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Diana Krall Jazz Album Female Vocalist of the Year

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NORAH JONES DAY BREAKS (DELUXE EDITION)

The 9-time GRAMMY Winner releases a new Deluxe Edition of her acclaimed album Day Breaks. The expanded track listing features nine additional songs recorded live in New York City, including songs from Day Breaks like "Flipside" and "Peace," as well as fan favorites like "Don't Know Why" and "Sunrise."



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GREGORY PORTER NAT KING COLE & ME

The GRAMMY-winning vocalist releases his stunning fifth studio album, a heartfelt tribute to the legendary singer and pianist Nat King Cole. With the help of six-time GRAMMY-winning arranger VINCE MENDOZA, and the LONDON STUDIO ORCHESTRA, Porter revisits some of Cole's most cherished classics such as "Smile," "L-O-V-E," "Nature Boy," and "The Christmas Song."



TROMBONE SHORTY PARKING LOT SYMPHONY

Shorty's Blue Note-debut captures the spirit and the essence of The Big Easy, while redefining its sound. Blazing through 70s Funk, Rock, Hip-Hop and R&B, Parking Lot Symphony also delivers fresh covers of The Meters' "It Ain't No Use," and Allen Toussaint's "Here Come The Girls."



BRIAN BLADE & THE FELLOWSHIP BAND BODY AND SHADOW

Brian Blade & The Fellowship Band marks its 20th anniversary with this graceful meditation on lightness/darkness that arrives like a balm for the soul. Body and Shadow, which was recorded at the historic Columbus Theatre in Providence, Rhode Island, was written, produced and arranged by band leader and namesake BRIAN BLADE and pianist JON COWHERD.

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DECEMBER 2017



ON THE COVER

32 Wynton Marsalis

Building the Cathedral

BY ALLEN MORRISON

Wynton Marsalis enters the Hall of Fame and tops the Trumpet category in this year's Readers Poll. DownBeat sits down with the icon to discuss his music and his work as a composer, educator and arts advocate, as well as his role as the managing and artistic director of Jazz at Lincoln Center.

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Cover photo of Wynton Marsalis shot by Jimmy & Dena Katz at Jazz at Lincoln Center in Manhattan on Sept. 15.







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First Take > BY BOBBY REED



Nurturing Family Ties

EVERYONE IN THE JAZZ WORLD KNEW IT would happen one day, and now it has: Trumpeter Wynton Marsalis has been inducted into the DownBeat Hall of Fame. Congratulations to Wynton, who is the subject of our cover story on page 32. He also topped the Trumpet category in the Readers Poll, adding to his extensive list of honors.

He, of course, is not the only famous Marsalis. In 2011, five members of the family were named NEA Jazz Masters: Ellis, a pianist and jazz educator, and his sons Branford (tenor saxophone), Wynton, Delfeayo (trombone) and Jason (drums and vibraphone).

Wynton has become so famous as a cultural figure that even people who don't regularly listen to jazz know who he is. And those folks may not realize what a tremendous musician he is. In that regard, his fame makes him somewhat similar to Angelina Jolie: Nowadays many people think of her first and foremost as an advocate for humanitarian causes, rather than a supremely gifted, Oscar-winning actor.

Wynton's skills as a trumpeter, composer, arranger and bandleader for the Jazz at Lincoln Center Orchestra are not something Americans should take for granted. There is a danger that the luminosity of his fame could distract people from the magnitude of his talent.

That talent was nurtured in a family of musicians. Had he been born into, say, a family of farmers or physicians, he might not be an award-winning trumpeter today. But as a young man, the headstrong Wynton was determined to not allow family ties to interfere with the quality of his music. For DownBeat's December 1982 cover story, Branford and Wynton were interviewed by A. James Liska. At the time, Branford was 22 and Wynton was 21, and they were bandmates in the trumpeter's quintet.

Liska asked the siblings why they worked so well together. Branford replied, "It's simple: He's the leader."

Wynton responded: "Everybody thinks it's hard because he's my older brother. If we weren't brothers—if he was just another cat—nobody'd think anything of it. People are always going to try to put us together as brothers, and I don't want that. I tell people all the time that the reason Branford's in my band is because I can't find anybody that plays better than him."

Nowadays, Wynton and Branford are both revered as bandleaders—as are Delfeayo and Jason. (Branford's album *Upward Spiral*, recorded with his quartet and guest vocalist Kurt Elling, placed No. 2 in the Jazz Album category in this year's Readers Poll. See page 40.)

Thirty-five years after that DownBeat interview was published, my guess is that Wynton and Branford probably respect each other more *now* than they ever have.

There are many kinds of families. Some are united by bloodlines. Others are united by profession. I would be remiss to not mention an important change here in the DownBeat family. This issue marks the last one for our managing editor, Brian Zimmerman. We deeply appreciate all the hard work Brian has done since joining our staff in 2014. We'll miss him as a staffer, but we hope to see his byline in the magazine for years to come. **DB**

FROM THE BROADWAY ORCHESTRA PIT To the recording studio....







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Triad of Goodness

There are three things of note (pun intended) in the July issue of DownBeat: First is the Players profile of Jazzmeia Horn ("Addressing 'Social' Issues"), whom I have enjoyed seeing perform. Here in NYC, she's a respected name who is now travelling the world.

Second is the feature on Anat Cohen ("Perfect Accent"), whom I also enjoy hearing, especially when she performs with her two lovely brothers. She makes the clarinet not just another orchestra instrument, but rather a versatile instrument in all settings. I, a tenor saxophonist, now enjoy my clarinet more than ever, everywhere. No instrument should be segregated like humans often are.

Third is the feature on Bobby Watson ("Saluting Forgotten Pioneers"). His new album, *Made In America*, remembers and honors black people who gave so much in their various callings, often under conditions of adversity.

KEITH C. EDWARDS BROOKLYN, NEW YORK

The Chilly Box

I want to voice my great disappointment with the recent not-so-Hot Box changes. I miss the old lineup and also having a set roster of critics. John Corbett and John McDonough are particular favorites, but I also highly value the perspectives of Jim Macnie and Paul de Barros.

I know you've said the changes were intended to broaden the number of critical voices, but isn't that what the rest of the Reviews section is for?

The Hot Box should be where readers go to see how prominent new releases pass muster with a known set of musical jurists.

CARL DIORIO MOUNT LAUREL, NEW JERSEY

DB Alumnus Applauds

I was a contributing editor back in the 1970s when Jack Maher was DownBeat's president and editor. I just looked at your June 2017 issue online, and I must say the magazine has been transformed and is a wonderful piece of music journalism.

I don't write much anymore, but I am happy to be a DownBeat alumnus!

ERIC W. GAER, PH.D PRESIDENT & CEO ARROYO DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION

Seeking a Release Date

When I was reading Phillip Lutz's excellent cover story about Cécile McLorin Salvant in your October issue ("True Character"), I noticed it mentioned that her new album, *Dreams And Daggers*, would be out Sept 29. So I wrote a note in my calendar to buy the CD on that day.

In the Reviews section, right below the star



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rating, you should include the album's release date. With CD sales down from what they used to be, adding the release date in DownBeat would be a way to help fans purchase the album and therefore support the artist.

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Prime Vocalist

Harry Prime, one of the best big band singers, passed away June 15 at age 97. Harry sang with the orchestras of Randy Brooks, Jack Fina, Tommy Dorsey and Ralph Flanagan.

His biggest hit was with the Dorsey band: "Until" was a million seller, but many recordings with Flanagan showcased a top-quality voice with impeccable phrasing. Harry belongs right up there with Frank Sinatra, Billy Eckstine, Bob Eberle, Dick Haymes and Perry Como.

I'll remember Harry for his kindness to me, just a fan, and for letting me take a photo of him and Flanagan's female vocalist, Peggy King, when they worked with Ralph back in 1951. RIP, Harry Prime. Your congenial personality will be remembered along with your unique singing style.

HERB STARK MOORESVILLE, NORTH CAROLINA

Correction

In the Toolshed section of the November issue, a review of the Canopus Type-R snare drum used an incorrect product name.

DOWNBEAT REGRETS THE ERROR.

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Vijay Iver Sextet Far From Over

Vijay lyer plano, fender chodes Graham Haynes cornet, flugelhorn, electronics Steve Lehman alto saxophone Mark Shim tenor saxophone Stephan Crump double bass Tyshawn Sorey drumn

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Relief for Inundated Musicians

n Aug. 17 in Baton Rouge, Louisiana, a Town Hall-style luncheon sponsored by the Jazz Foundation of America took place in the Tracy Center at the Catholic Life Center. The event marked the one-year anniversary of the tragic flood in the city caused by a stationary weather system.

While organizations such as the Red Cross and FEMA helped with the rebuilding, the most significant relief effort for musicians was spearheaded by the JFA, the New York-based nonprofit organization that has aided legends like Jimmy Scott and Clark Terry as well as the victims of Hurricane Katrina in New Orleans. The JFA replaced instruments, got cars repaired, bought clothing and hired a bio-washing company to get rid of toxic bacteria and waste that had infiltrated flooded homes. The JFA also helped musicians pay their rent and get gigs.

More than 100 people who had been served by the JFA attended the luncheon, which featured music by the Harvey Knox Soul Spectrum Band.

A little more than a week later, more musicians were put at risk, this time in Houston, when Hurricane Harvey slammed the city on Aug. 25, causing massive flooding. Hurricane Irma sprawled over Florida on Sept. 10. Then on Sept. 20, Hurricane Maria decimated Puerto Rico. Throughout this tragic, historic hurricane/ storm season, the JFA has been actively addressing musicians' various needs in each locale.

Within two weeks after Harvey, the JFA had used databases and referrals to contact nearly 200 people. "In the cases where musicians got water in their homes, the results were devastating," said Joe Petrucelli, JFA co-executive director. "We encountered some heartbreaking cases of musicians who had fled New Orleans after losing everything in Katrina, only to relive a nightmare with Harvey 12 years later."



In the aftermath of a natural disaster, finding gigs is a particularly tough challenge. "Nearly all the musicians we connected with had lost income due to gigs canceled by the storm," Petrucelli explained. "Busy artists lost thousands of dollars in bookings for themselves and their bands in September and October."

The JFA has taken on clients throughout Florida, from Miami to St. Augustine, and is doing work in Puerto Rico. "We are building a Puerto Rican and islands database like the one we built in Houston," said Wendy Oxenhorn, JFA's co-executive director. "The main thing is to find out the names and contact info of all the musicians who have no way to work; [they may not] even have a home anymore. We will have to think of strategies along the lines of Katrina, where it will take over two years for people to begin to see the priorities of what they lost—to deal with rebuilding homes, to help them get new furniture, mattresses and clothes." Other groups are helping out, too. On Sept. 30, the Sam Ash music store in Houston hosted Hurricane Harvey Musicians' Relief. "The event offered free restringing and clean-up service to anyone who came in with a guitar damaged in the floods," said D'Addario rep Matt Budd.

Yamaha Corporation of America is lending a hand by working with school music educators in Texas and Florida. "We also partner with DonorsChoose.org," said Brian Petterson, marketing manager. "We applaud their quick response in creating 'Recovery Funds' specifically for crowd-funding efforts in support of teachers in communities affected by both hurricanes."

Joshua Redman and Miguel Zenón (a native of Puerto Rico) were among the jazz artists who played an Oct. 8 benefit concert at Freight & Salvage Coffeehouse in Berkeley, California, raising more than \$20,000 to aid hurricane victims in Puerto Rico. —Dan Ouellette

Riffs)



MOPDtK's Colorful Album: *Paint* is the first release by the piano trio configuration of Mostly Other People Do the Killing. The album features seven new compositions by bassist/composer Moppa Elliott written after pianist Ron Stabinsky joined the ensemble in 2014. Also featured on the recording is drummer Kevin Shea. Each composition is named after a small town in Pennsylvania that contains a color in its name, and the town of Paint, Pennsylvania, gave the album its title. All of the compositions are by Elliott, except "Blue Goose," which was written by Duke Ellington. The album is due out Oct. 20. More info: hotcuprecords.com

Vaughan Competition: Now in its sixth year at the New Jersey Performing Arts Center's Victoria Theater, the Sarah Vaughan International Jazz Vocal Competition, also known as the SASSY Awards, announced the five jazz singers who will perform for the top prize honor on Nov. 12. The 2017 finalists are Tiffany Austin (Berkely, California), Christine Fawson (Albuquerque, New Mexico), Fabio Giacalone (Brooklyn), Quiana Lynell (New Orleans) and Tatiana "LadyMay" Mayfield (Fort Worth, Texas). The five finalists will perform before a panel of judges on the final day of the TD James Moody Jazz Festival (Nov. 4-12) at NJPAC. This year's competition marks the first time the entries have been open to male, as well as female, singers. More info: njpac.org

Russian Jazz Conference: The Jazz Across Borders forum, Russia's first international jazz conference, will gather global jazz professionalis in St. Petersburg Nov. 17–18. Among the confirmed participants are vocalist Kurt Elling, pianist John Beasley, British venue manager Simon Cooke (Ronnie Scott's), Korean festival producer Jae Jin In (Jarasum Jazz Festival), Indonesian festival producer Peter Gontha (Java Jazz Festival), Italian festival organizer Carlo Pagnotta (Umbria Jazz Festival), educator Larry Simpson (Berklee College of Music) and label owner Jana Herzen (founder and president of Motema Music), among others. More info: jazzrussia.com



Monterey Hits 60 with Lively Swing, Hip-Hop

WHEN ONE OF THE WORLD'S LONgest-running jazz festivals celebrates a landmark anniversary, fans expect a special party. Monterey Jazz Festival's Diamond Jubilee not only paid homage to the past but trumpeted the future of the ever-evolving idiom.

The multi-stage extravaganza was jammed with music, from the first notes of Ray Obiedo's broiling Latin Jazz Project on Sept. 15 through the buzzing finale with the Vijay Iyer Sextet on Sept. 17.

Diversity informed how artistic director Tim Jackson designed the programming. Main-stage acts honored the masters Dizzy, Monk, Sonny and Ella. These pleasing sets were played by veteran artists who had festival history. Upcoming artists were also invited, including the electronica-spiced GoGo Penguin, rising-star vocalist Kandace Springs and percussionist extraordinaire Pedrito Martinez.

The most remarkable newcomer was string-sawing bassist Miles Mosley, who on opening night electrified Dizzy's Den with his r&b, funk and wild outside rock. Close to the end of his set, he asked the crowd, "Can you guys tell me if there's any Jimi Hendrix in my music?" The crowd roared, and in remembrance of the six-string renegade who headlined the Monterey International Pop Festival 50 years earlier, Mosley ripped into "If 6 Was 9."

Mosley opened the beyond-jazz door for Sunday's debut appearance of Chicago-born hiphop star Common, who began with a hand-clapping groove then shouted out, "We gonna take you to where we come from." He stressed that communication is vital: "We are humans for the

people. ... I stand for the people."

Common bounded across the stage, thrust his fist in the air and encouraged the crowd "to be a part of the change." A storyteller and sage, Common praised jazz as the forbearer of hiphop and gave shout-outs to the "freestyle" of John Coltrane and Freddie Hubbard and Derrick Hodge, who was playing the festival with his band. Common singled out Herbie Hancock, the MJF Legend honoree this year, who was sitting in the second row, gleefully clapping and dancing to charged songs like "Little Ghetto Boy" and "The Day Women Took Over."

A revelation at the fest was six-string blues-blazer Mr. Sipp (aka Castro Coleman), who was formerly a committed gospel player until B.B. King took him under his wing. After his Sept. 16 arena show, he commanded the Garden Stage with so much enthusiasm and vigor that the crowd fell in love with him.

A little more than an hour later in the arena, John Clayton delivered this year's MJF milestone commission piece, the eight-movement *Stories Of A Groove: Conception, Evolution, Celebration.* With the Clayton-Hamilton Jazz Orchestra augmented by the Gerald Clayton Trio, the leader conducted the suite (and occasionally played his upright bass), zeroing in on sociocultural subjects and delving into a range of emotions—from beauty to anguish to anger to elation.

Many commissions fall prey to cerebral game play, but Clayton, who finished the piece just two days before, composed a piece for these divisive times straight from the heart, making this a classic Monterey showcase.

Stern Rebounds from Injuries

SITTING IN A DRESSING ROOM AT Washington D.C.'s Blues Alley, Mike Stern pressed what looked like a wad of Scotch tape between his right thumb and forefinger. "Wig glue," the guitarist explained, holding up the folded brown adhesive strip. "This is the shit I've gotta do now, to support the pick. I've still got a grip, but it slips a little."

Stern needs the help with his grip after an accident that occurred in July 2016. While walking in Manhattan, he fell into a street construction pit that the city's typical audiovisual commotion had camouflaged from him. The fall broke Stern's upper arm in four places, requiring 11 pins to set it. The episode also caused the nerve damage that affects his hand and fingers.

The accident and its consequences influenced Stern's writing for his new album, *Trip* (Heads Up/Concord). The cover art, featuring "a guitar that looks like it's in the position of falling," alludes to it, as do the tune "Screws" (as in the ones in his arm) and the title track.

Initially, the guitarist didn't realize the extent of his injuries; nor did the emergency room doctors at NYU's Langone Medical Center, where Stern had been taken after the fall. Indeed, they discharged him the same night he came in, pins and all. "My hands were signed off as being perfect—no problem with the hands, just the shoulder," he said. "And the [physician] didn't really know the possibility of nerve damage: No one told me that."

It was three weeks later, when his hand was still numb, that Stern began to be concerned. The trauma doctor who'd treated him in the ER assured him that the feeling would come back. But the guitarist wasn't convinced. Finally, his friend and fellow guitarist Wayne Krantz recommended a hand-and-arm specialist who works with musicians.

This doctor was plainspoken. "He said, 'Yeah, this is maybe not gonna come back without some work," Stern recalled. Stern underwent a surgical procedure—tendon transfers, in his hand. This enabled both the sensation and mobility needed to play guitar. The doctor positioned Stern's index finger with a slight bend to allow him to better grip a guitar pick. "Being a musician, he knows the deal and he wanted to get me back playing right away. He said 'You're gonna go crazy without playing."

All told, Stern was out of commission for about three months. When he did pick up the axe again, it wasn't as difficult as he'd feared. Still, there were some small adjustments—shorter phrases, alternate fingerings—and there was that difficulty with keeping the pick secure.

"At first it was a real drag because I didn't know how to work this out," he said. "I put Velcro on the pick, and on this glove I was wearing. I tried different things, tape and all this other stuff, and that didn't really hold it."

Stern sought the advice of a fellow musician. Jazz drummer Ray LeVier was badly burned as a child, and his hands were damaged; yet he found a way to hold drumsticks and play.

"He's a badass drummer," Stern said. "He can really swing his ass off. I called Ray, and he said, 'Use wig glue."

It's an ad hoc solution; Stern's doctor has also done additional procedures, and plans to do more.

Stern finally got to the point where he could consistently play. In January, he recorded *Trip.* It includes material he had planned before the accident to record with Chick Corea, Dave Weckl and John Patitucci. But instead, Stern reverted to his preferred practice of using several different players and ensembles, including frequent collaborators Randy Brecker, Bob Franceschini, Bill Evans, Tom Kennedy, Victor Wooten, Weckl, Will Calhoun and Dennis Chambers. Stern's adversity has deepened his appreciation for creative pursuits. "It's such a gift to play music," he said. "I'm so grateful to be able to do records, man. It's something that I will never take for granted." —*Michael J. West*



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VINYL / BY AARON COHEN

Jackie Shane: Being for Real

For Chicago-based reissue label Numero Group, narrative is as much a part of its thoughtful releases as the music. And few soul singers have a story as fascinating as **Jackie Shane**, whose long-lost 1960s recordings are compiled on the two-LP set **Any Other Way** (also available on CD and download).

Shane's kinetic energy thrilled audiences, especially in Toronto, her home base in the latter part of the decade. At that city's Saphire club, she recorded the exciting Jackie Shane Live album in 1967, which constitutes the heart of this package. Four years later, she vanished. But her records and disappearance were not the only reasons why r&b fans have long sought to uncover the mysteries surrounding her. Along with Shane's unique timbre and absorbing mid-song monologues, she has always been openly transgender. After exhaustive detective work and entreaties, Numero Group located the reclusive Shane and earned her approval for this compilation. While she avoids interviews, music scholar Rob Bowman spoke with her for the package's extensive liner notes. She had much to tell him

Now 77, Shane was born in Nashville, Tennessee, and grew up singing in gospel groups as well as her junior high glee club as a high soprano. At 13, she realized that her birth as a boy did not indicate her true identity and began wearing women's makeup and clothing. Shane's mother encouraged her and that support reinforced the confidence she needed.

With that self-assurance, Shane presented her persona as she saw herself despite all of the difficulties in being such an unabashed outsider-while also working through the inherent challenges of singing r&b across the South during the late 1950s. Little Richard was an acquaintance and his vocal attack sounds like it had a lasting impression (Little Richard's personality undoubtedly left its own mark). Shane also worked as a busy session drummer, preferring to stand while doing so. After witnessing some racist attacks and encountering other dangerous situations, Shane took the advice of peers like singer Joe Tex and moved North, eventually settling in Canada.

In Montreal, Shane met up with trumpeter Frank Motley and toured with his group, the Motley Crew, during the 1960s. While Motley's showmanship included playing two trumpets simultaneously, Shane did not rely on gimmicks. That ver-



satile delivery came across on her singles throughout the decade, 12 of which are included in this compilation. On her version of William Bell's "Any Other Way," a deeply emotional plea becomes animated through a series of subtle gestures. The country hit "You Are My Sunshine" sounds both downhearted and assertive. Shane's voice rises above a couple tracks that included unnecessary backup singers and dull arrangements.

There was nothing mild about Jackie Shane Live, which the singer recorded with Motley's band, renamed The Hitchhikers. Shane initially leads the group through a couple fast-tempo burners—"High Heel Sneakers" and "Barefootin'"-but the most compelling performances are when the pacing is more deliberate. She twists and elongates Dee Clark's pop hit "Raindrops" and heightens its inner pain. The spoken-word interlude that Shane delivers on Barrett Strong's "Money (That's What I Want)" derived from her early experiences hearing church sermons, but here the content is poles apart; Shane takes the time to proudly declare who she is with not-so-hidden references to her sexuality.

Shane continued to perform for a few years after recording this album. She turned down an offer to join Funkadelic because that band was too wild. even for her. Then she left the city, and music, in 1971, re-emerging only recently to authorize this package. But it may not be the last the world hears from her. As Shane told Bowman, she was glad to have changed perceptions among crowds unaccustomed to seeing someone "being trans and being different." She added, "These people had never been exposed to a person that was for real." DB Ordering info: numerogroup.com

Schomburg Center Adds Rollins Archive

ONCE OR TWICE A WEEK DURING HIS grade school years, Sonny Rollins, now 86, made the two-block walk to his local library from his Harlem flat on 137th Street between Lenox and 7th Avenues. Eight decades later, that same library, the August Schomburg Center for Research In Black Culture, has added Rollins' remarkable personal archive to its enormous holdings of African-American materials.

The Rollins collection spans approximately 1950 to 2014. The materials include extensive personal and professional correspondence, including Rollins' luminous love letters to his late wife, Lucille. A short list of the original manuscripts of compositions and arrangements includes lead sheets for "Airegin," "Sonnymoon For Two" and a never-performed piece circa 1950 titled "Night Blindness."

In original notebooks, sketchbooks and working materials, Rollins documents his studies in the art of music, the craft of the saxophone and music theory.

Dozens of cassette and reel-to-reel tapes document practice sessions, rehearsals and performances. There are ample concert flyers and posters, copious business records (contracts, visa applications, tour plans), and abundant personal effects and memorabilia (a short list includes an oft-used Selmer saxophone, a traveling case, and reams of sheet music and songbooks).

"I consider myself maybe a 75 percent selftaught musician," said Rollins, who stopped performing in 2012. "On my steno pads, there's a lot of my writing about scholarship and aspects of performing. Over the years, I saved posters from jobs, and things that happened every day in my career. Lucille kept all the books and contracts. All this stuff accumulated. I saw that Max Roach's stuff went to the Library of Congress, and I thought: Why not place it in an archive? They've got a treasure trove of my personal life, a gang of stuff."

It would appear that Rollins and the Schomburg are a felicitous fit. "What I love about this particular collection is the texture," said

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Boxes of tapes in the Sonny Rollins Archive

Shola Lynch, curator of the Schomburg Moving Image and Recorded Sound Division, where the catalogued artifacts will reside. "You get to see his creative process over the years in bits and pieces. You see it through his doodles and his journaling; you'll hopefully hear it through some of the audio recordings."

Schomburg Director Kevin Young focuses on Rollins' "range and depth." "Even in a writer, you rarely see such in-depth diary-keeping, such personal letters, such extensive notation and composition notes," Young said. "You see not only the creative process, his song-making, but also his thinking about what it means to make songs."

Rollins looks forward to the end result as well. "I don't know most of what's in there," he said. "People will tell me after they see it. I'll go up there when it's put together and I'll be surprised." —*Ted Panken*





JOSHUA WHITE "13 SHORT STORIES" JOSHUA WHITE (p) with JOSH JOHNSON (as), DEAN HULETT (b)

d JONATHAN PINSON (d)



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Charette Gets More Experimental

ON HIS PREVIOUS TRIO ALBUMS, SUCH AS the Posi-Tone releases Square One (2014) and Once & Future (2016), organist Brian Charette played it fairly straightforward in the soul-jazz tradition of his B-3 heroes Jimmy Smith, Melvin Rhyne and "Brother" Jack McDuff. Charette showed signs of breaking out of the mold on 2015's Alphabet City (Posi-Tone), named for his East Village neighborhood in New York, and now with his self-released Kürrent, Charette has completely smashed the mold with an unorthodox trio that incorporates an array of analog synths and circuit bent electronics. Picture a jam between Jimmy Smith and Kraftwerk, and you're getting close to the experimental terrain that Charette explores with guitarist Ben Monder and drummer Jordan Young.

"It's obvious by now that I'm just not a traditional person," said Charette, 45, at a coffee shop on Union Square in Manhattan. "And I've been fighting it for so long. I've been trying to squeeze myself into that box. But I'm so old now that I can't anymore. So it's kind of busting out now."

Circuit bending is a technique pioneered by Reed Ghazala in 1966, wherein electronic instruments are "broken" or manipulated by having their circuit board connections shorted out or interrupted, resulting in the odd squeaks, weird textures and other tweaked tones heard on tracks like "Conquistador" and "Doll Fin" from Kürrent. "It's fun, it's risky and it's not tight," Charette said. "You take electronic instruments and you basically break them. You put solder in the connections in the back. You can make your own connections. ... When they start to misfire, it can make microtonal sounds or beats that are in different time signatures. So what we do is write this interesting jazz harmony and work these sounds into the backdrop."

All the music on Kürrent is played live with no overdubs. And aside from Charette's adventurous excursions on his bank of analog keyboards-a Korg minilogue, his trusty Hammond SK-1 and the studio's Hammond A-100-the album also features some audacious skronking by Monder. Jordan also manipulates an array of electronics from behind his drum kit, including a keyboard with a vocoder.

"This is not abrasive music, it's gentle music," said Charette. "We're trying to control these chaotic electronic instruments."

Though Charette studied classical piano as a teenager while also picking up jazz from Kenny Werner and Charlie Banacos, he maintained a healthy appetite for prog-rock in his youth, with a particular interest in the music of the German synth band Kraftwerk and the experimental synth group Tangerine Dream. He began playing B-3 organ at age 16 and soon found himself on gigs with visiting artists like Lou Donaldson, Charles McPherson, Houston Person and Matt "Guitar" Murphy.

"I love traditional organ trio," Charette said. "I don't want to make it seem like I'm anti-Jimmy Smith or anti-tradition. But I want to start doing more of this kind of thing that we're doing in the Kürrent trio. It's still jazz, it's still improvising, but we have all this other stuff kind of swirling in the background, and the response from audiences on gigs has been incredible."

Then again, Charette's recent Steeplechase release, Backup, finds him swinging in a straightahead jazz vein.

"I don't think of my artistry as this precious thing," Charette said. "I just really like to play and I like that people like to listen to me do it. That's about as deep as it gets for me in thinking about it." -Bill Milkowski



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Meinhart Releases New Leader Album

SILENT DREAMER (ENJA RECORDS), THE title of saxophonist and composer Tobias Meinhart's fifth and newest album as a leader. alludes to a paradox that impacts his artistry a great deal. Even though his sinewy tone comes with an assured, relaxed demeanor while he delivers his melodic improvisation, the music on Silent Dreamer is far from somnolent. Instead, it's kinetic, and at times, restive. On the title track, the 33-year-old's deliberate passages alongside guitarist Charles Altura ride across a torrential rhythmic momentum, propelled by Orlando LeFleming's jutting bass lines and Jesse Simpson's lacerating drum rhythms, while pianist Yago Vázquez interjects with punchy counterpoint.

Similar combustive friction and agitation energize other compositions such as the alluring "Ghost Gardens" and the suspenseful "Purple Space," both of which feature one of Meinhart's mentors, trumpeter Ingrid Jensen. When the German-born, Brooklyn-based Meinhart explains the concept behind Silent Dreamer, he recalls one of the musings of Wayne Shorter, who once stated that he tried to create music that people heard in their dreams. "If you or another person is dreaming, they might look very silent from the outside. But inside, there might be a storm or something going on," Meinhart said. "I have very crazy dreams. But no one but me can see them."

Meinhart said that he once had a lucid dream, a state of being aware that he was dreaming. "In the dream, I was flying over some fantasy lands and I could do anything that I imagined."

Some of his dreams involve performing on stage. Interestingly, though, his dreams have yet to produce a complete composition.

Throughout his small yet impressive discography, Meinhart proves himself to be not only a commanding saxophonist but also a keen composer, prone to writing memorable material brimming with emotion and enigma. Jensen explained what drew her to his playing when they first met in 2002 at a jazz workshop in Salzburg, Austria. "Tobias has such a special sweetness in his sound," she said. "He's had that from the very beginning, and I find it is constantly developing more and more into a personal voice."

Meinhart isn't stuck solely in his interior realms; he's very much in touch with the outside world. Take, for instance, the inspiration behind "Equality," a boisterous piece that he wrote the day after the 2016 U.S. presidential election. He recalled the day of the election, sitting in his apartment that he shares with Vázquez and being fairly optimistic. "We expected to just have some wine and watch Hilary [Clinton] win," Meinhart laughed. "When we woke up, we were in complete shock. We went to a protest march the next day. It was heartbreaking. I even saw policemen cry on the street because of the election results. I thought that I had to do something in response."

"Fighting Your Fear," another gripping, hyperactive original, gives insight into Meinhart's journey to the bustling New York jazz scene from his small village outside of Regensburg in Germany's Bavaria region. Underneath the jagged rhythmic impulsion, his upwardly bound improvisations and intermittant cries firmly convey struggle.

"I've had my nightmares," Meinhart said. "But I like daydreaming: just sitting in a room and imagining things that I want to happen. I think that helps my vision." -John Murph

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Vail Jazz Faculty Enables Students

"IT'S SOMETHING YOU HEAR ABOUT A lot," said Georgia pianist Clay Eshleman of the Vail Jazz Workshop, standing beside the white tent in Vail Square, where he and the other 11 Vail Jazz All-Stars had delivered a crisp performance to a cheering crowd. "It is so special to be here."

Indeed. Eshleman joins the ranks of pianist Robert Glasper, saxophonist Grace Kelly and trumpeter Ambrose Akinmusire as an alumnus of a workshop festival that stands out for its superior musical quality, extraordinary level of intimacy—six instructors for 12 students (a pair of sextets)—and for the way students are generously integrated into performances. Student groups played almost every day this year and also sat in at nightly jams with the likes of guest artists Ken Peplowski and Dick Oatts on reeds and Butch Miles and Jeff Hamilton on drums.

The culmination of a weeklong workshop, the Vail Jazz Party ran over Labor Day Weekend (Aug. 31–Sept. 4). Inspired by Colorado's intimate Gibson's Jazz Gatherings of yore, where artists and audience would mix and mingle, the Jazz Party was part of the area's summer-long Vail Jazz Festival, produced by founder Howard Stone, the recipient of this year's DownBeat Jazz Education Achievement Award. Performances took place in the grand ballroom of the Vail Marriott and in Vail Square, surrounded by the gigantic, evergreen- and aspen-painted shoulders of the Rocky Mountains.

The stellar faculty—workshop leader John Clayton (bass), Lewis Nash (drums) Terell Stafford (trumpet), Jeff Clayton (alto saxophone), Wycliffe Gordon (trombone) and Bill Cunliffe (piano)—served as the house band and was abetted by guests that included, among others, the captivating Danish vocalist Sinne Eeg and a quintet of workshop alums that included the remarkable, 22-year-old pianist James Francies.

Houston native Francies, a 2012 alum who recently signed with Blue Note, took the crowd's breath away with cascades of substitute chords and machine-gun runs during a late-night jam. Other delights included a performance by an outsized organ trio led by Akiko Tsuruga.

Miles and Hamilton each gave a textbook demonstration in big band drumming, as they took turns anchoring Denver's H2 Big Band in a tribute to Buddy Rich. The program was accompanied by vivid film excerpts of Rich, and concluded with a Q&A in which Hamilton talked about Rich's extraordinary prowess. This was one of three audience-education programs others focused on Cole Porter and Mongo



Santamaria—that dovetailed nicely with the jazz party's instructional mission.

