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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." CHARLES LLOYD NEW QUARTET

CHARLES LLOYD NEW QUARTET PASSIN' THRU

NEA Jazz Master saxophonist and musical truth-seeker Charles Lloyd reconvenes his remarkable New Quartet with pianist JASON MORAN, bassist REUBEN ROGERS, and drummer ERIC HARLAND and takes us on another mystical journey with this live recording of Lloyd's original compositions.



BLUE NOTE ALL-STARS OUR POINT OF VIEW

With its latest iteration, the **Blue Note All-Stars** take listeners on an exuberant musical exploration, while making their mark on the future. The supergroup features modern-day luminaries **ROBERT GLASPER**, **AMBROSE AKINMUSIRE**, **MARCUS STRICKLAND**, **LIONEL LOUEKE**, **DERRICK HODGE** and **KENDRICK SCOTT**, with guest appearances by WAYNE SHORTER and HERBIE HANCOCK.



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.



ON THE COVER



Can't-Fail Energy BY BILL MILKOWSKI

The bassist-vocalist-bandleader talks about her new album, *Exposure*, which was created during 77 continuous hours as the recording sessions were streamed on Facebook Live. Spalding tells DownBeat why she wanted to work in that unusual setting, and why only 7,777 copies of *Exposure* will be made.

FEATURES

- 38 Dave Douglas Abstract Inspiration BY DAN OUELLETTE
- 42 Willie Jones III Merging Swing & Swagger BY TED PANKEN
- **47 Best Albums of 2017** 5-, 4½- and 4-star albums from the past year



Cover photo of Esperanza Spalding shot by Jimmy & Dena Katz at Pioneer Works in Brooklyn on Oct. 5. Info on concerts and programs at Pioneer Works is posted at pioneerworks.org.







76 Marius Neset



JAZZ SCHOOL

- 82 Making the Grade BY ANTONIO J. GARCÍA
- 84 Jazzing up Jazz Band BY JB DYAS, PH.D.
- 92 Communal Listening BY ROBERT HURST
- 94 Teaching with Technology BY MICHAEL FEIN
- 96 Italy's Siena Jazz Workshop BY TED PANKEN
- 102 Transcription Kamasi Washington Tenor Sax Solo
- 104 Toolshed

DEPARTMENTS

72 Adam Larson

- 8 First Take
- 10 Chords & Discords
- 13 The Beat
- 26 Players
 - Matt Mitchell Eric Wyatt

Shannon Barnett Blaque Dynamite

- 61 Reviews
- 110 Jazz On Campus
- 114 Blindfold Test Sean Jones



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Tremendous Volume

THE SHEER QUANTITY OF MUSIC TODAY can sometimes be overwhelming, whether you work as a musician, journalist, club owner or concert promoter—or even if you're just a fan.

On the Chords & Discords page in this issue, there's a letter from Doug Holtby, who sent us an email expressing his reaction as he read through the album titles and artists' names in the 2017 DownBeat Readers Poll in our December issue. Holtby felt that "it's no longer possible to even attempt a survey or synthesis of the many tributaries of profoundly interesting and satisfying music that each year brings."

Providing that type of survey is precisely the goal of the DownBeat Readers Poll. Some folks will, of course, feel that the poll does not reflect their tastes in every category. But it does provide a snapshot of what our readers from around the globe are responding to.

Another such compilation of data appears in this issue, with our "Best Albums of 2017" feature beginning on page 47. The January issue of DB arrives in time for music buyers to use it as a shopping guide during the holiday season. Included in the "Best Albums" list are releases that received a rating of 4 stars or higher, with a short description of the 5-star albums (i.e., those that our critics have deemed a "masterpiece").

When you turn to those pages, there's a temptation to say, "How could I possibly hear *all* of this music?" Well, you can't. And that lengthy list only contains the albums that got a 4-star rating and up. There are, of course, hundreds of other worthy, important albums that got a rating of 3¹/₂ stars or less, or that we simply didn't have the space to include in the Reviews section during the past 12 months.

Sometimes we need to remind readers that the number of reviews they see in DB represents only a fraction of the albums that are sent to us.

I was at a party recently, and when I told a fellow that I was the editor of DownBeat, he said, "You must get a lot of pitches. Do you get, like, 25 pitches a week?" I explained that I get more than 100 pitches *per day*, in the form of emails, download links, phone calls and physical CDs and LPs shipped to our office.

What we do at DownBeat is our best attempt to curate a diverse assortment of features, news stories and reviews in each issue, representing a variety of artists, instruments, styles, music labels, age groups, geographic locations, etc.

As editors, one of the most common complaints we hear is, "How could you possibly include a feature on Artist A, but not a feature on Artist B?" Well, difficult decisions have to be made because hundreds of artists are under consideration as candidates for the four major features that appear in a typical issue of DownBeat.

We shine a spotlight on brilliant musicians who make superb music. And if that musician is also eloquent in explaining his or her inspirations or processes, then that's the recipe for a terrific story. In this issue, you'll find features on bassist-vocalist-bandleader Esperanza Spalding, trumpeter/label owner Dave Douglas and drummer/label owner Willie Jones III. These are fascinating human beings, people that we'd love to talk to even if each of them *weren't* one of the most talented jazz musicians on the scene today. Brilliant music + brilliant minds = editorial gold.

Let us know if you agree. Please send an email to editor@downbeat.com and tell us what you like or dislike about this issue. Thanks. **DB**

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Ricky Riccardi, Director of Research Collections, Louis Armstrong House Museum





Chords පි Discords

Wynton's Well-Deserved Honor

I've never been a huge fan of Wynton Marsalis' trumpet playing, his polarizing opinions or his work with the Jazz at Lincoln Center Orchestra. However, I am thrilled about his induction into the DownBeat Hall of Fame (December).

Wynton's legacy as jazz music's premier ambassador has been well documented. But I truly believe he and his brother Branford deserve a massive thanks from everyone in jazz-regardless of sub-genre preference-for helping to "save" this precious art form. Back in the late '70s and early '80s, jazz as we know it was dead. Heck, it wasn't even called jazz, but was disdainfully referred to as "acoustic jazz"-connoting old-fashioned music played by has-beens in leisure suits. Things got so bad that Cedar Walton started making disco funk records, Kenny Burrell couldn't draw more than four patrons to San Francisco's Keystone Korner and the greatest jazz band on the planet, V.S.O.P., couldn't get a record deal.

Wynton and Branford—with their retro suits, brash attitudes and fresh take on hard-bop/



post-bop—made jazz hip again. Although the popularity of jazz will never be great, it's a hell of a lot better today than it was during the dark days of '81. I'm sure some DownBeat readers will tear their hair out over Wynton's induction, but there's no disputing his enormous talent and profound impact on the music we love so dearly.

GORDON WEBB SANTA CLARA, CALIFORNIA

)

Joel Frahm's Pure Joy

I'm sitting in the Park View diner in uptown Manhattan, and the music they're playing on the sound system is first rate: tracks by Jaleel Shaw, Marc Cary, and then something that catches me by surprise: "Someday My Prince Will Come," the Miles Davis version.

Of course it's just as beautiful to my ears as it's always been, with Miles' lovely, intimate statement of the melody and incredible mastery of dramatic harmonic effect within just a few tones. The end of that solo—*whew!* After Miles, Hank Mobley enters, playing so beautiful and light. (I've always hated the critics dissing this solo in comparison to John Coltrane's admittedly virtuosic masterpiece later in the track.) Suddenly I'm falling in love with this music—recorded 56 years ago—all over again.

Then Wynton Kelly enters, all clarity and unfettered, swinging bliss, and I look to my left and see a father and his 7- or 8-year-old son at a patio table. The young boy is miming as if he is playing the Wynton Kelly solo, completely into the feeling of the song and obviously enjoying it unselfconsciously and thoroughly.

Something about seeing this pierced my heart today. It was a moment of such simple and sheer beauty during a period of time that has seemed so very dark to me—with each passing day bringing more bad news, big and small. Sometimes the universe shows you a moment that reminds you of reasons to be alive and grateful, doesn't it? I need another napkin.

JOEL FRAHM GOODOLDJOEL@HOTMAIL.COM

Cheers for Rudresh & Rudy's

Rudresh Mahanthappa is a great player, and I always enjoyed his performances with Bob Lark's DePaul Jazz Ensemble in Chicago ("Finding Affirmation," November).

Also, I have a comment regarding another article in that same issue—your story on the Nashville venue Rudy's Jazz Room. My son's group, Visceral Trio, played at Rudy's in May. It's a beautiful, comfortable venue with great acoustics. The owner is gently trying to teach the patrons that being quiet during a performance is a good thing.

TOM BECKWITH TLBECKWITH@SBCGLOBAL.NET

So Much Music

In perusing the 2017 DownBeat Readers Poll results, it occurs to me that it's no longer possible to even attempt a survey or synthesis of the many tributaries of profoundly interesting and satisfying music that each year brings. I'm not convinced that our more conservative common denominator represents what we're *actually* listening to.

DOUG HOLTBY EDMONTON, ALBERTA

Correction

In the December print edition, the review of Chet Doxas' *Rich In Symbols* (Ropeadope) misspelled the name Zack Lober.

DOWNBEAT REGRETS THE ERROR.

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Django Bates' Belovèd The Study of Touch

Django Bates piano Petter Eldh double bass Peter Broun drums



NYC Concerts Raise Funds for Puerto Rico

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Generous artists in the New York jazz community rallied to assist the people of Puerto Rico with a pair of benefit concerts.

On Oct. 23, more than 300 attendees jammed (Le) Poisson Rouge for a show billed *Salsa Meets Jazz For Puerto Rico*, which raised money for the Jazz Foundation of America. Organized by drummer/percussionist Bobby Sanabria, the show featured his Multiverse Big Band with an array of guests.

At the start of the two-and-a-half-hour concert, Sanabria told the cheering crowd, "Despite the fact that our government has treated the people of Puerto Rico as second-class citizens, tonight they will be treated with the respect, the honor, the majesty they deserve." Then taking his seat center stage behind his drum kit, Sanabria kicked off the musical proceedings with "Mosaico Puertoriqueño," a lively homage to the island's many indigenous rhythms.

The poet Mariposa delivered her piece "What Does It Mean Be Puerto Rican," accompanied by violinist Ben Sutin, unfurling the flag of Puerto Rico at a climactic moment. Fittingly the band followed with Eddie Palmieri's "Puerto Rico," which featured trumpeter Jon Faddis.

Vocalists Brenda Feliciano and Antoinette Montague followed, singing "Capullito De Aleli" and "Let The Good Times Roll," respectively, with alto saxophonist Patrick Bartley joining the band on the former and pianist Valerie Capers and trumpeter Jimmy Owens on the latter.



