as expected: a very non-colored, true representation of my voice. One of my favorite personal mics has a touch of proximity effect that gives my voice a touch more body; this mic did not have that, but it did have a nice sheen that I felt sounded very natural. So as with any mic, it's about what you want out of it. There is no right or wrong. It's worth noting that the mic I prefer on my own voice is three times the price of the MA-50, so the fact that it's even in the conversation, let alone a possible alternative, is impressive.

I also tried the MA-50 against a household-name mic that is found in most radio stations and is in the same price range. I preferred the MA-50. Compared to this mic, I really appreciated the authentic, natural sound. I was surprised at how much better the MA-50 sounded in this test. If I listened to both demos in a blind test, with both mics being the same price point, I would pick the MA-50 10 times out of 10.

I also used the MA-50 as mono drum overhead and on an acoustic guitar. The versatility and natural, open sound were very pleasing in all instances.

The relatively low price point of the MA-50 makes it a strong candidate to consider for your next mic purchase.

—Matt Kern

[mojaveaudio.com](http://mojaveaudio.com)



## Recording School › GEAR BOX

### 1. Headset Mics with Cables

Galaxy Audio's ESM3 and ESM8 single-ear and HSM3 and HSM8 dual-ear wireless headset microphones now come with four free Easy Replace cables. Five prepackaged bonus packs are available with four Galaxy Audio/AKG cables, four Shure cables, four Audio-Technica cables, four Sennheiser cables or a mixed set with one each of the four available cable brands included. [galaxyaudio.com](http://galaxyaudio.com)

### 2. Clarity & Definition

Zoom's four-track H4n Pro Handy Recorder features advanced condenser microphones, high-performance mic pre-amps and an extremely low noise floor. An updated design gives the H4n the capacity to handle up to 140dB SPL, so users can count on clear, well-defined, distortion-free X/Y recording even in loud environments. [zoom-na.com](http://zoom-na.com)

### 3. All-in-1 Systems

Blue Microphones' USB Studio series includes all-in-one systems that combine the company's Snowball, Yeti or Yeti Pro microphone with custom recording software from PreSonus, studio vocal effects for iZotope and custom templates for voice, instruments and podcasting. Users of the USB Studio series can transform any creative space into a recording studio. [bluemic.com](http://bluemic.com)

### 4. Digital MK 4

The new digital version of Sennheiser's MK 4 microphone features Apogee A/D conversion and mic preamp technology. The large-diaphragm MK 4 digital, which connects directly to iOS devices and Mac and PC computers, is suitable for mobile recording tasks that require great sound quality with the warmth and detail of a true condenser microphone. It comes with a USB cable, Lightning iOS cable, microphone clamp and pouch. [sennheiser.com](http://sennheiser.com)

### 5. Sound Diffusion

The GeoFusor from Auralex is a versatile sound diffuser based on the shape of a geodesic dome. Its dimensional pattern offers smooth, even diffusion and allows back filling with absorptive material for enhanced low-end control. The GeoFusor is wall- and ceiling-mountable and is offered in two sizes: 1 foot by 1 foot and 2 feet by 2 feet. [auralex.com](http://auralex.com)

### 6. High-End Interface

Focusrite has launched the Red 4Pre, a 58-in/64-out interface that combines four of the company's digitally controlled, Air-enabled Red Evolution mic preamps and high-headroom instrument outputs with dual Thunderbolt 2, Pro Tools HD and Dante network audio connectivity. Additional Red or other Dante-compatible components can be connected to the Ethernet ports of the Red 4Pre to provide additional channels irrespective of the interface used to drive the Red 4Pre. [us.focusrite.com](http://us.focusrite.com)







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Jared Sims, director of jazz studies, conducts the WVU Jazz Collective at an Oct. 10 concert on campus.



WEST VIRGINIA UNIVERSITY

# WVU Jazz Students Focus on the Creative Process

**LOCATED 75 MILES DUE SOUTH OF** Pittsburgh, the city of Morgantown, West Virginia, is a hotbed of improvised music. A Thursday night jazz jam session there regularly draws large audiences, a fall wine and jazz festival is thriving and a second jazz festival is scheduled to launch in March.

What accounts for this level of enthusiasm? A big part of it is the fact that the city's population doubles to 62,000 each fall with the influx of students at West Virginia University. Morgantown, which has been home to WVU since 1867, epitomizes the community that revolves around students.

"There is an extraordinarily good audience for music here, with lots of venues," said Jared Sims, director of the WVU jazz program. "Our campus is very spread out, so there are lots of opportunities for playing, and a real extended community of musicians in the area."