It was a privilege to see that mission accomplished in real time. At a debriefing session one morning, Clayton delivered a stirring, no-nonsense sermon to his young charges about how to navigate the jazz life. As Clayton facetiously said onstage that afternoon, teachers spent the week putting their "foot on the necks" of the students. It was a grueling workout, but no one seemed to mind. As Eshleman had conveyed, Vail is, indeed, a very special event. —Paul de Barros

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Fujiwara Shows New Vision

DRUMMER TOMAS FUJIWARA, BY HIS OWN admission, thinks a lot about balance, symmetry and duality. On past recordings, he has explored those notions abstractly with The Hook Up, his quintet that melds the unpredictable spasms of free-jazz with hard-bop phrasing, making the case that innovation and tradition—those two seemingly opposing poles—need not be at odds. But nowhere is Fujiwara's abiding interest in balance more apparent than on his neatly conceptualized new album, *Triple Double* (Firehouse 12), a literal embodiment of that ideal.

The album features doubled instrumentation, as the title suggests: two drummers (Fujiwara and Gerald Cleaver), two guitarists (Brandon Seabrook and Maly Halvorson, with whom Fujiwara also plays in a trio called Thumbscrew) and two horns (Ralph Alessi on trumpet and Taylor Ho Bynum on cornet). Each musician is quite different, but that, Fujiwara noted, is intentional. The repeated instruments can be seen as "mirrored pairings," he said in a recent conversation at a Brooklyn café, with each musician facing off against his or her counterpart and foil.

"The mirroring of the instruments creates this interesting generative tension," said Bynum, who has known and played with Fujiwara for the past 25 years. "All of us end up in this place of comfort and risk." Such tension is on clear display at the beginning of "Decisive Shadow," the seventh track, on which Seabrook's overdriven tone is set portentously beneath Halvorson's tinny noodling, which can sound like a warped radio broadcast.

Triple Double—whose title is also a playful reference to the basketball term—isn't the first album with doubled instrumentation. It's a conceit that dates back at least as far as Ornette Coleman and his double quartet. Trumpeter Nate Wooley's episodic *Argonautica*, released last year, features stacked horns, drums and keyboards. In 2006, Fujiwara himself appeared on *The Double Trio*, a live album fronted by Bynum and horn player Stephen Haynes.

What differentiates Fujiwara's album is that it is, on several levels, his most personal to date. Recorded in just two days at the beginning of 2017, the album is dedicated to Fujiwara's four multinational grandmothers, two of whom died last year. "Their energy has definitely influenced me and had a big impact," said Fujiwara, who is 40. He wrote several of the tunes with an image from childhood in mind, he said. The first track, for example, "Diving For Quarters," was composed for his stepmother's mother, who would often toss coins into the pool for Fujiwara to retrieve.

Fujiwara, a kinetic drummer with an elastic



sense of rhythm-he has performed in the off-Broadway show Stomp-studied with the late Alan Dawson as a kid growing up in the Boston area, and he was the only child student, aside from Tony Williams decades earlier, whom Dawson is supposed to have taken on. "He never, ever talked to me like a kid," Fujiwara recalled proudly. Evidence of that can be found on a recorded snippet of a lesson that Fujiwara includes at the beginning of the tune "For Alan," the fifth track on Triple Double. Dawson, on vibraphones, is patiently trying to teach his young charge how to trade solos, though a 10-year-old Fujiwara is reluctant to learn. "If I'd left the tape running," Fujiwara said, "you'd say, 'Ouch!'"

Instead, on the album, Fujiwara fast-forwards to the present as he eases his way into an eight-minute improvisational drum exchange with Cleaver. Though Fujiwara said that Cleaver's drums were tuned a bit lower for the session, it can be particularly difficult to differentiate between each drummer, especially as each of their solos intensifies. It's as if the two drummers, their styles mirrored back at one another, have become one.

"When you look at yourself in the mirror, even though you know what you look like and you know it's you," Fujiwara said, "you always see something that you didn't think was there." —Matthew Kassel

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Sopot Jazz Fest Promotes Diversity

ON THE FINAL EVENING OF POLAND'S Sopot Jazz Festival, which ran Oct. 5–7, saxophonist Greg Osby summed up the connective qualities he'd looked for during his second time around as curator of the eight-band event: "Inclusion, progression, diversity and balance."

Then Osby—who did not perform—introduced Israeli recorder player Tali Rubinstein, joined by Polish drummer Dorota Piotrowska, Polish pianist Kuba Płużek and Russian bassist Daria Chernakova. On the strength of one rehearsal, the quartet played a cohesive set in which Rubinstein made full use of her seven-instrument arsenal, which ranges from sopranino to contrabass recorder, projecting birdsong, Bedouin cries, bagpipe overtones, multi-instrument circular breathing and classical lyricism.

That same rhythm section remained to join soprano saxophonist Sam Newsome. He utilized an array of extended techniques (placing aluminum foil in the bell, blowing with chimes and tuned bells attached to the horn, creating a drone effect with dramatic swoops, jamming the bell into the piano strings) within a flow that shifted from ametric rubato to freebop grooves.

Similar aesthetics animated Algorhythm, a quintet of young locals who opened night two

with music culled primarily from their recent album, *Mandala* (Alpaka). Composed by trumpeter Emil Miszk and pianist-electronicist Szymon Burnos, the pieces featured shifts in meter, tempo and dynamics; lots of unisons; patient soloing; and overall strong musicianship.

After pianist Kasia Pietrzko's Polish trio (Andrzej Swięŝ, bass; Piotr Budnink, drums) rendered her intense composition, "Intimacy" (from *Forthright Stories*, self-released), they served as rhythm section for New York-based tenor saxophonists Troy Roberts and Adam Larson. Each reedist played two originals, followed by a concluding "battle" that highlighted their contrasting sounds—Roberts warmtoned and melodic across the registral spectrum; Larson more turbulent and intense.

The evening ended with vocalist Cleveland Watkiss' veteran group of U.K. "All Stars"— Orphy Robinson (vibraphone, electronics), Pat Thomas (piano, electronics), Neal Charles (bass) and Mark Sanders (drums)—who collectively improvised compelling responses to a set of lucid, witty Watkiss texts. The references included free-improv language, Monk, Mingus, Linton Kwesi Johnson and Jayne Cortez. "Sober Drunk" began with Robinson's sonic collage of Donald Trump saying things like, "very bad," "disaster"



and "I'm very educated, I know the best words."

Sopot 2017 had opened with a concert pairing singers Alice Ricciardi (Italy) and Viktoria Pilatovic (Valencia by way of Lithuania), who have both recorded for Osby's Inner Circle label. A master phraser with a fresh point of view, Ricciardi was alternately surrealistic and swinging. Pilatovic delivered several well-crafted original English lyrics, vocalesed ebulliently on "Four" and scatted proficiently on "East To Love" in duo with bassist Josh Ginsburg, who centered a rhythm section with pianist Pietro Lussu and drummer Czeslaw Bartkowski, and contributed several no-limits solos.

—Ted Panken



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DJANGO BATES Positive Artistic Friction

The annual jazzahead! conference and festival held in Bremen, Germany, can be a bit overwhelming, considering the sheer number of events and panel discussions, along with a packed roster of 40-plus artists. But as veteran attendees have learned, there are often unexpected surprises during this April event. This year, one such revelation came during a showcase for ECM artists at the pristine venue Sendesaal, as Django Bates' Belovèd piano trio offered a preview of songs on its new album, *The Study Of Touch*, out Nov. 3.

Boasting an empathetic, loose-yet-linked rapport with his bandmates—drummer Peter Bruun and bassist Petter Eldh—Bates explores a time-honored musical format, offering a commanding freshness and sensitivity. The music is perfect for ECM's aesthetic while also delivering a new twist or three.

Bates—now 56 and deserving wider recognition, especially in the States—is enjoying a flurry of activity, including three new releases. Along with *The Study Of Touch*, which is his leader debut for ECM, he contributes masterful piano work to oudist Anouar Brahem's new ECM album, *Blue Maqams*, which also features bassist Dave Holland and drummer Jack DeJohnette. Back in July, Bates released *Saluting Sgt. Pepper* (Edition), a collaboration with the Frankfurt Radio Big Band that is a respectful yet dynamic tribute to the 50-year-old Beatles classic. On Sept. 4–9, Bates and the band played a residency at Ronnie Scott's in London, in *Sgt. Pepper* mode.

"It was my wish that they would come out in the same week," Bates said, referring to the release dates for *The Study Of Touch* and the Beatles homage. "These things are hard to control. But also, I looked back on that wish and wondered, "Why is it important to me?" It [has to do with] the fact that I would rather not be pinned down. The best way to make that crystal clear is to have a piano trio album on ECM and a reworking of *Sgt. Pepper's*. I like those two albums to be talked about at the same time because they have a friction between them, in a really good way."

Since the late 1980s, Bates has been revered as one of the U.K.'s finest, most inventive jazz musicians. He has made significant strides in the field of progressive-minded big band music, from his work with Loose Tubes to commissions for various European big bands to his StoRMChaser group, which includes students, including prominent saxophonist Marius Neset from the Rhythmic Music Conservatory of Copenhagen—where Bates taught for many years. (He is currently on the faculty at the Hochschule der Künste in Bern, Switzerland).

Now comes Bates' powerful, poetic excursion into the piano trio format. But this is not entirely new territory for him. He previously released two Belovèd trio albums—2010's *Bird* and 2012's *Confirmation*—on his small Lost Marbles label.

The trio's origin is rooted at the RMC campus, where an abundance of grand pianos stoked Bates' interest in his original instrument. "A few years into that job [as professor at RMC], after having always said to myself, 'I will never have a piano trio because the world doesn't need another one,' I was walking past a room and I heard the bass player Petter Eldh and the drummer Peter Brunn playing together." It was an "aha moment," and a piano trio was born.

Bates started experimenting with the trio, eventually bringing his arrangements of Charlie Parker's repertoire to his bandmates, especially after the group had been invited to play a Bird tribute at Copenhagen's Jazzhouse. Next the musicians worked on some Bates originals. A handful of those—including "We Are Not Lost, We Are Simply Finding Our Way," "Senza Bitterness" and "Peonies As Promised"— appeared on *Confirmation* and were reworked for the ECM disc.

"For me, ECM is the continuation of a very long story," he explained. "I had some wonderful times with other peoples' music on ECM back in the '80s—with Sidsel Endresen, most notably. That opened up a whole new world because I hadn't really worked with singers. I suddenly realized how fantastic it is to be a musician behind a voice and listen to text and react to text.

"It was very nice to get back to the same studio, Rainbow [in Oslo], with the trio. In fact, I wrote a couple of pieces [in advance], specifically for this recording. In my mind, I pictured the studio and sound and [producer] Manfred [Eicher] being there as the audience."

One of those new pieces, "Happiness All the Way Up," is the concluding track on *The Study Of Touch*, serving as a complementary bookend to an older composition, "Sadness All The Way Down," which opens the album. That type of conceptual touch epitomizes Bates' restlessly creative energies.

"I'm so happy with Belovèd," Bates said. "I really wanted Manfred to hear this band. I wanted him to sit in a room and listen to the band. And if there's a tape machine rolling, so much the better."

The multifaceted Bates, who also plays electronic keyboard and tenor horn, is looking forward to live performances, especially in piano trio mode—and possibly on U.S. soil. The Belovèd trio will play at London's Wigmore Hall on June 9, 2018.

"I'm hoping that, as a result of *The Study Of Touch*, we get a lot more gigs. Playing in front of people is a whole other world, and a whole other energy. It gives energy, and that helps with the creative phase that you're in. There's plenty of stuff waiting to be written, or arranged."



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ALEX HAN *Emerging as a Leader*

s any working musician knows, making an album can be a challenge. And releasing a debut album can be a particularly difficult task, as the leader must make important decisions about presenting himself or herself to the world. As the old saying goes, "You never get a second chance to make a first

impression."

New York-based saxophonist Alex Han, 29, has proven himself to be more than up to the challenge. Jazz fans can hear his high-caliber musicianship and the fruits of his diligence on *Spirit* (3 Deuces), released in June.

An alumnus of Berklee College of Music,



Han has consistently toured and recorded with bassist Marcus Miller for nine years. He is prominently featured on Miller's Grammynominated 2015 album, *Afrodeezia* (Blue Note).

Han has gained valuable experience from working with numerous high-profile musicians, including drummer Terri Lyne Carrington, bassist Stanley Clark and keyboardist George Duke (1946–2013).

His technical prowess on alto saxophone and synthesizers is evidenced on *Spirit*. On this album, Han and Miller have elevated their collaborative partnership, revealing a deep commitment to crafting new instrumental sounds. They know each other's playing well, which enhances their overall cohesiveness. And the benefits of their teamwork are abundantly clear on the varied rhythms and tempos presented on the album.

Miller produced *Spirit*, composed the album's appealing title track, and played electric and fretless basses as well as guitar.

"Marcus wrote 'Spirit' just for me," Han said. "It came out so well. It was our second take. The first take was cool, but Marcus gave us more direction as to how to create the arc of the tune." Miller also utilized his arranging skills, along with pianist Federico Peña, on a version of Sting's tune "Fragile."

"Alex has been in my band, setting stages on fire across the world for the last several years," Miller said. "With *Spirit*, we get to hear not only his phenomenal playing but also his beautiful compositions."

Han wrote seven of the 10 tracks on *Spirit*, which also includes a version of bassist Yohannes Tona's "The Jungle Way Out," which he featured on his 2007 album, *Sand From The Desert*.

The music on *Spirit* was recorded in four locations: Hannibal Studios in Santa Monica, California; Dockside Studios in Maurice, Louisiana; Vibromonk Recording in Brooklyn; and Cue Recording in Falls Church, Virginia. The album features contributions from James Genus (bass), Etienne Charles (trumpet), Mino Cinelu (percussion), Adam Agoti (guitar) and Cory Fonville (drums).

Among Han's most famous supporters is saxophonist David Sanborn, who said, "Alex is an amazing player, with stellar technique and deep soul, always using his abilities to serve the music, which in the case of this record is first-class."

Han explained that his goals for his leader debut are to inspire love and hope, to bring contemporary instrumental music back to the forefront of culture, and to bring spiritual relief to people who might be in a dark place.

"There's something greater above our heads," Han said, "and music is a way to have that celebrated and have that connectivity."

LAURA AINSWORTH Saving Old Songs

hen it comes to Dallas-area vocalist/ comedienne Laura Ainsworth, the apple does not fall far from the tree. As a youth, she watched her saxophonist/clarinetist/vocalist father, Bill Ainsworth, support some of the all-time musical greats. "My earliest recollection was when my dad was in jingle studios singing radio station call letters," says Ainsworth. "I thought that was what I wanted to do. I had to get a little older to appreciate what he had done as a younger man with all the bands. I got a real taste of that when he was in the house band at The Phoenician Room in Dallas. I got to see him play with Mel Tormé, Tony Bennett and Ella Fitzgerald. His early years with the Tommy Dorsey Orchestra and Tex Beneke, though, were way before I was born."

Ainsworth's striking red hair, vivacious retro-like fashion sense and razor-sharp wit combine to create a unique persona and uncanny trifecta focused on a sort of reconstruction or reworking of the Great American Songbook. She looks and sounds the part, with a seamless delivery derived from the '40s and '50s, yet contemporary as well. She has four independently released albums on Eclectus Records: *Keep It To Yourself* (2011), *Necessary Evil* (2013), *New Vintage* (2017) and a just-released high-quality vinyl collection of select tracks from the previous three CDs called *Top Shelf*.

Ainsworth, whose day job is writing comedy bits and parody songs with husband Pat Reeder for a topical radio service called The Comedy Wire, has a longtime working relationship with pianist/arranger/producer Brian Piper. And she is generous in her thoughts on what makes that relationship click. "We just happen to have the same kind of sensibility coming out of a similar musical family background," says the singer. "He's a master arranger. My whole thing is finding obscure songs I want to bring to life in, more or less, the way they were originally done. But we'll give them a unique sound."

"Laura did not spend her life working on her music," Piper adds. "But she has been completely focused on doing the recordings with the best she could give, and has a wonderful feel for the tunes. She brought so much to the table in her research and with finding historically interesting songs, especially songs that have not been done a lot. It gives her a really cool, fresh approach to bringing something old and rare back to life. I've done lots of producing, in all kinds of disciplines, but my love for jazz fit well with the material Laura chose. It was really easy to make something out of the songs."

Utilizing some of the top jazz players in northern Texas, Ainsworth's stock-in-trade is flipping the script on musically provincial sensibilities, with deep tracks like Rodgers & Hammerstein's "The Gentleman Is A Dope," Harold Arlen & Johnny Mercer's "Out Of This World" and Frank Loesser's "That's How I Got My Start." But she also employs modern songwriters like Amy Rigby and Marshall Crenshaw as well.

In addition to select appearances in and around the Dallas area, recent years have found Ainsworth making successful ventures to jazz festivals in India and Dubai and performing at The Metropolitan Room in New York. But, whatever direction her music takes, it is all informed with an innately spiritual sense of love, respect and preservation. "I'm into saving things. It's my life's work," Ainsworth says. "I'm saving old songs. I've restored three houses-including my parents' house from 1955 that I currently live in. And I save homeless parrots. I have an African grey parrot that is a jazz bird. He listens to jazz all day long and he can improvise in tune. I'll play the same sequence of notes on the piano and, perched next to me, he will anticipate those notes and sing in key."

-Eric Harabadian



GUILHEM FLOUZAT TRIO A THING CALLED JOE SSC 1492 - IN STORES NOW

Flouzat interest in the American Songbook led him to learn the lyrics of lesser known standards and to call them out at jam sessions, delving into their many interpretations and incorporating them into his drum routine.

Producing A Thing Called Joe was an exercise in abandon for Flouzat. On the day before the recording, the drummer spent a leisurely afternoon picking tunes and comparing different versions, making a home cooked dinner and engaging in casual conversation with his bandmates pianist Sullivan Fortner and bassist Desmond White. At the studio they took turns calling tunes from a list, making arrangement suggestions on the spur of the moment. When the day was done, eighteen tunes were recorded. Then came the work of distilling the material and discovering the right sequence for listeners, so they could do what listeners used to do with old LPs: listen to them over and over again.



JAY CLAYTON & KIRK NUROCK UNRAVELING EMILY 1443 - IN STORES NOW

An air of mystery surrounds the work of Emily Dickinson. The beloved writer spent most of her time away from the public's eye amassing a collection of poetry that has fascinated readers for decades. Her short, gnomic verses are a perfect fit for Vocalist Jay Clayton and composer Kirk Nurock. On their new recording, **Unraveling Emily**, Nurock weaves Clayton's innovative vocalizing into surreal compositional soundscapes. As Nurock overdubbed multiple layers of Clayton's singing and speaking, with varying ambience, echo and spatial relationships, a haunted theatrical quality appears.



Charles Rumback's new trio album is Threes (Ears & Eyes).

CHARLES RUMBACK Emphasizing Structure

rummer Charles Rumback leads mostly through understated cues on his new trio album, *Threes* (Ears & Eyes). His direction of pianist Jim Baker and bassist John Tate features spacious pauses and light cymbal strikes. Similar nuances shape Rumback's writing: His compositions emphasize a subtle, sometimes expansive, approach to melody.

"I've always thought if you have a strong melody then you can do whatever you want because you know where you're at," Rumback said over coffee near his home on Chicago's northwest side. "It's not that I choose melody to be more important, it's just what holds the music together."

That emphasis on solid song structures has been crucial as Rumback has worked in markedly different configurations. His 2015 album, Daylight Savings (Ears & Eyes), has an uncommon bass/drums duo format with Tate. Rumback also performs in the equally unconventional trio Stirrup with cellist Fred Lonberg-Holm and bassist Nick Macri. Rumback is just as comfortable working in the more traditional jazz quartet Whirlpool as well as with saxophonist Charles Gorczynski, with whom he performs under duo name Colorlist.

"We're influenced by all these things around us," Rumback said. "I don't think in terms of genre. I just think, 'What does the music need?' I hear it the way I hear it and play it the way I play it."

Rumback's versatility goes back to his teenage years in Hutchinson, Kansas. He gravitated toward jazz even though his musician friends did not share his interest in John Coltrane and

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and the blues guy," Rumback said. "That's what made the music awesome and unique. Because we were coming from it from a pure place of not being limited by style." After Rumback attended Kansas' Johnson

"You might be playing with the metal guy

Pharoah Sanders. That situation turned advan-

tageous because it meant he could not fall into a

comfortable niche.

After Rumback attended Kansas' Johnson County Community College and studied with r&b saxophonist Ralph Brown, he moved to Chicago in 2000 to finish his music degree at Roosevelt University. At the time, Rumback was in his early 20s and regularly attended gigs and jam sessions at the Green Mill, Velvet Lounge and Empty Bottle. While these jazz and free-improvisation hotbeds made their lasting impact, he also collaborated with rock and folk musicians. Working with adventurous country singer Angela James required him to concentrate on song lines over his own dexterity.

"As an accompanist, you can only do certain things behind a vocal before it becomes distracting for the listener," Rumback said. "If a vocalist is singing a phrase, you wait until she's done and punctuate that phrase. Playing behind vocals has had the same effect on my drumming as writing my own music did. All of a sudden I was playing differently because I was listening for the melody I wrote."

Currently, Rumback is finishing a duo album with singer/guitarist Ryley Walker and a new Colorlist recording. He also serves as production manager at the Chicago venue Constellation, which drummer Mike Reed owns.

"It's a 'not afraid to roll up your sleeves and do the dirty work' kind of scene," Rumback said of the local music community. "If I went anywhere else, I'd miss that. There's a realness that comes through in the music because of it."

THE KEYS TO JAZZ **ARE IN GOOD HANDS**



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To honor her late husband, Kelly Peterson assembled some of the most celebrated jazz artists in the world to perform and record on the luminary's prized personal Bösendorfer Imperial piano. then released the recordings as a deluxe collector's edition, featuring an extensive commemorative book, and as a standard 3-CD digipak package. Oscar, With Love showcases Oscar Peterson as a composer and includes the world premiere of several pieces he wrote but never recorded; the compositions were retrieved from Peterson's library for the project.

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n the fall of 2016, Wynton Marsalis spoke at an event in Manhattan commemorating the centennial of Albert Murray, the jazz historian, cultural critic and novelist who died in 2013 at age 97. Murray had been a longtime mentor to the trumpeter and composer, ever since he was an 18-year-old Juilliard student. He talked about some of the key lessons he learned at Murray's knee in the older man's modest, book-lined apartment on West 132nd Street.

Marsalis said, "If you could get past thinking that Count Basie was 'old' ... if you could come to grips with time, and how things unfold in time, you could then perhaps put yourself in a context." Reinforced by many years of tutelage by Murray, he took that lesson to heart: that understanding the historical context of one's life and work was central to achieving both wisdom and excellence as an artist. It may have contributed to Marsalis' personal credo: "All jazz is modern," now the guiding principle for Jazz at Lincoln Center, of which Marsalis and Murray were co-founders.

By Allen Morrison *Photo by* Jimmy & Dena Katz



7



'I've been surrounded by absolute killers for a long time. And the depth of the love I have for them is hard for me to express.'—Wynton Marsalis

At 56, Marsalis is among the youngest living artists ever inducted into the DownBeat Hall of Fame. If he had only been the leading trumpeter of his generation, there's little doubt he eventually would have made it into the hallowed hall. But it's his tireless work as an educator, bandleader, fundraiser, non-profit executive, and advocate for jazz and American culture that probably sealed the deal so soon. His accomplishments are the consequence of soaring ambition, outsize talent, charisma, thirst for knowledge and a fierce work ethic. His Twitter bio is as accurate as it is succinct: "Internationally acclaimed musician, composer, educator and a leading advocate of American culture. Managing and Artistic Director of Jazz at Lincoln Center."

That description understates his fame. He is

arguably the most famous jazz musician in the world, but beyond his celebrity, Marsalis is also jazz's most renowned intellectual and fiercest champion. No individual in jazz has done more to advance both jazz education and the international appreciation of jazz in the last 50 years.

Most jazz musicians who have risen to the top of their profession would be happy to have a Grammy or two. For Marsalis, however, his nine Grammy Awards are just the tip of the iceberg. He is the only musician to have received Grammy awards in both the jazz and classical categories in the same year (1983), and he repeated this remarkable feat in 1984. He has released more than 60 jazz and classical albums since 1982.

As significant to jazz as any music Marsalis ever wrote or played was his central role in creating Jazz at Lincoln Center in 1987. A pivotal moment—for both the organization and jazz in general—came in 1996, when JALC, which had started as a program and grew into a department, was incorporated as a new and equal constituent of Lincoln Center, alongside the New York Philharmonic, Metropolitan Opera and New York City Ballet. It represented a major achievement in Marsalis' lifelong mission to foster the appreciation of jazz in the country of its birth.

Today, JALC is the largest nonprofit organization promoting jazz in the country, with a \$43 million endowment and a staff of more than 140. After a herculean fundraising campaign, it moved into its current home at the Time Warner Center in 2004. The complex houses three concert and performance spaces (Rose Theater, The Appel Room and Dizzy's Club Coca-Cola) engineered specifically to enhance the sound of acoustic jazz. JALC webcasts hundreds of concerts a year, all available for free.

JALC's educational outreach programs include the Essentially Ellington program, which now provides jazz curriculums to nearly 5,000 high schools in the United States and sponsors the country's biggest national competition for high school jazz bands; an expanding archive of about 1,000 free instructional jazz videos; and many other initiatives. It also launched its own record label, Blue Engine, in 2015.

DownBeat spoke to Marsalis in his dressing room at Jazz at Lincoln Center. There was a corner desk strewn with family photos and sheet music, a Steinway baby grand and framed pictures on the wall of Clark Terry and other trumpet heroes.

As leader of the 15-member Jazz at Lincoln Center Orchestra (JLCO), he has become close to the musicians, all of whom are outstanding soloists. Ten of them compose and arrange for the ensemble. At any given performance, most of the arrangements and many of the compositions are by orchestra members, with the strong encouragement of Marsalis.

"I've been surrounded by absolute killers for a long time," Marsalis said. "And the depth of the love I have for them is hard for me to express."

The musicians love him back. Trumpeter Marcus Printup, who has been with the JLCO for 24 years, said, "I've never met a bandleader who is so unselfish. Everyone understands our roles in the band. We also know who he is. But Wynton doesn't like it to be about himself; he wants it to be about the band. Sometimes I'll say to him, 'This is your band,' and he'll say, 'No, this is our band.' There are times when I'll have two or three solos, and he'll have just one. And I'll say to him, 'You should play, because people want to hear you.' And he'll say, 'No, I've been playing for 30 years, man. I want the people to hear you.' That's just the kind of cat he is."

Although his career has been marked by controversy—and he continues to be a lightning rod in internecine jazz world disputes most jazz historians and critics agree on his importance. In his book *The History of Jazz*, author and critic Ted Gioia wrote, "Marsalis must be seen as the key figure who, more than anyone else, vehemently asserted the centrality of [jazz] tradition in the face of fusion and free styles, and aimed to be its preserver, propagator, promoter, and publicist all rolled into one."

These days Marsalis is more interested in talking about Jazz at Lincoln Center and praising his JLCO colleagues than he is in talking about himself. "When I was younger," he said, "anytime I won something I'd have to say something negative. And one day, a lady came backstage and gave me a compliment. And, of course, I was like, 'I can't play, I didn't do this or that'; I was being self-deprecating. And she said, 'So what does that mean for my compliment and my taste?" He smiled. "So I'll just say I'm grateful for every opportunity to be considered in any way, at any time. ... As I get older, I try to become more grateful and more humble, take up less space. I find that's the best way to improve."

In 1982, the year his eponymous Columbia album was released, DownBeat declared 1982 "the year of Wynton Marsalis." Readers crowned him Jazz Musician of the Year, the album was named Jazz Album of the Year and he was voted the best Trumpeter ("handily defeating Miles in each category," according to an article in the December 1982 issue).

"No major jazz figure—not Ellington or Armstrong, Goodman or Gillespie—had become so famous, so fast," Gioia later wrote.

"Our whole field was struggling," Marsalis said, reflecting on his initial rise to fame. "I liked jazz, but I knew I couldn't play. It created a kind of pressure between me and the other musicians who could play much better than I could, but they weren't getting that kind of publicity. This is not me looking back now—I felt like that then.

"Clark Terry could play. [Harry] 'Sweets' Edison could play. I grew up in the jazz world. They were like uncles to me; I knew them since I was 13 or 14. My father [pianist Ellis Marsalis] could play. It wasn't like I was thinking I'm like [the next] Clifford Brown or somebody. I was not under that illusion. I did feel, from a philosophical standpoint, I was stronger than normal. I felt like ... [intellectually], I was capable of holding my own. ... But I didn't confuse that with the thought that I could play. It wasn't just me. We all knew we needed to learn how to play. Branford, Kenny Kirkland, [Jeff] 'Tain' [Watts]—we all knew we were gonna try to learn how to play."

He didn't ask for all the publicity, and all the petty jealousies and controversies it inspired. "But when I would be interviewed," he said, "I had views, philosophically, many of which I still hold very strongly."

At the start of his career, Marsalis was

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A CENTURY OF JAZZ PIANO

In June 2015, Jazz at Lincoln Center launched its own record label, Blue Engine Records, with the release of *The Jazz At Lincoln Center Orchestra With Wynton Marsalis*– *Live In Cuba*. The label plans to continue to release both live and studio albums, some of them drawn from the organization's library of hundreds of concert recordings dating back to its founding in 1987.

At the label's launch party, Marsalis said, "We have over 28 years of recordings-performances by big bands, small bands, collaborations with all types of musicianseverybody from Aaron Diehl to Willie Nelson. We are going to release as many of them as we can."

On Sept. 15, Blue Engine released its sixth album, Handful Of Keys, a live recording culled from three 2016 concerts that celebrated a century of jazz piano. Handful documents six gifted pianists playing a variety of styles, from 1920s Harlem stride to avant-garde, with big band arrangements that extend and complement the piano.

The concerts featured a multigenerational cast, from 13-year-old whiz kid Joey Alexander to 89-year-old piano master Dick Hyman. Also along for the ride were pianists Myra Melford, Helen Sung, Isaiah J. Thompson and the Jazz at Lincoln Center Orchestra's Dan Nimmer.

The album opens with Hyman playing his own sparkling arrangement of the James P. Johnson 1930 stride masterpiece "Jingles." From there the program bounces merrily around the decades, with particular emphasis on repertoire from the 1960s: Bill Evans' "Very Early," interpreted with emotional maturity by Alexander; McCoy Tyner's high-energy "Four By Five," with Sung playing her own arrangement; and Thompson tearing it up on "Lulu's Back In Town" à la Thelonious Monk. Thompson returns to summon the spirit of Oscar Peterson on "Hymn To Freedom," performed in trio with bassist Carlos Henriquez and drummer Ali Jackson. Hyman returns to play on Benny Carter's arrangement of "All Of Me."

A show-stopping highlight of the album is the contribution of West Coast pianist/composer Melford, who plays her own composition, "The Strawberry." The piece is a survey of jazz piano genres, including gospel, blues, Latin and a highly percussive brand of free-jazz. The album closes with the hard-swinging, versatile Nimmer playing Wynton Kelly's "Temperance" from 1960. – Allen Morrison

thought of as perhaps the most gifted jazz trumpeter in a generation. Today, while his trumpet playing has lost none of its luster, it takes something of a backseat to his prolific composing. His primary instrument today is the JLCO, although sometimes he writes for smaller groups like string quartets and his septet, and sometimes for larger ones, like symphony orchestras.

Alto saxophonist Sherman Irby, who played with the JLCO from 1995 to '97 then rejoined in 2005, said the Marsalis trumpet style has continued to ripen.

"His sound has gotten fatter and bigger as the years have progressed," Irby said. "He thinks he doesn't have as much control as he used to. But he's able to put more emotion on one note, like Ben Webster. He did me a solid by playing on my new record. ... [At one point], he took one note, and the vibration that he put out on his horn had more emotion than anybody else. That's getting to the essence of what music is all about."

Marsalis seems to always be composing a major work. A partial list includes the Pulitzer-winning Blood On The Fields, which included elements of blues, work songs, chants, spirituals, New Orleans jazz, Afro-Caribbean rhythms and Ellingtonian big-band jazz; the epic All Rise for big band, gospel choir and symphony orchestra; Congo Square, with Ghanian master drummer Yacub Addy; his 2009 Blues Symphony for symphony orchestra; 2010's Swing Symphony for orchestra and jazz band; the 2014 Concerto In D for violin; The Jungle, for the New York Philharmonic and JLCO; the list goes on.

While Marsalis has long acknowledged his debt to Duke Ellington, he indicated that another composer had an equally profound effect on him.

"Jelly Roll [Morton] has had the most influence on me in terms of how I put my music together," he said. "I realized that he uses small components and connects them together, like an Erector Set. When I was in my early 20s, I started to transcribe "Black Bottom Stomp" and other music by him. ... The first piece I wrote that used the Jelly Roll type of concept was called 'Blue Interlude.' ... Then [I studied] Duke's original scores. If you look at them, they'll say, A, B, C, D. Then he'll put D-C-A; A-D; A-B; A-C. He's putting it together in that same Jelly Roll type of way. Duke and Jelly Roll are the two that I thought wrote New Orleans counterpoint the best."

He also studied classical symphonic forms—sonatas, scherzos, slow marches, rondos—and began thinking about jazz in a somewhat similar way: "What are the fundamentals of *our* thing? I started to write music with those fundamentals." He often includes blues, African American church music, train sounds (which have a mythic meaning in the South, he said), sultry Johnny Hodgeslike alto saxophone wails, brassy Afro-Latin trumpets, call-and-response and New Orleans march rhythms. "I try to always keep all of my music in the music that I write," he said.