Paquito D'Rivera joined the Multiverse ensemble on clarinet for a powerful rendition of Puerto Rican-born Ellington trombonist Juan Tizol's "Caravan." The band's percussion section was featured on "El Lider," before trumpeter Randy Brecker stepped into the spotlight for a rousing version of "Cumbanchero."

Candido wowed the crowd with an extended conga recital on "Manteca" before the night ended with vocalist Rachel Kara Perez's moving rendition of "Preciosa."

On Nov. 1 The Jazz Gallery hosted *Fuerza Puerto Rico*, a sold-out show organized by alto saxophonist and San Juan native Miguel Zenón. His quartet with pianist Luis Perdomo, bassist Jorge Roeder and drummer Rudy Royston opened the evening's first set with his "Cantor." Afterward Zenón addressed the crowd, noting that 41 days after Hurricane Maria, conditions had not improved much, with many on the island still without electricity or water.

Other artists performing at The Jazz Gallery included Peter Bernstein, Dave Douglas, Kurt Elling, Larry Grenadier, Jon Irabagon, Branford Marsalis, Christian McBride and John Scofield. The evening ended with just about everybody gathering onstage for a rousing "Caravan."

In addition to raising thousands of dollars, these two concerts raised awareness about the obstacles Puerto Rican musicians now face. The Jazz Foundation of America has been assisting with relief efforts. Its co-director Joe Petrucelli said, "We have taken on 50 cases in Puerto Rico and are providing direct financial support to musicians and their families. We expect the number of cases to continue growing, as there are no prospects for employment, with venues closed and tourism cratering." —*Russ Musto*

Riffs >



O.P. Fest To Honor Granz: The inaugural Oscar Peterson International Jazz Festival will honor the centennial of jazz icon Norman Granz. With pianist Renee Rosnes serving as artistic director, the festival will take place Feb. 16–18 in the Niagara Wine Country of Ontario, Canada. Opening night will feature Cécile McLorin Salvant, Jon Faddis, Jimmy Greene, Michael Dease, Benny Green, Christian McBride and Kenny Washington in a concert billed as an International All-Star "Jazz at the Philharmonic." Rosnes and pianist Bill Charlap will perform as a duo on Feb. 17. The fest closes with The Canadian Jazz Lions concert, featuring Carol Welsman, Kevin Turcotte, Mike Murley, Robi Botos, Dave Young and Jim Doxas. More info: opjazzfest.org

Road Doggies: Snarky Puppy will begin its 2018 U.S. tour with two performances at the Variety Playhouse in Atlanta on Feb. 14–15, followed by shows in Nashville (Feb. 16), Raleigh, North Carolina (Feb. 17), Silver Springs, Maryland (Feb. 18), Boulder, Colorado (Feb. 20), Denver (Feb. 21), Lincoln, Nebraska (Feb. 22–23), Portland, Oregon (Feb. 24), Seattle (Feb. 25), San Diego (Feb. 26), Los Angeles (Feb. 27) and San Francisco (March 1-4). Prior to the tour, the group will perform at New York's Carnegie Hall on Jan. 25 (in a concert billed as "Snarky Puppy with David Crosby and Friends") and serve as host band with daily sets at the second-annual GroundUP Music Festival in Miami Beach, Florida, Feb. 9-11.

More info: snarkypuppy.com

Final Bar: Pianist and singer Fats Domino, a pioneer of rock 'n' roll, died on Oct. 24 at his home in Harvey, Louisiana. He was 89. Among his 1950s hits were "Ain't That A Shame," "Blueberry Hill" and "I'm Walkin'." Harry Connick Jr. tweeted a tribute that read, in part, "You helped pave the way for New Orleans piano players." ... Jazz drummer **Grady Tate**, who also had a career as a vocalist, died at his home in Manhattan on Oct. 8. He was 85. He worked with Ella Fitzgerald, Stan Getz, Clark Terry and Quincy Jones. Tate contributed vocals to the animated series *Schoolhouse Rock!*



Vocalists Shine at Stockholm Jazz Festival

ONE OF THE FIRST SETS AT THIS YEAR'S Stockholm Jazz Festival, which ran Oct. 6–15, started with a formless, 21-minute excavation. It was by Sweden's Tonbruket quartet. For newcomers to this band, anything seemed possible, but suddenly, from formless to form, the group moved into a 6/4 groove.

Acoustic bassist Dan Berglund (formerly of the Esbjörn Svensson Trio)—flanked by guitarist Johan Lindstrom and drummer Andreas Werlin on one side and keyboardist/violinist Martin Hederos on the other—led the band through Lindstrom's "Tarantella," a robust, combustible shuffle. The band's onstage telepathy and cohesion were impressive, even if some of the music itself was somewhat pedestrian. Throughout the band's 90-minute set, no one stood out as a preeminent soloist, although each player took his share of the spotlight.

There were periods of goth-like rock followed by sudden pauses that led to a more classical approach, with pianist Hederos moving from organ back to piano, replete with rubato flourishes worthy of the late Keith Emerson.

Performing music from her two-CD set *Terrestrial* (the third in a trilogy for Hoob Records), Swedish singer Lina Nyberg and her superb band delivered a very distinctive program. Accompanying Nyberg's unique vocals, pianist Cecilia Persson, electric guitarist David Stackenas, bassist Josef Kallerdahl and drummer Peter Danemo filled in for the string orchestra heard on *Terrestrial*. The two-set performance at the venue Fasching was bookended with impressive interpretations, beginning with a haunting take on "Lazy Afternoon" (which is a track on *Terrestrial*) and concluding with Baden Powell's colorful "X Canto De Ossanha."

The group's ways of approaching a song, with odd intervals for soloists and interludes that would change course with contrasting tempos and rhythms, kept the music fresh and pleasingly unpredictable. Stakenas' often reverb-laden guitar complemented Nyberg's heavily narrative, theatrical vocal style. Going from dramatic and cloudy to bright, Nyberg and her band seemed like extensions of one another, despite the music's idiosyncrasies.

Other notable singers this year included another Swede, Rigmor Gustafsson, who performed at Fasching to a packed house. Gustafsson delivered a tasty mix of familiar tunes, ably supported by her band of bassist Martin Hoper, drummer Chris Montgomery and pianist Daniel Karlsson. Novel arrangements were the bill of fare: a waltzing, robust take on Burt Bacharach's "Walk On By," a slow and easeful "Over The Rainbow," and James Taylor's "Fire And Rain," performed at a deliberate pace that was more akin to folk than jazz, but with a slight touch of funk.

Jessica Curran (who was born in Massachusetts but is now based in Stockholm) displayed her versatility by singing in a variety of styles in two separate concerts. At her standing-room-only show at the 150-seat Scalateatern, she and her rotating seven-piece band visited material from her debut album of original music, *Here.* Traversing both spritely and more worldly terrain, Curran's life-affirming voice conveyed a sense of yearning.

Sweden's Vivian Buczek sang music from her new album, *Ella Lives* (Prophone). Appearing at Plugged Records, Buczek was accompanied by pianist Martin Sjostedt, bassist Niklas Fernquist and drummer Lofcrantz Ramsay, with special guest trumpeter/vocalist Peter Asplund on select numbers. Buczek's delicate voice is well suited to songs made popular by Fitzgerald, which this night included "You'd Be So Nice To Come Home To," an uptempo "Yesterdays" and a crawling "Prelude To A Kiss." *—John Ephland*

Barber Reanimates Standards

NOT LONG AGO, RAHSAAN BARBER WAS talking with some friends about his new album of standards, *The Music In The Night*. One of them asked: "Does the world *really* need another recording of 'The Girl From Ipanema?"

"I got a little miffed," the saxophonist recalled. "So when these people came to one of my gigs, I played 'Ipanema.' Then afterwards I said to them, 'Well, now I'll ask you: Does the world need another recording of this?' And everybody was like, 'Yeah.'"

Other than proving again that music usually speaks more eloquently than words, this exchange also says a lot about how standards are—and ought to be—perceived. On the one hand, it's easy to play through well-known tunes more or less on autopilot. A more fruitful strategy is to accept that familiarity as a challenge, to engage with the material in ways that are unique to who you are.

That was Barber's mission with *The Music In The Night*, released on his Jazz Music City label. You could say he's been gearing up for it since childhood, when he first heard Billie Holiday's rendition of "Georgia On My Mind."

"I'd grown up thinking that Ray Charles *was* that tune," he said. "But her recording made it almost like I'd never heard the song before. And now it's my favorite version."

That recording helped instill a respect for standards as springboards to self-expression. "My connection with a song begins with whether I want to grab my horn when I hear it," Barber said. "It has to have an emotional landscape or potential. But it can be hard to separate the song from the arrangement. 'My Favorite Things' started as a pop song. But if you take it out of the John Coltrane library, then I'm gonna have a major problem with you because his interpreta-



tion is the key. It's interpretation that offers jazz artists a chance to be familiar *and* individual."

Barber and his Nashville cohorts—pianist Matt Endahl, bassist Jack Aylor, drummer Derrek Phillips and guests James DaSilva on guitar and vocalist Dara Tucker—pursue new insights into "Ipanema," "Isn't She Lovely" and "Skylark." They offer a reggae-flavored "My Funny Valentine," a raw blues treatment of "Georgia On My Mind" and a few originals tossed in for extra seasoning.

"I'm not trying to do anything that's necessarily been done before," Barber said. "But I'm also not trying to shut out any influences. I'm so fortunate to have the band I had for this record because they helped me to be rooted but not stuck—to be contemporary but not flighty. That's the balancing act."" —Bob Doerschuk

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MOUTHPIECES FOR CLARINETS AND SAXOPHONES



Solal & Liebman Unite in France

BY THE TIME DAVE LIEBMAN FIRST MADE his mark in the early 1970s, as the saxophonist and flutist in Miles Davis' ensemble and a leader of the seminal fusion band Lookout Farm, Martial Solal had been a reigning pianist in the vibrant Paris scene for more than 20 years.

Since then, each has worked in a dizzying array of formats with many of the leading jazz musicians from around the world—setting standards of wit and wizardry that few have matched. But until recently, the two jazz titans had never collaborated.

Solal, 90, and Liebman, 71, have joined forces for a duo effort, *Masters In Bordeaux* (Sunnyside). The album constitutes a deep dive into the art of the extemporaneous, recorded in concert at Château Guiraud in Sauternes, France, on Aug. 4, 2016.

While the album documents what was only the third night of joint music-making for the two musicians—the first two nights had been at the Sunset Sunside Jazz Club in Paris the preceding December—the resulting colloquy reflects an encounter of kindred souls.

"It felt like I was meeting an old friend," Solal said.

The personal rapport was not a surprise; both are musicians of good humor and their collaboration, Liebman said, was a "family affair," brokered by saxophonist Jean-Charles Richard, a sometime student and colleague of his who is also Solal's son-in-law. But the musical rapport took a bit longer to completely jell.