With a freshman class of 20 and an average class size of 15, the jazz program is not large, but Sims said it is very well integrated into the larger music school, which is more than a century old, and the overarching College of Creative Arts. For students looking to gain insight into the world of music beyond performance, a graduate certificate program provides broad exposure to music publishing, recording, career management, marketing and copyright law.

"A large university like this offers lots of opportunities," Sims said. "The students in our bachelor of music in jazz studies program often participate in the African Music and Dance Ensemble or play in the WVU Steel Band, and

we have engineering students who take jazz classes. We consider jazz a methodology and not an end-point. It's about learning the language of jazz and building the tools you need to be as expressive as possible."

Sims said the jazz degree has two main focal points: to prepare students for potential graduate school studies and to inspire students to interact with jazz musicians in the community. WVU's master's program in jazz pedagogy prepares students for careers in education.

The school maintains 10 jazz ensembles, ranging from piano trios to a big band, and Sims explained that the focus is as much on the creative process as on performance. "Our rehearsals aren't just preparation for a concert," he said. "They're about using the language and learning how to create collaboratively."

In an effort to extend the collaboration to prospective WVU students, Sims will launch a spring festival that will combine high school musicians with WVU's ensembles, a faculty group and guest artist Gary Smulyan.

"I'm going to organize a high school jazz honors group, which will be selected by audition," Sims said. "They'll get to work with our faculty and perform a concert with our student ensembles and our guest."

Over the longer term, Sims has plans to build on the strengths he has identified.

"In the next five years, I'd like to extend the sense of community that exists here and tap into the enthusiasm I feel so that this program almost runs itself, because everyone's so into it."

—James Hale



KATE FLOCK

From left: William Banfield, director of Africana Studies at Berklee; Darla Hanley, dean of professional education; Rhonda Patrick-Sigh; and Deval Patrick.

**Carney's Axes Archived:** Former Massachusetts Gov. Deval Patrick gifted the baritone saxophone and clarinet of Harry Carney to the Africana Studies Archive at Berklee College of Music during a reception held at the college on Nov. 17. In a 2009 donation to Berklee, Deval Patrick honored the musical and cultural legacy of his late father, Pat Patrick, a saxophonist, composer and arranger best known for his 40-year association with Sun Ra. The Patrick family donated Pat Patrick's collection, which includes recordings, scores, 2,000 photographs and personal correspondence. [berklee.edu](http://berklee.edu)

**Student Jams:** The Jazz Institute of Chicago created the Jazz Links Jam Sessions to provide an environment where student musicians can play in front of a live audience. Students from ages 9 to 19 perform with one another and with the Jazz Links Mentors in the house band, including saxophonist Jarrard Harris, pianist Robert Irving III, bassist Katie Ernst and drummer Marcus Evans. Musicians, parents, siblings and friends are encouraged to attend these free events at the Chicago Cultural Center (78 E. Washington) in the Studio Theater on Jan. 11, Feb. 8, March 8 and April 12. [jazzinichicago.org](http://jazzinichicago.org)

**Honorary Degree:** Bass player Barry Guy, founder and artistic director of the London Jazz Composers Orchestra and the BGNO (Barry Guy New Orchestra), has been awarded an honorary doctorate by Middlesex University in London. Guy said, "I am honored to be associated with this university and will endeavor to continue working in a manner that advances the name of this august establishment." The Intakt label has released Guy's album *The Blue Shroud*. [mdx.ac.uk](http://mdx.ac.uk)

**Modal Mastery:** Noel Johnston, alumnus and adjunct instructor in jazz guitar at the University of North Texas, has published a new book, *Voicing Modes*. The 153-page publication is available from his website and from Amazon. He describes it as "a book for all guitar players who want to master their modal comprehension and ability."

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## Joel Harrison

Joel Harrison is a restless guitarist with a prolific recording history, including work with his 18-piece jazz orchestra. He has also served as the founder/producer of the Alternative Guitar Summit in New York, where artists present their new projects and collaborations. In his Brooklyn practice room, Harrison took his first Blindfold Test.

### Charlie Hunter

"We Don't Want Nobody Nobody Sent" (*Everybody Has A Plan Until They Get Punched In The Mouth*, GroundUP Music/Universal, 2016) Hunter, guitar; Kirk Knuffke, cornet; Curtis Fowlkes, trombone; Bobby Previte, drums.