Marsalis disputes the notion, prevalent in New York jazz circles, that JALC has only recently become more open to a broader array of jazz. "That's been said since 1999. Now it's 2017. Exactly what year did it become more open? That's just bullshit. ... When we did Ornette Coleman's music, people said they couldn't believe we were doing that; that was years ago. When [drummer] Han Bennink [an icon of European free-jazz]
was here, people said they couldn't believe that; that was in the '90s, OK?"

The new Blue Engine release, *Handful Of Keys* (see sidebar), features six piano soloists ranging from tradition-minded virtuoso Dick Hyman to avant-garde pianist/composer Myra Melford. "Did we call Myra so somebody could write something about it, or so that we could appeal to some camp?" Marsalis asked rhetorically. "She can *play*. And we love playing with her. Our camp is very broad. We have the broadest camp in the world, yet it's [supposedly] not broad enough. It doesn't matter. The dogs may bark but the caravan moves on."

Perhaps his greatest legacy is the legion of jazz musicians he has helped to mentor, including JLCO bassist/composer Carlos Henriquez, pianists Aaron Diehl and Jon Batiste, flutist/saxophonist Erika von Kleist, singer Cécile McLorin Salvant and dozens of others.

"Other musicians and artists did it with me: Albert Murray, Ralph Ellison, Stanley Crouch, August Wilson, Romare Bearden. Romy did an album cover for me; he gave me books to read. Then there were musicians like Elvin Jones, Gerry Mulligan, John Lewis, Gunther Schuller, my [high school] teachers John Longo and George Jansen, 'Sweets' Edison, Clark Terry, all the trumpet players.

"It's a cycle and a continuum. I have been part of the lives of so many musicians. I love them all. Maurice Brown and Keyon Harrold. Russell

'Wynton has told me it's like building a cathedral: The guys who started it knew they would never see the end of it.' — Aaron Diehl

Gunn. Tatum Greenblatt. Brandon Lee. Christian McBride—I knew him when he was a 14-year-old kid, playing 'Skain's Domain' on the piano, when I first saw him in Philly. And so many more. I'm proud of them."

Pianist Diehl was a talented but unseasoned young pianist, just 17 years old, when Marsalis offered him the life-changing opportunity of filling the piano chair of his septet during a European tour. More recently, during rehearsals for JLCO's 30th anniversary season opener, a tribute to Jelly Roll Morton, Diehl, a featured pianist, found the relationship had changed. No longer a student but a peer, he found the maestro had fewer comments for him.

"After the opening night concert he gave a toast to all the musicians, including the young Juilliard students who performed in the concert [Micah Thomas and Joel Wenhardt]. He said, 'I was your age when JALC began. And older musicians like Sir Roland Hanna, Norris Turney and Joe Temperley were the age I am now, playing in this newly formed band. All those guys are gone now. So when you're in your 50s and 60s, you'll ask yourself how have you contributed to this legacy? What will you offer future generations to ensure that it keeps going?'

"It really made me think," Diehl continued. "Artists can be very self-involved. As Wynton has told me, it's like building a cathedral: The guys who started it knew they would never see the end of it."

Jazz at Lincoln Center is the cathedral project in the lifetime of Wynton Marsalis. Asked if he views it as his crowning achievement, he is quick to set the record straight. "No, I don't feel like it's an achievement for me personally, because all of us did it. And we're still doing it. Let me tell you something: Our staff and our board, they're killing themselves for jazz. JALC has never been about me. It's like John Lewis told me once: 'If this is about you, I have some time; if this is about jazz, I have all the time in the world."



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Spiritual CHEMISTRY

On Oct. 19, 2016, **Chick Corea** launched an eight-week 75th birthday celebration at Manhattan's Blue Note during which he interacted with 15 different bands. In undertaking this marathon, Corea upheld a tradition of Blue Note residencies that started in 2001 with a nine-band event that generated the double-CD, nine-DVD package *Rendezvous In New York*, and resumed in 2011 with a 10-band extravaganza from which Corea culled material for *The Musician*, a three-CD 2016 release that includes a penetrating DVD documentary by Norwegian director Arne Rostand.

DURING COREA'S 2016 BLUE NOTE RESIDENCY, THE NEA

Jazz Master, DownBeat Hall of Fame member and winner of the Jazz Artist category in the 2017 DownBeat Readers Poll revisited and recontextualized the Elektric Band, his primary touring unit during '80s; his Three Quartets band (with saxophone wunderkind Ben Solomon); and his Leprechaun Band. He honored his 1969–'70 Miles Davis tenure in ebullient highbrow flow with Kenny Garrett, Wallace Roney, Mike Stern, Marcus Miller and Brian Blade. He reprised a project with Gary Burton and the Harlem String Quartet, and reimagined Return to Forever in two iterations—acoustically, with Hubert Laws, Ravi Coltrane and Avishai Cohen; and plugged-in, with John McLaughlin, Victor Wooten and Lenny White.

Additionally, Corea played duos with McLaughlin, Herbie Hancock, Brad Mehldau and Gonzalo Rubalcaba; engaged Marcus Gilmore, Tyler McFerrin and Yosvany Terry in four tabula rasa "experiments in electronica"; navigated Erlend Skomsvoll's phantasmagoric arrangements of his compositions with the Trondheim Orchestra; and presented his current feelings about the Spanish Tinge with Flamenco Heart, a recent assemblage including maestros Jorge Pardo and Niño Josele.

After the touring season, Corea went home to Clearwater, Florida. Instead of resting his 75-year-old bones, he formed a new unit with his old friend, drummer Steve Gadd, generating repertoire for a forthcoming 2018 album by a kinetic, Afrodiasporic-oriented ensemble (guitarist Lionel Loueke, woodwindist Steve Wilson, bassist Carlitos Del Puerto and percussionist Luisito Quintero). There followed spring and summer tours with the Elektric Band, a trio with bassist Eddie Gomez and drummer Brian Blade, and duo and combo encounters with Béla Fleck. Corea spent the end of August in Japan, beta-testing Corea/Gadd Band repertoire, then went home while Gadd played arenas for a week with Eric Clapton. Then Corea flew to the Monterey Jazz Festival to play duo with Hancock, and hopped back to New York for a two-week Gadd/ Corea Band Blue Note engagement that preceded six weeks of touring the United States, South America and Europe.

Two days before Hurricane Irma arrived in Clearwater, Corea listened to this account of his itinerary over the phone. "You're exhausting me just listening to you," he joked.

"How do you do it?" he was asked.

"I don't know how to answer other than to say that it's a joy," he said. "If I could avoid commercial airlines, I'd stay on the road the whole year. Mostly I like to stay home so I can hunker down and let my mind wander into the composing area. Most of the guys who played with me are friends I've played with before, either a little or a lot. The way a lot of us play together, the tune doesn't matter. We'll have a short rehearsal at sound check, and not worry about how perfect the music sounds. What matters is that we know what we're doing, and then just get off into never-never land."

"Never-never land" is a good descriptor for the eight stretched-out tracks on *Chinese Butterfly* (Stretch), the first new Corea-Gadd collaboration since their 2006 "Super Trio" project with Christian McBride, which followed the 1981 album *Three Quartets*, which followed such '70s Corea hit albums as *My Spanish Heart*, *The Leprechaun*, *The Mad Hatter* and *Friends*.

"When Steve visited me in December, we repeated what we did in the '70s—make basic tracks, just keyboards and drums, and then layer everything on top of it," Corea said. "His approach is so musical that the parts he comes up with become part of the composition I've written."

Unprompted, Corea referenced Miles Davis. "A major thing I took away from Miles was the way he treated his musicians, what he was able to draw out of them by just encouraging them to be themselves—or prodding them to be themselves," Corea said. "I loved the freedom that he gave me and the other guys, and that's been part of my process with the musicians I work with. Putting together this spiritual chemistry with other musicians is my favorite thing to do." —*Ted Panken*





1) | DIANA KRALL

Turn Up The Quiet (Verve)

Turn Up The Quiet is a co-production with Tommy LiPuma (1936-2017), producer of many of Krall's most acclaimed albums. For this poll-toping disc, the superstar pianist-vocalist chose the repertoire, conceived the ensemble arrangements and gathered three distinct bands for these sessions: a trio with bassist Christian McBride and guitarist Russell Malone; a quintet with drummer Karriem Riggins, bassist Tony Garnier, fiddler Stuart Duncan and guitarist Marc Ribot; and a guartet with guitarist Anthony Wilson, bassist John Clayton and drummer Jeff Hamilton.



JOHN SCOFIELD OUNTRY FOR OUD MEN









BRANFORD MARSALIS QUARTET FEAT. KURT ELLING 2.

Upward Spiral (Sony Masterworks)

Upward Spiral is an autumnal work that ponders loss, pain, dashed expectations and accommodation to all three. The tune choices are varied and smart, with many of the tracks tending toward art song, whether they're rooted in jazz, folk, popular song or poetry. Full of lovely surprises.

JOHN SCOFIELD (3.)

Country For Old Men (Impulse!)

Country For Old Men is an exploration into guitarist John Scofield's strong country and folk roots, featuring homages to such greats as George Jones, Dolly Parton, Merle Haggard, James Taylor and Hank Williams, among others. Joining Scofield are Steve Swallow (bass), Larry Goldings (keyboards) and Bill Stewart (drums).



CHRIS POTTER (4.)

The Dreamer Is The Dream (ECM)

For his third ECM release as a leader, tenor saxophonist Chris Potter presents a new acoustic quartet that blends melodic rhapsody with rhythmic muscle. Potter describes his compositional method as often being "like a dream state." Some of the album's best tracks come from such free-associative writing sessions.

5. BRAD MEHLDAU TRIO

Blues And Ballads (Nonesuch)

Brad Mehldau elevates the craft of balladry and blues playing on this deeply felt, somber rendering of seven tunes. With his longtime trio of bassist Larry Grenadier and drummer Jeff Ballard, Mehldau distills each melody to its aching essence, sometimes leaving it just so. Other times, he rips into brilliant, open-ended variations on a motif.

NORAH JONES 6.)

Day Breaks (Blue Note)

After years of exploring genres like folk, country and Americana, pianist Norah Jones comes full circle with a remarkable album that finds her returning to her jazz roots. Her sixth solo album, Day Breaks features such jazz luminaries as tenor/soprano saxophonist Wayne Shorter, organist Dr. Lonnie Smith and drummer Brian Blade

TROMBONE SHORTY (1.)

Parking Lot Symphony (Blue Note)

Trombone Shorty's Blue Note debut, Parking Lot Symphony, is a 12-track tour de force produced by Chris Seefried (Fitz and the Tantrums, Andra Day) and featuring 10 new original songs along with covers of tunes by Allen Toussaint and The Meters. True to its title, the album contains multitudes of soundfrom brass-band blare to hip-hop swagger.





In Movement (ECM)

Jazz history emanates from drummer Jack DeJohnette's adventurous new trio album. Fifty years ago, as a guest with John Coltrane's group, DeJohnette played with the fathers of Ravi Coltrane and Matthew Garrison, two potent modern musicians who, with In Movement, make their ECM debut.



JLCO WITH WYNTON MARSALIS FEAT. (9.)



The Music Of John Lewis (Blue Engine)

This phenomenal Blue Engine release is devoted to interpretations of nine pieces by pianist-composer John Lewis, of Modern Jazz Quartet fame. The audio was culled from a January 2013 concert devoted to the oeuvre of Lewis and curated by pianist Jon Batiste, then a 26-year-old rising star.



BILL FRISELL & THOMAS MORGAN 10. Small Town (ECM)

On their new album, guitarist Bill Frisell and bassist Thomas Morgan explore deep waters together. Recorded live at New York's Village Vanguard in March 2016, this intimate duo outing has the guitarist and his sympathetic partner creating a near-telepathic bond on an eclectic program of originals and covers.

11.	JOHN BEASLEY Presents MONK'estra Vol. 1 (Mack Avenue)
12.	JOSHUA REDMAN & BRAD MEHLDAU <i>Nearness</i> (Nonesuch)
13.	STEVE GADD <i>Way Back Home</i> (BFM)
14.	CHARLIE HADEN LIBERATION MUSIC ORCHESTRA <i>Time/Life (Song For The Whales And Other Beings)</i> (Impulse!)
15.	DONNY MCCASLIN <i>Beyond Now</i> (Motéma)
16.	GREGORY PORTER <i>Live In Berlin</i> (Eagle Rock)
17.	BOB MINTZER All L.A. Big Band (Fuzzy Music)
18.	WADADA LEO SMITH America's National Parks (Cuneiform)
19.	FRED HERSCH TRIO Sunday Night At The Vanguard (Palmetto)
20.	JOEY DEFRANCESCO Project Freedom (Mack Avenue)





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1 BILL EVANS TRIO

On A Monday Evening (Fantasy)

On A Monday Evening collects audio from a performance by the Bill Evans Trio at the Madison Union Theater at the University of Wisconsin on Nov. 15, 1976. Consisting of previously unreleased material, the concert, featuring bassist Eddie Gomez and drummer Eliot Zigmund, is a high point in the piano icon's acclaimed career. The album's eight songs were recorded by two college radio DJs, who used the station's recording equipment to preserve the evening for posterity. The recordings capture Evans' genius in full force at a pivotal moment in his career.





Truth, Liberty & Soul–Live In NYC: The Complete 1982 NPR Jazz Alive! Recording (Resonance)

This first-time release comprises more than 130 minutes of high-fidelity music presented exactly as it happened when Jaco Pastorius, "the greatest bass player in the world," played Avery Fisher Hall in 1982. Includes a 100-page book with photos and is presented in a sixpanel digi-pak designed by Burton Yount.



WES MONTGOMERY WITH THE WYNTON KELLY TRIO

Smokin' In Seattle: Live At The Penthouse (Resonance)

Smokin' In Seattle marks the third commercially released live album of guitar icon Wes Montgomery with piano legend Wynton Kelly. It was captured at the Penthouse jazz club in Seattle in 1966– just seven months after their classic 1965 live album Smokin' At The Half Note.



The Atlantic Years In Mono (Atlantic)

This box set gathers Coltrane's mono recordings from the Atlantic vaults as a six-LP set with a 7-inch vinyl single. Included are mono versions of *Giant Steps, Bags & Trane* (with Milt Jackson), *Olé Coltrane, Coltrane Plays The Blues* and *The Avant Garde* (with Don Cherry). An accompanying 32-page bound booklet features photos by Lee Friedlander.



MONO

5 | THELONIOUS MONK

Les Liaisons Dangereuses (Sam Records/Saga)

Les Liaisons Dangereuses is a studio recording made for French director Roger Vadim's film of the same name, the soundtrack of which was never released. The album shows Monk playing his distinct voicings and demonstrating his singular sense of rhythm on seven of his originals and a gospel hymn. Includes photographs from the recording session.





6. | MILES DAVIS

Freedom Jazz Dance: The Bootleg Series Vol. 5 (Sony Legacy)

This three-CD box set chronicles Miles Davis' musical evolution in the studio from 1966 to '68, the period encompassing the trumpeter's work with his "Second Great Quintet," featuring Ron Carter, Wayne Shorter, Herbie Hancock and Tony Williams. The album provides an unprecedented look into Davis' creative process.

CHET BAKER

In 1983 trumpeter Chet Baker played six consecutive nights at The Canteen in London with the John Horler Trio, featuring Horler on piano, Jim Richardson on bass and Tony Mann on drums. Richardson recorded these landmark performances on a Sony TCS audiocassette recorder, now meticulously restored as a two-CD set.







COUNT BASIE & LESTER YOUNG

Classic 1936-1947 Studio Sessions (Mosaic)

The 173 tracks on the eight CDs that constitute Mosaic's latest mega-exhibit were culled from the holdings of Universal Music and Sony Music, including all of Basie's recordings for Decca between Jan. 21, 1937, and Feb. 4, 1939. Mosaic's attention to sonic and discographical detail makes this collection well worth the investment.



Concert Of The Century–Tribute To Charlie Parker (Justin Time Essentials)

Concert Of The Century brings together audio from a 1980 concert in Montreal, where a group of legendary musicians under the leadership of trumpeter Dizzy Gillespie performed a thrilling tribute to bebop progenitor Charlie Parker. Available formats include CD, digital or two-LP set.

1 DAVID BOWIE

Who Can I Be Now? 1974-1976 (Parlophone)

The 12-CD box, 13-LP vinyl set feature all of the material officially released by Bowie during the so-called "American" phase from 1974 to '76. Exclusive to the box set is *The Gouster*. Previously unavailable as a complete album, the material was recorded at Philadelphia's Sigma Sound in 1974 and produced by Tony Visconti.

11.	ALICE CULTRANE World Spirituality Classics 1: The Ecstatic Music Of Alice Coltrane Turiyasangitananda (Luaka Bop)
12.	ERIC CLAPTON Live In San Diego With Special Guest J. J. Cale (Reprise)
13.	KEITH JARRETT A Multitude Of Angels (ECM)
14.	WOODY SHAW & LOUIS HAYES The Tour-Volume One (HighNote)
15.	ABBEY LINCOLN Love Having You Around: Live At The Keystone Korner, Vol. 2 (HighNote)
16.	SHIRLEY HORN Live At The 4 Queens (Resonance)
17.	ARTHUR BLYTHE In The Tradition/Lenox Ave. Breakdown/Illusions/Blythe Spirit (BGO)
18.	LOUIS ARMSTRONG The Standard Oil Sessions (Dot Time)
19.	PETER ERSKINE TRIO <i>As It Was</i> (ECM)
20.	VAN MORRISON It 's Too Late To Stop Now Vol. II, III, IV & DVD (Warmer Bros.)



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DIANA KRALL

1

MOVING PICTURES

It's a Wednesday morning in early September, and **Diana Krall** is taking a walk along the waterfront near her home in Nanaimo, British Columbia. She's just dropped her twin sons off at school, and is now gazing at what she calls "a very smoky, weird, like, pink water sea wall." Forest fires, brought on by a hot, dry La Niña summer, have shrouded much of the Pacific Northwest in smoke.

"THERE WAS A LAYER OF ASH ON OUR CAR THIS morning," she says over her cell phone. "I've been doing this walk along the water, and photographing. There were literally rose-colored gold sparkles on the water, with the sun shining through it."

Although she's best known as a pianist and singer indeed, she just topped the Female Vocalist category in the DownBeat Readers Poll, as well as taking Album of the Year honors for *Turn Up The Quiet* (Verve)—Krall is also an avid photographer. She has even incorporated environmental photos she's taken of her native B.C. into the backdrop for her current tour, along with work by Canadian artist Amy Friend and photographer Barry Underwood.

There's also a visual element to the way Krall approaches her music.

"You know how they say some people are visual learners?" she says, when asked about how she conceptualizes her interpretation of a song. "I use visual references. I just get a picture in my head, like a short film. Like 'Moonglow,' to me, is like the back of the glowing tube amps. Somewhere between that, and the Coney Island roller rink."

She laughs. "That's how I explained it to [guitarist Marc] Ribot, and he just put his arm on my shoulder and went, 'Yeah, I get it.' And I know he does." For proof, simply cue up the melancholy intro he plays on *Turn Up The Quiet*'s reading of the tune. Not only is his gently amplified, reverb-sweetened tone redolent of old tube amps, there's also a sense of playful nostalgia to the performance, particularly the solos he, violinist Stuart Duncan and Krall turn in.

"I'm not that analytical," she shrugs. "I'm just very visual. I get a visual feeling in my head, and then I sing the song."

Listening to *Turn Up The Quiet*, it's easy to get lost in the intimacy of the sound. Krall's voice is often just a husky whisper, the guitar and bass are lightly amplified (if at all), the drums—when there—are hushed, and even the string arrangements are strictly *mezzo piano*. It's a great listening experience at home or on headphones, but how can she manage that kind of quiet in a concert hall?

"That's sort of been my whole life's work," she replies. "If you just make yourself quiet, then everybody's going to listen a little harder."

She's quick to credit her team for making it easier to maintain that vibe.

"First of all, I have an amazing sound engineer, Clive Alcock," Krall says. "It's always the same comment at the end of the night: 'Oh, my god, the sound is so amazing!' And I have musicians right now who understand that we play pretty much to the stage. And you have to trust your audience and not be intimidated that when it's full of people the energy changes.

For the second leg of her *Turn Up The Quiet* tour, Krall says she is looking forward to "going out and playing with these guys. Every night, I look forward to playing. Sometimes I'm so involved in the music and what I'm listening to that I forget to come in."

She laughs, delightedly. "I'm just so grooving on what they're doing that I become the audience member. It's a joke, you know, because it happens so often. And that's a pretty nice place to be, that you're so immersed in it you forget that you're actually in the band." -J.D. Considine



MASTERMIND

By Phillip Lutz | Photos by Stella K

After kicking around for years, **Snarky Puppy** hit pay dirt in 2011 on the band's first European tour—selling out the club Cargo in London's Shoreditch neighborhood and subsequently drawing big crowds in rooms across the continent.

"WE CAME BACK FROM THAT TOUR FEELING LIKE something had changed," said Michael League, 33, the band's founder and leader.

But, he added, the band was in for a rude awakening: "We flew from Paris to Chicago, got in a van, drove 40 hours west into a West Coast tour and our average audience was like 15 people. We played for four people on my birthday in Arcadia, California, after playing for 350 in Paris."

These days, the group's fortunes have improved markedly. From London's O2 Academy Brixton to Long Island's Tilles Center for the Performing Arts to Los Angeles' Walt Disney Concert Hall, Snarky Puppy and its rotating cast of players are attracting thousands of fans who sing and sway to the band's sounds. The band has won three Grammy awards, and it has now topped the Jazz Group category in the DownBeat Readers Poll three years running.

Much of the appeal no doubt lies in the group's creative layering of smart grooves, hip harmonies and memorable melodies—not to mention its pyrotechnic displays, courtesy of keyboardists like Bobby Sparks, guitarists like Mark Lettieri and drummers like Jamison Ross.

At the heart of it all is a lean and lithe League, who, bass in hand, cues the band with a nod of the head, a wide smile and the understated swagger of a bandleader too cool to play the star.

"Mike's stage presence is a big thing," said trumpeter and keyboardist Justin Stanton, whose membership in the band dates to its early days at the University of North Texas more than a decade ago. Positioned onstage directly at League's right, Stanton feels that presence close up.

For all his confidence, League remembers those early days and keeps things in perspective—retaining in the process more than a modicum of modesty.

"I've never done anything new," he said as he sipped tea on a hot September day in Brooklyn's Atlantic Sound Studios. "All I can do is take all the stuff I've heard throughout my life and pick certain things from it, run them through the filter of myself and create something."

What he has created is a small empire, organized to accommodate his jobs as record company executive, freelance producer, composer, arranger, orchestrator and, ultimately, performer—a role that begins but hardly ends with his duties in Snarky Puppy.

League's enthusiasm for extreme multitasking obviously remained undiminished. Nonetheless, as he nursed a throat polyp—one that caused him to postpone a fall recording date and tour with folk-rock icon David Crosby, with whom he has of late been crooning counterculture classics like "Woodstock" and "Déjà Vu"—he seemed of a mind to take a step back, even as he moves forward.

Snarky Puppy's latest album, *Culcha Vulcha* (GroundUP), is a case in point. By League's own account, the album, released last year, represents a back-to-basics effort that reasserts the band's identity. Unlike the band's



past seven albums—culminating in *Sylva* (Impulse!), a collaboration with the 52-piece Metropole Orkest from the Netherlands, and *Family Dinner Vol. 2* (Universal/GroundUP), which features a multitude of guest artists, including vocalists—*Culcha Vulcha* was recorded in a studio with band members and staff but no audience present.

"There was definitely a conscious effort to make sure that people know what Snarky Puppy is," League said. "It's not the band from *Sylva*; it's not the band from *Family Dinner*. Those were special projects. We're an instrumental original music band, and so with *Culcha Vulcha* I wanted to go all the way down that hole and not have any special guests—to really show the people who have only found out about the band in the last few years what the band is about."

The mission was accomplished. "I was very happy with how dark it sounded, how patient it was," he said. "It didn't really have any of the bombast of *We Like It Here* [Ropeadope/ GroundUP, 2014]. It's not an explosive record. The melodies are simpler, and the grooves are slower and more restrained."

The basic tracks for *Culcha Vulcha* were laid down at Sonic Ranch in Tornillo, Texas, an outpost near the Mexican border, where League arranged to feed and house the musicians for more than a week. When it came time to record, they set up in a big circle and let loose.

"Everybody understood how to exist within the arrangement without stepping over each other," said Larnell Lewis, who was one of three drummers on the album.

The result—after some bass, flute, guitar and keyboard tracking was added in the Brooklyn studio—was an album with a clear architecture. "I still see a record as a record," League said. "At the risk of sounding like a curmudgeon, I really dislike the 'singles culture' that has developed with digital media. Creators are [now] creating things for shorter attention spans. But for me, the album is a story and I put my full attention to it. "I like to start each record with a song that's indicative of the whole scope of the record, but also one that is engaging, like an icebreaker."

League came up with "Tarova," a funky number that delivers the group's irreverent spirit with enough punch to propel the listener toward a Brazilian-inflected "Semente," Stanton's sauntering tune "Gemini" and a punkish party favor called "Grown Folks."

"The first three to four tracks I like to represent the whole album, showing diversity," League said. "And then at the end I tend to throw in the things I like a lot but I don't think others will like a lot." In that regard he described the slow burns of "Palermo" and "Big Ugly," the last two of the album's nine original tracks, as "treats for the people who want to listen to the whole thing."

Snarky Puppy will promote the album during its Dec. 9–20 tour of Mexico and South America.

League, whose reputation has been growing as a producer plugged into the public mood, has also been lending his skills to others. Through his GroundUP label and consistent touring, he has provided platforms for worthy under-theradar players both in the studio and onstage. In addition, he has lent his production skills to well-known artists such as Cuban singer and guitarist Eliades Ochoa, of Buena Vista Social Club fame, and Crosby, for whom he produced, played on and received writing credits on 2016's *The Lighthouse* (GroundUP).

The postponed recording session and tour with Crosby will be rescheduled for dates in 2018. Meanwhile, League was heading off to Turkey to deepen his knowledge of the oud and the daf, a large frame drum. Picking up the instruments, he demonstrated a bluesy approach to their playing that he intends to refine for a collaboration with the Metropole Orkest featuring his new band, Bokanté.

In its stripped-down, acoustic instrumentation and folkish sensibility, Bokanté is a decided departure from Snarky Puppy. Drawing on Delta blues and West African beats, its harmonies are open and simple, while its rhythms are complex, if deceptively so, as percussionists Jamey Haddad, André Ferrari and Keita Ogawa fill the space. Chris McQueen, Bob Lanzetti and Roosevelt Collier add color and depth on a range of guitars, as does League. On top of it all sits Creole singer Malika Tirolien. The group's inaugural album, *Strange Circles* (GroundUP), was released in June.

For Bokanté—which has found greater success in Europe than in the United States— League has recruited Ogawa, McQueen and Lanzetti from Snark Puppy. But the two groups operate in distinct spheres. "Stuff that's harmonically super rich—or impatient—can work in Snarky Puppy but not in Bokanté," League said. "Bokanté is like a giant, thick root growing from a huge tree deep into the earth, and it's like everything has to feel that way—heavy and old and organic. And Snarky Puppy can feel fresh and exciting and kind of tangential."

League, who willingly cued up bare-bones demos for the upcoming Bokanté album, was planning to orchestrate the material in preparation for a recording session in January. After that, he will turn his attention to Snarky Puppy, which will head back into the studio in April and embark on a major tour in 2019.

Meanwhile, fans who can't get enough of Snarky Puppy have another option: Dozens of the band's concerts have been recorded, mixed overnight and made available for download.

"All good ideas start in a creative space," League said. "And for me, the creative space is, 'Wow, this music is very different every night: totally different set list, different crowds, different-sounding rooms."

Given the expense of employing a traveling engineer, the venture has not yet been a smashing commercial success. League said that a series of European concerts made available in 2015 ended up losing a little money. But recordings drawing on a 2017 European tour turned a small profit.

Smiling, League said, "My attitude is, if we can afford to do cool things, we do them." **DB**

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OZZ



CHRISTIAN MCBRIDE



When **Christian McBride** walks into the room, you know the man has arrived. McBride's deep and resonant voice, his broad smile, good vibrations and perpetually cheerful demeanor reach out, over and through an audience. McBride personifies jazz as positive life force, carrying with it high-flying possibilities and down-to-earth swing. The 45-year-old bassist and composer brings his love of life and jazz to everything he touches, including the second album by his unstoppable big band, *Bringin' It* (Mack Avenue). Its 11 tracks, consisting of seven covers and four original compositions, are performed with gusto and gravity, as if McBride somehow infused his unique life force into each member of his 18-piece big band.

"EVERY BAND, BE IT A BIG BAND OR A SMALL GROUP, should build from the bottom up, and that means the rhythm section," McBride said from his favorite juice bar in Montclair, New Jersey. "Particularly in a big band it's important that I have a partner in the rhythm section that I feel is strong enough to withstand all that weight on top of us. For the first five years of my big band it was Ulysses Owens Jr., and for the last two years it's been Quincy Phillips. Tangibly, that's where the groove comes from. As far of the rest of the band, there ain't no way I can infuse my personality on the band; it just kind of happens. That's what good musicians do: They assess what's happening, and they fall in accordingly."

Though it has been six years since the release of McBride's first big band album, 2011's *The Good Feeling* (Mack Avenue), the ensemble has remained active on the concert circuit. The group toured Asia during its first year and is scheduled to tackle Europe next year. McBride's curator consultancy for the New Jersey Performing Arts Center (NJPAC) and his recent appointment as artistic director for the Newport Jazz Festival have allowed him to put his big band (which counts among its regulars trumpeter Freddie Hendrix, tenor saxophonist Ron Blake, alto saxophonist Steve Wilson, trombonist Michael Dease, guitarist Rodney Jones and pianist Xavier Davis) through its paces on a regular basis.

"We played these charts over the course of a couple years," McBride said. "I'd bring new charts to a gig and we'd rehearse them at the sound check, then rehearse again and play them on the next gig. By the time we got to the studio, some of the charts had been played already, so it was a slow burn."

Bringin' It recalls the big bands of Count Basie and Thad Jones & Mel Lewis, with nods to Oliver Nelson, Nelson Riddle and James Brown. It is pure McBride—total rock-'em, sock-'em big band dynamics and graceful swing forays performed with the kind of organic excitement that's rare in today's jazz world.

"There's sort of a silent frown now on jazz," McBride said. "It's happening again, that if the music is in 4/4 or has an obvious blues or bebop influence, some will frown on it. There's a conflation of intellect and abstraction being equal to some sort of genius. That's cool. But there's got to be a way that someone carrying the torch for swing and the blues can bring all these worlds together."

Bringin' It jumps off with "Gettin' To It," a fire-starter of slippery funk and popping melody propelled by a jubilant brass section and Jones' chunky guitar.

"Gettin' To It' is also the title track to my first Verve CD from 1994," McBride said. "That track brought James Brown and me together. It's pretty much a ripoff of his song 'Get It Together.' I took his groove and wrote a melody on top of it. Mr. Brown really enjoyed it. As years went on, it seemed like a no-brainer to write a big band arrangement of that song. It was a custom-fit for the big band."

Befitting a spiritual heir of the Browns—both James and bassist Ray—McBride is extremely busy. Two relatively new McBride groups, Tip City and New Jawn, will be making their presence known via upcoming records and tours. And McBride continues to pick up sessions as a sideman, most recently with baritone saxophonist Lauren Sevian, pianist/vocalist Diana Krall, drummer Matt Wilson, guitarist Peter Bernstein and rapper/actress Queen Latifah.

"I gotta keep learning," McBride said. "[There are] so many great musicians out there doing so many great things. I do my



DECEMBER 2017 TOUR DATES

11/30	49 WEST ANNAPOLIS, MD
12/1-2	TWINS JAZZ WASHINGTON, DC
12/6	THE FISH HOUSE MIAMI, FL
12/8	LE CHAT NOIR MIAMI, FL
12/9	BALL AND CHAIN W/ NICK TANNURA TRIO MIAMI, FL
12/10	U OF MIAMI/COOL FROST JAZZ AT COCOWALK
12/22	LULA LOUNGE TORONTO, ONT
12/23	THE REX TORONTO, ONT



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PHOTOS BY ANDREW JAMES, BOURBON STREET JAZZ AND r.r. jones





best to keep my muscles flexed. That's why I admire Ron Carter-80 years old and still doing five men's work. I have to be the best I can be; that's why I do the sideman dates."

Featuring pianist Emmett Cohen and guitarist Dan Wilson, Tip City takes over from McBride's former trio of pianist Christian Sands and drummer Owens, but the repertoire will remain firmly focused on standards. New Jawn follows a new direction.

"The New Jawn is without piano, something a little challenging," McBride said. "Just trumpet [Josh Evans], tenor saxophone [Marcus Strickland], bass and drums [Nasheet Waits]. The New Jawn is all original; Tip City is all standards. New Jawn is playing Dizzy's Club Coca-Cola in April. It's definitely harder and freer. Contrary to popular belief, I am a huge fan of avant-garde music. I wouldn't call this band avant-garde, but it leans more that way than the trio ever did." The Tip City album will be released on McBride's Mack Avenue imprint, Brother Mister Records.