Liebman set the ball rolling by sending Solal recordings of his performances with pianist Richie Beirach, a member of Lookout Farm with whom the saxophonist performs duos to this day. The recordings, perhaps, were superfluous: Solal, whose experience stretches back to associations with Sidney Bechet and Django Reinhardt, said that Liebman's reputation preceded him.

"I knew his work; everyone does," Solal said. "He has all the qualities you want in a musician."

Liebman also listened to Solal's records, which did not prepare him for the Frenchman's freewheeling attitude. "When I got to the stage with him," Liebman said, "it was as if I had never heard the records, because of the fact of surprise."

Surprise, in fact, is Solal's stock-in-trade. Always among the most mercurial of pianists, his encounter with Liebman found him in a particularly inspired mood—his ideas, at times purposefully oblique and fragmented, cascading with such force that even the saxophonist, surely one of the most inventive of musicians, was at first slightly overwhelmed.

"I was thrown by his spontaneity," Liebman said. "It's up my alley and in jazz we're supposed to treasure those moments, but the first time we played the two sets at the club, I was like, 'How am I going to hang in there with this guy?' I'm playing 'All The Things You Are' and 'Night And Day'—tunes I've been playing for years—and my script was different than it's ever been."

Solal, meanwhile, found Liebman himself to be "full of surprises."

Addressing the surprises, Liebman said, meant negotiating a generational divide. Liebman, the first recipient of the NEA Jazz Master award to emerge from the world of fusion, brought that background to the bandstand. Solal, having cut his teeth with Dizzy Gillespie and Kenny Clarke, came steeped in the language of bebop.

Yielding to Solal's seniority, Liebman helped bridge the divide by giving way on choice of material and, to a degree, how it was treated. Tunes like "All Blues" and "Footprints" were off the table, he said, as were harmonies introduced by the likes of McCoy Tyner.

"I did walk away saying, 'I just played a whole night without one fourth chord," Liebman recalled.

But beyond such matters, the two musicians shared a sensibility. Within the context of the program—six vintage standards, half of them ("What Is This Thing Called Love," "Night And Day" and "All The Things You Are") from the 1920s and '30s—both made liberal use of the highly articulated conventions of 20th century classical music.

And while Solal's irrepressible reinvention of harmony, melody and structure transformed each musical vehicle into a circuitous trip to the edge of a precipice, Liebman found markers warning him of danger ahead.

"His timing is perfect," Liebman said, "and that was the saving grace because a lot of times I had to depend on the rhythmical aspect of turning corners. That would make you say, 'Oh, we're going somewhere,' because you could hear the rhythm change. So that was a little bit of a crutch for me."

The crutch, he said, proved useful for a time during the performances at the Sunset Sunside. But by their next meeting, at Bordeaux, Liebman and Solal were moving in lock step—the artists' common sensibility fostering a synchronicity of thought and action that comes through clearly on the album.

"By then we had forged a little bit of a relationship," Liebman said. —*Phillip Lutz*





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Martino Returns with 'Formidable' Disc

WITH THE RELEASE IN 1967 OF HIS DEBUT album, *El Hombre*, 22-year-old Pat Martino established his reputation as a guitarist with a monster gift for weaving clean, sizzling lines informed by a profound intelligence. That reputation has never wavered.

But the South Philadelphia native, now 73, was fated also to be known for another thing: a kind of medical miracle in which he came back from brain surgery to regain—some would argue surpass—his previous status on the guitar.

Because of the surgery, performed in 1980, he lost much of his memory and sense of the future. At the same time, he gained a heightened appreciation of the present and its possibilities. And that has proved an invaluable asset for a jazzman.

"I made a decision to enjoy the moment, and simplicity," he said. "That produced the evolution back into enjoyment as an artist again not only with the guitar, but with jazz and with music, with the art of living and a concern with precision."

The latest evidence of that evolution is the long-awaited *Formidable* (High Note). The album, Martino's first studio recording as a

bandleader in 11 years, consists of nine deeply soulful, fastidiously rendered tunes that convey an almost Zen-like attention to the improvisatory art.

A good example is "El Hombre." Like the title track of his 1967 album, which was propelled by Trudy Pitts' insistent organ, the new arrangement—one of three originals on the new album—has an urgency to it. But certain elements that intensified the pace on the original recording—the opening ostinato and Pitts, for two—are gone, tempering the headlong rush just enough to lend the treatment a reflective clarity.

Another compelling example is the original tune "On The Stairs," the closing track on *Formidable*. On Martino's 1974 LP *Consciousness* (released on the Muse label), the piece was a barn-burner driven in no small measure by Tyrone Brown's ramped-up electric bass. But on the new album, the bass is absent and the tempo reined in, offering a measure of restraint that allows for a moment of contemplation.

Aiding Martino is a group of like-minded musicians—chief among them organist,

arranger and road manager Pat Bianchi. While Bianchi can burn with the best of them—check out his blistering rejoinders to Lou Donaldson on "Cherokee" as a member of the saxophonist's quartet—it is his personal manner and aural acuity, more than raw chops, that Martino highlighted when praising the organist.

"He's an incredible gentleman, and his playing transcends musicianship," Martino said. "His ability to take advantage of another player in the sense of listening closely without being busy in the process—he's very gifted in this way. That's exceptional."

Having been with Martino for six years, Bianchi, who won the Rising Star award in the Organ category of the 2016 DownBeat Critics Poll, is exquisitely attuned to Martino's state of mind when he is in the throes of exploration. It is a state, as the guitarist puts it, of "suspended consciousness, where the core of creativity emerges out of"—and one to which Bianchi contributes with horn arrangements and remarkably sensitive ensemble playing.

"Once the tune is counted off, it's 'See where the music goes," Bianchi said. "A lot of times certain things happen or develop that we're jovial about. But as an observation, when Pat's playing, into his thing, the amount of concentration is incredible to witness. It's almost [to the point that] he isn't aware of anything else around him—he's in that zone."

Martino is clearly in that zone—with Bianchi not far behind—on a song the organist brought to the guitarist's attention, Charles Mingus' ballad "Duke Ellington's Sound Of Love." Accompanied by drummer Carmen Intorre Jr.—trumpeter Alex Norris and saxophonist Adam Niewood lay out on this track and two others in the program—Bianchi's phrasemaking amplifies Martino's elliptical interpretation, helping transform Mingus' piece into a veritable meditation.

"I fell in love with the song," Martino said, "and appreciated it so much that I selected it for the album."

It is that sense of appreciation—for both the tune's aesthetic content and the relationships that developed around it—to which Martino returns: "It wasn't only the music, it was the social interaction that brought it about—performances of it again and again, and the times the magic came through."

Personal affinities, in fact, have suffused the project from conception to completion. "What brought about the album was the rapport with the quintet," Martino said. "There was something about the initial rehearsals that in some way stuck out, and in some ways brought a smile to us. That's what we wanted to capture." —*Phillip Lutz*







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European Scene / BY PETER MARGASAK



Homegrown Intimacy

In December 2009, Parisian free-jazz enthusiast Bertrand Gastaut organized an intimate concert at the home of his sister with some of his favorite musicians-drummer Benjamin Duboc, bassist Didier Lasserre and the American poet and spoken-word artist Steve Dalachinksy. As with many such endeavors, the event was presented as a spontaneous outgrowth of a formal festival Gastaut was involved with at the time. The performance was a hit and local fans encouraged him to do it again. He took the suggestions to heart and imagined pairing the same rhythm section with the great French saxophonist Daunik Lazro. All three musicians were excited by the prospect; however, travel expenses and a lack of funding made it unfeasible.

Rather than give up on bringing these musicians together, Gastaut went all-in. "I said, 'I like the idea of this trio, and you like it, too, so let's do a recording session and I'll start a label to release it." During a single session in August 2010, the trio cut the music that would be released a year later as *Pourtant les Cimes Des Arbres*. Dark Tree Records (darktree-records.com/en), a name taken from a composition by pianist Horace Tapscott, was born. Yet Gastaut wasn't new to the music business.

The Marseille native moved to Paris in 2001 to study architecture but "was more often in jazz venues and clubs than at the university," he recalled. He spent a year working for Bleu Regard, the label started by expat American saxophonist Charles Tyler, and he worked for Universal France, overseeing a reissue project focused on French pop singers. He also programmed concerts at the Parisian venue Espace Jammapes and worked for the music distributor Orkhestra. As with Dark Tree, all of those pursuits were part-time; to make ends meet for his family, Gastaut works as an evening receptionist at a local hotel.

The concert series he began in 2009 carries on as jazz@home, with events pre-

sented at his sister's apartment in the Montmartre neighborhood, often featuring French artists, but also musicians from the U.S. and all over Europe, such as Oliver Lake, Joe McPhee and Marilyn Crispell.

Through connections made by presenting an international array of artists, Gastaut has built up a roster that's dropped powerful records by several French trios, including En Corps, a superb group with Duboc, drummer Edward Perraud and pianist Eve Risser that recently released *Generation*, its second album for the label. Last year Dark Tree issued the eponymous debut of the trio Tournesol with Duboc, drummer Julien Loutelier and the aggressive, idiosyncratic guitarist Julien Desprez.

Although Dark Tree has focused primarily on music from France, Gastaut has also shone a spotlight on vintage creative music from Los Angeles-an area he's been fascinated by since hearing Tapscott perform in France back in 1995. In 2015 his label released NoUTurn, a superb, previously unissued live recording by the Bobby Bradford-John Carter Quintet from 1975. He's also just released the second title in the label's "roots series," Live At The Century City Playhouse—Los Angeles, 1979, by Vinny Golia's wind quartet, which features both Carter and Bradford along with trombonist Glenn Ferris. In January he'll release his first title by an active American group, the trio Stomiidae with cellist Daniel Levin, saxophonist Chris Pitsiokis and guitarist Brandon Seabrook. And next spring he'll release a new duo recording by Desprez and saxophonist Mette Rasmussen.

For Gastaut, geographic origin is less important than how the music makes him feel. "The records have to be singular, to touch my soul, to give me goosebumps," he said. "When I listened to [the second Lazro-Duboc-Lasserre album] Sens Radiants for the first time, I had tears in my eyes, so I had no doubt."

AngraJazz Festival Spotlights Portuguese Talent

ALTHOUGH PORTUGAL CONTINUES TO host a number of noteworthy festivals, the country's jazz scene remains underappreciated. The 19th annual AngraJazz Festival, held Oct. 4–7 on Terceira Island in the capital city of Angra do Heroísmo, sought to rectify that.

Performances took place at the posh Centro Cultural e de Congressos de Angra do Heroísmo, a circular 550-seat venue that was once Praça de Toiros de São João, a coliseum that housed bull-fighting until it was destroyed by a volcanic earthquake in 1980. The space was refurbished in 2003 by lead architect Miguel Cunha, who, coincidentally, is one of the founders of the AngraJazz Festival.