I don't know who this is. I love that live Chicago blues feeling. This person is playing a raw, emotional blues-based tune that, in my mind, is what the electric guitar was built for. This sounds like somebody whose roots are pre-Robben Ford. It's not wild like Buddy Guy or regal and nuanced like B.B. King. Instead it's someone who's listened to jazz and has off-kilter voicings and who knows how to pull a string. Nice tone. I love it. 4½ stars. [after] It's Charlie Hunter? I'm shocked. I've never heard him play like this, and he's playing like an old soul. He really has listened to and incorporated so much of the blues tradition.

### Frank Zappa

"Gee, I Like Your Pants" (*Shut Up 'N Play Yer Guitar Some More*, Ryko/FZ, 1995, rec'd 1979) Zappa, lead guitar; Warren Cucurullo, Denny Walley, Ike Willis, rhythm guitars; Tommy Mars, Peter Wolf, keyboards; Arthur Barrow, bass; Vinnie Colaiuta, drums; Ed Mann, percussion.

Wow. The technique is off the charts . . . I love that jazz-rock '70s sound, like John McLaughlin, but of course that's not John. This person sounds like a European, but I don't know. I don't think I've heard this album, but 5 stars. Awesome. Well, is this Dweezil Zappa? [after] It's Frank? It's been so long since I've listened to him play guitar, but I'm embarrassed to say that I have this album but haven't listened to it in 20 years.

### Sonny Sharrock

"Promises Kept" (*Ask The Ages*, Axiom/Island, 1991) Sharrock, guitar; Pharoah Sanders, tenor saxophone; Charnett Moffett, bass; Elvin Jones, drums.

I know where this is coming from. That sounds like Pharoah on tenor sax, so that must mean that the guitarist is Sonny Sharrock. Sonny's in my history, but I didn't listen to him closely. But he informed the playing of people I really love. This is just unbelievable. Nobody plays like this. This was a time where the level of intense emotion and desperate urgency was in the air. The tone of the instruments and the way they were playing them, it was like getting punched in the face. While I gave other [tracks] a 5, this must be a 6. These guys are just pouring their guts out. I don't hear that enough these days. On drums, I believe that's Elvin Jones.

### Pat Metheny

"Zero Tolerance For Silence, Part 3" (*Zero Tolerance For Silence*, Geffen Records, 1994) Metheny, guitar.

It's not Marc Ribot, but it's in close proximity. It's striking and original, and the effects were like an older-sounding Electroplex. 5 stars, but I don't know who this is. [after] That's another record I own that I haven't listened to in 20 years. I bought it when it first came out because I was so intrigued Pat would do an album like this.

### Milt Jackson/Wes Montgomery

"S.K.J." (*Bags Meets Wes!*, Riverside/Concord 2008, rec'd 1961) Montgomery, guitar; Jackson, vibes; Wynton Kelly, piano; Sam Jones, bass; Philly Joe Jones, drums.

Oh, this is so real. This was from a great time in America when swing was still going full force. These people were born with it. It sounds like the Wynton Kelly Trio with Wes as a guest, and then there's Milt Jackson's



Joel Harrison

COURTESY OF ARTIST

vibes. It sounds very unproduced, which I love. I don't like the later Wes, when he was overproduced. You can't just give Wes Montgomery a 5 because every record he recorded sounds perfect. So 6 stars and beyond. The highest number possible.

### Hoosegow

"Mighty" (*Mighty*, Homestead, 1996) Elliott Sharp, guitar; Queen Esther, vocals.

Whoever this is listened to all the old masters. This is someone trying to sound like Son House and doing a damn good job at it. [after] Elliott's not a guy who wants to play in a cultured, mild manner. He's resourcing the real blues, but he's not an imitator. 5 stars.

### James Blood Ulmer

"Church" (*from Odyssey*, Columbia, 1983) Ulmer, guitar; Charles Burnham, violin; Warren Benbow, drums.

It sounds overdubbed. And who's playing a violin with a wah-wah? It sounds like Charlie Burnham. Now, who would be playing with Charlie? I'm stumped. I'll give this a 4—it's too monodimensional in its trajectory. But I love the soundscape. [after] I think he sounds better live than on record. But here's another guy who can make a guitar speak. He resources all the guitar's history. He's speaking a language—not playing licks.

### McCoy Tyner

"Boubacar Traore"/"Baba Drame" (*from McCoy Tyner Guitars*, Half Note/McCoy Tyner Music, 2008) Tyner, piano; Bill Frisell, guitar; Ron Carter, bass; Jack DeJohnette, drums.

It sounds like Bill [Frisell] playing Malian music. I'm wondering who he's playing with because he rarely plays with pianists. It's McCoy? How did I miss this record? So, Frisell, definitely 5 stars—beautiful and entrancing and yet so simple. He resides in a favorite place among the gods. **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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