A Christian McBride Situation is yet another group enterprise, consisting of Patrice Rushen (keyboards), Alyson Williams (vocals), DJ Logic and Jahi Sundance (turntables, electronics) and Ron Blake (saxophones). And through it all, McBride still finds time to give back to the community: The New Jersey-based educational organization Jazz House Kids, which he runs with his wife, vocalist Melissa Walker, has been teaching young students the fundamentals of jazz for more than 15 years.

"Children are tuned in to energy; they feel the energy and where you're coming from," McBride said. "As long as you're playing for them and not at them-you can't be dogmatic with kids. They just want to feel the music. Play it with feeling and let them latch onto it, and then after a while you can put the historical thing on them."

With McBride at the helm, jazz is a diverse playing field that welcomes all styles and all musicians. While some pursue grants and commissions, McBride believes in building audiences from the ground up, as he did with his as yet unreleased piece, The Movement Revisited, which revisited the legacies of Rosa Parks, Malcolm X, Muhammad Ali, Martin Luther King Jr. and President Barack Obama.

"I would rather a grant come to me rather than me going after the grant," McBride said. "Now I understand that those are great things that give the artist an opportunity to make some money. But my dream is to reach the common person. That way I build capital with the listening public. Then I can create my musical dream in an organic way, in a natural, community-based way. Like my piece The Movement Revisited. Someone did pay to make that happen, but it was with the intention of bringing the people in as opposed to proving to a small group of people, 'Yes, I am a genius and I deserve this money.' I would like jazz to have more of its folk roots, sort of a street music, a people's music, so to speak." DB

Havana International Jazz Festival Tour January 14 to 22, 2018 JazzCuba.com



Taj Mahal & Keb' Mo' BREAKING DOWN INHBITIONS

By Jeff Johnson | Photo by Jay Blakesberg



Taj Mahal and Keb' Mo' are no strangers to the accolades that come with well-conceived albums. *TajMo* (Concord)—which teams 75-year-old blues showman and world music pioneer Mahal with a genre-bending collaborator who is 10 years his junior—is winning nearly universal raves from critics and fans. DownBeat readers are on board, selecting *TajMo* as Blues Album of the Year. And, as their nine-piece band proved time and again during a sixmonth tour in support of the project, the new material gains an added dimension when performed live onstage.

Interviewed by phone from Milwaukee in mid-September, Mahal noted that the songs from *TajMo* have an organic quality when performed in concert. "It's living music every night," he said. "We shoot for an ideal and we start 'em up, and I find myself moving through a particular song differently from night to night. But so far it's fun every night."

In a separate interview, Keb' Mo' echoed Mahal's unabashed joy in a partnership that's about more than legacy building. "I don't care how people remember me—I have fun now," he said. "We have fun every day." The infectiously upbeat material lends itself to a lighthearted tone and easy banter with fans, as Mahal and Keb' Mo' demonstrated during a show at the North Shore Center for the Performing Arts in Skokie, Illinois. "There's no reason to be up there if you can't have a good time," Mahal explained. "The original traditional cultural imprint is that the audience is part of the performance, but now the audience is oriented to watch the music rather than be involved in it." Mahal and Keb' Mo' are masters at breaking down such inhibitions.

TajMo might be regarded as an antidote for a particularly turbulent era. "We wanted to do some good, positive songs," Keb' Mo' said. "And then we thought it would be fun to do some classic songs like 'Diving Duck' and [Billy Nichols'] 'Shake Me In Your Arms.' When we were making this album, all these things were happening, like the South Carolina church shootings and Baton Rouge. We just wanted to make a record that felt good."

Mahal said he defines the blues in upbeat, positive hues. "That's what the blues is all about, whatever form it takes," he explained. "It doesn't have to be plowmen telling you how bad their lives are. The record ended up being major relief for what's happening today, socially and politically. I don't think you can go through my 55-year catalog and hear any of the whining blues. There are other colors to paint with."

While both Mahal and Keb' Mo' made their bones as folk-blues revivalists, their touring ensemble showcased the two frontmen's passions for New Orleans jazz, mellow soul, hard-driving electric rock, calypso, Afro-Caribbean, Hawaiian, reggae and ska as much as down-in-the-Delta blues played on fingerpicked acoustic guitars, harmonicas, resonators and other traditional blues instruments. The rhythm section of drummer Marcus Finnie and bassist Stan Sargeant was joined onstage by 22-year-old keyboardist David M. Rodgers, trumpeter Quentin Ware and saxophonist Dana Robbins, with Mahal's daughters Deva and Zoe Moon Mahal providing backing vocals as they reinforced the sense of family so vital to the project. Chicago blues harmonica virtuoso Billy Branch, who appeared on the album, also sat in at the Skokie gig. And the presence of other album guest stars, including guitarist Joe Walsh, vocalists Bonnie Raitt and Lizz Wright, percussionist Sheila E. and harpist Lee Oskar, further illustrated the eclectic nature of *TajMo*.

Still, the album's success centers on the pairing of Mahal, a two-time Grammy winner, and Keb' Mo', who has won three. While star collaborations of this nature frequently tend to get bogged down in commerce and contrivance, there's a true harmonic convergence at work here that transcends such limitations.

It's a partnership that has its roots in a chance meeting that took place in 1969. The former Henry Saint Clair Fredericks Jr., who was enjoying solo success thanks to his 1968 self-titled Columbia Records debut and its follow-up, *The Natch'l Blues*, began playing at school assemblies in Southern California. When Mahal visited Compton High School for a pair of gigs, in the audience was a 17-year-old student named Kevin Moore. The future Keb' Mo' recalls the experience as a life changer, and he soon decided to build a career in music.

When Mahal's stardom waned in the disco-crazed late '70s, he relocated to Hawaii. The Harlem-born, Springfield, Massachusettsreared bluesman formed the Hula Blues Band, and alternated touring with that indigenous



Hawaiian group and the more roots-oriented Phantom Blues Band. He'd cross paths with Keb' Mo' occasionally, and was instrumental in kick-starting the younger artist's solo career.

Keb' Mo' admittedly needed the help. "Taj was working with [producer-guitarist] John Porter," he said. "I came out to the studio with my demo tape and reluctantly played it for them. This was the '90s, and 40-year-old guys just couldn't get record deals. I was trying to forge my own recording career just based on what I could do on my own, and that failed."

Keb' Mo' asked Porter to produce his selftitled 1994 breakthrough album, as well as several subsequent projects. In fact, Porter was at the helm for all five of the cumulative Grammywinning albums by Keb' Mo' and Mahal. By the early 2000s, Keb' Mo' had achieved a level of success equal to Mahal's.

The *TajMo* collaboration took another decade to come to fruition. "I'd run into [Mahal] on the road and we gradually formed a relationship through the years," Keb' Mo' said. "In 2014 he told me, 'We should do something together,' and I pretty quickly agreed. We'd do a few songs at my studio [in Nashville], and we started trading song ideas. He was in Berkeley [California] and I was in Nashville."

With help from his nationwide network of artists who could lay down their parts in farflung studios, Keb' Mo' was able to complete the album, but it took nearly three years. All the while, he and Mahal were discovering just how well they complemented each other musically. The rough-hewn vocals of Mahal and the scratchy-voiced Keb' Mo' seem like they'd be more gritty than harmonious on duets, but they blend surprisingly well. Equally important, they were both ready to experiment.

"What was driving me was ancestors from a long time ago," Mahal said. "I was interested in going back to the roots and finding out what was going on. You can't build a foundation from the chimney down; you've got to go from the ground up. My parents never made me afraid of my own history, and I embraced music from the continent and the Caribbean and South America. You can't just stay in one little lane. I'm not going backwards; those tunes are moving forward. It's still living. It's still got legs."

So will this musical marriage made in heaven last beyond *TajMo*?

"I'm sure we're going to talk about it again," Mahal replied. "We'll take time to reflect, but I'm sure we'll figure out other things to do."

His partner sounded less hopeful, saying, "It has a shelf life to it. It's a finite project. We're celebrating the range of songs that we meet at. Taj has a repertoire of music—old Hawaiian, calypso, Caribbean. ... There's a place where we blur together, and that's what we're celebrating. We're both happy as pie just doing it, and I've become very close with Taj."



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COMPLETE RESULTS

HALL OF FAME

82nd

Wynton Marsalis	
Allan Holdsworth	947
John McLaughlin	828
Les Paul	
George Benson	789
Jack DeJohnette	711
Toots Thielemans	699
Phil Woods	687
Hank Mobley	618
Benny Golson	
Marian McPartland	
Mel Tormé	525
Tito Puente	516
Jimmy Heath	507
George Duke	489
Charles Lloyd	480
Bob Brookmeyer	
Carmen McRae	
Shirley Horn	432
Kenny Burrell	
Kenny Barron	
Dr. John	
Steve Gadd	
Grant Green	
Bobby Hutcherson	378
-	

JAZZ ARTIST

Chick Corea	789
Wynton Marsalis	.690
Pat Metheny	.645
Wayne Shorter	.627
Diana Krall	.606
Tony Bennett	.603
Esperanza Spalding	.597
Chris Potter	.537
John Scofield	.537
Kamasi Washington	.513
Christian McBride	.504
Charles Lloyd	.486
Kurt Elling	.438
Gregory Porter	
John McLaughlin	.405
Ambrose Akinmusire	.393
Maria Schneider	.375
Keith Jarrett	.373
Trombone Shorty	.372
Kenny Barron	

JAZZ GROUP

Snarky Puppy	1,266
Pat Metheny Unity Group	870
Chick Corea Trio	771
Wayne Shorter Quartet	684
Wynton Marsalis Quintet	630
Christian McBride Trio	528
Trombone Shorty	
& Orleans Avenue	519
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Roy Hargrove	1,104
Terence Blanchard	867
Randy Brecker	855
Tom Harrell	822
Arturo Sandoval	774
Roger Ingram	768
Chris Botti	
Ingrid Jensen	645
Avishai Cohen	609
Christian Scott aTunde Adjuah	441
Wadada Leo Smith	
Terell Stafford	
Dave Douglas	381
Nicholas Payton	378
Sean Jones	
Paolo Fresu	309
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Brian Lynch	297

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Steve Turre	1,188
Robin Eubanks	
Curtis Fuller	678
Nils Landgren	621
Steve Davis	606
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Alan Ferber	

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Branford Marsalis	2,106
Dave Liebman	993
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Chris Potter	891
Ravi Coltrane	729
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Jan Garbarek	675
Joe Lovano	672
Jane Ira Bloom	627
Anat Cohen	606



Steve Wilson	.525
Jane Bunnett	.459
Jimmy Greene	.426
James Carter	.372
Lee Konitz	.327
Ted Nash	.285
Sam Newsome	.273
Donny McCaslin	.267
Evan Parker	.264

ALTO SAXOPHONE

Kenny Garrett	1,767
Lee Konitz	
David Sanborn	
Paquito D'Rivera	825
Rudresh Mahanthappa	699
Miguel Zenón	
Grace Kelly	645
Gary Bartz	537
John Zorn	519
Bobby Watson	507
Steve Coleman	492
Dick Oatts	486
Ted Nash	393
Henry Threadgill	339
Anthony Braxton	330
David Binney	327
Donald Harrison	327
Steve Wilson	309
Charles McPherson	297
Tia Fuller	294

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Wayne Shorter	1,281
Branford Marsalis	1,134
Joe Lovano	1,011
Joshua Redman	945
Charles Lloyd	861
Kamasi Washington	768
Jeff Coffin	738
Donny McCaslin	615

Eric Alexander	519
Melissa Aldana	489
Pharoah Sanders	471
Jimmy Heath	405
Mark Colby	387
Ernie Watts	360
Jan Garbarek	330
Kirk Whalum	330
Houston Person	300
Mark Turner	285
James Carter	279

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Ronnie Cuber	
John Surman	774
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Hamiet Bluiett	
Scott Robinson	
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Lisa Parrott	537
Mats Gustafsson	501
Tim Berne	
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Don Byron	1,089
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Shabaka Hutchings	213
Ken Vandermark	204
Marty Ehrlich	198
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Charles Lloyd	1,443
Nicole Mitchell	
Lew Tabackin	747
Dave Valentin	
Elena Pinderhughes	678
Dave Liebman	633
Jane Bunnett	609
Henry Threadgill	609
Ted Nash	603
Steve Wilson	
Tia Fuller	
Holly Hofmann	
James Spaulding	342
Jamie Baum	
Ira Sullivan	273
Ali Ryerson	272
Anne Drummond	270
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1,416
1,377
1,047
930



789
666
642
540
468
423
420
411
375
369
342
303
279
276
225

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Herbie Hancock	3,159
Chick Corea	2,970
Robert Glasper	1,239
Craig Taborn	744
Larry Goldings	642
Lyle Mays	636
John Medeski	615
Hiromi	612
Booker T. Jones	501
Jason Lindner	
Eddie Palmieri	
Gary Husband	351
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Django Bates	
Patrice Rushen	
Jim Beard	252
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Joey DeFrancesco	4,428
Dr. Lonnie Smith	
Larry Goldings	1,401
Booker T. Jones	1,095
John Medeski	969
Carla Bley	906
Brian Auger	555
Mike LeDonne	405

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Pat Metheny	1,953
Bill Frisell	1,269
John Scofield	1,113
Larry Coryell	849
John McLaughlin	690
Mary Halvorson	
Allan Holdsworth	591
Peter Bernstein	549
Julian Lage	537
Al Di Meola	
Pat Martino	471
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John Pizzarelli	435
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David Gilmore	
Kevin Eubanks	
Mike Stern	
Stanley Jordan	345
Dave Stryker	330
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Christian McBride	. 2,289
Ron Carter	1,761
Esperanza Spalding	1,470
Dave Holland	1,131
Stanley Clarke	975
Victor Wooten	705
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John Patitucci	672
John Clayton	477
Avishai Cohen	462
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Brian Blade	1,251
Steve Gadd	1,005

Peter Erskine	738
Antonio Sanchez	684
Terri Lyne Carrington	588
Roy Haynes	573
Billy Cobham	549
Vinnie Colaiuta	489
Jeff Hamilton	480
Jeff "Tain" Watts	456
Eric Harland	387
Lewis Nash	366
Allison Miller	360
Mark Guiliana	357
Dave Weckl	342
Matt Wilson	342
Cindy Blackman Santana	336
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Joey Baron	
-	

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Sheila E	1,314
Poncho Sanchez	
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Airto Moreira	906
Trilok Gurtu	840
Mino Cinelu	588
Pedrito Martinez	567
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Bobby Sanabria	486
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Jon Batiste (melodica)	633
James Carter (bass saxophone)	552



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Wycliffe Gordon (tuba)	.468
Chris Thile (mandolin)	.453
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Kurt Elling	
Tony Bennett	2,175
Bobby McFerrin	
Mose Allison	
Michael Bublé	771
Theo Bleckmann	630
Jacob Collier	615
José James	426
John Pizzarelli	405
Jon Hendricks	384
Andy Bey	375
Freddy Cole	
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Kevin Mahogany	261
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Kenny Washington	
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-	
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Anat Cohen Tentet Happy Song ANZIC

On her first two releases of 2017, Anat Cohen's open-minded musical outlook sent her on duet excursions into the music of Brazilian composer Moacir Santos (*Outra Coisa*) and her second collaboration with The Trio Brasileiro (*Rosa Dos Ventos*). The scope is more expansive on Cohen's third album of the year, a recording that features the tentet she debuted in 2016. It is also her latest collaboration with Oded Lev-Ari, who serves as the band's musical director and chief arranger.

Dipping and diving between eras, styles, cultures and musical personas, the material is meant to celebrate the clarinet's place in history, although it goes just as far to celebrate Cohen's propensity for taking off in melodic flight. Case in point is the ebullient title track and opener, a rebooted Cohen original that sets the pace for the rest of the album with its upbeat swing and bright tones. The track kicks off with a borderline New Orleans-trad vibe, courtesy of Cohen, offset by a rhythm section that tempts the tune Eastward. The evocative "Valsa Para Alice" circles Cohen back to her work with the music of Brazil before things heat up with the dance-floor ready swinger "Oh Baby."

The album's most memorable moments arrive in non-stop succession after that, beginning with the three-part, klezmer-inspired "Anat's Doina." As the band embarks on a narrative built on a pair of Cohen compositions and one traditional tune, it unleashes a new wave of emotion and drama—it also entices the listener to see the whole piece performed live.

Later, Lev-Ari's "Trills And Thrills" shifts the mood completely with its uneasy, dissonant opening and ominous tones. Like a set of curtains ushering the listener into the meat of the album's second act, the intro feeds a series of unexpected guitar licks—a welcome platform for the rock ethos of Sheryl Bailey.

The album closes with a trip to Mali as the tentet embarks on Neba Solo's "Kenedougou Foly," a tune whose bounce-inducing beat stokes a whole new fire in Cohen's performance. It's the kind of ending that begs for a *Happy Song* sequel. —*Jennifer Odell*

Personnel: Anat Cohen, clarinet; Oded Lev-Ari, musical director, Rubin Kodheli, cello; Nadje Noordhuis, trumpet, flugelhorn; Nick Finzer, trombone; Owen Broder, baritone saxophone, bass clarinet; James Shipp, vibraphone, percussion; Vitor Gonçalves, piano, accordion; Sheryl Bailey, guitar; Tal Mashiach, bass; Anthony Pinciotti, drums.

Ordering info: anzicstore.com

Happy Song: Happy Song; Valsa Para Alice; Oh Baby; Anat's Doina; Loro; Trills And Thrills; Goodbye; Kenedougou Foly. (54:15)



Rez Abbasi Unfiltered Universe WHIRLWIND 4713 ****

Familiarity with South Indian Carnatic music will probably enhance your appreciation of *Unfiltered Universe*. But it's not a prerequisite. The music grabs hold of both your imagination and heart with equal alluring power. Rez Abbasi proves again to be more than a superb guitarist; he's clever conceptualist, too. Here with his estimable Invocation ensemble he imbues exploratory modern jazz with Carnatic rhythms and pulses without relying on any

Bill Charlap Trio Uptown, Downtown IMPULSE! 602557811032

Making old stuff new, underscoring the eloquence of style and lifting the hood on the flow of tradition has been at the center of the Bill Charlap Trio's work for two decades. This new album makes a case for the notion that the group gets more articulate with each passing year. With bassist Peter Washington and drummer Kenny Washington at his side, the pianist puts an original fingerprint on the sage formulations of others. Using skill, ingenuity and teamwork, they bring poise to the program while assuring that verve and legibility are paramount.

Revered for tackling some of jazz's most intriguing nuggets, this trio provides enough panache to make each of these pieces crackle with the kind of action that reminds how entertaining jazz can be. To some degree, they're an "inner workings" band. It's impossible not to be bowled over by the intricacies each member donates to the cause. On "Spring Can Really Hang You Up The Most," Charlap is out front doing the talking, but the nuanced lift Washington's brushes provide is crucial to defining the track's character. Ditto for the lithe instruments associated with the idiom.

The result is music that raises the bar of what's considered "world-beat jazz." The compositions blossom as worlds unto themselves as Abbasi's thick-toned guitar lines often run in unison with Rudresh Mahanthappa's piquant alto sax; the two sound like pioneers probing new musical territory. Vijay Iyer's percussive piano accompaniment and the alert rhythms of drummer Dan Weiss and bassist Johannes Weidenmueller goad Abbasi's improvisational flights with suspenseful displays of tension-and-release. Elizabeth Mikhael's rich cello adds dark, orchestral hues to such transportive pieces as the majestic title-track and the wondrous "Turn Of Events."

Unfiltered Universe is the third in a trilogy of Abbasi's investigations into South Asian music, a journey that began with 2009's Things To Come (emphasis on Hindustani music) and continued with 2011's Suno Suno (emphasis on Pakistani Qawwali music). Considering the vast cultural richness the South Asian Diaspora contains, one hopes that this isn't Invocation's final adventure. —John Murph

Unfiltered Universe: Propensity; Unfiltered Universe; Thoughts; Thin-King; Turn Of Events; Disagree To Agree; Dance Number. (52:00)

Personnel: Rez Abbasi, guitar; Dan Weiss, drums; Vijay Iyer, piano; Johannes Weidenmueller, bass; Rudresh Mahanthappa, alto saxophone; Elizabeth Mikhael, cello.

Ordering info: whirlwindrecordings.com



bumps his bass-playing mate places in the heart of Jim Hall's "Bon Ami."

Sometimes things can sound miniaturized. I'm thinking that's because scale carries the day, keeping expressionism at bay and trading a bounty of flourish for a parade of melodic particulars. So be it. The utterly engaging workout they give "Sophisticated Lady" is the essence of cumulative detail. —*Jim Macnie*

Uptown, Downtown: Curtains, Spring Can Really Hang You Up The Most; Uptown, Downtown; The One I Love Belongs To Somebody Else; I'm All Smiles, There's A Small Hotel; Satellite; Bon Ami; Sophisticated Lady. (54:24) Personnel: Bill Charlap, piano; Peter Washington bass; Kenny Washington, drums.

Ordering info: impulse-label.com



Brian Blade & The Fellowship Band Body And Shadow BLUE NOTE 00602557921717 ★★½

Brian Blade, one of the most nuanced drummers in jazz, has made some wonderful albums with his now 20-year-old Fellowship Band (including 2014's Landmarks). The group emphasizes ensemble texture, gauzy landscapes and hypnotic vamps over attention-getting solo work, but at what point is nuance not enough? Body And Shadow, the band's new CD, might be the answer. At 31-plus minutes, it is disappointingly short and musically slight, spending most of its time in static, atmospheric territory that feels like some kind of jazz doom-metal, offering very little activity for listeners to latch onto. Apart from the longest track, "Duality," and the engaging 7/4 closer-both by pianist Jon Cowherd-this is dull, dirge-like stuff.

This may be a function of its metaphysical outlook. Three of the nine tracks are Blade's time-of-day takes on the title subject. The one subtitled "Night" is the most engaging, thanks to Myron Walden's mellow bass clarinet and guitarist Dave Devine's twanging single notes and brushed, lightly reverbed chords. But "Noon" sounds like evocative art-film music and "Morning" goes nowhere. The slow but celebratory "Within Everything," by Blade, and the two riveting versions of the hymn "Have Thine Own Way, Lord" are more convincing, by virtue of the way they communicate a swelling of spiritual fullness.

If only the bulk of the album had the angularity and excitement of "Duality," where Walden soars to throaty, screeching highs on alto saxophone, with Blade storming behind him. But, alas, it does not. —*Paul de Barros*

Ordering info: bluenote.com

Body And Shadow: Within Everything; Body And Shadow (Noon); Traveling Mercies; Have Thine Own Way, Lord (Solo); Have Thine Own Way, Lord (Band); Body And Shadow (Morning); Duality; Body And Shadow (Night); Broken Leg Days. (31:39) Personnel: Brian Blade, drums; Jon Cowherd, piano, harmonium, mellotron; Chris Thomas, bass; Melvin Butler, tenor saxophone; Myron Walden, alto saxophone, bass clarinet; Dave Devine, guitar.



Critics	Jennifer Odell	John Murph	Jim Macnie	Paul de Barros
Anat Cohen Tentet Happy Song	**** ¹ ⁄2	****	****	****
Rez Abbasi Unfiltered Universe	***	****	****	***
Bill Charlap Trio Uptown, Downtown	***1⁄2	***½	****	****½
Brian Blade & Fellowship Body And Shadow	***1⁄2	**½	***	**½

Critics' Comments

Anat Cohen Tentet, Happy Song

This music bursts open like the first warm day of spring. Oded Lev-Ari's extravagant arrangements vary from the ebullient title track to his languid "Trills And Thrills." — John Murph

It's one thing to expect this kind of agility from a small group, but Cohen's 10-piece outfit moves through klezmer drama and '30s swing inflection with a deep authority. —Jim Macnie

This aptly titled album showcases Cohen's always marvelous and welcoming clarinet, from the Goodman-like champagne of "Oh Baby" to the Pixinguinha-like staccato of "Loro," as well as folk-world feels and some raggedy, Mingus-like ensemble passages. —Paul de Barros

Rez Abbasi, Unfiltered Universe

A single track, "Turn Of Events," encapsulates everything I'm after in new music from Abbasi. The lush orchestration leads to compelling exchanges between guitar and piano, while solos from Abbasi plumb and explore the boundaries of the space and time. —Jennifer Odell

It's a cohort that's absorbed each other's approaches for a couple decades now, and the chemistry shows. The gnarled stuff arrives with grace; the introspective stuff boasts an inviting rigor. —Jim Macnie

Abbasi's industrial jazz-rock isn't as consistently engaging here as on *Things To Come*, but the guitarist, pianist Vijay lyer and alto saxophonist Rudresh Mahanthappa catch fire on the cerebrally dreamy "Turn Of Events" and the whirling "Disagree To Agree." —*Paul de Barros*

Bill Charlap Trio, Uptown, Downtown

Despite my preference for more adventurous repertoire, it's hard to deny the inherent beauty in Charlap's articulation or his gracefully inventive approach to even the most conservative of Great American Songbook classics. —Jennifer Odell

The splendor of Charlap's musicality remains firmly interior; he delivers another quintessential offering—posh, straightahead jazz at its most affable. —John Murph

If we didn't have Charlap, we would have to invent him, just so we could luxuriate in the warm precision and seemingly effortless imaginative flights we lost with such players as Tommy Flanagan and Hank Jones.

—Paul de Barros

Brian Blade & The Fellowship Band, Body And Shadow

Rich swaths of color and dynamically constructed textures combine to create a new set of soundscapes for the Fellowship Band. But the metaphorical brushstrokes used to paint these new sonic pictures may be a turnoff for some. —Jennifer Odell

There's much to admire about Blade's eschewing burliness in favor of delicacy with the Fellowship Band. Still, I find myself returning to this disc as if I'd missed something. —John Murph

At first, I thought it was tad benign, but the pastoral sounds are balanced by a rigor that makes everything as engaging as it is ethereal. Love that solo version of "Have Thine Own Way, Lord."

—Jim Macnie



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with special guests ROY HARGROVE trumpet GRANT STEWART tenor saxophone



VINCENT HERRING saxophones CYRUS CHESTNUT piano YASUSHI NAKAMURA bass CARL ALLEN drums

with special guests NICOLAS BEARDE vocals RUSSELL MALONE guitar STEVE TURRE trombone BRAD MASON trumpet SAM DILLON tenor saxophone





Solal & Liebman Masters In Bordeaux SUNNYSIDE 1489 ****

No false advertising here. Martial Solal may not be as celebrated on this side of the Atlantic as he is in Europe, but there's no denying the 90-yearold French pianist's command of the instrument. Likewise, Dave Liebman has been a leading voice on soprano and tenor saxophone since the '70s. It doesn't take much to imagine that the two together would make for duets of the first order.

And yet, Masters In Bordeaux (recorded

Ron Miles I Am A Man ENJA/YELLOWBIRD

Informed observers might recognize the title of *I Am A Man* from its use as a Civil Rights slogan (specifically, in the 1968 sanitation workers' strike in Memphis—the one Martin Luther King had come to support when he was killed). Social justice themes are indeed prominent on cornetist Ron Miles' 11th album. But it also reminds us that the political is personal.

It's most evident in the title track's emotional duality, a tug-of-war between triumph and sadness. The former expressing the dignity inherent in asserting one's humanity, the latter conveying frustration that the assertion is still necessary. But it's also present in the seemingly innocuous tracks like "The Gift That Keeps On Giving," a swinger whose 42-bar head reads like a loose collection of Miles' trademark oddlength, punctuated phrases. That's the point: The tune celebrates swing, in all its permutations and possibilities. It's not hard to see pride in African American heritage there.

I Am A Man fills out Miles' regular trio (guitarist Bill Frisell, drummer Brian Blade) with pianist Jason Moran and bassist Thomas Morgan. They're ideal fits for the cornetist's

live at the Jazz and Wine Festival) manages to exceed expectations. From the moment Liebman's soprano chirps the repeated, threenote intro from "All The Things You Are," it's clear that the two aren't interested in perfunctory readings of jazz standards. Liebman plays the riff, and Solal answers in fractured harmony, and they begin to improvise, extrapolating ins this manner for 14 bars before finally stating the melody. Even then, it's hardly a standard reading, as Liebman and Solal play not only with tune's form and harmonic logic, but with the pacing and rhythmic structure of each other's playing.

Because their six-song set is made up entirely of jam session chestnuts like "Lover Man" and "Night And Day," the focus is not on the tunes but on the inexhaustible depths of Solal and Liebman's inventiveness. Even when they occasionally turn to the obvious—for instance, Solal quoting "Hot House" during his solo on "What Is This Thing Called Love"—the context makes it seem like a surprise. Indeed, the only possible complaint a listener could have with *Masters In Bordeaux* would be that there wasn't a second set. —J.D. Considine

Personnel: Martial Solal, piano; Dave Liebman, saxophones. Ordering info: sunnysidezone.com



cerebral lyricism. Miles and Frisell articulate the complex melody of "Mother Juggler," evoking motherhood's endlessness and thanklessness, but it's Morgan and Moran's presence that provides warmth and tenderness. The group also allows for deep ensemble play when Miles sits out—as on "Darken My Door," in whose first third the trio executes a veritable opera in miniature. Still, it's Miles himself who gives form to this rich tapestry. —*Michael J. West*

I Am A Man: I Am A Man; Darken My Door, The Gift That Keeps On Giving; Revolutionary Congregation; Mother Juggler; Jasper; Is There Room In Your Heart For A Man Like Me? (57:02) Personnel: Ron Miles, cornet; Brian Blade, drums; Bill Frisell, guitar; Jason Moran, piano; Thomas Morgan, bass. Ordering info: yellowbird-records.com



Antonio Sanchez Bad Hombre CAMJAZZ 7919 ****

In 2014, drummer Antonio Sanchez—best known for his long association with Pat Metheny—enjoyed acclaim in a different forum with his innovative solo-drum score for the Academy Award-winning film *Birdman*. That success drew further calls from film, documentary and television producers. Embracing the new terrain, the drummer/composer built his own home studio where he has single-handedly created numerous percussion-centric soundtracks. His newfound studio freedom also inspired this powerful and politically charged pet project that takes the *Birdman* concept to loftier heights.

Bad Hombre is an acoustic drumset-meets-electronica canvas filled with thrilling soundscapes that unfold in bold cinematic arcs. Many other electro/acoustic percussion experiments of the past have fallen short due to an overreliance on pre-programming, yielding cold, mechanical results. In Sanchez's music, the human element is foremost. There's plenty of knockout chops throughout, but that's not the point; the music dramatizes just how captivatingly expressive this drummer is.

The artist's recording process helped to ensure that human immediacy. Starting by recording numerous drumset improvisations, Sanchez edited choice sections and later added electronic layers in real time on a keyboard MIDI-controller (with occasional computer-generated arpeggiations).

The disc's title refers to Donald Trump's notorious, demeaning campaign utterance. Sanchez emigrated from Mexico 25 years ago, so this is personal. Prepare for a wild ride that whipsaws from hypnotic calm to bone-rattling tempests. —Jeff Potter

Masters In Bordeaux: All The Things You Are; Night And Day; Solar; What Is This Thing Called Love; On Green Dolphin Street; Lover Man. (45:05)

Bad Hombre: Bad Hombre Intro; Bad Hombre; Fire Trail; Distant Glow; Bbo; Momentum; Home; The Crossing; Nine Lives; Antisocial. (56:16)

Personnel: Antonio Sanchez, drums, keyboards, electronics. Ordering info: camjazz.com





Jon Cowherd Gateway NEWVELLE ****½

Suppleness and a sense of telepathy rule Jon Cowherd's remarkable new recording, *Gateway*, a rarity upon release. It's available as part of a set of six vinyl LPs, and only 500 sets will be pressed; the only other place to acquire it is a Cowherd performance. Gorgeously recorded, packaged and presented, this is a collector's item by design.

As its title and enigmatic cover photo imply, this aims to open up the listener to the elegant,

Keyon Harrold The Mugician LEGACY RECORDINGS

Now on his second album as a leader, trumpeter Keyon Harrold unleashes *The Mugician*, a sonic blend of past, present and future. He brings a load of friends with him for the ride, including fellow New York multi-instrumentalist Marcus Strickland, rising star Terrace Martin, drummer Chris "Daddy" Dave and Robert Glasper along with vocalists like bluesman Gary Clark Jr., legendary MC Pharoahe Monch, spacy r&b crooner Bilal and Mississippi rapper Big K.R.I.T.

After an inspiring "Voicemail" introduction from Harrold's mother, Shirley, the trumpeter blows confidently ahead of an epic medley of drums, piano and strings. The title track lightens the mood a little bit with the patois of Josh David Barrett set against a funky backdrop. As the album progresses, you'll hear a mix of sounds that take from hip-hop, jazz, r&b and dub reggae. "Wayfaring Traveler" sees a variety of vocal talents flexing over a thumping composition, complete with bass clarinet by Strickland and piano from Glasper.

"Stay This Way" keeps up the energy, with Dave keeping time and Burniss Earl Travis II balanced world of Cowherd. Even at their most animated, his compositions are courtly and patient, making *Gateway* a place to explore.

The music is, among other qualities, complex and brooding ("Memorial Day"), bluesy ("Piano Improvisation #2" and "Braun's Bronco") and wistful ("A Beautiful Something"). Everyone gets a turn at eloquence, though Cowherd is the star. All soar on the "Braun" tune, particularly the plummy Tony Scherr, on bass, and Steve Cardenas, in a guitar solo that conjures the pointed angularity of Steely Dan.