Orquestra Angrajazz opened the fest with an agreeable celebration of the bebop era. Founded in 2002 and consisting of mostly jazz artists born on Terceira, the 21-piece ensemble, co-directed by Claus Nymark and Pedro Moreira, delivered a broad program of chestnuts that included "Night In Tunisia" and "Lady Bird."

Much more engaging was Portugal's Ensemble Super Moderne, a vibrant octet of exploratory musicians and composers who embraced a Third Stream approach. Its gangly set, mostly culled from its 2014 eponymous debut, connected dots between Charles Mingus, Gunther Schuller and Anthony Braxton with



such contemporary sonic explorers as Mary Halvorson and Darcy James Argue. Beginning its set with the exploratory "La Capricciosa," which contained spiky lines, stark harmonies and a stuttering rhythmic flow, the ensemble soon revealed more emotional depth and rounded temperament on such transportive originals as "Moderne," which featured José Pedro Coelho's silvery tenor saxophone riding a rubato waltz rhythm that was frequently interrupted by jagged passages.

On "The Dreary Life Of Pugnacious," the ensemble displayed a flair for navigating intricate, ricocheting meters as well as crafting suspenseful harmonies, while the hypnotic "Regui" showed the ensemble's fondness for reggae. The striking compositions afforded each member the spotlight, which revealed such spectacular young mavericks as guitarist Eurico Costa, trombonist Paulo Perfeito, drummer Mário Costa, and clarinetist and baritone saxophonist Rui Teixeira as talents worth watching.

Other potent performances at the festival were delivered by trumpeter Charles Tolliver (fronting his Tentet in a celebration of Monk's centennial), a duo performance by French pianist Baptiste Trotignon and Argentine percussionist Mínimo Garay, drummer Matt Wilson's quartet and saxophonist Jon Irabagon's quartet. —John Murph





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Emi Meyer at Home in 2 Lands

SINGER-SONGWRITER EMI MEYER WAS BORN IN KYOTO TO A Japanese mother and an American father, but as an infant, she moved to Seattle and lived there until she went off to Pomona College in Los Angeles. When she got a chance to spend her junior year of college abroad, though, she jumped at the chance to return to Kyoto. She enjoyed living in Japan so much that she decided to settle there. Nowadays she is based in Tokyo, and she views having two homelands as a multicultural asset.

"I'm really grateful to have one foot in each culture," she said over the



phone from her apartment, "because it gives me a lot of perspective on each country. Japanese audiences are so kind, so supportive; they're very quiet and attentive. At the same time, it's easy to get *too* comfortable at times in that situation. So it's good for me to go back to the U.S., where audiences are more critical listeners. Just because they like one album doesn't mean they'll like your next one. If you're having a less-than-good night on stage, they'll notice and maybe even say something."

A version of her new album, *Monochrome*, was first released in Japan in 2015. But in preparing the U.S. version, which is on Origin Records, Meyer decided to change the program. She removed four standards from the previous track listing, recorded three new originals in Seattle and added an older original that had never been widely released.

"In Japan, people love to hear songs that have been done dozens of times," she said. "[But] in the U.S., there's more of a hunger to hear something new. Perhaps because of the karaoke culture, Japanese audiences want melodies and lyrics that are easy to sing. So I learned to do that. But once you learn that, you have to unlearn it, because you don't always want the melodies to be so clear. You start losing some of the freshness."

In 2018 Meyer will release an album that is the result of recent collaborations with musicians in Nashville, including blues veteran Keb' Mo'. This coming winter and spring she will be working in Japan, where she has built a strong following, but after April, she will spend most of 2018 trying to expand her fan base in the States.

As a youngster in Seattle, Meyer started out as a classical piano student, then joined the middle school jazz band and discovered the joys of improvising with other musicians. Soon she was a regular at Jazz Port Townsend—The Workshop. Meyer said the instructors and guest artists there gave her "honest feedback and advice." Pianist Dawn Clement and guitarist Dan Balmer, who co-wrote songs with Meyer and played on the new Seattle sessions, were both teachers at the summer camp.

Monochrome resembles a Norah Jones record in its elegant mixture of jazz and adult-pop. There's a taste of Brazilian rhythms on Meyer's "Paraíso" and the title track, and some bubbly scatting on "Master Piece" and "Flesh And Bones." Meyer's rendition of Michael Bublé's "Home" makes use of tender vowel sounds to convey a longing for someone far away.

"I do feel homesickness sometimes," Meyer said. "There are great things about the U.S. and great things about Japan. But there are parts of me that can't wait to see my friends back in the other place. Nowadays, no matter whether I'm in the U.S. or Japan, I don't feel as homesick as I used to. I'm definitely more at home in each of them." —*Geoffrey Himes*

Israels Merges Stellar Technique & Deep Passion

WHEN CHUCK ISRAELS LEFT THE ICONIC Bill Evans Trio after six years, in 1966, he found it difficult to find another situation in which he could get that much fulfillment out of simply playing the bass. So his musical direction began to shift.

"In some ways, I really abandoned my visible career as a freelance bass player," he said.

More than half a century later, he added, "The bass is a functional instrument for me. It mostly sits in the corner and what I mostly do is write."

But the Evans influence on his work remains powerful, as illustrated by the new Chuck Israels Jazz Orchestra album, *Concerto Peligroso* (Dot Time). The program—11 tunes recorded over three days in January and February 2017—contains echoes of Evans throughout.

Nowhere is that more evident than on the title track. The piece, which lays a new melody on the chord changes of Miles Davis' "Solar"— an Evans staple—borrows structurally from the trio's treatment in which the pianist, bassist and drummer each play choruses by themselves, creating a dramatic tension that finds its release when the ensemble begins playing together.

Similarly, "Concerto Peligroso" generates a rush of excitement when the bass and drums enter after the band and pianist have been alternating passages without any rhythmic underpinning.

"It's a direct robbery from Bill," Israels acknowledged.

The piece, brilliantly conceived and tightly arranged, is seamlessly executed—owing in no small measure to both the band, which has been a working nonet in Portland, Oregon, for seven years, and the presence of pianist Miles Black, a longtime collaborator of Israels' who was recruited for the album after the group's regular pianist was unable to make the recording session.

Israels said that Black, as much as any pianist, was able to assimilate both Evans' technique of rhythmic placement—or, more to the point, displacement—and his capacity for incorporat-



Chuck Israels' new album shows the influence of a former bandmate: the late pianist Bill Evans. ing European classical constructs without sacrificing a jazz feel.

"He is able to encompass more of Bill's approach to music than anybody else l've played with," Israels said.

Elsewhere, the Evans influence is similarly striking. The haunting "Dark Tapestry," Israels said, "is my version of 'Time Remembered." It's like that Evans composition rhythmically and aesthetically, he added. And while it also differs from the tune—weaving into the sonic fabric metric and tempo changes and a descant line sung by Israels' daughter, Jessica Israels—every element in the arrangement conveys the Evans melancholy.

"This is all reflections on Bill," Israels said.

Israels, 81, continues to learn from his decades of experience. "You have to have a delicate balance of both technical mastery and emotional passion," he said. "It's just at this late stage I've felt confident in my competence to produce something like this regularly." —*Phillip Lutz*





In Memoriam: Muhal Richard Abrams

PIANIST-COMPOSER MUHAL RICHARD Abrams, a 2010 NEA Jazz Master, died Oct. 29 at his Manhattan home. He was 87.

Abrams bequeaths multiple legacies to numerous legatees. First and foremost is his recorded oeuvre of more than 30 albums—many of them with covers displaying his vivid paintings.





Abrams' music presented, as George Lewis once remarked, "an infinity of possibilities." Ensembles ranging from quartet to big band interpreted elemental blues themes, warp-speed post-bop structures, textural soundscapes and collage pieces that addressed text, silence and space. Cohesive *tabula rasa* improvisations shared pride of place with fully scored symphonic works, string quartets, saxophone quartets, solo and duo piano music, electronica and computer music. His transidiomatic voice authoritatively referenced ragtime, stride, bebop, Euro-Romanticism, Serialism, post-Stockhausen and the blues.

"Muhal pushes the envelope in every direction," Vijay Iyer said in 2010, after Abrams was inducted into the DownBeat Hall of Fame. "His approach is in keeping with the language of jazz, with the sense that any available method of putting sound together should be at your disposal in any context."

Iyer, Steve Coleman, Greg Osby, Jason Moran, Craig Taborn and Tyshawn Sorey are among the numerous musicians who drew deeply from Abrams' vast well of knowledge after 1977, when he moved to New York from Chicago. By that time, the Association for the Advancement of Creative Musicians (AACM)—which Abrams had co-founded in Chicago with fellow pianist Jodie Christian, trumpeter Phil Cohran and drummer Steve McCall, and whose bylaws and aesthetic guideposts reflect Abrams' pragmatic, communitarian ethics—was 12 years old.

Born Sept. 19, 1930, in Chicago, Abrams was a self-taught musician. By the late 1950s, he was operating in the upper echelons of Chicago's thriving jazz scene. He steadily expanded his palette, assimilating Joseph Schillinger's massive *System of Musical Composition*. Around 1960, he explored Rosicrucian arcana, which he would deploy as metaphysical armature for many subsequent works. In 1962, seeking a forum in which to workshop his ideas, he launched a rehearsal ensemble, the Experimental Band, whose members formed the core of the AACM.

Among them were such formidable individualists as Roscoe Mitchell, Joseph Jarman, Amina Claudine Myers, Anthony Braxton, Henry Threadgill, Leroy Jenkins and Jack DeJohnette, who took advantage of the AACM's Abramsinspired collaborative infrastructure to create original music from a global array of sources in establishing their respective footprints.

"If you want a house with 10,000 rooms, you don't complain because nobody has a house with 10,000 rooms to give you," Abrams said. "You build it yourself, and do it with proper respect for the rest of humanity.

"I just go as far as the eye can see in all directions. There's no finish to this stuff." —*Ted Panken*

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MATT MITCHELL Generous Bandleader

PIanist/Keyboardist Matt Mitchell's uncategorizable fourth album, *A Pouting Grimace* (Pi), is a 10-part suite extrapolated from a one-bar vamp reminiscent of Roscoe Mitchell's 1977 piece "Nonaah." To be specific, the 13-member ensemble unisons that vamp 11 times at the end of "Brim," the fourth piece of a fascinating work in which Mitchell synthesizes into his own argot elements refracted from classical, electronica, avant-garde jazz and world music vocabularies.