What grounds Cowherd's second recording as a leader is the drumming of Brian Blade, a friend of Cowherd's from their New Orleans days at Loyola University in the late 1980s. Colleagues in the Brian Blade Fellowship, they can't help but generate a groove. But Cowherd's approach—at times a caress, at others a hammer—and the urgency of his melodies are what make *Gateway* compelling. The album ends with the third solo-piano improvisation, a sweeping work featuring Cowherd at his most absorbing. —*Carlo Wolff*

Gateway: Gateway; Piano Improvisation #1; Memorial Day; Wandering Heart; Warriors; A Beautiful Something; Piano Improvisation #2; Braun's Bronco; Piano Improvisation #3. (42:00) Personnel: Jon Cowherd, piano; Brian Blade, drums; Steve Cardenas, guitar; Tony Scherr, bass.

Ordering info: newvelle-records.com



delivering an absolutely punishing bass riff. Credited as producer, Harrold does a veteran job of supplying melodic texture to the backdrop as Bilal and Big K.R.I.T. exchange vocal parts. But by putting the music first, Harrold has crafted his best album yet. —*Chris Tart*

The Mugician: Voicemail; The Mugician; MB Lament; When Will It Stop?; Wayfaring Traveler; Stay This Way; Lullaby; Her Beauty Through My Eyes; Ethereal Souls; Broken News; Circus Show; Bubba Rides Again. (49:40)

Personnel: Keyon Harrold, trumpet, vocals; Marcus Strickland, tenor saxophone, bass clarinet; Shirley Harrold, vocals (1), Nir Felder, guitar; James Poyser, keyboards; Shedrick Mitchell, piano, organ; Robert Glasper, piano; Chris "Daddy" Dave, Mark Colenburg, drums; Burniss Earl Travis II, bass; Aaron Draper, percussion; Tracey Harrold-Smith, Angenita Harrold, Shirlena Harrold, Chervonia Andre, Jermon Harrold, background vocals; Darin Atwater, conductor.

Ordering info: keyonharrold.com



ANAT COHEN TENTET HAPPY SONG

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Brass Shouts and Murmurs

The angels blew their horns, and the rest is history, ever-evolving. New trumpet releases from artists from Peru, Rhode Island, Chicago and Germany travel every-which-way exploring fresh vistas or hewing close to the cinematic and dramatic.

Lima-born, New York-educated Gabriel Alegría leads his outsized Afro-Peruvian Sextet with Mingus-like elasticity and dynamic intensity on Diablo En Brook*lyn* (Saponegro; 50:38 ********). This exuberant bicultural street fair, bluntly recorded in a historic Lima studio, extends Alegría's career-long crusade for Peruvian incursions into jazz. Folkloric choruses, hollers and handclaps blend with New Orleans boogaloo, bebop and Peruvian criollo (West African meets flamenco), all fleshed out with guest Yellowjacket Russell Ferrante's chameleonic keyboards. Hybrid charts whirl and zigzag unexpectedly-subtle one moment, raw and unbridled the next-with power turns by Laura Andrea Leguía's robust tenor and Yuri Juárez's limber guitar. Ordering info: afroperuviansextet.com

Why do horns record solo? Often, like that double-jointed dog, it's "because they can." Trumpeter **Dave Ballou** earned sterling credits with Andrew Hill, Sheila Jordan, Either/Orchestra, Gunther Schuller and Dewey Redman. On **Quadrants For Solo Trumpet (pfMentum 113; 60:36** ★★) he improvises alone with his eye on an hourglass and mind aligned to focal pitch sets and cardinal compass points. He plays horns (B-flat, piccolo and flugelhorn, with various mutes) over four 15-minute tracks, with no overdubs or edits, an analytic method resulting in bloodless, arid expanses. Earnest, no-flash abstractions unroll incrementally as tuneless exercises. North: microtones, multiphonics, altissimo arcs into subtones. East: arching motifs peer forth. South: halting, poignant. West: inquisitive, fragmented, animated. For patient brass mavens only?

Ordering info: daveballou.com

Chicago trumpeter/composer **Orbert Davis**' new project with his Jazz Philharmonic, *Paradise Blue* (316 Records; 41:45 ★★★½) etches a jazz-infused soundtrack for actor Dominique Morrisseau's manwith-horn drama set in 1949 Detroit's Black Bottom neighborhood. Emmy-winner Davis' lively, polished retro-bop score, played by a quintet featuring the lusty alto of Rajiv Halim, is intercut with moody period cameos (Strayhorn piano cadenzas, tenor balladry, wisps of strings) that signal, with little urgency, scenes of romance, intrigue and deliberation.

Ordering info: 3sixteenrecords.com

German trumpeter Thomas Siffling likes laying down Harmon-muted fast-tracks on Flow (Jazznarts Records eSeries; 81:00 ******), with a quintet of circling guitar and groove-looping bass, keyboard a-tinkle and snare a-sizzle. Smooth? Yes. The album's robotic finger-snap formula can be floaty and bland, but there are flashes of seductive backbeats that suggest trolling for danger on dim city streets. Glimmering moments for Alex Gunia (quitar/electronics) and Dirk Blümlein (bass) help enliven the program, and mechanical strutting on bonus track "Cosmic Showdown" eerily evokes a zombie Chris Botti and Gothic shreds of Mannheim Steamroller DB

Ordering info: jazznarts.com



Chet Doxas Rich In Symbols ROPEADOPE ****

Rich In Symbols positions Chet Doxas as the yang to Donny McCaslin's yin. Both are saxophonists whose soundscapes are as steeped in rock aesthetic and electronics as they are in jazz and improvised music. But where McCaslin's acclaimed sound is all darkness, minor keys and abrasion, Doxas' leans major-key, full of ebullience and hope.

Actually, Rich In Symbols—whose seven tracks were inspired by Doxas' favorite paintings from 1980s New York—uses minor keys as often as major; it's the demeanor of the major key far more than the technique. The album's harmonic and emotional tensions also come with elements that relieve them. If Doxas' smooth vibrato on the slow-burn "Orchard" doesn't do it, the brightened secondary melody (and John Escreet's piano exhilaration) will. "We Made A Lie Together" is as somber as its title, but even this has Escreet's slashes-of-light keyboard intro and the optimism of Doxas and Stevens to leaven it.

Meanwhile, the rest of the album all but basks in its own joy. The opening twofer, "While You Were Sleeping" and "Starcrossings," are cheer made manifest, sunny saxophone and guitar melodies (written and improvised) over bubbly, pseudo-EDM grooves that drummer Eric Doob peppers with just enough variation to keep the ear tuned in. The more wistful "Image And Nation" plays up its sweetness and fondness. Music is an interpretive craft, all the more so when based on visual art; *Rich In Symbols* may less represent the art itself than the delight Doxas takes in it. So much the better. —*Michael I. West*

Ordering info: ropeadope.com

Rich In Symbols: While You Were Sleeping; Starcrossings; I Haven't Seen Color; Image And Nation; Orhcard; Hot Ones; We Made A Lie Together. (39:39).

Personnel: Chet Doxas, woodwinds, synthesizer, Matthew Stevens, guitar, Zack Lober, bass, Eric Doob, drums; Liam O'Neil synthesizer, Dave Douglas, trumpet (6); John Escreet, piano (5); Dave Nugent, guitar (1, 3, 5).



Rob Mazurek Rome CLEAN FEED 435 ****

Rob Mazurek Chimeric Stoned Horn ASTRAL SPIRITS MF154/AS054

It's been more than 20 years since Rob Mazurek broke with the hard-bop of his earliest recordings, but his rate of change continues to accelerate. These two solo albums, drastically different in sound, tools and methodology, mark the opposing poles of the multi-instrumentalist's work.

Rome is a traditional live album. It was performed in front of an audience during a concert recorded for broadcast on Italian radio, and it begins with a gambit that establishes the music's essentials within seconds. Mazurek strikes a note on the piano and lets it decay. Then he plays a slow, pensive tune on his horn. This music is all about the formation and disappearance of well-defined sounds within a vast space. Sometimes that space is a framework of glassy electronics, and other times it is boundless silence.

Mazurek has sometimes fought against his natural ability to play a beautiful melody. On *Rome*, he doesn't so much give in to it as integrate it with the more abstract aspects of his music. His open-horned melodies dance across reflective, ever-changing electronic backdrops, and yearning grand piano statements get braided with spindly shadow themes played on a prepared piano. Nowadays musicians can't always get their hands on one decent piano; this set benefits immeasurably from Mazurek being able to play two at once. *Rome* sacrifices none of Mazurek's improvisational rigor, and yet is one of the most approachable things he's done in years.

On the other hand, Chimeric Stoned Horn is a rocket blast straight from the solitary tone scientist's workshop into the future. Recorded in a studio in Mazurek's current hometown of Marfa, Texas, it glories in distortion and density as unreservedly as Rome celebrates clarity and space. He wields electronics like a boxer, alternating quick, jabbing bursts of static with haymaker blasts of coarse, impure sound. He also introduces a new horn, the piccolo trumpet, which he plays through filters that pixilate its brittle attack to achieve maximum ferocity. The album's longer pieces develop abruptly, as if they were governed by on-off switches. The shorter pieces make no attempt to develop at all, but register an impact and then disappear. It's bracing stuff, but therein lies its appeal. Lusty and strange, Chimeric Stoned Horn is every bit as satisfying as its more ingratiating counterpart. -Bill Meyer

Rome: Twombly At New Church; Gazing Through Walls (Two Paintings By Caravaggio); King Of Rome (For Pino Saulo); Sweet Life Of Disrepair (For Fellini). (48:51) Personnel: Rob Mazurek, comet, piano, prepared piano, electronics. Ordering info: cleanfeed-records.com

Chimeric Stoned Horn: Arrival From A distance; Chimeric Tomes; Charged Hollers; Clap Thunder; Cube Of Rain; Fracturing Time; Granulate And Blue; Hollers Charged; Horn Stone; Like Bones Of Stars; Planets Lower Crust, Reticent Eye Cluster, Red Softly, Stalking Light; Stoned Horn; Swarm Hands. (54:56) **Personnel:** Rob Mazurek, piccolo trumpet, modular synthesizers, samplers, bells, voice.

Ordering info: monofonuspress.com/astral-spirits



Jamie Reynolds Grey Mirror FRESH SOUND NEW TALENT 528

Pianist Jamie Reynolds is an artist who thinks in big pictures and broad strokes. But on the orchestrational level, he's all about detail and nuance. That's a winning combination, and it works to mellifluous effect on *Grey Mirror*.



The idea for this project came several years ago, when the pianist tried to envision how a song would sound if played by a brass ensemble and then by a guitar-led jazz quartet. Struck with the unique qualities of these diverse settings, he decided to record an album that featured both groups. *Grey Mirror* is the result. Of its 14 tracks, five feature accompaniment by the brass ensemble The Westerlies, and four feature guitarist Matthew Stevens. Some songs—like "The Earliest Ending" and "Small Worlds"—appear on the album twice, rendered once in brass and once in guitar. Other tracks feature Reynolds' core trio, which includes drummer Eric Doob and bassist Orlando LeFleming. "Good Help" captures their percolating energy perfectly, with a triumphant bass line by LeFleming and an incandescent drum beat that makes the whole song flicker and glow. *—Brian Zimmerman*

Personnel: Jamie Reynolds, piano; Matthew Stevens, guitar (2, 4, 7, 14); Orlando LeFleming, bass; Eric Doob, drums; Andy Clausen, Willem de Koch, trombone (1, 6, 9, 11, 13); Zubin Hensler, Riley Mulherkar, trumpet (1, 6, 9, 11, 13).

Ordering info: freshsoundrecords.com

LAMA & Joachim Badenhorst Metamorphosis CLEAN FEED 433 ****

Since dropping its 2011 debut, Portuguese-Canadian trio LAMA, which actually formed in the Netherlands in 2008, had enlisted guest musicians for its subsequent

recordings. The group's latest and strongest effort, *Metamorphosis*, is the second with the inventive Belgian reedist Joachim Badenhorst, but as much as his fluid, generously melodic improvisational style exerts a strong presence, there's no doubt that the trio itself has established a beguiling modus operandi.

The new album opens with the ravishing three-part suite by bassist Gonçalo Almeida that gives the album its title, melding exquisite atmosphere with smoldering rhythm, a simmering sonic cauldron that quietly summons the spirit of Balkan music through the lyric interplay of Badenhorst and trumpeter Susana Santos Silva. As the suite progresses, the players push toward wide-open terrain, especially in the increasingly heated interplay of the trumpet-clarinet front line. Throughout the entire effort, the musicians move easily between post-bop experimentation and a wonderfully indeterminate mélange of bubbling electronics and European folksiness. —Peter Margasak

Metamorphosis: Metamorphosis I; Metamorphosis II; Metamorphosis II; Comacina Dreaming; Dark Corner. (45:46) Personnel: Joachim Badenhorst, clarinet, bass clarinet; Susanna Santos Silva, trumpet; Gonçalo Almeida, bass, keyboards, effects, loops; Greg Smith, drums, electronics.

Ordering info: cleanfeed-records.com



Tom Harrell Moving Picture HIGH NOTE 7301 ****

Because he's such a solidly mainstream player, it's easy to overlook how inventive and experimental Tom Harrell's albums have become. His four albums prior to this have found him leading a sextet with two bassists (one being



Esperanza Spalding); a piano-less quartet with tenor man Mark Turner; a string-augmented tribute to Debussy and Ravel; and a guitar-spiked quintet featuring fellow trumpeter Ambrose Akinmusire. By comparison, *Moving Picture*'s use of a piano trio seems almost conservative, until you get to the bits where Harrell overdubs himself into a trumpet choir.

It's the playful ingenuity of the writing, not the instrumentation, that makes this worth hearing. Some bits are unexpectedly exotic, like the capering arabesques of the title tune, which find Harrell at one point overdubbing his trumpet in fifths, evoking Jon Hassell; others are blessedly simple, such as the liltingly Latin "Gee, A. Bee," which takes its title from the chord progression it's based upon. It's nothing revolutionary, just enough of a twist to keep the feel fresh and the playing unpredictable. Special kudos to his long-time collaborator Ugonna Okegwo, whose groove-defining bass lines are every bit as impressive as his wonderfully songful solos. *—J.D. Considine*

Moving Picture: Moving Picture; Apple House; Montego Bay; Time Passage; Different Clouds; Gee, A. Bee; Happy Ring; Vibrer; Sea; Four The Moment. (67:18) Personnel: Tom Harrell, trumpet, flugelhorn; Danny Grissett, piano; Ugonna Okegwo, bass (except 8); Adam Cruz, drums (8).

Ordering info: jazzdepot.com

Antibalas Where The Gods Are In Peace DAPTONE 046

There are few greater musical endurance tests out there than a tour with the Afrobeat party purveyors Antibalas. The band works at a pace that is persistent and hypnotic, crowding stages for nearly 20 years.



This new release is brisk but packs a punch. Opener "Gold Rush" positions Marcos Garcia's chunky Curtis Mayfield guitar riff over Miles Arntzen's relentless hi-hat. Vocalist Duke Amayo slithers and barks a tale of a less than noble Northern California mining town. In the course of 10 minutes, keyboardist Nikhil P. Yerawadekar, trombonist Raymond Mason and baritone saxophonist Martin Perna tear apart the spotlight with an assertive funk. The band cooks without hesitation. "Hook & Crook" is no less commanding, but it is more spacious. Saxophonist Jas Walton raises the blood pressure midway with a soaring solo that flutters over an orchestra's worth of brass and percussion. The centerpiece is a three-part suite called "Tombstown." Opening with an exotic hook, the suite carries an entire globe's worth of musical influences, from the Louisiana swamp to the Union Square drum circles. —*Sean J. O'Connell*

Where The Gods Are In Peace: Gold Rush; Hook & Crook; Tombstown I–III. (35:01) Personnel: Duke Amayo, vocals, percussion; Martin Perna, baritone saxophone; Jordan McLean, trumpet; Raymond Mason, trombone; Jas Walton, tenor saxophone; Marcos Garcia, Timothy Allen, guitar; Nikhi IP. Yerawadekar, bass; Will Rast, keyboards; Reinaldo De Jesus, Marcus Farrar, Kevin Raczka, percussion; Miles Arntzen, drums; Morgan Price, alto saxophone; Zap Mama, Lollise Mbi, Abena Koomson, Domenica Fossati, Mayteana Morales, vocals.

Ordering info: daptonerecords.com

Grey Mirror: The Earliest Ending; Sleep; Good Help; Grey Mirror; Church; Lake Cycle; Small Words; Green-Wood; Church; Untitled Interlude; The Latest Beginning; Lake Cycle; Small Worlds; The Earliest Ending. (51:15)
Sam Bardfeld The Great Enthusiasms BJU RECORDS 064 ****

Violinist Sam Bardfeld makes his case for "weird, joyous art" on this wildly eclectic outing with pianist Kris Davis and drummer Michael Sarin. An adventurous spirit whose career path has landed him spots in The Jazz Passengers, Anthony



Braxton's Trillium Orchestra, Steven Bernstein's Millennial Territory Orchestra, Joel Harrison's String Choir and Bruce Springsteen's acoustic Sessions Band, Bardfeld combines a touch of Stuff Smith's playfulness with a Charles Ives aesthetic on his first album as a leader in 12 years.

"Fails While Daring Greatly," his ode to Richard Nixon's resignation speech, lurches forward until stumbling into a descending scale. Bardfeld's breakdown with Sarin on this opener is full of daring and dissonance. "Resignation Rag," another ode to Tricky Dick, rolls along on Sarin's New Orleans second-line groove. Davis offers the kind of spiky, probing solo on this quirky number that has made her one of the most provocative and acclaimed pianists on the downtown improvising scene.

Elsewhere, the kindred trio re-imagines the Springsteen/Patti Smith tune "Because The Night" as something far more dissonant and foreboding than the original. —*Bill Milkowski*

The Great Enthusiasms: Fails While Daring Greatly; Resignation Rag; Winner Image; Because The Night; The Great Enthusiasms; King Harvest (Has Surely Come), The 37th Time I Have Spoken. (46:00) **Personnel:** Sam Bardfeld, violin; Kris Davis, piano; Michael Sarin, drums. **Ordering info:** bjurecords.com

Clark Sommers Lens By A Thread EARS&EYES

Atmospherics and soundscapes are central to the music of Chicagobased bassist Clark Sommers. But he also shows a real penchant for catchy riffs. His new album, *By A Thread*, dwells equally in both those arenas, offering painterly grooves and spiky melodies that combine in ecstatic fashion.



As a composer, Sommers distributes the melody evenly among his bandmates, taking full advantage of his talented collaborators' skills. He's surrounded here by a stellar squad in guitarist Jeff Parker, drummer Kendrick Scott, keyboardist Gary Versace, saxophonist Geof Bradfield and special guests Joel Adams on trombone and Vijay Tellis-Nayak on Moog synth. Individual chops are in fine form, but the band's greatest asset is the ability to listen and respond. There's considerable group interplay on the title track, which is kaleidoscopic in its layering of sound and groove. And on the album's closer, "Pilage," trombonist Adams and saxophonist Bradfield engage in fluid crosstalk with Parker, who contributes warbly asides in the spaces between notes. On "Points Of Reduction," Sommers takes his only solo, but it's among the album's best—punchy and profound. —Brian Zimmerman

By A Thread: By A Thread; Meet Me Halfway; Stoic Sun; Points Of Reduction; Simple Act; You've Said; Chasm; Pilage. (48:30)

Personnel: Clark Sommers, bass; Jeff Parker, guitar; Kendrick Scott, drums; Gary Versace, keyboards; Geof Bradfield, woodwinds; Joel Adams, trombone/megabone (8); Vijay Tellis-Nayak, Moog synthesizer (2)

Ordering info: earsandeyesrecords.com



NEW RELEASE

JOHNNY RAWLS

last three albums have made Downbeat Best of Year List



Blues / BY FRANK-JOHN HADLEY

They Shall Be Released

Johnny Rawls, Waiting For The Train (Catfood 024; 41:23 ****) Across eight Catfood albums since 2005, Johnny Rawls' singing has displayed sincere, easeful emotional engagement with intelligent lyrics from one song after another written with his trusty bassist, Bob Trenchard. And the streak continues. Note the intimacy he brings to the ballad "Stay With Me" and the bravura that spurs the song's uncontained glee over making a fresh start on "Rain Keep Falling." Covers of tunes by Bobby Womack, Tyrone Davis, Syl Johnson and Bob Dylan are full of humanism. Never flagging in spirit, Trenchard and the other ace musicians again incorporate elements of Southern soul, Texas blues and classic popsoul into their infectious aroup sound. Ordering info: catfoodrecords.com

Layla Zoe, Songs From The Road (Ruf 1246; CD: 73:11/DVD: 87:00 ***½) There are times in a Layla Zoe concert when the Canadian comes off as the most eloquent blues woman on the road today. Recorded and filmed at a German venue last March, she enters throes of passion wailing about "A Good Man" and guestions "Why Do We Hurt The Ones We Love?" With "Highway Of Tears," she decries the tepid governmental response to violence inflected on Canada's Aboriginal women. Other times, she's rather ordinary, with her German power-trio led by guitarist Jan Laacks spitting fire like a tank bombarded by a barrage of bursting shells.

Ordering info: rufrecords.de

The Sherman Holmes Project, The Richmond Sessions (M.C. Records; **52:50** ★★★★) Now back home in Virginia, the sole remaining Holmes Brother sings like a tower of warmth and strength, with an air of purification, at a friendly get-together accompanied by roots musicians of high standing, dobroist Rob Ickes among them. The impressive array of material comes from Southern soul, gospel, Motown, Ben Harper, John Fogerty and country music. Ordering info: mc-records.com

Various Artists, The Rough Guide To Ragtime Blues (Rough Guide 1359; **73:57** ★★★★) Here's a "reborn and remastered" trove of spunky rhythmic blues of the 1920s and '30s that emulates ragtime piano intended for dancers. Tracks by Blind Boy Fuller, Buddy Boy Hawkins, Memphis Minnie, Charley Patton and others active in the Piedmont region and the Delta are of consistently high quality.

Ordering info: worldmusic.net

Bill Toms & Hard Rain, Good For Mv **Soul** (Terraplane; 46:31 *******¹/₂) On a



session produced by roots luminaries Will Kimbrough and Rick Witkowski, Bill Toms in Pittsburgh lays legitimate claim as one of the worthiest members of the blues-soul camp that reveres Stax/Hi without suffocating in revivalist clichés. His honest, weathered voice never guits, and his songwriting usually rates above average. Toms' seven-piece band, including The Soulville Horns, drives the songs down a Southbound road, paralleling Toms' intentions.

Ordering info: billtoms.com

A.J. Croce, Just Like Medicine (Compass 7 4691; 31:22 *******) Though he calls himself a pianist first, A.J. Croce's bluesy music on his ninth album revolves around his phlegmy, un-finessed voice. Sounding something like a cross between his late pop chart-topping father Jim and Leon Russell, he conveys the ache and confusion of romance found in wry, down-home originals. Dan Penn's understated production and contributions by Steve Cropper and Colin Linden stand him in good stead. Ordering info: compassrecords.com

King James & The Special Men, Act Like You Know (Special Man Industries 1001; 36:50 *** * ***) It took 25 years for New Orleans stalwart King James (Jimmy Horn) to get into the studio professing his love for the blues and r&b of Guitar Slim and other Crescent City legends. Only loosely defined a singer, his imperfect vocals have the tremors of a non-conformist with convictions. On "9th Ward Blues," James' wild band plus a quest hellraiser on tuba knock over bar stools for almost 14 minutes. DB

Ordering info: specialmanindustries.com



Bruce Gertz Singularity OPEN MIND JAZZ 011 ***

Bruce Gertz Quartet Blue Cube OPEN MIND JAZZ 010 ****

If bass player Bruce Gertz is not a household name, he's not exactly a newcomer, either. For more than 40 years, he has been on the faculty of the Berklee College of Music and a member of the Boston jazz scene. More recently, he has decided to take his destiny in his own hands and release an increasing number of recordings showcasing his skills as a composer. Among his latest productions are *Singularity* and *Blue Cube*.

Singularity is a solo outing that can be considered an EP, clocking at just above 18 minutes. Most likely, Gertz understands the weariness that could have resulted from a marathon solo-bass performance. The six compositions on *Singularity* work as a suite, as all share many commonalities in their approach and style. For instance, Gertz chooses not to use his bow, which indicates that he prioritizes melodic runs over any introspective ruminations, "Clear Night" being the exception. Indeed, he has a clear focus and is never caught meandering. His music is full of positive energy.

There is more variety on the quartet date that Gertz leads on *Blue Cube*. He is joined by long-time friend Jerry Bergonzi on tenor saxophone, Tim Ray on piano and the versatile George Schuller on drums, son of the famous arranger Gunther Schuller.

On bass-led records, engineers and producers have a tendency to move the instrument up in the mix. But this is not the case here. Gertz even shies away from the spotlight by taking only a few short solos. Bergonzi, meanwhile, is in fine form and shines throughout this disc, displaying the wide range of his abilities and sonic palette. Ray is a stellar pianist, but his inventiveness and range do not match Bergonzi's. He compensates by delivering melodious lines full of lyricism. And Gertz couldn't have found a more sympathetic collaborator in Schuller. Bass and drums form a solid team, and their telepathic relationship allows them to keep the music moving forward.

Style-wise, the material is steeped in the post-bop tradition—the only tune not written by Gertz is Bergonzi's title track. The most unconventional piece is the noir-ish "Bass First, Face First," which oscillates between total freedom and swing.

It is often said that ballads are most revealing of the craft of a musician or a band. "A Conversation We Had" allows each musician to shine in his assigned role. Ray is in charge of the lovely melody, thus leaving much room for the other three musicians to explore the multiple facets of the piece from a rhythmic and harmonic standpoint. —*Alain Drouot*

Singularity: Singularity; Bouncy Thing; E's Flat; Slinky; Clear Night; Fourth Time. (18:04) Personnel: Bruce Gertz. bass.

Blue Cube: Blue Cube; Bass First, Face First, A Conversation We Had; Apeture; Squeeze; The Heart of A Champion; So Lie; Trajectory. (59:30) Personnel: Bruce Gertz, bass; Jerry Bergonzi, tenor saxophone; Tim Rav, piano: George Schuller, drums.

Ordering info: openmindjazz.com



Beyond / BY JOE TANGARI



Jazz & Soul: A Close Conversation

To the extent that they ever really existed, genres are no longer definable things. For every record that fits into an easy category, there's another that doesn't quite fit anywhere.

It's fair to say that Exchange (Self Release; 27:00 *******), by Nico Segal's The Juju Exchange is among the latter group of albums. There are times when it sounds like Vince Guaraldi (the contemplative piano and brushed drums of "Patients"). others where flutes and trumpets echo like trippy dub ("The Lane"), and songs that morph from bouncy piano jazz to sinister ambience to spacey electro in less than three-and-a-half minutes (the title track). Segal is best known for his work with rappers Vic Mensa and Chance the Rapper, but here he leads the charge on a mostly instrumental set, with occasional vocals layering in over the complex mix of programming and live playing.

Ordering info: soundcloud.com/thejujuexchange

New Orleans-based **Naughty Profes**sor take a similarly eclectic approach on *Identity* (Self Release; 62:40 \star \star \star \star \star), bolstering their own jazz-rooted horns and rhythm section with a host of guest performers. Deep-voiced rapper Chali 2na brings a bit of social consciousness to his two contributions, but most of the other vocalists sing in a more subdued neosoul mode. The album shows influences from fusion, hip-hop, trip-hop, funk and the more jam-oriented end of rock, as evidenced by the crazy shredding guitar on "Without A Trace."

Ordering info: naughtyprofessormusic.com

Moving from the southern U.S. to the Southern Hemisphere, New Zealander **Jordan Rakei** plays atmospheric indie soul with dashes of jazz and modern psychedelia on **Wallflower** (Ninja Tune; 45:00 ★★★½). Avoiding verse/chorus structures, Rakei harmonizes with his own voice in unexpected, ever-shifting ways that feel descended from Marvin Gaye's late-'70s work. "Clues Blues" anchors the middle of the album with an intro of sequenced soundscapes that give way to herky-jerky dub-jazz with richly arranged horns.

Ordering info: ninjatune.net

The between-genres nature of Van Hunt's Popular (Blue Note; 48:30 ★★★★) nearly doomed it. When it was recorded in 2008, his label had no idea what to do with a record so openly eccentric and, at times, abstract. After a nine-year wait, Popular still feels fresh and inventive-Hunt seems to have the same creative spirit of George Clinton or D'Angelo, though he sounds like neither. There are hints of Southern rock ("N The Southern Shade"), rocket-fueled, funky pop songs ("Turn My TV On"), string-soaked ballads ("There's Never A G'time 2 Say G'by") and even a hint of noise in the guitar that swarms the second half of the seething ode to lust "The Lowest 1 Of My Desires."

Ordering info: bluenote.com

Less outré but no less difficult to label is Son Little's New Magic (Anti-/Epitaph; **35:58** ★★★★). Little, aka Aaron Livingston, is a sharp singer with just enough grit in his voice to lend weight to his fleet vocal melodies. A slinking old-school soul tune such as "O Me O My" might seem to position him alongside the revivalist likes of Eli Paperboy Reed, but he transcends that category with the effervescent pop of the title track, the choral stomp of "Charging Bull" and the dirty guitar fuzz of "ASAP." It may be hard to put a finger on what to call it, but that last song will stick with you for a long time. DB

Ordering info: anti.com



David Virelles Gnosis ECM 2526 ★★★★

To Cuban-born, New York-based pianist David Virelles, "gnosis" refers to "an ancient collective reservoir of knowledge." *Gnosis*, his fourth album as a leader—featuring poet-percussionist Román Diaz as spiritual collaborator—draws on everything from improvisational sound-painting to punctilious solo piano improvisations, contemporary chamber music, 20th-century Romantic composition and a solo piano arrangement by 2016 Pulitzer Prize winning composer Henry Threadgill.

It starts with "Del Tabaco y el Azúcar" ("Of Tobacco And Sugar"), an intriguing mingling of piano, marimba and Afro-Cuban hand percussion marked by disconnected contrasts, odd pauses, ambient resonance and dramatic overall shape.

The following 17 tracks include approaches that range in distance from conventions the songlike theme and variations of "Fititi Ñongo," the radical transformation of classically pretty "De Ida Y Vuelta" and the brief but powerful ensemble responding to Diaz's chant on "Erume Kondo." What links them is their composer-performer's elegance, exploratory curiosity and willingness to let silence amplify his ideas.

Such attractive surfaces and the program's tautness should encourage repeat listening, during which insights into the underlying structure this multi-dimensional work will be revealed. —Howard Mandel

Ordering info: ecmrecords.com

Gnosis: Del Tabaco Y El Azúcar, Fititi Ñongo; Lengua I; Erume Kondó; Benkomo; Tierra; De Ida Y Vuelta I; Lengua II; De Ida Y Vuelta II; Nuná; Epilogo; Dos; Caracola; Visiones Sonoras; De Portal; De Tres; De Cuando Era Chiquita; De Coral. (52:13) **Personnel:** David Virelles, piano, marimbula, vocals; Román Diaz, lead vocals, percussion; Allison Loggins-Hull, flute, piccolo; Rane Moore, clarinet; bass clarinet; Adam Cruz, steel pan, claves; Alex Lipowski, orchestral bass drum, temple blocks, bongos, gong; Matthew Gold, marimba, glockenspiel; Mauricio Herrera, ekón, nkomos, erikundi, claves, background vocals; Thomas Morgan, double bass; Yunior Lopez, viola; Cristine Chen, Samuel DeCaprio, violoncellos; Melvis Santa, background vocals

Geof Bradfield *Birdhoused* CELLAR LIVE ****½

Bradfield's previous album, *Our Roots*, was a testament to the transformative powers of arrangement and improvisation, as the Chicago tenor saxophonist and his quintet re-imagined/re-invented the work of Leadbelly, Blind Willie Johnson and



others. *Birdhoused*, recorded before a live audience at Chicago's Green Mill, takes much the same approach with equally invigorating results. This time, though, the sources are a little more modern, and much more varied.

The album opens with a treatment of Curtis Mayfield's orchestral soul ballad "The Other Side Of Town," which in Bradfield's hands sounds more akin to John Coltrane's *Africa/Brass* sessions, thanks in no small part to the loping groove established by bassist Clark Sommers and drummer Dana Hall. From there, they move to a "deconstruction" (Bradfield's word) of Charlie Parker's "Constellation." From the fanfare-like head to the shifting tempos during the saxophone solos, it certainly isn't bebop, yet it somehow manages to convey the same fiery intensity, particularly in Marquis Hill's frenzied trumpet solo. And then there's "Sonatina," which converts the Gÿorgi Ligeti composition into a showcase for Hall's sense of percussive color. *—J.D. Considine*

Birdhoused: The Other Side Of Town; Constellation; Sonatina; Nephila; Solid Jackson; Bass Solo; Fearful Symmetry; Birdhoused; Laconia. (57:30)

Personnel: Geof Bradfield, tenor saxophone; Nick Mazzarella, alto saxophone; Joel Adams, trombone; Marquis Hill, trumpet; Clark Sommers, bass; Dana Hall, drums.

Ordering info: cellarlive.com

Carol Welsman For You SELF RELEASE

Canadian vocalist Carol Welsman, a six-time Juno Award nominee, turned to her fans on social media to help select the tracks for this sweetly evocative new album. In an online event spanning Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and her website,



Welsman provided 30-second sound bites of 23 solo piano/vocal tracks recorded by Japanese producer Takao Ishizuka in 2016 and asked her online following to vote for their favorites. The top 15 songs selected by voters became the program on *For You*.