However hyper-detailed the pieces, he leaves ample room for extemporaneous contributions from A-list code-switchers Jon Irabagon (saxophones), Scott Robinson (bass sax, contrabass clarinet), Anna Webber (flutes), Ben Kono (oboe, English horn) and Sara Schoenbeck (bassoon); percussionists Patricia Brennan (vibraphone, marimba), Ches Smith (multiple instruments), Dan Weiss (tabla) and Kate Gentile (drums, gongs); and gifted accompanists Kim Cass (bass) and Katie Andrews (harp). Tyshawn Sorey conducts two of the gnarlier pieces.

"Many of them are composers," Mitchell said of his ensemble during a conversation in a café around the corner from his house in Brooklyn's Lefferts Gardens district. "All are friends who are super-capable of pretty much anything I could conceive to ask them. It's not just what they play, but their sonic concepts when I say, 'Please play these notes for me, but then play your own notes here."

That morning, Mitchell had flown home after a Pittsburgh solo concert opposite saxo-

phonist Tim Berne (whose music Mitchell interprets on the 2017 solo album *Førage* on Berne's Screwgun label). This occurred on the heels of a month touring Europe and the States with Berne's Snakeoil ensemble to promote the band's *Incidentals* (ECM). In a few days, Mitchell would fly to Los Angeles for a gig playing Weiss' complex charts, then to Philadelphia for a Snakeoil concert, and then to Paris for an 11-day residency with Steve Coleman's Five Elements and Natal Eclipse units.

"I've been a fan of Steve's as long as I've been a fan of Tim's—since I heard *Black Science* in high school," said Mitchell, whose appearance on Coleman's drummerless 2017 album *Morphogenesis* (Pi) burnishes a c.v. of "difficult music" sideman associations—eight years with Berne, five years and three albums with the Dave Douglas Quintet, and consequential gigs and recordings with, among others, Webber, John Hollenbeck's Claudia Quintet and Rudresh Mahanthappa's Bird Calls band.

"Tim has tunes that we specifically learn, and play, and get better at playing with them," he continued. "With Steve, you absorb a series of concepts, which can take a minute to get used to. There's a certain spontaneity. He'll just start playing a tune. There's an old-school aspect to it."

Whether functioning as sideman or leader, Mitchell's own grounding in old-school verities may be the secret sauce that infuses his musical production with a quality that's as visceral and raw as highbrow and abstract. "Matt has encyclopedic knowledge of the history and different styles of music," Irabagon said. "With a composer who is trying these things and going in new directions, you might think of a hermit who gets mad at people who can't play his music perfectly the first time. But on top of being a genius composer and musician, Matt is one of the most hilarious, personable guys I know, which comes through in his music.

"This record [*A Pouting Grimace*] is unique, like a great novel or painting that each time you hear it reveals a different aspect. The music was completely challenging. The parts are intricate. Sometimes they line up with your neighbor, and sometimes they're completely opposite, and resolve a 16th note later or something. So we were not relaxed in the studio by any means. We were definitely on a mission. All twelve of us could feel this record was special."

With the international visibility garnered through his extensive sideman associations and an acclaimed new album, Mitchell is primed to gain traction for his leader efforts.

"In a perfect world, I'd like to be known for my own music first and foremost," he said. "I want to do my own music and tour. I have enough unrecorded material that if someone presented me with \$100,000 and said, 'Make as many records as you want right now,' I could do five different ensembles.

"But it's not just pragmatism that leads me to play with a lot of bands. I play with these people because I love them and I love their music. The challenge is that I just can't do everything. So I'll have to take that as it comes." —*Ted Panken*





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- Jim Widner Leader of the Jim Widner Big Band and Director of Jazz Studies at the University of Missouri-St. Louis



Axophonist Eric Wyatt's new album, *Look To The Sky* (Whaling City Sound), is dedicated to his late parents. "My mother and father were very important to me," the deep-voiced Wyatt said, choking up. "My dad's relationship with me and my music—that's [actually] his horn that I play. This is probably my most message-oriented record."

The album cover photo depicts Wyatt looking to the sky with his hands in a prayer position; it's a gesture to acknowledge his departed parents. The photo was taken at the Grand Army Plaza in Prospect Park, not too far from Wyatt's Flatbush neighborhood. The CD booklet also contains a photo of him playing saxophone in the street, outside his house.

The personal nature of the album packaging embellishes the music,



which offers an emotional journey of originals and interpretations, including "Afro Blue," Herbie Hancock's "One Finger Snap" and an instrumental version of "Tenderly" (which was popularized by singers Sarah Vaughan and Rosemary Clooney).

Wyatt, who is the godson of Sonny Rollins, recorded his new album with musicians he connected with on both a musical and personal level. They include Benito Gonzalez (piano), Keyon Harrold (trumpet), Eric Wheeler (bass) and Shinnosuke Takahashi (drums). Both Harrold and Takahashi performed at the funeral for Wyatt's mother.

"Eric has been a Day 1 supporter of me and my artistry," Harrold said. "He's like a big brother—one who would call to check in; one who always kept his ears to the street. I called him the Mayor of Brooklyn because he had all of the Brooklyn gigs locked up."

Wyatt's chemistry with his collaborators is apparent on Gonzalez's arrangement of "Afro Blue," as the quintet delivers an intense 4/4 version of the Mongo Santamaría classic. "Keyon came by my gig at Smalls, and we played it and everybody liked it," Wyatt explained. "Everybody else plays it with the conga, Latin feel. This takes it away from that and puts it in a whole different context."

The eight-minute rendition begins with Wyatt playing an emotive but controlled solo until the 3:30 mark, when Wheeler and Gonzalez take it away. The leader sets the tone for his peers, who keep the energy up until the drummer gets some and Wyatt sends it home with his tenor wailing. Wyatt's version is more straightahead than the one keyboardist Robert Glasper recorded on 2012's *Black Radio* (Blue Note), but it feels modern in the current Kamasi Washington era, where spiritualized (yet not necessarily entirely free) jazz is making serious waves.

Wyatt has a long history with Gonzalez. "We started playing together in 2007 when he first moved to New York," Wyatt recalled. "I had met him in California in 2006." At that initial meeting, Wyatt didn't tell Gonzalez where he lived. So when Gonzalez moved New York, he was surprised to see Wyatt at a jam session. The musicians connected and have been collaborating ever since. Gonzalez contributed two originals to the new album: "E-Brother" and "Starting Point." Elsewhere, on Wyatt's original tune "Jolley Charlie," the pianist delivers a dazzling, memorable solo.

Wyatt will promote the album with a European tour, as well as shows in the States. The Brooklyn native, who has done voice-over work, takes one vocal turn on *Look To The Sky.* "It's the debut of my singing on an album," he said, referring to his duet with Andrea Miller on an adventurous rendition of "My Favorite Things."

"The goal is to increase my fan base with this record," Wyatt said. He had another goal for the program: "I wanted this record to have every song end and you didn't think it sounded like the song before." —*Chris Tart*

SHANNON BARNETT *Believe the 'Hype'*

ne of the more impressive aspects of the Shannon Barnett Quartet's new album, *Hype*, is the way the leader and her three bandmates wrestle unconventional sounds, intervals and meters into linear melodies that can be easily, pleasingly followed. Or, to look at it another way, Barnett's writing catchy tunes that accommodate enough avant-garde elements to sound unprecedented.

"I went through a phase when I listened to a lot of Don Cherry, Ornette Coleman and Eric Dolphy," the Australian trombonist said from her home in Cologne, Germany. "I've always found that music very melodic. At the same time, I was playing a lot of early New Orleans repertoire. That music also has tunes played in wild polyphony, and sometimes the horn players are belting out the words at the same time. I love singing, and the trombone has a real vocal quality.

"So, personality is a really big thing in both those styles. The music is arranged so the improviser's character comes through."

Her first band was the "Art Ensemble" at a small, rural high school outside Melbourne, where the music teacher encouraged the students to invent their own riffs and find a way to make them all work together.

There was a similar emphasis on composition and improvisation at her next school, the Victorian College of the Arts in Melbourne, from which she graduated.

In 2010, she attended the Banff International Workshop for Jazz & Creative Music in Canada. There she got enough encouragement from such teachers as Dave Douglas, Darcy James Argue and Myra Melford to move to New York and enroll at SUNY Purchase to fill the gaps in her grasp of jazz history and technique.

Six months after graduation, while she was struggling to make a go of it in New York, she got an out-of-the-blue invitation to fly to Cologne and audition for WDR Big Band. She was hired, and suddenly she had a full-time, salaried job and was living in her third country in six years.

Barnett was surprised by the vibrancy of the local jazz scene and quickly landed a side gig with a Ukrainian singer. She was so impressed by the singer's rhythm section of Fabian Arends and David Helm that she invited them to form a band and asked them to recommend a saxophonist. That turned out to be Stefan Karl Schmid, and the quartet has gathered such momentum that Barnett is taking a sabbatical from the WDR for most of 2018 to write and record more with the combo.

Like Coleman's classic quartet with Cherry, Barnett's foursome has no chording instrument, just her trombone mixing it up with Schmid's tenor, Helm's double bass and Arends' drums. As in Coleman's harmolodics and early New Orleans jazz, the musicians are often improvising simultaneously. The two horns will shadow each other, sometimes in close proximity, sometimes in counterpoint, while the rhythm section explores push-and-pull patterns below.

"Shannon has a great sense for proportion within her compositions and her playing," Schmid said. "The theme leads into the improvisation, so it's often hard for the listener to tell which is which. Thus the music has the possibility to sound different every time we play it. For the album [*Hype*] we captured only one possible version."

"As a composer," Barnett explained, "I like giving people enough information to get them going but not so much that they don't have room to pursue their own ideas. While they're improvising, though, I want the other musicians to be present, to throw things to the soloist, to feed information, to create an environment, to push the right buttons to find out what the soloist is really like. I'm always looking for improvisations to become conversations, so there's going to be a vocal quality to that—whether it's people yelling at each other or talking quietly." —Geoffrey Himes



Ms. Hilton continues to unclog the arteries in Jazz. -Jazz Review

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MIKE MITCHELL Blaque Dynamite Arrives

has been playing drums almost his entire life. "I got a toy drum kit when I was 2, and that broke right when I turned 3," he said. "Then my mom and grandma bought me a real drum set."

Drummer Mike Mitchell performs under the name Blague Dynamite and has a new leader album, *Killing Bugs*,

> Mitchell, 23, was raised in Forth Worth, Texas, in household filled with music and religion. "My mom's a singer from the church, so I grew up listening to of lot of traditional gospel. My father is also a drummer. He was the one who introduced me to all the r&b, what my grand

parents would call 'worldly music'—music of the world, not of the body of Christ."

By the time he was 9, Mitchell was working professionally, playing r&b, smooth jazz and Motown tunes. At age 10 he moved with his mother to Dallas. "My mom would take me to different jazz clubs where she knew the people who were playing," he said. "There was a place in Dallas, Brooklyn Jazz Café. It had Bobby Sparks, Jason 'JT' Thomas from Snarky Puppy, and Keith Anderson, the leader of Prince's band before he passed. Those cats would be really receptive. They



would say, 'Yo, bring Little Mike and we'll let him sit in.'"

In Dallas, Mitchell attended Booker T. Washington High School for the Performing and Visual Arts, where he developed a deeper understanding of jazz.

ESY OF

"When I was 8 or 9 years old, my uncle gave me a Tony Williams/Elvin Jones mix tape, and I hated it because I didn't get it," he said. "I was so confused, but I would come back to it. Then, when I was 13 or 14, I listened to *Kind Of Blue* every day for a year. Then I went to *Four And More*, and once I crossed that boundary to *Bitches Brew* that's when I really started to understand the link between the swing and the fusion."

A YouTube video of a teenage Mitchell playing at a memorial concert for drummer Marvin McQuitty (1966–2012) brought him to the attention of bassist Stanley Clarke. Mitchell said, "Stanley called Bobby Sparks and was like, 'I heard this kid from Texas, do you know him?" Through Sparks, Clarke's management got in touch with Mitchell and said that the bassist wanted to play with him. When Mitchell was on tour in Los Angeles with a high school band from the Thelonious Monk Institute of Jazz, Clarke attended the show. "Stanley invited me to his house to come and play some stuff," Mitchell said. Since then, the drummer has been a regular member of Clarke's various ensembles.

The McQuitty memorial video was also responsible for Mitchell linking up with bassist Derrick Hodge, in whose band he's played for the past two years. "I ran across this [YouTube] clip and he sounded incredible," Hodge said. "I just sent a message: 'Man, I love your music, heard great things about you, keep me posted on what you're doing.' He responded and just showed a lot of love. I was like, 'Man, when the opportunity presents itself, I would love to work with you.' He came in and just fit right in, and it's been amazing ever since."

When Mitchell isn't touring with Clarke, Hodge, or most recently, soul singer Erykah Badu, he's creating powerfully personal music with Raché, his band consisting of longtime East Dallas colleagues. The drummer's album *WiFi* found him dynamically navigating the group through a compelling mélange of jazz-rock that shows influences of Miles Davis' electric work in the 1970s.

His new album, *Killing Bugs* (Ropeadope), takes things a step further, crafting a 21st-century hybrid sound that mixes jazz, rock and hiphop. "It's rock music essentially," Mitchell said, "but we're really educated on our jazz, which is why we solo the way we do.

"My whole approach to music, in general, is to not have any holes for the listener. There are people who don't like jazz, don't like hip-hop, don't like rock, but they love my album because it has elements of something that they remember they are a part of." —*Russ Musto*

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By Bill Milkowski Iphotos by Jimmy and Dena Katz

Witnessing ESPERANZA SPALDING in concert in September 2006, when she opened for the McCoy Tyner Sextet at Berklee's Beantown Jazz Festival in Boston, it was clear that she was exceptional.

Her debut album *Junjo*, with pianist Aruan Ortiz and drummer Francisco Mela, had just come out on the Barcelona-based Ayva Music label, showcasing her obvious talents, though it included only two originals alongside interpretations of Chick Corea's "Humpty Dumpty," Jimmy Rowles' "The Peacocks" and Egbert Gismonti's "Loro."

With her self-titled major label debut in 2008 on the Heads Up label, Esperanza exploded onto the scene with a kind of confidence and verve that is rare for any 23-year-old artist. And by the time she won the Best New Artist Grammy Award in 2011 on the strength of 2010's Chamber Music Society, she was a full-fledged star ready to follow her instincts and tackle concept projects with a capital "C."



Chamber Music Society was followed by the crossover album *Radio Music Society* in 2012. Spalding's 2016 kaleidoscopic concept album *Emily's D+ Revolution* found her adopting an alter ego/spirit muse to allow her the creative freedom to pursue a new musical direction without the pressure of expectations.

After performing inspired sets this past summer with the ACS Trio at the Newport Jazz Festival and a week at the Village Vanguard, Spalding pulled off the most audacious move yet in her daredevil career by live-streaming the birth of an album from conception to completion in 77 hours before an estimated audience of 1.4 million Facebook viewers.

"Knowing someone is watching and listening to what you're making seems to conjure up a sort of 'can't fail' energy," reads Spalding's mission statement on her website. "The necessity to keep going because it's live draws up another depth of creative facility that can't be reached when you know you can try again tomorrow." For the subsequent album, the aptly named *Exposure*, she pressed up only 7,777 copies another cryptic move by the ever-evolving artist who continues to think outside the box.

Guitarist Matthew Stevens, keyboardists Robert Glasper and Ray Angry, violinist Andrew Bird, vocalist Lalah Hathaway and drummer Justin Tyson participated in the recording sessions. Stevens described the process as unlike anything he had ever done. "I think Esperanza is interested in excavating the deep, dark corners of her artistic self by whatever means necessary, which includes a willingness to fail," he said. "She committed herself to this project 100 percent and wrote those songs from nothing in front of all those people."

The afternoon before premiering new tunes from *Exposure* at Pioneer Works in Brooklyn, we met at the restaurant Alta Calidad in Prospect Heights. The conversation was free-flowing, funny and full of intrigue. The following evening, at Pioneer Works, a line wrapped around two blocks to enter the facility.

A sleight figure alone onstage, seated on a

stool, she opened with a solo rendition of "Contora De Yala," playing upright bass and singing in Spanish before delivering an intimate rendition of Stevie Wonder's "Overjoyed."

Her between-songs banter with the audience was open and honest, alternately earthy and mystical, tender and metaphysical. Her current group Royal Tease (Angry, saxophonist Myron Walden, drummer Josh Dion and backup singers Starr Busby and Catherine Brookman) then joined her on stage to perform new, previously unheard material from *Exposure*. At one point during the show, Spalding told the audience, "Don't let the internet fool you, the answers are here," pointing to her heart.

Below are excerpts from our conversation.

DownBeat: Where did this idea of doing a marathon live-streaming session on Facebook come from, and how did you actually bring it to fruition?

Esperanza Spalding: Originally the idea came when I was sitting at James, this restaurant about three blocks from here. I had been thinking

for months about doing a performance-based live event that would happen in real time, and I wanted somehow to invite non-musicians into the creative process.

There were a lot of things going into my brain, all based on how to create something based on a concept. And then it hit me like a ton of bricks—"No, fuck that! Enough with the conceptualizing. What would happen if you just went in with nothing planned, where the creation, the exhibit, the performance was just being yourself and making whatever you had to release at that moment?"

I loved that idea because ... you could only respond to whatever was actually happening in the actual moment—versus responding to a concept that had been pre-determined ahead of time. It's like the difference between improvising and film scoring. When you're creating in accordance to a concept, the concept itself [can] be limiting on the creative content.

It's already providing a frame.

Exactly. So I just thought, "What could I do that would remove everything but spontaneous creation?" which to me means you're responding to what's actually happening in the moment versus like a chord structure or a theme or whatever. It was in response to sort of an exhaustion of putting ideas together and then responding to the concept. And it was in the moment of feeling like, "Fuck it! I don't have the energy to create an ambiance around an idea." I felt kind of burned out on that method.

So originally I thought, "I'm just going to go in the studio with Karriem Riggins, just Karriem and me, and he'll have his drums and all his tools and his toys and I'll have a bass and a voice and a piano just for composing and that's it. We'll lock ourselves in there for three days and we'll live-stream it so we'll also have evidence of we can't cheat, we can't hide. Whatever comes out, the world, or whoever's watching, will know what came out."

This "blank page" approach is very different, I imagine, than what you did on *Emily's D+ Evolution*, which involved a lot of musical architecture.

Definitely. The simplest way I can describe it is just, "Be yourself and create as yourself." And you don't have to be able to describe it or frame it or prep it. So really we were putting a parameter for us to just go in and be ourselves, and that was the art. We're stating the claim that that is the art of this project.

And the whole thing evolved from the idea of just you and Karriem playing together?

Yes, but then he wasn't available. I called him and he said, "I'm not into that. I don't want to be on camera figuring my shit out." He finally came around to it but he got called for a tour with Diana Krall, which is fine. But I've always wanted to be exposed as the producer that I am and I was a little scared of that. So this kind of forced my exposure as a producer.

How did it work with continuous live-streaming for that long? Was the camera on you while you were sleeping?

No. I enlisted Matthew, Justin and Ray to produce themselves during the night shift. They would come in at 5 p.m. and I had finished writing around that time. Then I would play them all the sketches for that day, and then I would go to sleep by 8 or 9 p.m. And they would play on their parts overnight.

So you worked in shifts.

Yes, and then I'd get up in the morning, keep writing and playing. Part of this was about encouraging audience members or fans or non-fans to buy into the idea of creation versus performance. And that was really a winning revelation of this project, to find out that people were really willing to buy into that idea, literally.

Some of the online comments showed that people really felt involved in the process as the live stream was going on. They felt like they were participating.

Well, they were. It wouldn't have worked without them. It only works with a witness and it only works by us responding to their observations. They had to be there. But it had to be livestreamed for us to find what we found and for the stakes to be real.

Because, yes, it's more about creation than performance, but we're performing the act of creation, and what is a performance without an audience? So what they felt was correct ... not just because they were observing what was happening minute to minute, but them staying up or not staying up or tuning in for a few minutes once over the course of three days really is what made that project what it was.

Were you aware of their feedback as you were performing?

Not the first day. But there was a TV screen in the lounge and I had the Facebook feed up on it so any time I took a break from the studio I could see what people were talking about. It was great.

Did that influence the musical direction in any way?

Probably. I can't point to anything specifically but ... yeah, absolutely. The same way that when you're on the stage there's like an empathic link between the performer and the audience. You start energetically responding to the shifts in the audience.

Even though I couldn't feel their presence viscerally, I felt it energetically and it came through their comments: "We're here! We're watching! We're with you!" Or, "I like that melody. ... Why did you take that melody out?" I felt their participation for sure.

What about lyrics? Were you improving lyrics as well?

We didn't go in with anything. We started from zero. Sometimes I think all songwriters experience this. ... [I]f you're a person who tends to go with melody first, while we write melody we're just putting a few tent-pole words through the song. And often those words imply what the song is about, finally. And that process rang true during Exposure, too. It might be mumbles and then one little word would pop out, and that word would reveal the potential for a theme and I would just keep digging and hashing out the lyric and it would emerge. To have this self-imposed notion that we're going to create this much content in such a short period of time, you're kind of scraping the edges of your brain to get fresh data out.