The resulting album is an intimate affair spanning songs in multiple languages, including Spanish ("Besame Mucho"), French ("Les Feuilles Mortes") and Italian ("Ti Guarderò Nel Cuor"). But the bulk of the material is drawn from the Great American Songbook, and Welsman takes to classics like "Skylark," "The Shadow Of Your Smile" and "My Funny Valentine" from angles of adoration and invention. Her voice—satiny and emotive—drapes magnificently across the contours of "My Foolish Heart," which she adorns with delicate clouds of piano, while on the Carpenters-associated "Close To You," she casts soaring wordless vocals into the carefree, windswept melody. —*Brian Zimmerman*

Ordering info: carolwelsman.com



For You: Skylark; The Shadow Of Your Smile; Smile; Les Feuilles Mortes (Autumn Leaves); Besame Mucho; Bewitched; It Had To Be You; My Foolish Heart; La Parapluies De Cherbourg (I Will Wait For You); Corcovado; My Funny Valentine; Close To You; Garota De Ipanema; Ti Guarderò Nel Cuor (More); Les Moulins De Mon Cœur (The Windmills Of Your Mind); Someone To Watch Over Me. (44:00) **Personnel:** Carol Welsman, piano, vocals.

Historical / BY BRADLEY BAMBARGER



Leaders of the Pack

The Louis Hayes-Junior Cook Quintet featuring Woody Shaw toured across Europe in 1976-'77, with the drummer, tenor saxophonist and virtuoso trumpeter joined by pianist Ronnie Mathews and bassist Stafford James. This was an earthy group waving a resolute flag for hard-bop in the fusion-minded '70s. The Tour, Volume Two (HighNote 7308: 51:56 ********) is perhaps even better than the first volume. which was taken from a single gig in Stuttgart, Germany, and included mostly originals by the band. This second collection-featuring mostly bop and songbook standards—comes from shows taped at various tour stops. There's a fantastic performance of "All The Things You Are" that transforms the standard into something rousingly fresh. Shaw is blazing, and the band sounds great together, as it also does on "A Night In Tunisia." Shaw's bent notes and high cries in his epic "'Round Midnight" solo are pure poetry, with a Haves exhortation to "keep going, keep going" adding to the excitement.

Ordering info: jazzdepot.com

Having recently unearthed precious discoveries of live and studio Bill Evans albums. Resonance Records gives us Just Friends: Live At The Village Vanguard (Resonance Records; 58:01 ***) by the slinky, playful team of clarinetist Eddie Daniels and pianist Roger Kellaway, alongside bassist Buster Williams and drummer Al Foster. Engineer (and eventual Resonance founder) George Klabin recorded the Manhattan club date in 1988 with a high-end cassette player and a single stereo microphone; the hour-long result has a surprisingly clear, present quality, with enough clinking glasses and audience murmur for atmosphere. Along with two originals apiece by Daniels and Kellaway, the album includes a version of the titular standard complete with an expansive, classically inspired intro by the clarinetist. Ordering info: resonancerecords.org

Two remastered reissues from the Sunnyside catalog allow us to reappraise long out-of-print discs. Shorter By Two: The Music Of Wayne Shorter Played On Two Pianos (Sunnyside 467; 55:34 ★★★½), recorded in 1983, presents pianists Kirk Lightsey and Harold Danko side-by-side on two instruments; but the effect can sound more like one huge. 176key piano, such is the unified sound they achieve in a selection from the great saxophonist-composer's catalog from the late 1950s to the mid-'70s. Although the notes are densely packed and often uniform in color, rhapsodic beauties in the arrangements reveal themselves after repeat listenings. "Armageddon" is deep blue in hue, while "Lester Left Town" is a fun, tuneful rainbow of a piece. "Nefertiti" sounds more like a Bernard Hermann cover here, with "Marie Antoinette" feeling like two piano professors playing after hours in a Storyville cathouse.

Ordering info: sunnysidezone.com

Recorded in 1994, Beautiful Love (Sunnyside 468; 62:08 ***1/2) found singer Jav Clavton and pianist Fred Hersch paired in an explorative partnership. They elevate Cole Porter's "So In Love" into an epic, love-drunk tone poem, the two performers utterly in sync. Clayton's "Wild Is The Wind" manages to depart from the famous Nina Simone template in its own quietly unadorned way, with a beautiful a cappella intro from Clayton and another darkly unwinding Hersch solo. The vocal performances are intimate and brave; the singer, in her early 50s at the time, can show slight frailties, with the vocalese episode in "You Don't Know What Love Is" a bit of a stretch. But the seven-minutes-plus performance of Shorter's "Footprints" is full of vocalese, and it conveys the tune in the most human of ways. DR Ordering info: sunnysidezone.com



Sam Newsome & Jean-Michel Pilc Magic Circle SOME NEW MUSIC ****

Soprano saxophonist Sam Newsome is perfectly matched by pianist Jean-Michel Pilc on their debut duet album *Magic Circle*. The horn man takes his instrument into far reaches of multiphonics, range and projection, phrasing radically while keeping the iconic melodies in view. The pianist, with no need to show off, is fearlessly venturesome yet grounded in musical sense and taste. Both are committed to their collaboration, each with original ideas about the repertoire and a fine grasp of what they can do together.

Their music is free, though they stick to forms. There is implicit swing, but the rhythms are mostly rubato—the musicians imposing their own time. Dynamically, the two are attuned to quiet and maintain narrative tension without getting fast and loud; when they go there, it's especially emphatic. Their interpretations tend to isolate, penetrate and distill the essences of the songs, focusing on distinct moments to expand on and crystallize rather than flowing heroically through them.

Duke's "Sentimental Mood" is deconstructed down to its intervals, climaxing in Newsome's long-held, overtone-rich note, to which Pilc offers contrasting dissonance, gently. Their version of Monk's "Misterioso" is gemlike, precious without pretension, Newsome tapping a beseeching quality like something from early jazz, Pilc evoking true blues. Each track can be enjoyed for its performers' knowing wit and wisdom, or just the pure sounds they find and release in the act of playing works of composers who knew what they were doing, too. —Howard Mandel

Magic Circle: Autumn Leaves; In A Sentimental Mood; Giant Steps; In A Mellow Tone; Magic Circle; Misterioso; Auto-schediasm; Out Of Nowhere; Ask Me Now. (52:00) Personnel: Sam Newsome, soprano saxophone; Jean-Michel Pilc: niano.

Ordering info: store.cdbaby.com



Paul McCandless Morning Sun: Adventures With Oboe LIVING MUSIC 49

Paul McCandless will always be best known for his membership in the band Oregon, in which he played oboe, English horn, soprano and bass clarinet ever since it was formed in 1972. Prior to Oregon, McCandless worked regularly with the Paul Winter Consort from 1969–'71 along with the future members of Oregon.

Winter and Oregon performed what could be called "Fourth Stream" music, adding world music, folk, New Age and ambient sounds to the jazz/classical hybrid of Third Stream. *Morning Sun* consists of previously released material taken from nine albums dating from 1970– '71, 1977, 1985 and the late 2000s. McCandless is in the spotlight throughout, playing oboe and occasionally English horn with different versions of Winter's groups.

The music is moody, often classical-oriented, and makes liberal use of space. It's haunting in its own way. Included along the way are an unaccompanied piece for McCandless' quietly expressive oboe ("Elves Chasm"), the celebratory "Bright Angel," interactions with the sounds of whooping cranes ("Whooper Dance") and an eagle ("Eagle"), a vocalized version of Jim Pepper's famous "Witchi Tai To," the picturesque "Sunset On The Great Sand Dunes," duets with Don Grusin and a fresh version of Bach's "Fantasia In G." —*Scott Yanow*

Morning Sun: Adventures With Oboe: All The Mornings Bring; Elves Chasm; Bright Angel; Whooper Dance; English Horn; Witchi Tai To; Sunset On The Great Sand Dunes; Um Abraco (A Big Hug); Anabela Sunderland; Eagle; Common Ground; Twilight; The Last Train; Fantasia In G; Morning Sun. (65:14)

Personnel: Paul McCandless, oboe, English horn; Paul Winter, soprano, alto saxophone, keyboard, contrabass sarrusophone; John Clark, French horn; Paul Halley, Paul Sullivan, piano; Don Grusin, keyboards; Tim Brumfield, organ; David Darling, Eugene Friesen, cello; Ralph Towner, guitar, harmonium; Oscar Castro-Neves, Webster Santos, guitar; Glen Moore, Herb Bushler, Sizao Machado, Eliot Wadopian, bass; Collin Walcott; tabla, drums; Gordon Gottlieb, Jamey Haddad, Steve Gadd, drums; Glen Velez, Bre, Guello, percussion; Renato Braz, vocals, guitar; John-Carlos Perea, Uguisu, Jim Scott, vocals. Musillami/Syracuse Bird Calls PLAYSCAPE 061517 ****

A prolific guitarist with an exceptionally warm, round tone, California native Michael Musillami has a deep catalog of albums that are filled with soulful compositions in a variety of settings. Here, he teams for the second time with veteran bassist Rich Syracuse to play a set of compositions by a single jazz icon. First time around, the subject was Wayne Shorter; this time the pair focuses on Charles Mingus.

From the first notes of the tightly arranged "Opus 3" the fit between the two is evident. The bassist has a bright sound and lithe technique that matches well with Musillami's single-note attack. The title piece takes on the appearance of a Spanish lament, with the guitarist picking phrases laden with duende over Syracuse's bowed instrument.

The choice of Mingus serves up material both familiar and lesser known. For "Boogie Stop Shuffle" Musillami and Syracuse begin with some free-time exchanges, filled with massive amounts of space, stretching out for six minutes before launching into the main theme. On the late-period ballad "Carolyn Kiki Mingus" Syracuse provides gorgeous counter-



point to his partner's tangy lead, and the combination is suffused with propulsive energy. "Goodbye Pork Pie Hat," which has served as an effective vehicle for numerous guitarists, is played carefully and with significant attention to detail, with Syracuse in the lead for the first part of the journey. As he has on album after album, Musillami demonstrates how much feeling he can pour into an unadorned electric guitar signal. —James Hale

Bird Calls: Opus 3; Bird Calls; Free Cell Block F, 'Tis Nazi USA; Nostalgia In Times Square; Boogie Stop Shuffle; Goodbye Pork Pie Hat; Carolyn Kiki Mingus; Duke Ellington's Sound Of Love. (52:00) Personnel: Michael Musillami, guitar, Rich Syracuse, bass. Ordering info: playscape-recordings.com



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Books / BY EUGENE HOLLEY JR.

The Swing of Enlightenment

Anyone familiar with **Herbie Hancock** or **Wayne Shorter** knows that Nichiren Buddhism has been an important aspect of these artists' lives since they became practitioners of that spiritual philosophy in the 1970s. But there has never been one cogent compendium of their ideas and views on the subject, until now. *Reaching Beyond: Improvisations on Jazz, Buddhism, and a Joyful Life* (World Tribune Press), co-authored by Hancock, Shorter and Daisaku Ikeda, author and president of the worldwide Buddhist organization Soka Gakkai International (SGI), ebulliently and eloquently fills that void.

A collection of serialized dialogues between Hancock, Shorter and Ikeda, the book originally appeared in the SGI newspaper Seikyo Shimbun from September 2010 through December 2011, and was published in Japanese as Conversations on Jazz, Buddhism, and Life. It unfolds in an informal. conversational ebb and flow, where the participants alternately express how Buddhism influences their music and way of life-and vice versa. In one passage, Ikeda describes jazz as "a cry from the heart, from the soul. It stirs courage and makes people strong. It invigorates our lives. It brings people together. In this regard, it has much in common with Buddhism." For Hancock, the music is about dialogue that is "a celebration of the joy of life ... a pure and direct method of communication, a crv issued from the depths of human emotion." Shorter sees the art form as "a creative process that can break through the superficial constraints of dogma, decrees, and mandates."

And so it goes on in the subsequent pages, an interwoven, three-way call-andresponse traversing a wide array of subjects, including the African American origins of jazz, the values of diversity, the spiritual value of art, the positive role of Africa in world history and the necessary duty of mentoring young people. And along the way, Hancock and Shorter wax philosophic about what they learned from their musical mentors. Hancock recalls his often-told parable about when he played a wrong note accompanying Miles Davis, who didn't judge it, and incorporated the note into what he was playing. Shorter recalls with fondness Art Blakey's admonition to "inspire through the sound of modern original music the need for change in the pursuit of dignity and freedom."

Ikeda is an effective and empathetic guide, engaging with Hancock and Shorter while dropping references to Walt Whitman, James Weldon Johnson, Nelson Mandela,

REACHING BEYOND

Improvisations on Jazz, Buddhism, and a Joyful Life



Langston Hughes and John Coltrane along with anecdotes from several classics of Buddhist and Asian literature.

Throughout the book, Ikeda, Hancock and Shorter speak of the ability of jazz and Buddhism to "turn poison into medicine," as evidenced by the sobering chapter containing their thoughts on 9/11. And the most poignant, painful and healing part of the book reveals how Hancock and Shorter dealt with their personal tragedies: Hancock lost his sister, Jean, in a plane crash in 1985, and Shorter lost his wife, Ana Maria, in the TWA Flight 800 disaster in 1996.

Hancock recalled how he was finally able to shed tears for his sister after committing her ashes to the sea, while Shorter recalled that he "could have become desperately overcome with grief and may have tried to destroy myself." Instead, he says that he "realized that if I did not continue my pursuit of music—something I felt was meaningful to the human spirit—it would bring great sadness to my wife. I began to see that my mission in life must be to continue composing music."

Reaching Beyond is an excellent supplement to Michelle Mercer's Footprints: The Life and Work of Wayne Shorter, and Hancock's memoir, Possibilities. It's full of deep insights and positive affirmations from three remarkable human beings, whose light beams from the Buddha to the bandstand. DB

Ordering info: bookstore.sgi-usa.org



Vinnie Sperrazza Apocryphal Hide Ye Idols LOYAL LABEL 021 ****

On the second album with his versatile quartet Apocryphal, drummer Vinnie Sperrazza pushes further against the post-bop grain without completely abandoning it, setting up a gripping tension between ambient texture and buoyant lyricism. The new album was produced by Geoff Kraly (half of the electronic-pop outfit Paris Monster), who often functions as a fifth member of the group, manipulating sounds made by alto saxophonist Loren Stillman and guitarist Brandon Seabrook.

On the opening track, "Sun Ra," Sperrazza makes it clear he's digging deep into sound exploration, paying homage to the intergalactic bandleader not through emulation, but by crafting a sumptuous, hovering soundscape through which isolated bits of the band's playing-cymbal patterns here, an astringent upper-register alto lick there-are cast in thrilling relief. "People's History" is a hat tip to the progressive historian and activist Howard Zinn, and it states its case with a different strain of abstraction, as Kraly translates a stream of the quartet's live performance into a modular synthesizer. "Family" brings in a different kind of tension, moving from tender balladry into a showdown between Stillman's post-Ornette Coleman melodies and Seabrook's abstract metallic smears; the rhythm section carves out a frenetic bed of motion that veers between nervous skitter and provocative lurches.

Sperrazza has proven repeatedly that he's a fantastic post-bop drummer. With *Hide Ye Idols*, he proves he's also a strong composer with a keen conceptual streak.

—Peter Margasak

Hide Ye Idols: Sun Ra; People's History; Family; St. Jerome; Bulwer Lyttor; Hide Ye Idols; Valentinus; (37:57) Personnel: Vinnie Sperraza, drums; Loren Stillman, alto saxophone; Brandon Seabrook, guitar; Eivind Opsvik, bass; Ordering info: Ioyallabel.com Paul Jones Clean outside IN ****

Tenor saxophonist Paul Jones brandishes a unique compositional method on his latest album, *Clean*. Using a system in which he assigns musical tones to numbers, then filters those integers through a random number generator, he delivers

a program of surprisingly accessible material that blends straightahead jazz with brainy, pointillist sound art.

A New York-based sextet—with saxophonist Alex LoRe, guitarist Matt Davis, pianist Glenn Zaleski, bassist Johannes Felscher and drummer Jimmy Macbride—articulates Jones' artistic vision with technical precision. But on tracks when the group is augmented by reeds and string instruments, *Clean* inherits an extra degree of sonic depth. Consider the way bassoon and cello entwine mellifluously on "Alphabet Soup," and later, how Zaleski's nimble left hand emboldens the galloping bass line on "Buckley Vs. Vidal." It's the work of a composer who has brilliant things to say and a captivating way of saying them. *—Brian Zimmerman*

Clean: Ive Sn Th Gra Md; Clean; Alphabet Soup; The Generator; It Was Brgh Cold; Centre In The Woods; Romulo's Raga; I Am An American; Hola, Amigo; Trio; Im Prety Uch Fkd; Buckley Vs. Vidal; Dirty Curty; The Minutiae Of Existence. (62:30)

Personnel: Paul Jones, tenor saxophone; Alex LoRe, alto saxophone; Matt Davis, guitar, Glenn Zaleski, plano; Johannes Felscher, bass, Jimmy Macbride, drums; Mark Dover, darinet (1, 5, 7, 11, 14); Ellen Hindson, oboe (1, 5, 7, 11, 14); Nanci Bellmont, basscon (1, 3, 5, 6, 7, 9, 11, 12, 13); Susan Mandel, cello (3, 6, 9, 12); Nicholas Biello, soprano saxophone (1, 5, 7, 11, 14); Andrew Gould, alto saxophone (1, 5, 7, 11, 14); Sam Dillon, tenor saxophone (1, 5, 7, 11, 14); Jaya Rattman, baritone saxophone (1, 5, 7, 11, 14); Gina Izzo, flute (1, 5, 7, 11, 14); Erika Dohi, piano (1, 5, 7, 11, 14).

Ordering info: outsideinmusic.com

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Natasha Agrama *The Heart Of Infinite Change* WORLD GALAXY ★★★ With *The Heart Of Infinite Cha* vocalist Natasha Agrama rele seven covers by the likes of Cha

With *The Heart Of Infinite Change*, vocalist Natasha Agrama releases seven covers by the likes of Charles Mingus, Duke Ellington and Joe Henderson, putting a modern spin on these tunes and others with col-

laborators Stephen "Thundercat" Bruner, Stanley Clarke (her stepfather), Ronald Bruner Jr. and the late keyboardist Austin Peralta. As a part of the fruitful Los Angeles jazz scene, Agrama relies on these collaborations to develop thick, luscious soundscapes.

The opening "Black Narcissus" features wordless vocals from Agrama, which communicate swarms of texture and sound. And on a cover of Bilal's "All Matter," Agrama goes for par with one of today's brightest neo-soul stars. The album concludes with "The Ballad Of The Sad Young Man," which again proves that Agrama can hold her own on the classics.

The material here is good, but it leaves one to wonder if Agrama can captivate as a composer herself. It's another welcomed release on the hot West Coast imprint World Galaxy, but it may be more compelling to hear the singer take on her own material. —*Chris Tart*

The Heart Of Infinite Change: Black Narcissus; Goodbye Porkpie Hat; In A Sentimental Mood; All Matter; I Wonder What Became Of Me; Lover Man; The Ballad Of The Sad Young Men. (36:50) Personnel: Natasha Agrama, vocals; Austin Peralta, keyboards; Stephen "Thundercat" Bruner, bass; Ronald Bruner Jr., drums; George Duke, Fender Rhodes, piano; Stanley Clarke, bass; Vinnie Colaiuta, drums; Mitchell Long, guitar; Ruslan Sirota, piano; Hadrien Feraud, bass; Doug Webb, saxophones. Ordering info: worldgalaxyrecords.bandcamp.com

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Nicole Mitchell & Haki Madhubuti Liberation Narratives THIRD WORLD PRESS/BLACK EARTH MUSIC ****

Poet, author, educator and Third World Press publisher Haki Madhubuti released some of the best (and most underrated) jazz-meets-poetry fusion of the post-Vietnam era, with such woefully out-of-print titles as 1976's Rise Vision Comin' and 1977's Medasi. Forty years later, he makes a masterful return to acetate working in collaboration with composer/flutist Nicole Mitchell on her second title of 2017.

Released on Third World, where she has worked as an employee for 13 years after moving to Chicago in 1990, Liberation Narratives is a magnificent, soulful creation featuring Mitchell's Black Earth Ensemble (which includes including Tomeka Reid on cello, Tomas Fujiwara on drums and Ugochi on vocals, among others) backing up Madhubuti as he recites classic lines from across the span of his half-century career in prose.

What a blessed way to kick off a new career than with a loving look back at a formidable mentor such as Madhubuti, whose delivery on such inspired material as "Gwendolyn Brooks" (named after the first African-American Pulitzer Prize winner), "Black Man Unfinished" and "We Walk The Way To The New World" against the smooth, spiritual current of the Black Earth Ensemble in a way that recalls Gil Scott-Heron's records with keyboardist Brian Jackson.

Madhubuti is the voice of experience, wisdom and truth, and Liberation Narratives is what all of us need to ingest for a better perspective in these uncertain times. -Ron Hart

Liberation Narratives: Often Hard to Believe; Move Into Our Own; Gwendolyn Brooks; Too Many Of Our Young; Blackman Unfinished; Rise Vision; Peace Starts Inside of You; We Walk The Way Of The New World; Woman Black; Poetry. (66:55) Personnel: Haki R. Madhubuti, spoken word; Nicole Mitchell, flute; Ugochi, vocals; Pharez Whitted, trumpet; Renee Baker, violin; Zara Zaharieva, violin; Tomeka Reid, cello; Miguel de la Cerna, piano; Harrison Bankhead, contrabass; Jovia Armstrong, percussion; Tomas Fuiiwara, drums

Ordering info: thirdworldpressfoundation.com

niu miles



Alan Ferber Big Band Jigsaw SUNNYSIDE 1494

Jigsaw is an apt title for this set of expertly arranged and performed jazz orchestra works, though sharp edges are beside the point. The 16 members of Alan Ferber's Big Band (17 on two tracks), mostly admired leaders and prized soloists, employ their skills so that the trickiest parts of the complexly layered and synchronized charts fit snugly, cohering into each composition's big picture, resulting in a gallery of artfully detailed pleasures.

Burnt Sugar, The Arkestra Chamber All You Zombies Dig The Luminosity AVANT GROIDD MUSICA

Heading for two decades of existence, New York's Burnt Sugar collective personnel are still revolving around multi-instrumentalist Greg Tate and bassist Jared Michael Nickerson, involving key players such as Steven Bernstein (trumpet), Avram Fefer (saxophone) and Mazz Swift (violin). Tate follows the path of conduction maestro Butch Morris, placing a guided improvisational template on top of the rockfunk language.

It might be a question of the ears needing time to adapt to this swirling sonic universe of funk, but as the album progresses, it seems to grow dynamism and direction, losing its sense of muddled layering. The opening songs sound like several tracks are playing simultaneously, with a chaotic piling of dislocated voices, solos and beats, but when the fourth number, "Ride Ride Ride," hits, everything coalesces into one of the best works on the disc, with a powerful vocal from Abby Dobson, topped off by an urgent Andre Lassalle guitar solo.

The production style is sometimes muddled

For instance: A tutti sigh that truly sounds as if it comes from a single source concludes "Impulso"; guitarist Anthony Wilson introduces "She Won't Look Back" with a whammy-bar distension that flows naturally into a glistening engagement with bassist Matt Pavolka; the title track begins with alto saxophonist O'Gallagher raging freely over Mark Ferber's off-beat drums; "Lost In The Hours," by Paul McCandless, has quirky melodic switchbacks; and "Get Sassy," with trombonists Alan Ferber and Jacob Garchik sliding and smooching in tandem, revels in slinky funk.

Throughout the album the rhythm section's blend is as thoughtfully construed as the horns' charts. Everything is nuanced—flag-waving moments come from well-plotted movements rather than bounding out as broad stokes, sudden fanfares or cappers. Ferber, educator as well as player-composer-arranger, demonstrates full mastery. His Big Band belongs in the idiom's current top tier. —Howard Mandel

Jigsaw: Impulso; She Won't Look Back; Jigsaw; North Rampart; Get Sasy; Lost In The Hours; Late Bloomer, G8:04) Personnet: Alan Ferber, trombone, composer; John O'Gallagher, Rob Wilkerson, John Ellis, Jason Rigby, Chris Cheek, woodwinds; John Fedchock, Jacob Garchik, Jennifer Wharton, trombones; Tony Kadleck, Scott Wendholt, Alex Norris, Clay Jenkins, trumpets; Anthony Wilson, guitar; David Cook, piano, keyboards; Matt Pavolka, bass; Mark Ferber, drums, percussion; Rogerio Boccato, percussion (1, 6).

Ordering info: sunnysidezone.com



and too crammed with action. But highlights "Throw Some Light" and "Ziploc Latex" attain soaring heights, and the remixed "R U Insane?" is a fully uncaged grinder. —*Martin Longley*

All You Zombies Dig The Luminosity: That Bent Arc; The Charmer; Stop Trippin'; Ride Ride Ride (Erybody Get Gentrifled); Young, Black & Vague; Black Fros Black Gold; Vaguely Tyrique; My Black Uncertainty; Throw Some Light; Ride Ride Ride Reprise; Ziploc Latex; And Chaos Died; Quoth The Raven; All You Zombies/ Grizzle Damus; R U Insane? (The Mo' Brutal Remix); There Is A G; R U Insane? (51:04)

Personnel: Mikel Banks, Dean Bowman, Julie Brown, Abby Dobson, Shelley Nicole, Christina Wheeler, Justice Dilla-X, voices; Jared Michael Nickerson, bass; Greg Tate, guitars, bass, beats, loops; Rene Akan, Andre Lassalle, Jimmy Lee, Thom Loubert, Ben Tyree, guitars; Leon Gruenbaum, keyboards; J.S. Williams, Steve Benstein, trumpets; 'Moist' Paula Henderson, baritone saxophone, EWi; Avram Fefer, alto saxophone; Mazz Swift, violin; Meret Koehler, drums.

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Season of Giving

Ella, Albums, Books, Gear & More in our Fanatics' Shopping Guide



By Frank-John Hadley

Inlike the ice slowing melting beneath Santa's North Pole digs, Yuletide music enjoys a state of permanence. Each year there are artists who rummage through the musical chestnuts and craft albums that allow listeners to rediscover the goodwill and cheer in which the worthiest holiday music is grounded.

The San Francisco organization Jazz At The Ballroom, which supports music education in Bay Area schools, has a stake in benevolence. On its album Christmas (Jazz At The Ballroom; 53:54 $\star \star \star \star$), nine jazz artists soother the souls of listeners with interpretations of mainly wellknown songs. Singer-bassist Nicki Parrott and singer-pianist Champian Fulton convey warm, reserved demeanors. A sense of playfulness surfaces in Ken Peplowski's clarinet work on "Carol Of The Bells," while vocalist Kathryn Crosby quietly savors the romance of "White Christmas," the Irving Berlin classic made uber-famous by her late husband. Vocalistpianist Tony Desare works his charm and pulls "Santa Claus Is Coming To Town" back from treacly sentimentality. Still, all's not snug and cozy around this hearth: The venerable Freddie Cole has sung better in past Decembers, and Kitty Margolis isn't exactly convincing.

Ordering info: jazzattheballroom.com

As evidenced by her performances on the aforementioned Jazzat the Ballroom album, hol-

iday genialness comes naturally to Champian Fulton. Her album *Christmas With Champian* (Champian Records 001; 59:36 $\star \star \star \star$) finds her dispelling the deadening familiarity of dry evergreens like "Let It Snow," allowing listeners to hear a shopworn lyric and melody as if for the first time. Her attractive singing voice and piano playing fit well with David Williams' bass and Fukushi Tainaka's drums. She enjoys a familial bond by having her father, trumpet/ flugelhorn player Steve Fulton, contribute to five tracks. On Fulton's original vocal number "Merry Merry Christmas," the only accompaniment is her expressive piano work.

Ordering info: champian.net

Herb Alpert hasn't trimmed a tree in a recording studio since 1968, but now he's back in Yuletide mode. On *The Christmas Wish* (Herb Alpert Presents 177; 54:07 $\star \star \star \star$), his trumpet crackles with joy in first-rate arrangements by Chris Walden that offer fresh approaches to chestnuts like "Santa Baby" and "Winter Wonderland." Judicious employment of a 45-piece orchestra and 32-person choir reduces the threat of excessive elaboration. The meticulous singing of Alpert's wife, Lani Hall, adorns the title track.

Ordering info: herbalpert.com

Another advocate of archangel Gabriel's horn, Chris Pasin, used his memories of child-

hood Christmases to inform the enjoyable jazz he presents on **Baby It's Cold Outside** (Planet Arts 301714; 55:17 $\star \star \star$). The trumpeter and several collaborators, including pianist Armen Donelian, toggle between calm introspection and swinging heat as required for their treatments of the usual carols and secular songs.

Ordering info: chrispasin.com

Hop aboard the golden sleigh steered by Dave Koz & Friends for a pleasant, smooth ride. Named for two decades of special holiday concerts, the album 20th Anniversary Christmas (Concord 00567; 45:41 $\star\star\star$ /2) entertains with the saxophonist, pianist David Benoit, trumpeter Rick Braun and acoustic guitarist Peter White reappraising ye olde favorites plus one relative newcomer, Leonard Cohen's "Hallelujah."

Ordering info: christmas.davekoz.com

If there's any justice in Santa's world, Jason Paul Curtis and *These Christmas Days* (self-released; $34:32 \star \star \star \star$) will be appreciated far and wide. A Sinatra-influenced singer-songwriter based in the Washington, D.C., area, he's got a real feel for the fun or romantic words he's crafted for eight tuneful originals. Complementing Curtis' pleasant charisma are a Basie-ish big band called Swing Shift and his combo Swinglab.

Ordering info: jasonpaulcurtis.com

A vocalist whose career spans more than four decades, Nashville's **Debbie Williams** sounds at ease locating the prettiness in the mostly routine tunes on *When Christmas Was Christmas* (335 Records 1709; 34:35 $\star \star \star$). She usually keeps sentimentality at a tolerable level. Veteran producer Billy Terrell, who is more susceptible to insipidity, had a hand in composing the neat title track.

Ordering info: 335records.com

Eugene Marlow's Heritage Ensemble recognized the stale orthodoxy of much holiday music and chose to do something about it on *A Not So Silent Night* (MEII Enterprises; 37:44 $\star \star \star \star$). The Hanukkah, Noel and New Year's songs derive a good part of their ecumenical chutzpah from the inventiveness of Marlow's arrangements and the spry individuality of his pianism. It's a blessing that the ensemble approaches "Dreidel, Dreidel, Dreidel," "Jingle Bells" and the rest with the right mix of audacity and familiarity.

Ordering info: eugenemarlow.com

The Canadian band Sultans of String keeps imaginative imperatives in overdrive for the entirety of Christmas Caravan (self-released; 72:45 $\star \star \star \star$), a generous pitch for global unity through the music of Christmas, Kwanza and Hanukkah. These five musicians have jubilantly recharged the classics with arrangements that demand attention. "Greensleeves" has a Turkish flair as violinist Chris McKhool and the other Sultans are joined by Istanbul's Gündem Yayli Grubu string ensemble. The Ukrainian New Year's carol "Shchedryk" ("Carol Of The Bells")performed here with the Prague Philharmonic Orchestra-progresses with uplifting energy. The Sultans can slow down and be reflective, too: "Silent Night" is simply beautiful.

Ordering info: sultansofstring.com

Also hailing from Canada is Diana Panton, a sensitive singer with a lovely voice who brings a warm glow to all 15 tracks on *Christmas Kiss* (eOne 5605; 62:16 $\star \star \star \star$). She deftly uses gossamer shading and rhythmic subtlety to recondition conservative picks like "Winter Wonderland" and more thoughtfully chosen tunes, such as Ted Shapiro's 1941 composition "Winter Weather" and John Leslie McFarland's "Kissing By The Mistletoe."

Ordering info: dianapanton.com

Another native Canadian with polite merriness to share, pianist David Ian, gives us *Vintage Christmas Trio* (Prescott 0005; 34:06 $\star \star \star \star$), his third and best holiday release. Supported by the fine acoustic bassist Jon Estes and the agile drummer Josh Hunt, Ian explores the strengths of "Silver Bells," "Good King Wenceslas," "Up On The Housetop" and seven more tunes. Ian has an intelligent playing style, always avoiding the weak emotion that plagues less thoughtful musicians. Ordering info: iantunes.com

Out of Norway comes **December Songs** (Losen 157; 51:29 $\star\star\star\star$). The longtime duo of pianist **Olga Konkova** and guitarist **Jens Thoresen** crafts spare versions of European carols and commercial chestnuts ("Jingle Bells," "White Christmas") with a sense of repose. Even when their instincts for the lyrical don't always pan out, they communicate a deep empathy for the dignified joy inherent in the material.

Ordering info: losenrecords.no

Silent Night: Christmas Carols On Acoustic Guitar (Acoustic Music 319.1564.2; 36:47 $\star \star \star \star$) tenders rare rewards with a dozen tracks by five Europeans who display exceptional skills as soloists and as arrangers. Steve Hicks, an Englishman, delves into the beautiful melodies of carols from Great Britain as well as Paraguayan classical guitarist Augustín Barrios' "Villancico De Navidad." Germany's Peter Autschbach is poised, precise and loving with his version of "Silent Night," while countryman Ernie Rissmann follows the way of his heart as he interprets the handsome old Albion tune "In The Bleak Midwinter." Brazil's Rainer Mafra treats both lighthearted and reflective songs with understanding. Thomas Ruez's folky picks "Oh You Little Merry One" and "Come Children" may not be particularly Christmassy, but this Austrian, playing resonator guitar, articulates a sense of elation.