I was certainly surprised by the content of a lot of the songs. They were about issues that I wasn't consciously aware I was thinking about. One of them had to do with buying property in the United States. I've always sort of questioned as the descendants of settlers or colonized people, where do I fit into that narrative of purchasing property on colonized land? Like it doesn't settle right in my system. For economic reasons, I get it-having something to hand on to my family. But I discovered in "Colonial Fire" more of how I actually think about that. And I think that was a beautiful revelation for all of us, of hearing what we really had to say when we really didn't have time to think or change what was coming out of us intuitively.

A total green-light session.

Yeah, which often sessions are. We didn't have anything to lean on. There wasn't anything that we practiced. Like, I'd tell the musicians, "All right, bring me something from scratch ... you have two hours." So it felt like we all were reaching for information that we hadn't ever used before, even though it was in us. And I think it was revealing.

Matt communicated to me and other people on the scene that he wouldn't have done that; he wouldn't have played that typically. But because there wasn't time to obsess over "That's the coolest thing or the best thing I can do," he had to lay something down and then he'd hear it back and respond to it. Sometimes when you're chasing for the best thing you can miss what already happened that was just right. And that was actually an unexpected element of this session—we heard lyrics, we heard melodies, we heard patterns emerge out of us that we didn't know were there.

In all 77 hours did you generate a lot of raw material?

Not really. It all got built onto each song sketch. There isn't any extraneous sonic material. Once the tunes are finished, we're not touching any of it, we're just mixing it. So what we did for 77 hours was make a record from top to bottom.



So when I say we built onto the structure, [I mean that] once I got a sketch, I would lay down my parts to a click [track]. So everything that happened got built onto the same armature. So there's no editing. We fit whatever we wanted into that click track of the song itself. There's one take of every song. It was all just, "You have 20 minutes to do the vocals on this, you have 30 minutes to lay down the guitar track," and that's it.

The clock was literally running.

Yeah, we had a big nice red clock up there. The advantage of this mode is it forces us to accept everything—ugly, good, bad, wonderful, revelatory, mediocre. It enables this kind of deep letting go. Two thousand people just saw you do a really stupid melody and you have to let it go. You just keep letting stupid things come out to get to the best nugget that you can get to in that moment. I read that 1.4 million people were tuning into the sessions. And yet, you chose to only release a limited edition, just 7,777 copies of *Exposure*.

Yeah, I didn't want to do the whole dogand-pony show around the release. I wasn't even planning to do any press afterwards. I just wanted to create an experience that brings a lot of people together for it—we witness it and participate in it and it's done.

What makes it special, in a way, is that only us were there. You can't watch the live stream anymore; it's gone. So for those of us who were there, we all experienced something that only happened once. And now it's gone. The limited copies is an extension of that idea. I don't need to convince everybody in the world to buy this record. I just want to make it available to the people who want evidence that they were a part of that.

I imagine it's already sold out.

I think we were half-sold out by the time the live

stream started, and we sold out in the middle of Day 2. So the records are already gone.

This whole project is like the difference between art and commerce.

There's always multiple interests operating when you're dealing with art as a commodity. Because we all have bills to pay. ... So I don't know if this project is about placing art in contrast with commerce. I do know that it was an experiment of directly connecting with the people who actually support my livelihood and having a trust exchange, basically, where it's like, "Hey, I'm inviting you into this space to experience this art I make," and I'm trusting that down the road they'll do something for me. They don't have to.

This project is about the contrast of a commodity-based economy versus a gift-based economy. So instead of convincing people or trying to pull out of them their dollars and their attention, I'm saying, "I'm going to give this to you first and it's a gift."

Isn't that like a love relationship?

Yeah, that's a nice way to look at it. So in a gift-based economy the idea is I'll trust at some point somebody who's a part of this community will send that energy back in a gifting way. It may not come directly to me, though I have a feeling that it will. Because there's a sense of connection that's formed.

Are you on to the next project already?

Yeah, I have written some new stuff for a musical theatrical piece that will be performed in the round this spring. Now I have to figure out how to get that funded. And with Wayne Shorter, our hero and fearless leader, there's an opera that he's writing and I just delivered the first draft of the libretto. He wanted to write an opera based on the Greek myth of Iphigenia, one of the few female heroines whose story doesn't end in a tragedy. For the past threeand-some-change years we've been working on getting the presenting part ready and the commission part ready. It's finally coming together ... We'll premiere it in fall 2019.

George Clinton once said in an interview: "The secret is in the striving, not the arriving."

Arriving's pretty nice, too. I like discovering the result of an experiment. I don't think it's all about the search. Yes, search is necessary, but what do you do with what you find? That's the big question. In my adventures, I am going for something. I may not make it, but I want to fucking arrive at that thing that we just spent two years and who knows how many thousands of dollars trying to develop. Absolutely. I want a finished poem, I want a finished song. The search is the means to get to the end. **DB**
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Jove douglo

The long windows on the north and south sides of the room look out at woods in the back, with the fall leaves ready to burst into yellow and red blooms, and there's a work area of sorts in the front yard with piles of chainsawed wood, a maul and wedges. Douglas has already split and stacked what he figures are five cords of hardwood for the coming winter; it's fuel for both an old fireplace and wood-burning stove.

With the quiet and calm, this composition room has been Douglas' base for creativity since 2004. He lives in a rural area, down a winding road, once dirt, that is now paved. But he's still far enough off the beaten path that he and his neighbors must pool their funds together to hire a snowplow to dig them out in the winter. The year he moved here also marked the last year of his seven-album contract with RCA. At the time, he was on the verge of launching his indie label, the now strikingly successful Greenleaf Records.

by dan ovellette * photo by michael Jackson

In 2003, Douglas and Roy Campbell Jr. co-founded the Festival of New Trumpet Music (FONT) at the now-defunct venue Tonic. Originally designed as a one-off extravaganza of adventurous trumpeters, it was so critically acclaimed by horn players and critics that it has boldly lived on as a nonprofit at venues across the city including Jazz Standard, Dizzy's, The New School and ShapeShifter Lab.





Douglas' latest—and arguably best album, the jazz-chamber work *Little Giant Still Life*, teems with jubilance courtesy of the four-horn band The Westerlies and the unique drumming voice of Anwar Marshall. The album arrives from a confluence of inspiration, including the explosive works of abstract painter Stuart Davis (1892–1964), the turmoil of the 2016 political season and the creative spark of working with his new support team.

"Maybe it's just my personality," Douglas said. "But I keep thinking up new contexts and new ways of working with the tradition the way it's been handed down to me. *Little Giant Still Life* is an example of that."

Douglas had helmed his own charged group Brass Ecstasy for years (with French horn, trombone, trumpet, tuba and drummer), but working with The Westerlies—trumpeters Riley Mulherkar and Zubin Hensler and trombonists Andy Clausen and Willem de Koch posed challenges. "The biggest difference here is The Westerlies comes as a fully formed group with its own language," he explained. "I was able to not only use all the four individual players but also write for them as a pack, a block. So I had to think differently.

"There are a lot of tunes with blowing structures and all the typical things we learn from jazz, like from masters Monk, Wayne Shorter, Henry Threadgill, Gil Evans. But I also felt like I was able to draw on more contemporary classical language in some areas. My primary interest is writing for personalities, to be able to use that new-music type of language with a player who understands improvisation and playing forms inside the songs."

With more than 50 albums to his credit as a leader of original music, Douglas assigned most of *Little Giant Still Life*'s tunes with a lead

sheet that the brass members played and then improvised around or within. "It's like a concert score," he said. "We work from that. It's the best way to get into action. We all can see what everyone else is playing. It's fine for one person to jump into another part, but if it doesn't work, we stop and talk about it. So the players can really do whatever they want unless it's not serving the tune. It's up to me as the composer to justify why not."

He added, "The Westerlies can do it all, with the layers and crosscurrents." For example, he cites the tune "Your Special Day," a short piece with driving energy, peppery images and sustained brass notes that brings to mind pianist Philip Glass' work on the soundtrack to *Koyaanisqatsi* (1982). It builds to a harmonized trace of "Happy Birthday." All of this was on the lead sheet, Douglas said, but "of course, you can't dictate every nuance. It's like Mozart. The way The Westerlies are playing this is their own. When I wrote it, I was hearing what I thought they could do with it. That's the ultimate collaboration."

Douglas' fascination with Davis' artwork came from a visit to an exhibition at New York's Whitney Museum in 2016, *Stuart Davis: In Full Swing.* Not only was he taken in by the artist's flaming colors, robust geometric rhythms and improvisations in creating variations on a theme, but he also was inspired by the American modernist's political engagement as a citizen-artist. Davis, who once said that he "never fit in" with his culture, worked with a jazz-influenced sensibility. He was active during the Harlem Renaissance, and there's an online photo of him hanging out with Duke Ellington in 1943. He saw jazz as the musical equivalent of abstract visual art.

After the Whitney exhibition, Douglas read

more about Davis' life and dug deeper into his artwork, much of which he painted while listening to recordings by jazz musicians, including Earl "Fatha" Hines.

"What I like about the idea of [Davis'] work is its American vernacular," Douglas said. "His work is formally and structurally thoughtthrough. He used rhythm in a lot of ways that remind me of Thelonious Monk—the way he used repetitive rhythms. There's a lot going on in his paintings, but as they say, he still had one foot in the gutter. No matter how abstract something is, I still have the feeling it was built from a simple germ of an idea. I like to be able to have that feeling. That describes a lot about the stuff I wrote for the band."

Most of the music on *Little Giant Still Life* is inspired by Davis' paintings, but Douglas says it's not a simple compositional process where you look at a piece of artwork and write a tune to it. In fact, he said, some of his writing—melodies, harmonies, rhythms, forms and structure—was detached from his piano. Inspiration arrived when he was out jogging and reflecting on the art, and when he was in the studio, hearing The Westerlies' improvisations and the ways that Marshall would respond to his freedom largely as the sole beat keeper.

"I'm not a painter, but I imagine the process of painting is similar to composition," Douglas said. "As you're writing, you don't always know where you're going. You go down blind alleys or you get into foggy areas where you don't know what's happening for a long time. But over a period of months, the idea becomes illuminated to you. You're able to put your finger in it. I was thinking about Stuart Davis as I was writing, so I can find [allusions] to specific works."

Case in point: the opening tune, "Champion," which is based on a series of

paintings made with Champion brand spark plugs as the center theme. "I wrote that piece, as well as the title track, to match that image," Douglas said. "I wrote on the top of that page, 'flashy, bright, bold and vibrant,' and I wrote for that. I wasn't so much thinking about the image as the idea of the image. Davis intended to have the viewer see that brightness. I started writing it as a smaller piece, but it developed into a bigger piece than I expected because of the several different sections and the drum solo sections." The upbeat piece sparks, skips, tumbles and works with an abstract Cubist feel. The Westerlies serve as a supportive rhythm team when Douglas solos in the upper register, and learned as a quartet to work as a sextet on a short tour. Once in the studio, all six players jumped in and clicked.