Ordering info: acoustic-music.de

Better known in Europe than in the States, Liz McComb sings the carols and spirituals on her album *Merry Christmas* (GVE; 44:02 ★★★★) with a conviction rooted in her experience growing up in an African-American church. Her supple, limber voice conveys not only religious devotion but also the more secular warmth of the season, equally persuasive on "When Was Jesus Born?" and "The Christmas Song." No stranger to jazz and blues, McComb is a skilled pianist, and her accompanists furnish guitar, drums, percussion, organ and additional piano. Ordering info: lizmccomb.com

The Supremes' two-disc set *The Ultimate Merry Christmas* (Real Gone Music 0642; 71:11/71:00 ★★★½) has the original 1965 album in mono and stereo versions plus all manner of remixes, alternate mixes and outtakes—a whopping 16 previously unissued. The melodic obscurity "Bright Little Star" is more luminous than the carols here. Among the noteworthy bonus tracks are a fun 1967 club performance of "Greensleeves" and a moving rendition of "Silent Night" that features the perennially overshadowed Florence Ballad.



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Glorious Gifts for Ella's Centennial

very fall, record labels release lavish, extravagant box sets that few of us would buy for ourselves but that cause us to make imperial proclamations of our generosity toward others during the holidays. If you feel generous and wish to emphasize your own good taste as well, check out the lineup below. Why? Because very few Baby Boomers—or their offspring and maybe even *their* offspring—would not delight in getting a new **Ella Fitzgerald** or **Louis Armstrong** collection this holiday season. The gift of Ella's music is a fine way to salute the immortal "First Lady of Song" as her centennial year comes to a close.

In hindsight, it's surprising that Fitzgerald (1917–'96) didn't collaborate with Armstrong (1901–'71) sooner in her career. You'd think they would have found each other quickly. Each had recorded for Decca for a full decade, but their paths didn't cross until January 1946. It might have been the beginning of a productive musical friendship, except that their first session together would be Armstrong's last for Decca for three-and-a-half years. That accounts for the cutoff date on *The Complete Decca Singles* 1935–1946 (Verve Records/UMe; ume. lnk.to/louiscompletedecca), a digital-only

compilation of 136 titles covering Armstrong's most commercially diverse decade, the one that climaxed with his first duet with Fitzgerald.

Armstrong was commercial in a way that fit the Decca model. He was a self-governing sovereign with few musical loyalties. A bandleader in name only, he readily transplanted himself from Luis Russell (his working band) to Jimmy Dorsey to Glen Gray to the Mills Bros. to Lyn Murray—yes, even to Andy Iona and his Islanders. (Just imagine Duke Ellington moonlighting with Glenn Miller at Victor or Count Basie with Ish Kabibble at Columbia.)

But Armstrong could breeze through any genre and always be Louis. This collection finds him covering all bases, from humdrum song selections to 18 well-polished re-creations of earlier classics (e.g., "West End Blues"). But this period also generated fresh Armstrong classics that now have permanent pedestals in the canon: "Struttin' With Some Barbecue," "Swing That Music," "Jubilee" and more, all of which catch the sound of his trumpet at its mature height.

If you'd prefer to wrap an actual box to put under the Christmas tree (rather than a digital gift), the procession begins with the four-disc set *Ella Fitzgerald And Louis Armstrong*— *Cheek To Cheek: The Complete Duets* (Verve Records/UMe; us.udiscovermusic.com or Amazon). This is most comprehensive Ella-Louis scrapbook ever compiled. With the Decca and Verve catalogs now siblings under the extended Universal Music parent company, all things are possible.

Still, the old contrasts are striking. Decca was trolling for a hit single in the novelty market, while Verve couldn't have cared less. So the first Verve *Ella And Louis* album startled us with Armstrong's voice and horn presented in a way no one had ever heard before—close up and cozy. His rusty growl sounded exposed, almost naked without the camouflage of the All-Stars.

Verve executive Norman Granz amplified the intimacy by using only the Oscar Peterson trio with Buddy Rich and 11 leisurely ballads, most new to him. Granz told them to take their time, and they did. For Ella, it was home. For Louis, whose trumpet is laid-back and close to the texts, it was a breakthrough to the core of his artistry. A year later, *Ella And Louis Again* was recorded in three sessions. It captures the

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same pillow-talk intimacy, but with a wider range of tempos. "Stompin' At The Savoy" seems to combust spontaneously. All the tune sequences here follow the original LPs.

Five days later they began their magnum opus, the deluxe two-LP *Porgy And Bess*. If the first duets achieved warmth, this one aimed for grandeur. Russ Garcia's orchestrations swell and shrink with a theatrical flamboyance. Armstrong's horn, soft-spoken before, has as a concert-hall stateliness, though sometimes uncertain of the new terrain. Of the 17 songs only four are actually performed as duets. But among the many *Porgy and Bess* treatments, this one remains a unique achievement—a splendid rivalry between Gershwin's operatic aspirations and the sui generis imprints of Ella and Louis at their best.

The surprises come on the fourth disc, which gives us a peak into both the fun and frustration of the creative process. Armstrong moves through eight takes on "Bess, Oh Where's My Bess" without nailing it. The issued version ended up being an overdub Louis recorded several months later. There are also several trumpet rehearsals of a piece called "Red Headed Woman," which is not listed in any Armstrong discography. It is actually the instrumental section interpolated into "There's A Boat That's Leavin' Soon For New York."

The crown jewel this season is the six-LP set *Ella Fitzgerald Sings The George And Ira Gershwin Song Books* (Verve/UMe). Michelangelo carved his monuments in stone. Granz used vinyl. And when he considered something of particular value, he draped it in a luxurious wardrobe of packaging, lest no one misunderstand its consequence.

The Fitzgerald-Gershwin project was perhaps Granz's most enduring achievement. It was an authentic work of art. Uncluttered by commercial intent, the cover art announced itself without a syllable of copy, only a bold French Impressionist face and the imposing signature of Bernard Buffet. Universal has now restored this masterpiece to its original vinyl magnificence and physical presence. Holding one of the shiny, 12-inch discs is like cradling a specimen of Dresden porcelain. Even those without a turntable may covet this limited edition for the sheer privilege of exhibiting an objet d'art. Those who do have one can experience the 53 original recordings with Nelson Riddle as Granz intended, plus a sixth LP of bonus items previously issued on *The Complete Ella Fitzgerald Song Books* in 1993.

With the Fitzgerald centennial winding down, Universal and others have been busy with smaller monuments as well. Two live discoveries are notable. *Ella At Zardi's* (Verve/ UMe) will likely create a similar buzz to the singer's *Twelve Nights In Hollywood* set from 2009. It captures two sets from the night of Feb. 2, 1956, just after the formation of Verve and just before the Cole Porter songbook work began. Timing alone makes it a career landmark, and "Airmail Special," "Bernie's Tune" and a slow "My Heart Belongs To Daddy" add to the musical surprises. She sings "I've Got A Crush On You" to Riddle, who was in the audience.

More for the hardcore fan is *Ella Fitzgerald: Live At Chautauqua, Vol. 2* (Dot Time Records; dottimerecords.com), a previously unreleased concert recording made in 1968 at Chautauqua Institution Amphitheater in New York state. The 46-minute set concludes with a historically important tune, "He Had A Dream," a moving tribute to Martin Luther King. (This album, part of Dot Time Records' Legends Series, is a companion to *Live At Chautauqua, Vol. 1*, which was released in 2015.)

For those who prefer a one-stop overview of at least two-thirds of her career, the fourdisc set *Ella Fitzgerald*, *100 Songs For A Centennial* (Verve/UMe) provides a 50/50 mix from the Decca and Verve periods that highlights the contrasts between sales-driven Decca years and the high-art plateaus Fitzgerald reached on Verve—although the work she did with pianist Ellis Larkins in 1950 is as complete as anything she produced under Granz.

One of those pieces is part of *Someone To Watch Over Me* (Verve/UMe), in which several of her more small-scale combo works from the Decca and Verve years are augmented by newly recorded London Symphony Orchestra accompaniments. The original sparse backing leaves plenty of room for the orchestrations to breathe without tripping into any background bottlenecks. Thanks to the magic of digital recording technology, Gregory Porter joins Fitzgerald and Larkins on their 1954 rendition of "People Will Say We're In Love."

-John McDonough



Jimmy Smith - performing on his favorite instrument, the Hammond B-3 organ. Sidemen include guitarist Kelyn Crapp and drummer Herlin Riley.







Remembering an Icon

he centennial celebrations for Dizzy Gillespie, Thelonious Monk and Ella Fitzgerald have taken away some of the spotlight from the incomparable Buddy Rich (1917-'87). But there are some new releases to remind us what a fantastic drummer he was. They come in packages that compile music that was included a 1985 three-LP set, Mr. Drums, Buddy Rich Live On King Street. Video footage of the performances has been issued in various formats over the years. Now, just before 2017 ends, the soundtrack comes to bat as a digital release in two batches. An LP incarnation is scheduled for January. These performances were chronicled on two separate DVDs issued by Lightyear in 2003 and 2005. At press time, remastered digital versions of the two films were scheduled for release in November.

Rich came of age in the 1930s, when drummers like Chick Webb, Gene Krupa, Sid Catlett, Jo Jones and Louie Bellson filled the spotlight with visual precision and breathtaking speed. They knew exactly what they were doing because to be in the spotlight was to be a star. For more than 50 years no one filled a spotlight like Rich, who bounded around a drum set like an acrobat radiating attitude like lasers.

Unlike most veteran musicians—whose work can be sorted easily into prime, middle and late periods—Rich never had a "late period." None that was identifiable, at least. Yes, the music here was recorded in the twilight of his career—two years plus a day before his death on April 2, 1987, to be exact. But the machinery of his technique and style never lost its precision tolerances or torrential force. In a way, technique was his style. When Catlett or Krupa soloed, their rhythms often nested in your memory. But Rich preferred to flood audiences in a hurricane of surging rolls and cross-over gymnastics that became stroboscopic streaks of sound. The rhythmic design and detail were there but unknowable, camouflaged in a storm of velocity.

Many of the charts he played were built around these qualities-fast, dense, punchy orchestrations that Rich could lean into and punch back at. The Rich band was actionpacked, and we get a nice cross section of its history on Channel One Set and The Lost Tapes (Lightyear/Lobitos Creek; lightyear.com). Together they mix some of the early mid-'60s book with later work. Even a slow piece like "Sophisticated Lady" rolls forward like layers of harmonic lava, with Rich nudging quietly here and there. On fast numbers like "No Exit" he shoves ahead like an express snowplow. It's all very dazzling. But Rich was a superb smallgroup drummer as well. And it's often on the lighter charts, such as "One O'clock Jump" or even "Love For Sale," that his playing is more supportive than exhorting. Among the other reprises are "Norwegian Wood," "Mexicali Rose," "Willowcrest" and "New Blues."

Also reprised are Rich's two most expansive showcases, "West Side Story Medley" and "Channel One Suite." Each is a somewhat discursive concert piece with abrupt shifts in mood and tempo pasted together with flowery transitions. But the former had the advantage of familiarity and became among his most requested showstoppers.

So who was Buddy Rich? And was he really the Grinch that a series of covertly taped and widely circulated tantrums from 1970 have portrayed him to be? "I wrote nearly a whole chapter about these famous 'bus tapes' because they have come to define him so much," says Pelle Berglund, whose 500-page biography, Buddy Rich: One of a Kind (Sivart Publishing Co.; sivart.se), is planned for December publication. "But they're not the full picture. I found he was warm, playful, and always defended his musicians in interviews. He demanded very much of them and of himself. But I don't buy the picture that he was always rude and angry. I think this book is needed because others didn't cover the whole picture. He did 250 concerts a year-this with three heart attacks, broken arms, and often great physical plain. Yet he kept on playing. He always wanted to do better than the night before. That's what the book is about. What pushed him forward, sometimes even risking his life. I didn't want to write a book about technique. I wanted to write about the man and how he could force himself so hard."

Though only a couple of chapters were available for review at press time, a full 500 pages on Rich, whose career took him from Artie Shaw through Jazz at the Philharmonic to 20 years leading the last commercially successful big band in American music, could hardly be boring. —John McDonough

ECM

Fans Get Lucky

enor saxophonist Lucky Thompson (1924–2005) worked in some of the most famous jazz orchestras of the 1940s and early '50s, playing in big bands led by such swing icons as Billy Eckstine, Lionel Hampton and Count Basie. He was one of the first African Americans in Boyd Raeburn's legendary orchestra. Thompson often found himself on the bandstand situated in proximity to such future giants as Charlie Parker, Dizzy Gillespie, Art Blakey, Charles Mingus, Leo Parker and many more. According to jazz critics of the time, Thompson was in the

same league as these extraordinary gentlemen, garnering comparisons to modern jazz pioneers such as Ben Webster, Coleman Hawkins and Lester Young in the pages of publications like DownBeat and Esquire.

But the intriguing thing about Thompson was that he clearly didn't suffer fools gladly. His quickness to call out club owners or music industry executives who did him wrong earned him a reputation for being difficult, costing him gigs both at clubs and in the studio.

Tired of petty politics, Thompson relocated to Paris in 1956, where he would spend the remainder of the decade honing his craft in the small-band format with some of the hottest players in French jazz. He frequently collaborated with pianist Martial Solal, and he worked with a rotating combo consisting of such young Parisian lions as guitarist Jean-Pierre Sasson, bassist Benoit Quersin and drummer Gérard "Dave" Pochonet. He also shared the bandstand with fellow American expats, like trumpeter Emmett Berry, drummer Kenny Clarke and pianist Sammy Price.

Recorded in mono, the four-disc set *Complete Parisian Small Group Sessions 1956–1959* (Fresh Sound Records; freshsoundsrecords.com) documents Thompson's transition from





a blacklisted freelance musician in the States to one of the most respected and in-demand leaders on the Parisian scene. His work in the quartet and quintet formats allowed him to explore the feather-light intimacies of melody, rhythm and texture, expressing himself in a way that would have been difficult, if not impossible, in a big band.

For fans who prefer to hear Thompson in the throes of a large ensemble, there's a companion disc, *Lucky Thompson In Paris 1956* (Fresh Sound Records), which shines a light on the sax-ophonist's All Star Orchestra Sessions. On the first of these sessions, Thompson joined the 10-piece Modern Jazz Group to play five compositions written by pianist Henri Renaud (including "Meet Quincy Jones") and arranged to highlight the newly arrived saxophonist. For the remaining three sessions, Thompson and Pochonet co-led medium-sized all-star groups that played originals like Sasson's "Portrait Of Django" and Thompson's "Still Waters," as well as an arrangement of Count Basie and Neal Hefti's "Bluebeard Blues."

The pleasures of hearing this unsung tenor master overcome the dogma of his homeland and reinvent his legacy as a leader makes these reissues a revelation, especially if you are a fan of the embryonic stage of modern jazz.

Moreover, Thompson's life story illustrates a vitally important lesson: If you are true to yourself and to your beliefs, despite the forces of oppression in your vicinity, you might find another place in this world where behavior once perceived as difficult is considered dynamic. —*Ron Hart* Anouar Brahem Blue Maqams Dave Holland Jack DeJohnette Django Bates



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Chet Baker at Salle Pleyel in Paris, October 1955

Louis Armstrong and Duke Ellington during the filming of Paris Blues on Jan. 5, 1961

Leloir's Photos **Convey Admiration**

hotographer Jean-Pierre Leloir (1931-2010) got his first camera from a U.S. soldier the day that Paris was liberated from Nazi occupation. That act had profound consequences for the rest of Leloir's life. He would go on to make photography his profession, first publishing his work in Jazz Hot magazine in 1951. Some of Leloir's best-known images are of French singers, such as his celebrated portrait of Georges Brassens, Léo Ferré and Jacques Brel smoking and chatting around a table.

He also captured images of rock stars, but he held jazz musicians in high esteem throughout his life. In a moment of sweet irony, when the French government made him Chevalier de L'Ordre Des Arts et des Lettres in 2010, it similarly recognized bassist Ron Carter, one of his photographic subjects, in the same ceremony.

Two jazz enthusiasts in Spain have compiled Jazz Images (Elemental Music Records; available from Amazon), a 168-page coffee-table book of Leloir's color and black-and-white photos. Gerardo Cañellas runs jazz clubs in Palma de Mallorca, Spain, and Buenos Aires, Argentina; Jordi Soley has collected, sold and distributed jazz records since 1980. Cañellas and Soley's objective when choosing images for the book was to favor photographs of spontaneous moments that took place offstage. The result is a collection that nicely balances iconic images with intimate ones.

Among the artists depicted are Duke Ellington, Dizzy Gillespie, Dexter Gordon, Herbie Hancock, Charles Lloyd, Nina Simon, Thelonious Monk and Sarah Vaughan. Most of the book is devoted to photos, but there is also a preface by Ashley Kahn and brief essays by three musicians whom Leloir photographed-Quincy Jones, Michel Legrand and Martial Solal.

Jones celebrates the power of photography to preserve and recall history. He writes, "We need to get back to our roots and remember where we came from. I am so happy to see Leloir's work published, because behind each image is a story-one that needs to be told and appreciated."

One photo of Count Basie sitting at a makeshift desk says volumes about the transience and hard work of a bandleader's life. A double image of Donald Byrd reading a newspaper on a bench with a neon-lit club behind him captures the tenuousness of a life spent creating after dark.

Solal articulates the mixture of competence and respect that enabled the photographer to gain his subjects' trust: "During that period, Leloir was one of the very few photographers interested in the musicians, and he was certainly the only one who knew us by name. His manners and behavior always seemed very professional, highly precise and meticulous, and it was apparent that he loved what he was doing and admired his chosen models."

This admiration is powerfully conveyed in Leloir's photos of John Coltrane. Some depict the smartly attired saxophonist gazing to one side, dignified and pondering. Another from the same session captures him looking intently at his horn's mouthpiece. Another sequence finds the notoriously workaholic Coltrane rehearsing in his hotel room. And in one rare image the saxophonist gives a wide-open grin, showing the teeth that never made it into official portraits. No matter how many Coltrane albums you own, you're bound to come away from that photo feeling like you've learned something new about him. Now that's art.

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"Inspiration is New York jazz pianist Marc Devine's first album as a leader. This is a straight-ahead trio session featuring veteran bassist Hide Tanaka and drummer Fukushi Tainaka. Both sidemen provide flawless backing for Devine as he swings through jazz dassics such as Hank Mobley's "Soul Station" and Bud Powell's "Hallucinations," Also featured on this album is the lesser-known Hank Jones composition "Vignette," the cooking Osie Johnson tune "Osmosis," and Devine's own hard bop piece, the title track "Inspiration"--a nod to his original hard bop and bebop roots. The album even includes pop tunes such as Carole King's "Will You Still Love Me Tomorrow" (which Devine plays very much in the style of pianist Erroll Garner), and Elvis Presley's "Love Me Tender," to which Devine ads a bit of a Red Garland flavor."

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<u>Blues Greats Back in Spotlight</u>

Now and then we get important reminders about the major figures in postwar blues. John Lee Hooker and Jimmy Reed are in the news, again recognized for their astonishing faculty for creating highly individualized blues of enduring distinction. Though there is debate on the exact year Hooker was born, his family points to 1917, and he's being feted with a centennial honors. The celebration includes, significantly, the largest box set anthology ever devoted to his pioneering work, along with a museum exhibit.

Reed (1925–'76) is also the subject of a new box set, the most comprehensive of several issued down the years. According to various sources, Reed wound up at Vivian Carter and Jimmy Bracken's Vee-Jay Records in Chicago because either the Chess label rejected him out of hand or he balked at the Chess brothers' demand that he record with Muddy Waters.

Whatever happened, Reed and Vee-Jay hit the jackpot: He became one of the most popular blues artists of the 1950s and '60. A significant influence on legions of blues and rock artists, Reed had a laconic vocal style and was a talented harmonica player, as evidenced by the three-CD, 88-track, Scott Billington-produced *Mr. Luck: The Complete Vee-Jay Singles* (Craft his music between 1948 and '98. (Hooker usu-Recordings; available from Amazon). ally treated his recording contracts like dis-

Solid-gold tracks like "Honest I Do," "Big Boss Man," "Bright Lights Big City" and "Baby What You Want Me to Do" are included in this fine presentation of Reed's consummate conviviality. Remastered mono richens the listening experience. Interestingly, 11 songs are preceded by snippets of interviews in which Reed discusses their origins.

In a 38-page booklet, Billington correctly gives Reed's chief lieutenant Eddie Taylor shoutouts for his crucial boogie-guitar contributions to Reed's famous blues sound. (Fans who want to delve deeper should check out Will Romano's 2006 biography, *Boss Man*, published by Backbeat.)

Hooker is the subject of the lavish, five-CD set *King Of The Boogie* (Craft Recordings; johnleehooker.com/kingoftheboogie), which was compiled by Roger Armstrong and Mason Williams. It offers 21 essential Vee-Jay singles, including exemplars "Dimples" and "Boom Boom," as well as 79 other hypnotic songs from the vaults of Chameleon, Chess, Modern, Specialty and a few more companies that issued his music between 1948 and '98. (Hooker usually treated his recording contracts like disposable tissues.) Disc 1 includes the immortal "Crawlin' King Snake"; Disc 2 includes three previously unreleased tracks, including "When I Lay My Burden Down"; and Disc 3 includes the blues staple "One Bourbon, One Scotch, One Beer," which Hooker first recorded in 1966. Disc 4 compiles 15 concert selections, including four previously unreleased tracks.

Disc 5, titled *Friends*, draws from sessions conducted with a diverse array of collaborators, including B.B. King ("You Shook Me"), Robert Cray ("Mr. Lucky"), Bonnie Raitt ("I'm In The Mood"), Warren Haynes ("Up And Down") and Carlos Santana ("The Healer"). It also features two duets with Van Morrison, including the Grammy-winning "Don't Look Back." The set concludes with the same song that opens Disc 1, "Boogie Chillen"," but on this later version the blues icon is joined by one of his more famous admirers: Eric Clapton.

The set's 56-page book has liner notes by music historian Jas Obrecht (author of *Rollin' and Tumblin': The Postwar Blues Guitarists*) and by Hooker's longtime manager and friend,

HOLIDAY GIFT GUIDE 2017



Mike Kappus. This box set is perfect for the fan who yearns for something more extensive than *Whiskey & Wimmen: John Lee Hooker's Finest* (Vee-Jay Records/Concord Bicycle Music; available from Amazon), a 16-track compilation issued earlier this year.

There's never been anyone quite like the idiosyncratic Hooker, a Mississippi native and son of a sharecropper. His sly, brooding, low voice exalting sensual pleasures or evincing what Greil Marcus called "stoic, doomy rage"—together with wriggling fragments of guitar, forged a merger of intensity and relaxation.



Shortly before his exit in 2001, Hooker, close to tears, told this writer: "Music picks you up when you're feeling down. I have my guitar and my songs. It heals me."

The Grammy Museum in Cleveland, Mississispi, is currently hosting the exhibit *John Lee Hooker: King Of The Boogie*, which features the bluesman's stage outfits, guitars, photos and awards. The exhibit will be on display through February 2018, and then it travels west to the Grammy Museum at L.A. Live in Los Angeles. (Info is posted at grammymuseumms.org.)

Another chief architect of the blues, Muddy

Waters (born McKinley Morganfield in 1913) is the subject of the 48-page children's book *Muddy* (Antheneum; simonandschuster.com/ kids), written by Michael Mahin and illustrated by Evan Turk. The book traces his Mississippito-Chicago life voyage, up to the release of his first commercially successful record in 1948.

Aimed at kindergarten and early elementary school kids, the text conveys the importance of resilience, individuality and the blues' positive messages. Parents or teachers might need to explain to young readers the meaning of certain terms, such as "juke joints" and "city-smooth sophisti-cats."

Turk's colorful ink and watercolor images border on abstraction, catching the eye while advancing the story. An "Author's Note" gives adults an overview of the Chicago blues story.

A blues Mount Rushmore onto himself, Robert Johnson is lionized by the hardback graphic novel *Love In Vain* (Faber & Faber; faber.co.uk). J.M. Dupont's text has the devil recounting the tale of one of his favorite disciples, an extraordinary musician whose mythicized roguery was a blessing to his art and craft. Dupont's collaborator here, the visual artist Mezzo, draws in black and white, cramming panels with all sorts of intriguing, shadowy details. *—Frank-John Hadley & Bobby Reed*



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Awesome Rock Artifacts

Come All Ye: The First Ten Years (A&M/UMe; ume.lnk.to/comeallye7cd), boasts a whopping 121 tracks, many of the Rolling Stones' album Their Satanic Majesties Request (ABKCO Music; available from Amazon), including two LPs, two Super Audio CDs, and both mono and stereo mixes, remastered by Bob Ludwig at Gateway Mastering.

Formed in 1967, England's Fairport Convention developed an engaging band sound out of an unusual mixture of American influences (Bob Dylan, The Byrds, Buddy Holly, Hank Williams) and a pinch of Celtic folk. The band—singer-guitarists Simon Nicol, Richard Thompson and Ian Matthews; bassist Ashley Hutchings; drummer Martin Lamble; and singer and multi-instrumentalist Judy Dyble basically invented British folk-rock. Using a rock sensibility and a small arsenal of electric string instruments, the group exalted the folkloric music and verse of old Great Britain.

In 1968, the arrival of free-spirited singer Sandy Denny proved significant. Her clear and gorgeous voice, laced with a melancholic quality in all registers, contributed to the band's remarkable tension between modernity and traditionalism, as documented on Discs 1, 2 and 7 of this entertaining box set.

Fairport reached its fullest bloom in late 1969 with fiddler Dave Swarbrick and drummer Dave Mattacks in the lineup. Denny's emotional power is showcased on mysterious, balladic set pieces like "Tam Lin" (in a BBC performance) and "Matty Groves" (an alternate take). Inspiration stirred Thompson's electric guitar work and Swarbrick's amplified fiddling,

while Mattacks brought a leavening sense of swing to the rhythm section.

Denny left the band in late 1969, and by 1972 Thompson had also departed; they both forged sterling solo careers. With Swarbrick the constant presence, Fairport gamely kept at it before disbanding in 1979. Discs 3 to 7 chronicle the journey, highlighted by a Los Angeles concert reunion with Denny.

The Stones' *Majesties Request* was thrashed by the press when it appeared in late 1967. It was deemed pretentious, aimless and unworthy of the mighty blues-based Stones—thanks to experimental elements, such as sound effects and tape manipulations, as well unusual instrumentation, including harpsichord, Mellotron, theremin, glockenspiel and electric dulcimer. Swimming against the tide, DownBeat bravely praised the album in its May 30, 1968, issue: In his 5-star review, Mark Wolf called the album "a revolutionary event in modern pop music."

So just what *is* this curio, with its bizarre 3-D cover? Some dismiss it as an aberration that appeared between the *real* Stones records *Between The Buttons* and *Beggars Banquet*. Others view it as the Stones' response to The Beatles' mind-blowing *Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band* LP and the trippy track "Tomorrow Never Knows" on 1966's *Revolver. Majesties* may be a parody of pop-psychedelia, perhaps even a concept album about English circuses and music halls.

At any rate, three songs stand out on this fun yet sometimes dark album. "She's A Rainbow" only reached No. 25 on the Billboard pop charts, but it remains one of the loveliest entries in the unconventional Mick Jagger-Keith Richards songbook. "Citadel" hinges on a prototypical Richards guitar riff, and "2,000 Light Years From Home" is a timeless slab of spacey psychedelic rock. *—Frank-John Hadley*

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Musicians Who Are with Us Forever

ans of jazz-rock have had plenty of reasons to weep this past year, as we've said goodbye to numerous heroes: guitarist Larry Coryell (1943–2017), drummer Alphonse Mouzon (1948–2016), Steely Dan guitarist/bassist Walter Becker (1950–2017) and fusion guitar wizard Allan Holdsworth (1946–2017).

But fans also have reasons to smile. New releases can add to a musician's legacy, and help ensure that they will live forever in the minds of their devoted followers.

Coryell and Mouzon were charter members of pioneering fusion band The Eleventh House, which was founded in 1973. Coryell and Mouzon recorded together in late 2016, and the resulting album, *Seven Secrets* (Savoy Jazz; available at Amazon), was released on June 2, after they had both passed.

Holdsworth lived just long enough to see the release of two important compilations: the 12-CD box set *The Man Who Changed Guitar Forever!* (Manifesto Records; manifesto.com) and the two-CD set *Eidolon* (Manifesto).

The box set includes his albums *I.O.U.* (1982), *Road Games* (1983), *Metal Fatigue* (1985), *Atavachron* (1986), *Sand* (1987), *Secrets* (1989), *Wardenclyffe Tower* (1992), *Hard Hat Area* (1993), *None Too Soon* (1996), *The Sixteen Men Of Tain* (2000), *Flat Tire* (2001) and *Then!* (2003).

Eidolon contains 28 tracks, all handpicked by Holdsworth, including "City Nights," "Sphere Of Innocence," "Funnels" and "Mental Fatigue," as well as a previously unreleased Jack Bruce vocal version of "Road Games."

Bill Bruford collaborated with Holdsworth in the drummer's eponymous band, which is

documented in the eight-disc set *Bruford* 1977– 1980: Seems Like A Lifetime Ago (Winterfold; burningshed.com).

Looking back on those days, Bruford said: "The band was over-caffeinated—short on subtlety but long on the sort of majestic stately themes with antecedents in progressive rock that set it apart from contemporaneous American outfits. We were a rock group with a jazz sensibility, rather than a jazz group with rock leanings."

Bruford produced the box set and dedicated it to Holdsworth. It contains previously unreleased material, remixed and remastered tracks, a booklet, photos and a numbered certificate signed by Bruford.

Fans seeking context and analysis regarding some of the other bands that Bruford was in and worked with—such as Yes, King Crimson, Genesis and U.K.—will want to check out David Weigel's book *The Show That Never Ends: The Rise and Fall of Prog Rock* (W.W. Norton & Company; norton.com). In addition to examining the origins of the genre, the author delves into the contributions of producers, impresarios and technicians, such as Ahmet Ertegun, Richard Branson and Robert Moog.

Weigel's descriptions of titanic prog-rock trio Emerson, Lake & Palmer are particularly poignant now, in the wake of the deaths of keyboardist Keith Emerson (1944–2016) and bassist/guitarist/vocalist Greg Lake (1947–2016).

In addition to Bruford, another prog-rock giant who's still with us is Yes guitarist Steve Howe, whose career is surveyed on the three-CD set *Anthology 2: Groups & Collaborations* (Rhino; rhino.com). Along with classics such as "Roundabout"—which Howe recorded with Bruford in Yes—the set also documents bands the guitarist was in early in his career, including The Syndicats, The In Crowd and Tomorrow.

The set's sonic diversity is noteworthy, as it chronicles the guitarist's glossy work with the bands Asia and GTR, collaborations with vocalist Annie Haslam, and even a version of the Kenny Burrell tune "Kenny's Song," recorded by a jazz trio featuring the leader's son, Dylan Howe (drums), and Ross Stanley (organ).

Guitarists (and those who worship sixstring titans) will enjoy Jas Obrecht's book *Talking Guitar: Conversations with Musicians Who Shaped Twentieth-Century American Music* (University of North Carolina Press; uncpress.org).

The book includes interviews with 19 artists, including Gregg Allman, Clarence "Gatemouth" Brown, Ry Cooder, Ben Harper, Eric Johnson, Carole Kaye, Jerry Garcia, Roebuck "Pops" Staples and Johnny Winter.

The tome is accompanied by a CD containing excerpts of Obrecht's interviews. Listeners can be a "fly on the wall" as Barney Kessel discusses the enormous impact Charlie Christian had on jazz guitar. Stevie Ray Vaughan reflects on his youthful obsession with Jimi Hendrix. Tom Petty praises Slim Harpo.

When discussing obstacles to what he calls "pure creativity," Carlos Santana says, "Ego, to me, is like a dog or a horse: Make them work for you; don't *you* work for them. *They're* supposed to work for you." —*Bobby Reed*

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John Vanore

Creating an Alternative Large Ensemble

hen I first decided to form my alternative ensemble, I wrote a couple of arrangements. Taking a step back, I realized that each was just "another chart" not a chart that would be especially identifiable. I kept experimenting to achieve my own uniqueness in my arrangements and shape an identity.

My alternative ensemble was formed from my love of being a soloist and playing in big

bands. We began in the 1980s and have produced four albums. The instrumentation defines the viewpoint of this article: four trumpets, two trombones, French horn, two saxophones doubling and a rhythm section of guitar, bass and drums. I wanted the power and explosiveness of the large ensemble with the intimacy of a small group. Your choice to create an "alternative" ensemble should mean just that. Webster says alternative is the choice between possibilities.

Creating art always comes with or is associated with a certain amount of risk. Art strives to take us somewhere we haven't been, create a lasting impression and challenge conventional wisdoms and traditional thinking. The development of your ensemble insists on the strength to turn your back on accepted norms.

We can identify elements of risk in our own favorite musical artists. Risk makes them unique—original with a voice.

Decisions demand and encompass a vision: a new ideology, so to speak, of what to do and what not to do—the not possible being even more defining. Accept that there is no pedagogy for the alternative ensemble; you must create it.

Arrange with intrinsic versus generic value. In deciding to use "Footprints" as my classic/standard on my *Culture* (Acoustical Concepts Records) recording project, I felt the need to not just arrange the tune. There must be hundreds of arrangements of this great classic. My objective was to take a different point of view with merging/integrating the expected with the unexpected.

Approaching the piece in 4/4 with the core being the funky bass line that suggests/embellishes, the original opening identity sets the tone for the drive of the tune, with chosen sections briefly swinging in contrast. The band plays melody as ensemble color also. The intro restates with French horn, and bass trombone is used as an unexpected device (and only once).

An example of what not to do can be in the ensemble chorus. Using the "drop 2" technique to voice would not be especially unique versus creating the multiple voice color combinations to identify the group. Design is the keyword: Like the layers of paint described below, my brush was the voicing character, and how the voices were implemented created the uniqueness of the ensemble melody.

Own yourself. Design your techniques. Create arranging and compositional "devices" that can be implemented in your writing, helping to define it to be more compelling and interesting rather than mechanical. If a device seems to be something you've heard before, reject it. Work it until it is your own. Again, there is no pedagogy for the alternative large ensemble.

"Eat the paint." Visit other mediums. My phrase "Eat the paint" is to encourage analytical comparison to painters—masters of color and form. Take a close look at some paintings. Spend a day at a great museum and choose two or three painters whose work resonates with you.

Bring a notebook, and "research" a color. Plant your face as close to the paintings as allowable ("eat the paint") and work up an analysis of how colors were used. Start with one artist and one color (e.g., red). Catalog and relate the texture, saturation, density, layers, amount of usage, significance to the overall work and anything else that strikes you. What is the percentage of red to the whole? How many shades are there? What other colors are used in that particular red (the blend that makes the identity of the color for that painting)? Is the color red consequential to the execution of the painting or is it just a highlight?

My sonic example is the single use of soprano sax and French horn in the eight-measure interlude in my piece "Curiosity" (32 seconds into the recording). For me, this was use of light and shadow—unpredictable, and it doesn't reoccur. Relating to alternate disciplines can be the beginning of your chord voicing design.

Watch a movie and turn off the sound. In

its absence, you'll notice how the score provides life to the movie. Engage in edits, wide shots, depth and cinematography. Consider saturation and contrast (we might call these unison and tutti, or close voicing versus spread voicing). Apply the visual use of these words to your sound and orchestration.

Others need to know. Recording the alternative ensemble is most important as a means to preserve and communicate your work. In other art forms (painting, writing, film), the medium of the art serves to preserve it. Our vision needs to be preserved through recording. This is where the confluence of recording art and technique become important to the documentation of your work. I can't overemphasize the importance of recording to the uniqueness you are trying to convey in your work. Your recording becomes the reference document (picture) of your work. If your alternative ensemble is unique, there will be no other against which to judge or compare.

Think cinematically. Careful choices here will highlight your compositional technique. Just as in film, not all elements are to be perceived exactly the same. For example, depth and perspective engage the listener. The color of harmony, the interaction of lines, the impact of the ensemble and the color contrasts need to be thought of as more than a two-dimensional view—that is how we see a score, and the recording must bring it to life. Again, think cinematically here. Visual depth, contrast and saturation are all applicable to the excitement you can generate aurally.

My Stolen Moments (Acoustical Concepts Records) project is testimony to the cinematic approach. The recording is my statement of "Stolen Moments" (the song), which was to be a requiem, an homage and a thanks for the influence of the great arranger Oliver Nelson (1932– '75). See the intro to the title track and the first few bars of the theme as scored below in Figure 1. The sonic footprint of the introduction sets the tone for the piece, like the opening roll in a movie. The recording perspective disappears in the emotional content of the orchestration.

For online audio and score examples from my *Stolen Moments* project, go to johnvanore. net/media/index.html and click on "DownBeat Master Class." Notice how my "palette" approach (blending for overtones and color) to orchestration and voice assignment allows for unexpected instrument combinations. An important concept is for the small group to coexist within the large ensemble—or it's a small group and a large ensemble. Interlude-type sections are brief and are used often in place of the exchange of band chorus to highlight melodies and/or solos.

Elaborate your thoughts in a couple of your own arrangements, then in an original composition. At the conclusion, one of the hardest things will be how you evaluate your own outcome. There should not be similar ensembles as models and references. After all, you just created the alternative. **DB**

Philladelphia-based trumpeter John Vanore is an alumnus of Woody Herman's big bands. Vanore has fused that experience with the influences of Dennis Sandole and Oliver Nelson to compose for a unique large ensemble, Abstract Truth, which imparts the intimacy of a small group and the fire power of a big band. The most recent project is the new album *Stolen Moments* (Acoustical Concepts Records). Vanore is currently Artist in Residence at Widener University. Visit him online at johnvanore.net and acrecording.net.

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Woodshed > PRO SESSION BY SARAH PARTRIDGE



Sarah Partridge

The Whole Picture: Considering Performance in Music

he music was great, but the evening left me cold." Have you ever said it, felt it or just experienced something like it without knowing what was wrong? I have. And I increasingly realize that part of my job as a musician and a performer is to never let it happen. Music and performance should meld into one thing, and that thing is

what you must give to your audience so that they leave moved, shaken, enlightened or satiated. It's a tall order, and many musicians are neither taught the importance of performance nor care to even think about it. Don't get me wrong. I love my fellow musicians and music is foremost in our minds when we are playing it, but a "gig" is also a performance, no matter where you are or how many people you are playing in front of. It's time to start thinking of the whole picture.

One may feel that considering "performance" is only for the world of vocalists or actors who tell stories with their words. But if music is a form of communication that has the ability to move people, then the instrumentalist must consider performance as part of the whole pie. The entire ensemble is part of the story. That story is the piece of music being played at that moment. Each player plays a part. And if you're a soloist ... well, it's all on you.

So much of the musician's life is spent in the practice room perfecting the notes, reaching for a certain "sound," improving technique, mastering tempo or improvising over a melody. When it comes time to perform, all those elements may be in place, but what about communicating with our fellow players as well as the audience? Musicianship aside, some are better communicators than others. This can be said for players and singers of all genres. In many cases, the jazz musician is an excellent communicator with his or her fellow players because of the improvisational nature of the music. The mere act of trading solos necessitates a visual cue to another player to "carry the flame."

On the other hand, in jazz, audiences sometimes feel left out of the inner circle of what is happening on stage. Classical musicians, while being known for their technical brilliance, are often seated and stuck to their scores, leaving little room for any kind of response to each other. In fact, they are barely able to look at the conductor. The bottom line, in performance, is that the music is just not enough. There has to be a physical response between the musicians themselves that reaches beyond the bandstand or stage, which then triggers an empathic response from members of the audience. So, how do we musicians add this layer to our repertoire? Here are a few things to consider.

There must be a reason you come to the stage, bandstand or corner of a room. You are there to share your music with others. We can't show up for a gig only knowing what time the downbeat is and when our breaks are. Each performance is another chance to share the interpretations of our stories, our compositions. So find a reason for being there. It doesn't matter what it is. It can be like setting an intention for a yoga practice. You can mentally dedicate the whole evening to someone. It can even be a woodshedding gig. As long as there is a need inside of yourself to be there.

Memorization opens up everything. Memorizing, when possible, immediately



allows the artist to experience the music in the moment. We are no longer reading and, therefore, more able to interact with one another as well as with the audience. The channels of communication, so to speak, are now more open. Musician to musician, musician to score, musician to audience: Everything flows and we're experiencing the music together, not as separate entities. Notice, when you play a piece that is memorized how free you feel. Imagine if you memorized everything you played. I know, as a singer, that if I stood in front of an audience reading music and lyrics, we would probably all feel completely detached from each other. But memorization is the norm for singers. If instrumentalists broke the habit of reading music in performance, everyone on and off stage would have a more fulfilling experience. It's a lot of work but it pays off.

Consider this. My mentor, Bud Beyer, was chairman of the theater department at Northwestern University, and is now working with chamber orchestras in Norway. He noticed that "many accepted conventions in music might be inhibiting the creation of a real emotional connection between conductor and player, between player and player, between player and the work (composition), and between everyone and the audience." He now has these chamber orchestras up on their feet without a music stand in sight. Their scores are completely memorized and they play as a living unit, reacting to one another and, therefore, engaging the audience. It looks and feels so natural; and believe me, even on video, your experience of the concert is elevated to a much higher level of pleasure. Check it out for yourself on YouTube (voutube.com/watch?v=5h5Xc-rUef4).

One should also have the intent in performance of giving something away. You're giving the audience a piece of you. There can be no withholding. There is no wall between you and the people listening. They so want to be drawn in. They want to laugh, cry, get chills, be transported. You have the power to do that. So once you've found your reason for being there, embrace your surroundings (even if it's a hole in the wall) and consider that this space is your home for the next hour or two or three. You have invited your friends in for a revealing evening of music and emotion. Yes, emotion. We all know that music is emotional. We feel it; now give that up and let them feel it.

As a singer, I place myself in a time and place as the introduction is being played. In my mind, I either remain as myself, or perhaps I am someone else entirely. I know exactly who I'm singing to. The song is then very specific to me. Making a piece of music personal allows an audience to paint their own emotional pictures as that story is being told. An instrumentalist can do the same thing. There's nothing different about it except the lack of lyrics. I feel that if there are lyrics to a tune, a player should know them. I was surprised and delighted once when I was casually singing in the back room of a temple with the great pianist Bill Charlap. I started "Moonlight In Vermont" and he quickly corrected a lyric I was singing. I believe that his knowledge of lyrics is part of what makes him such a wonderful player and accompanist.

I can hear a rebuttal coming on because I've heard it before. "I feel the music passionately when I'm playing. So the audience must feel it, too." Just remember that in performance, unlike rehearsal, your playing is not for you. When we become so self-involved, and the music becomes so "precious," we lose our audience. They detach because we are not considering them at all, not involving them in the experience. I have cringed when a horn player, so moved by his own solo, has turned his back to the crowd. I've daydreamed as a vocalist has sung an entire song to herself with tightly closed eyes. I've watched musicians who are unwilling to greet an audience, or talk about the piece they are about to play.

We've all been audience members, and we know how wonderful it feels to be included. Think of how fun it is when something unexpected happens on stage and the performer acknowledges it and makes a comment or a joke. Suddenly we are inside the experience. And unfortunately, that may be the moment we talk about when we leave the concert. Not that the music was bad. It may have been wonderful, but we weren't moved.

Show up with a reason and purpose, memorize, give something away and don't just play for you. Wherever you are performing, whether there are two people or a crowd of two thousand—it's always the same. You owe that audience something. They came to hear you with the hope of being carried somewhere else. They want to take that flight with you, not watch you go it alone. Relax in the effort of what you do and enjoy the ride. **DB**

Vocalist Sarah Partridge's fifth album, *Bright Lights & Promises: Redefining Janis Ian*, is available through Origin Records. Visit her online at sarahpartridge.com.



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Kurt Rosenwinkel's Guitar Solo on 'All The Way To Rajasthan'

For this month's transcription, from guitarist Kurt Rosenwinkel's 2003 album *Heartcore* (Verve), we have another twochord vamp going from a I minor to a IV7, like on Herbie Hancock's "Chameleon" solo from the September 2017 issue. Rosenwinkel's "All The Way To Rajasthan" is in the key of C minor (as opposed to B_{β} minor for "Chameleon") and has three measures of the tonic for one bar of the IV.

"All The Way To Rajasthan" is also a completely different groove, and Rosenwinkel plays with a much different improvisational approach than Hancock. Although the tune has some bits of Eastern influence, Rosenwinkle sticks mainly to jazz-oriented vocabulary in his solo.

For the most part, Rosenwinkel demonstrates a very fluid, legato style, but notice how he varies his articulation throughout the solo. His slurring is a prime example. Sometimes he attacks the strong beat and slurs into the weak beat (as he does in the last beat of measure 13 and the last two beats of measure 14), and other times he plays on the upbeat and slurs into the strong beat (going into measures 9, 11 and 12 are great examples). This is a subtle way of creating a sense of syncopation.

There's also Rosenwinkel's use of staccato and legato, especially at the ends of phrases. Ending phrases with long, sustaining notes (such as in measure 3, and at the very end of the solo in bar 25) as well as short, clipped notes (as in bars 11 and 14) is like the punctuation that gives sentences various emotions and shades of meaning. (An exclamation point gives a sentence a much different meaning than a question mark.)

But Rosenwinkel also varies his note lengths within these phrases. Sometimes staccato notes appear in the middle of phrases (heard in places like the end of bar 5 and toward the middles of bars 13–16). And though he often plays strings of 16th notes, Rosenwinkel often breaks those lines up with longer note durations—anything from an eighth note (end of bar 23) to a half note (bar 2).

The same is true for his silences. Rosenwinkel's rests range from 16ths (bars 10, 13, 22) to halfs (bar 19, and across the bar lines between measures 3–4 and 12–13). Also, sometimes rests are used to separate phrase, but sometimes they appear in the middle of phrases to add a sort of interior punctuation. Notice how from measure 8 through 11 he has sections where there is no space (bar 8, beat 2 through the middle of bar 9, beat 1) and also places where rests are inserted in between 16ths, breaking up the lines. Measure 12 is one. All the DJ's and F's imply some sort of DJ chord, which would make sense if he was implying a DJ7 resolving to the Cm in the next bar, and the G natural at the end reinforces this as either a DJ7(#11) or a G7(J5). Except for the C natural toward the end, which goes against this, but does connect with the next chord.

And at the end, the F6 chord. The seventh isn't clearly stated on this harmony, so it could

For the most part, Rosenwinkel demonstrates a very fluid, legato style, but notice how he varies his articulation throughout the solo.

We also don't hear Rosenwinkel using repetition or blues vocabulary as Hancock had done on the same chord progression. The chords imply a C dorian scale (Cm7 = C-E_p-G-B_p; F7 = F-A-C-E_p; together they make C-E_p-F-G-A-B_p, most of C dorian), and we do hear some dorian licks (bars 1-7, bar 21 and the first half of bar 23). But for much of his improvisation Rosenwinkel plays more "outside."

Sometimes he does this by implying other harmonies. A clear example is the end of bar 8. From the low G, Rosenwinkel ascends through a $G7(\downarrow 9)$ arpeggio. Even though the chord here is F6, $G7(\downarrow 9)$ is the V of Cm, which is the harmony in the subsequent measure. So his line resolves to the next chord.

Other examples are much more subtle.

be a dominant (which fits with the Cm chord), but it could also be heard as a major-seventh type harmony.

For the final bar of his improvisation, Rosenwinkel has decided to sample both. He starts off with an F ionian scale, as would fit an Fmaj7, but at the midpoint of the bar morphs into F mixolydian, as per an F7 chord. One could also hear this as a C mixolydian resolving to F mixolydian, implying a V/V chord. A nice touch at the end is when Rosenwinkel plays the E natural again, but this time as a chromatic passing tone between the F and E_b. So first he plays E, then E_b, and then finishes with both. **DB**

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

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BP Rose Max 135 Semi-Hollow Thick Tones, Clean Bite

hen you're a third-generation woodworker with a passion for guitars, what do you do? You start your own guitar company, and that is exactly what Sam Prace decided to do when he founded BP Rose Guitars. Prace designs and produces instruments with a goal of building the best possible guitars for a reasonable price. The Max 135 semi-hollow is BP Rose's flagship model, and true to his word, Prace has delivered a guitar with a level of playability and craftsmanship that's quite impressive considering its \$1,950 price tag.

Prace began building guitars in 1982, constructing Strat and Tele copies in his father's cabinet shop. He launched BP Rose in 1987, taking the "BP" from his dad's name, Ben Prace, and "Rose" from the name of his family's cabinet shop, Rosewood. Prace prides himself on his extensive research, which he feels is a key factor in producing a good product. After years of building "copy" guitars, Prace began to work on his own concepts, and in 1995 he completed his first original design: the Max 135.

The initial goal for the Max 135 was to offer an affordable alternative to the Gibson Les Paul. After creating the prototype, Prace decided he needed to seek out a source for manufacturing his guitars and eventually settled on a factory in Japan that he felt was capable of maintaining the level of quality that BP Rose demands. With the 135 and other BP Rose models, all the woodwork and finishing is done in Japan but the electronics and hardware are all installed in the United States.

The Max 135 features a semi-hollow design with a mahogany body capped with a flamed maple top. The guitar's body and sides are made from a single piece of wood that's routed out to create the internal chambers and center block. The 135 is a comfortable 13.5 inches across the lower bout and 1¼ inches deep, with a single Florentine cutaway and two bound f-holes. The guitar has a 22-fret one-piece mahogany set-in neck with a 24¾-inch scale length. It features a dual set of custom-wound Lindy Fralin pickups with a three-way selector switch and individual volume and tone controls, reminiscent of the Les Paul. All the hardware is manufactured by Gotoh with the exception of the Bigsby vibrato tailpiece. Available in natural or sunburst and finished in high-gloss nitrocellulose lacquer, the guitar is quite attractive with very clean workmanship throughout.

The combination of its semi-hollow design and dual pickup wiring make this an extremely versatile guitar. The bridge pickup offers tons of clean bite and mellows nicely when rolling off treble. The neck humbucker provides thick and warm tones while still maintaining clarity, and combining the two delivers a huge range of choices suitable for nearly any musical style. The Max 135 plays well and is comfortable to hold, but the Bigsby does add a bit of weight to the package. BP Rose gives the option of a Gotoh stop tailpiece in place of the Bigsby.

The Max 135 is a fine example of Prace's commitment to quality and value. Not only is the guitar available for under \$2,000 with a hard case, but BP Rose offers a 100-percent lifetime guarantee on every instrument it sells. If anything goes wrong, they will fix it at no cost, and even if you sell it, the guarantee stays

with the instrument. This level of pride and commitment is all too rare in business today, and I truly believe Prace when he says, "I do this from the heart, not the pocketbook."

—Keith Baumann bproseguitars.com

Dorico 1.1 Music Notation System Extensive Chord-Symbol Entry, Editing

The year 2016 saw the release of Dorico, the much-anticipated introduction of Steinberg's entry into the music notation software field. I was able to take a look late last year and was notably impressed with the overall ideological approach and attention to workflow detail.

While a few critical things had not been addressed in that initial release, the Dorico team had (and has) a very strong presence through their corporate channels and on social media and, as much as possible, has been very transparent about the roadmap for critical future features.

The fourth update (all free so far) landed at the end of Q2 2017 and, at 500 improvements and fixes, Dorico 1.1 is the most significant update yet. The biggest feature introduced in this release is the ability to enter and edit chords.

Now when you are in Write mode, there is a new chord symbol icon at the bottom of the right toolbar. After clicking on the icon, you can use the computer keyboard to easily add chords and extensions, including polychords. Once in chord mode and clicking on a note head, you are presented with the standard Dorico editing popup.

Typing "Cm" into this popup and hitting "enter" gives you Cmin. Typing "C+" gives you Caug. Typing "F#|Ab" results in a polychord with F# on top. There is also an entry for "No Chord." While entering chords, you can easily navigate within and between measures by using the tab, space and arrow keys. If you enter the options pane in Engrave mode, you are able to adjust globally how you move back and forth while entering chords. Depending on the number of chords per measure, different projects may benefit from different chord navigation settings. Chords can also be entered via your MIDI keyboard by playing the desired chord, giving you ultimate flexibility.

There are also ways to tell Dorico exactly how you want a chord represented. So if you play E, G, B and C, you have the option of expressing that as Cmaj7/E or Em (add β 13). And further options allow you to display that as either β 13 or β 6.

There is also another level of display options for chords. Let's say you want a C augmented chord displayed not as "Caug" but as "C+." In most other programs, you would take care of these options in the chord entry mode as you write. But, keeping with the Dorico philosophy that the musical content exists independently of the score layout, there is another layer of options of how chords are displayed by entering Engrave mode.

These additional options on how to display chords are quite extensive. There are nine presets that affect how all chords are displayed. For example, in the Default preset, a C major 7th chord is displayed as Cmaj7 and C minor appears as Cm. Choose the Indiana preset, and now you have a triangle (Δ) for major chords and a minus sign (–) for minor chords. And, if the presets are not giving you what you want, there are almost 70 settings on this chord option page where you can customize almost every chord option imaginable.

If you require further tweaking, included in that list is a design section where you can micro-edit placement and size settings related to superscripts, subscripts, stacked alterations, bars for polychords and more. This is another example of how Dorico has again successfully decoupled the writing process from the engraving process, keeping you focused on the task at hand.

While there are still no templates yet devoted to jazz, with the addition of extensive chord-symbol entry and editing,



Dorico is one step closer to being a one-stop shop for jazz publishing.

Some other improvements of note in Dorico 1.1 include the ability to adjust where chords are displayed within a staff system; the ability to show repeat endings optionally below the bottom staff of the system; comprehensive support for piano pedal lines; the ability to edit note or rhythmic spacing of your music in Engrave mode; and improvements to playback, including fixes to handling changes of playing technique. —*Matt Kern*

steinberg.net/en



Bari Woodwinds Infinity HR *Premium Ebonite, Tonal Control, Responsive Articulation*

Bari Woodwinds has produced a new line of professional saxophone mouthpieces called Infinity HR. Players will find these hard-rubber members of the Bari lineup available at great prices for soprano, alto, tenor and baritone saxophones.

CNC-machined from premium ebonite for consistency, Infinity HR mouthpieces share a classy marble-looking exterior and feature a higher baffle than previous Bari lines. The alto and tenor models that I play-tested had a free-blowing feel and produced a pleasing tone quality. Pitches were very well centered regardless of volume level (including subtone). Articulation was responsive and tuning was reliable throughout all registers.

I found the Infinity HR (size 5) alto mouthpiece to be a good fit for my Selmer Mark VI while playing lead on a couple of big band gigs. Section blend and power for soloing were easily achieved using #2½ Vandoren Java Red Box and #3 Hemke reeds with a Vandoren M/O ligature. My alto tone sounded warm at all dynamic levels, even when increasing volume to stay on top of the section during soli passages. The Infinity HR alto model is a bit longer and broader than my regular hard-rubber alto mouthpiece, and it gave my embouchure a relaxed, secure feeling. Infinity HR alto mouthpieces are available in tip-opening sizes 5 (.072), 6 (.077), 7 (.082) and 8 (.087), with an MSRP of \$260.95.

The Infinity HR tenor mouthpiece (size 7*) sounded great in two vastly different settings: a big band performance and a rock band gig. Big band sectional playing blended easily, and when it came time to solo, I found myself able to push the volume to the point where I didn't even need a microphone.

The Infinity HR absolutely crushed it in the rock/pop environment, providing plenty of power while cruising the altissimo register during solos and purring sweetly while quietly backing the vocalist on a sultry number. Playing a Mark VI tenor, I had the most success using #21/2 Vandoren Java Red Box reeds for the big band and #3 Java Red Box reeds for the rock band, both paired with a Vandoren M/O ligature. This piece reminded me of the power and immediate response of the old Vandoren Jumbo Java mouthpiece with a high baffle. Infinity HR tenor mouthpieces are available in sizes 5* (.085), 6 (.090), 6* (.095), 7 (.100), 7* (.105), 8 (.110), 8* (.115), 9 (.120), 9* (.125) and 10 (.130), at an MSRP of \$276.95.

Infinity HR mouthpieces for soprano (MSRP: \$226.95) are available in sizes 5 (.062), 6 (.064), 7 (.068) and 8 (.072). Baritone models (MSRP: \$323.95) come in sizes 6 (.090), 7 (.100), 8 (.110), 9 (.120) and 10 (.130).

Infinity HR saxophone mouthpieces allow for aggressive playing and superb tonal control across the saxophone's entire range, offering great projection and control. —Bruce Gibson

bariwoodwind.com



Jazz On Campus >



A KU student big band performs at New York's Jazz at Lincoln Center.

KU Fosters Jazz Work Ethic

THE UNIVERSITY OF KANSAS (KU) School of Music has come a long way since the early 1970s, when jazz was openly discouraged.

"Back in those years, the story goes that the dean used to threaten any students he heard playing jazz," said Dan Gailey, director of KU's jazz studies program and producer of the annual KU Jazz Festival in Lawrence.

Today, said current Dean Bob Walzel, all KU music students are required to take at least one jazz class, and the institution boasts of its advanced jazz curriculum.

"We really push the envelope on creative programming," said Gailey, who's also a clarinet professor. "We use the building blocks of bebop, but we're doing everything from exploring Turkish music to getting our students to write charts of Kneebody's music for a performance on campus. We push students to explore the blurry boundaries that exist in music today. I want them to leave here as really well-rounded musicians."

Of KU's 600 music majors, about a dozen are jazz majors, while a total of 120 students are pursuing a minor in the jazz studies program. Another three students are enrolled in KU's new Master of Music, Jazz/Composition program. Gailey and Walzel are currently working on a plan to roll out an MM in jazz studies, as well.

Gailey said the common thread among the students he has recruited is the work ethic that goes toward putting in significant time to listen and absorb the jazz language.

"I've played all kinds of music," said Gailey, a saxophonist, "and I know that jazz is harder to play than anything else. You have to put in the time. When I'm judging applicants to our program I'm listening for whether a player's sound is informed by listening. I want the ones who are listening."

The jazz studies program has both performance and academic components, including three big bands and seven combos, as well as classes in arranging, improvisation, jazz history, theory and pedagogy. The primary big band has recently made trips to Europe, and the combos have won multiple DownBeat Student Music Awards.

Like many institutions, KU has introduced business classes to its music program, exposing students to important subjects like copyright and taxes. The university offers a music enterprise certificate to undergraduate and music major students who pursue the full course of study, which is intended to provide a foundational understanding and experience in establishing, managing and promoting music businesses.

"We strive to be realistic about what we're giving to young people and where they will take what we give them here," Gailey said. "There are a handful of our grads who play locally, and some are teaching privately. Some have gone on to graduate programs, and others are teaching in public schools. But I also know that a number of graduates go on to law school or medical school, and they thrive there because they've learned to think creatively.

"I want us to keep looking for non-traditional opportunities for our students, and I'd like to see our program get bigger as long as it makes sense for us."

Walzel added: "A big part of the reason that music students are required to take jazz courses now is that we recognize the importance of this music's history—the social history of jazz and the fact that, if you can connect with it, the music becomes so much broader."

—James Hale

School Notes >



Jazz at MSU: A group of acclaimed musicians will participate in the Michigan State University Federal Credit Union Jazz Artists in Residence program from October 2017 through March 2018. Launched in 2013, the MSU College of Music's residency program attracts high-level talent to teach, mentor and perform at the university and at K-12 schools and academies across the state. Made possible by a \$1 million endowment from the MSU Federal Credit union, the program has become a model for other educational institutions. Drummer Harvey Mason will be in residence Dec. 4–10, followed by pianist Helen Sung (Feb. 5–11) and saxophonist Steve Wilson (March 19-25). music.msu.edu

American Ideas: As part of its Spirit of Jazz & Democracy series, St. Mary's College of Maryland will present a master class on improvisation taught by Dominic Fragman and Paul F. Murphy on Nov. 29, starting at 6 p.m. in Montgomery Hall. The class will explore how jazz performance concepts can be applied to everyday life. A Dec. 8 concert at Auerbach Auditorium will feature Fragman, Murphy, Larry Willis and poet Jere Carroll. <u>smcm.edu</u>

Reid in NOLA: As part of the University of New Orleans' Jazz @ the Sandbar series, bassist Rufus Reid will perform on Nov. 8, and clarinetist James Evans will perform on Nov. 15. Reid will also present a Nov. 9 workshop as part of UNO's Meet the Artist series. The workshop—which will be held at 2 p.m. in the UNO Performing Arts Center, Room 103—is free and open to the public. <u>uno.edu/cola/music</u>

Helping Children: On July 20, Seattle nonprofit organization Childhaven announced the establishment of the Chris Cornell Music Therapy Program at Childhaven in memory of the late rock musician and philanthropist. Vicky Cornell has committed \$100,000 to assist Childhaven's therapeutic early learning model for trauma-affected children. "Music has the power to engage, to delight and to heal," said Childhaven CEO Jon Botten. The Chris & Vicky Cornell Foundation previously contributed to Childhaven's music therapy program in 2013. childhaven.org

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Blindfold Test > BY DAN OUELLETTE

Ambrose Akinmusire

rumpeter Ambrose Akinmusire took his first DownBeat Blindfold Test in a packed house at the Jazz Café during the North Sea Jazz Festival in Rotterdam, The Netherlands, on July 9 shortly before he performed with his quartet. Audience members included pianist/keyboardist Craig Taborn and trumpeter Marquis Hill, both of whom performed at the festival.

Thad Jones/Mel Lewis Orchestra

"Low Down" (All My Yesterdays: The Debut 1966 Recordings At The Village Vanguard, Resonance, 2016, rec'd 1966) Jones, Jimmy Nottingham, Bill Berry, Jimmy Owens, Danny Stiles, trumpets; Jack Rains, Garnett Brown, Cliff Heather, Tom McIntosh, trombones; Jerome Richardson, Jerry Dodgion, Joe Farrell, Eddie Daniels, Pepper Adams, saxophones; Hank Jones, piano; Sam Herman, guitar; Richard Davis, bass; Lewis, drums. It sounds like Thad Jones in the latter part of his life. The first Thad Jones record I got was *The Magnificent Thad Jones*. Later Marcus Belgrave became one of my mentors, and one day as we were driving he told me that I should do a tribute to Thad Jones because I had similar harmonics as he did. And Marcus added that I also looked like Thad.

Thad Jones didn't get the credit he deserved as an improviser because he was such an amazing big band composer. But he was an amazing trumpeter, too. I like this because it shows how inventive Thad Jones was, how he was playing in the moment. He was taking the background and embellishing on it to move the tune forward.

Jonathan Finlayson & Sicilian Defense

"Flank And Center" (*Moving Still*, Pi Recordings, 2016) Finlayson, trumpet; Matt Mitchell, piano; Miles Okazaki, guitar; John Hébert, bass; Craig Weinrib, drums.

Jonathan Finlayson—his latest album. That's my man. We grew up together. I met Jonathan when I was in the 6th grade in Oakland [California]. We were in a citywide all-star band together. We went to middle school together and started playing jazz at the same time, then we went to high school together. Whenever I was working on something, Jonathan could always do it better.

I was just on the phone with him today, talking about the trumpet and music. I know this new music so well because we came up together. The elements he's added to his band, like the piano, are interesting as he's focusing more on composition and the ensemble.

Don Cherry

"Dewey's Tune" (*Critics' Pick Sampler*, Vol. 1, Black Saint/Soul Note, 1997) Cherry, pocket trumpet; Dewey Redman, tenor saxophone, musette; Charlie Haden, bass; Ed Blackwell, drums, gong.

At first I thought Johnny Coles. Is this Don Cherry? I see him as the first trumpeter who was trying to expand what the instrument could do in terms of intervals and different types of sound. He was one of the first trumpeters trying to break the trumpet apart to investigate all it could do.

Clark Terry

"One Foot In The Gutter" (*In Orbit*, Riverside, 1958) Terry, flugelhorn; Thelonious Monk, piano; Sam Jones, bass; Philly Joe Jones, drums.

This is Clark Terry with Thelonious Monk on *In Orbit*. Clark Terry was one of the first trumpet players I heard who just murdered the horn. This tune sounds like church, with the chordal movement and the way Monk is playing the triads. You can hear Clark and Monk having conversations.

Christian Scott aTunde Adjuah

"Phases" (*Ruler Rebel*, Stretch/Ropeadope, 2017) Scott aTunde Adjuah, trumpet, samples; Cliff Hines, guitar; Luques Curtis, bass; Joe Dyson Jr., pan-African drums, Roland SPX-SX; Sarah Elizabeth Charles, vocals.

It's Christian Scott. I know this record. I check out all my peers. I try to



keep hip to what's going on.

Christian and I have known each other since we were kids. I met him when he came to play at Yoshi's [in Oakland] when he was 15. I was 17 at the time and my friends kept telling me, "You've got to hear this new cat." He was playing with his uncle Donald Harrison, and he played "Donna Lee." *Wow!* So I met him and we became friends. He's my brother in the music. I appreciate that he's stuck to his vision.

When we were younger, he would talk about all the things he was going to do with his music, and he's doing it now. I can hear it on this [track], the way he uses drum samples. This song is so cool. I like the vocalist, who has a great album out [*Inner Dialogue*] that Christian co-produced. Christian sounds like a vocalist, so it makes sense that he's playing with her.

Johnny Coles

"My Sweet Passion" (*Little Johnny C*, Blue Note, 2005, rec'd 1963) Coles, trumpet, Leo Wright, alto saxophone, flute; Joe Henderson, tenor saxophone; Duke Pierson, piano; Bob Cranshaw, bass; Pete La Roca, drums.

Is it Kenny Dorham? Is that Joe Henderson? Oh, Johnny Coles. He's one of those cats that not many people know about. Is this *Little Johnny C*? I don't know that much about him, but a lot of my mentors sure know about him. He spent a lot of time in Oakland and the Bay Area.

At first I thought it was Art Blakey and the Jazz Messengers, but then the lines the trumpeter was playing didn't sound like Kenny Dorham even though the tone and inflections did. I enjoyed this.

Enrico Rava/Stefano Bollani

"In Search Of Titina" (The Third Man, ECM, 2007) Rava, trumpet; Bollani, piano.

I don't know who this is. I like it from a trumpet standpoint—the execution, the articulation is so clean. That's difficult to do. It felt like the trumpet player and the piano player have played together a long time. I don't know who the pianist is because I was spending so much time listening to the trumpeter. [*An audience member guesses correctly.*] I was thinking the same thing. I like Enrico Rava and I hope to eventually play with him. I know a lot of his records, but I didn't recognize this. I appreciate the fact that Enrico has continued to search throughout his career. 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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