The key non-brass component for the session was Philadelphia-based Marshall. "Anwar was a discovery for me," Douglas said. "He created a dialogue of sound on *Little Giant Still Life* without any other rhythm players. I left him open to think about tunings in terms of figuring out where he fit in. With three trumpets and two trombones, we end up with a unique sound because of Anwar."

"It did make me nervous," Marshall said of the initial sessions. "So I decided to take the approach of being more groove-oriented. My

<u>'STUART DAVIS USED RHYTHM</u> <u>IN WAYS THAT REMIND ME OF</u> <u>THELONIOUS MONK.'</u>

Marshall's drums play a central role.

"Champion' sums up the process with how we would work together," said Mulherkar. "Dave gave us the piece, and it was clearly written and through-composed. We're playing four voices, and then when Dave solos, we back him up in a more traditional way. But being the cohesive collective that we are, we come up with different combinations as improvisers."

Originally based in Seattle, The Westerlies grew up on Douglas' music. While the members attended his shows there, it wasn't until a Chamber Music of America conference that they got to meet him. In 2011, the band was working on "some weird stuff," said Mulherkar. "We decided to call Dave to ask him to listen and give us some guidance, some coaching. We had the classical world in common."

After that they met up again on the bill at their hometown Earshot Jazz Festival as the opening act for Douglas' quintet. "We had a short set while Dave had a full set," Mulherkar said. "We agreed that we could join him. We didn't know what we'd be playing, but he gave us the lead sheet to [the traditional folk song] 'Barbara Allen' and it was a natural for us to play."

Soon after, Douglas began writing with a further collaboration in mind that became *Little Giant Still Life.* "Musically, Dave wrote for us," said Mulherkar. "It was personal and tailored for us. It was organic. Since he knew us, he asked us to do things that we wouldn't have asked ourselves to do. It's riskier, more spontaneous, unexpected." The Westerlies rehearsed the music Douglas sent them. Then when they all gathered together, they took what they had assumption is that most listeners latch onto the rhythm of a piece. My job was to do a whole rhythm section by myself to make the compositions come alive." He was particularly pleased with his contributions to "Champion," which has multiple segments spotlighting drums.

Another "Champion"-like piece Douglas composed was the blues-steeped title track. "It expressed what the whole collaboration was about with all the different elements of rhythm," he said. "It brings together different languages and improvisations. We comp for each other. It's literally a 12-bar blues. The fact that The Westerlies can comp with two trumpets and two trombones like a jazz rhythm section is just amazing."

Other pieces of note include "Bunting," which nods to an NPR radio show theme before disintegrating into sonic chaos. "It's what the news feels like today," Douglas said. The abrasive, dissonant "Arcade" starts with all the players stacked up on top of each other, each playing a half-step apart. "We do four iterations of this, which ends up giving it a kaleidoscopic feel of walking through a hallway of shiny [objects] on each side as the lights move and flash," he said.

The lyrical "Codetta" is a Douglas original that he played as a duo with accordionist Guy Klucevsek on his 1998 album *Charms Of The Night Sky*; this time around, Douglas wanted the full brass effect. The seven-minute "Swing Landscape" opens with a chromatic shifting of voices in the band.

"That [song] represents the way the shapes and colors shift and mutate inside that painting," Douglas said. "But it also spoke to me about Stuart Davis. Being an American was very important to him. He was involved with WPA activities and painting murals. There's an extremely oblique quotation inside of this tune from the Richard Rodgers song 'Oklahoma!' You wouldn't recognize it. I pointed it out to The Westerlies. I don't think you can find it, but it's there. I felt, what's more Americana than [Rodgers & Hammerstein's] *Oklahoma!*? It lands on a major chord after all the chromatics. Something about that feels patriotic."

The nation's divisive political discourse has affected Douglas' creativity. "I wrote most of these tunes during the most insane presidential election in American history," Douglas said. "That was hard to ignore. It colored everything I did in the compositional room. I'd see one of the debates and there's a presidential candidate bragging about the size of his genitals. That's an extraordinary event in our nation's history. That is embarrassing, disgusting and yet you can't sweep it under the rug. Once you've witnessed that, how do you pretend that you haven't?"

So how did Douglas incorporate those emotions into his music? "Anger is not my response," he said. "As citizens and artists, we have to respond constructively, without complaining. It's about, 'Keep your eyes on the ball'—which is the music. If there's any social statement in the music, it's that an ensemble can function as a model for the way society can work. If you hear a good group improvising, it's like a dialogue. There will be prominent voices and there will be voices less prominent.

"But everyone has to be heard, everyone has to be an equal player in the music, and everyone's eye is on the ultimate goal, which is to make a successful piece of music. If our society could work this way, we'd be a whole lot better."

At 54, Douglas is still a relatively young man, but he said he feels, in some respects, like an elder statesman. His Greenleaf Records label is now home to 60 albums (his own, as well as releases by Kneebody, Donny McCaslin, Ryan Keberle and others) as well as a monthly subscription series of exclusive music. In February, Greenleaf will release the new Douglas-Joe Lovano Sound Prints project. (An earlier volume was released by Blue Note in 2015.)

Fortunately for Douglas, some critical prejudices from early in his career have faded away. "When I was at RCA, a lot of critics wrote that there were basically two poles for modern trumpet: "There's Dave and there's Wynton," he said. "I've talked to Wynton about this and how neither of us was comfortable with this formulation. There are no two ways of playing modern trumpet. That war is over. Wynton has done remarkable things, and I'm hoping that my work as a composer is a platform, too. That's part of the reason we started FONT—to show how many great, original trumpeters there are right now. It's a golden age for the music." DB

AND AND SWAGGER

By Ted Panken Photo by Anna Yatskevich

IT DOESN'T TAKE A PH.D. TO COMPLETE THE ELLIPTICAL TITLE OF WILLIE JONES III'S NEW ALBUM, *MY POINT Is...* (WJ3), on which the 49-year-old drummer helms a quintet with tenor saxophonist ralph moore, trumpeter eddie henderson, pianist eric reed and bassist buster williams.

"The common ground for these musicians is that they all love to play in a style that some would call hard-bop or straightahead—what I'd call real jazz," Jones said of his bandmates over breakfast near his home in Brooklyn's Clinton Hill neighborhood in late September. Bolstered by a four-night run at Dizzy's Club Coca-Cola before entering the studio, the players navigate the eight-piece program with abundant energy and a fresh approach. A similar descriptor fits Jones' five previous albums on his imprint label, WJ3, and another 11 releases on the label, including works by Reed, pianist Cyrus Chestnut, and alto saxophonist Justin Robinson, as well as guitarist Jacques Lesure and veteran bassist Henry Franklin. (The latter two, like Jones, are natives of Los Angeles.)

"Real jazz to me has the rhythmic feel of swinging," Jones said. "You can improvise, but change the rhythm base, and the style is different. It's great if blues is in it, but there doesn't necessarily *have* to be. The groove basis for jazz is the ride cymbal. If I want to play r&b or funk, then the emphasis will be on the backbeat with the snare drum and hi-hat. I can do that. I grew up loving Donny Hathaway, Earth, Wind & Fire, Roberta Flack. I'm the generation of hip-hop. I love black music. But I'm all about that *spang-a-lang* on the ride cymbal. I'm all about the finger-poppin'. That's what I was raised in. I breathe it."





Jones is best known for applying these aesthetics during a 1998–2006 stint with trumpeter Roy Hargrove's quintet, and subsequent tenures as drummer-of-choice for the late piano masters Cedar Walton and Hank Jones.

These days he most frequently plays with guitarist Russell Malone's quartet, with whom he performed on Sept. 22 at the uptown Manhattan club Smoke to promote the group's third HighNote album, *Time For The Dancers*.

Jones seemed to barely move a muscle above his shoulders, propelling the flow with deep focus, impeccable time and a keen instinct for conjuring combinations of rhythm timbre most apropos to each environment. Throughout the set, he displayed a mastery of diverse feels: backbeat-to-swing on Mulgrew Miller's "Soul-Leo"; medium swing on Walton's "Rubber Man"; brush-stroked rubato on Jimmy Webb's "By The Time I Get To Phoenix"; spare, crisp tippin' on Malone's blues-drenched "The Ballad Of Hank Crawford"; groove-rich tone-painting on Bobby Hutcherson's "Little B's Poem"; and, yes, high-octane spang-a-lang on Freddie Hubbard's "Sweet Sue," which climaxed with well-designed drum solo.

"Willie makes everything feel good," Malone said during a subsequent phone conversation. "Some drummers can't get through two bars of music without trying to do something cute and slick, but with Willie, the time and the groove is not an afterthought. He's aware of each component of the song—the melody, the changes and the form. I like to incorporate different grooves into my things, and Willie does not turn up his nose at them. He knows *exactly* what to do. That's why so many people want to utilize his skills."

The qualities to which Malone referred pose certain complexities for Jones in balancing the various components that comprise his

'Watching Billy Higgins practice is the best drum lesson you can get.'

career matrix. As we spoke, he was anticipating his semimonthly two-day trip to Northwestern University, where he's taught since 2010, to be followed by a European tour with an Eric Reedled quartet featuring Italian tenor saxophonist Piero Odorici and bassist Dezron Douglas. He noted a recent New York engagement with Javon Jackson's superb but intermittently convened Sax Appeal, with Gary Bartz, Donald Harrison, and Jimmy Heath, and cited gigs with Diane Schuur and Vincent Herring.

The release of *My Point Is...* was imminent, and he was preparing to drop new WJ3 releases by Reed and Moore.

"It's a full schedule," Jones said. "I'd like to transform into getting more gigs with my own band and play as a sideman with maybe one or two groups. I'd like it to be 50-50."

Toward that end, Jones was trying to book his *My Point Is...* quintet, which he calls the WJ3 All-Stars, on the 2018 U.S. and European festival circuits. "It's a difficult mountain to climb when you don't have big-time management," he said. "It's stressful. But once I get the gig, getting [the band] together in one room or at the airport or to a recording session is no problem."

Jones is anything but a bombastic player; a blindfolded fan could listen to *My Point Is...* several times without realizing the drummer is the leader.

"Willie doesn't necessarily put himself out front on the bandstand, but he's very much a leader in the sense that he hustles the gigs, pulls the guys together, handles the logistics, and does it with a sense of ease," Moore said. "When he asked me to do a record [for WJ3], I agreed immediately. He gave me complete leeway with the music, but he was totally hands-on."

Moore was referring to his new album, Three Score, which is an intense quartet recital with Reed, Jones and bassist Gerald Cannon. It's the saxophonist's first leader album since 1993, a few years before he heard Jones for the first time. The event was a Sunday cocktail hour gig that Moore held with fellow Tonight Show band members Robert Hurst and Marvin "Smitty" Smith at a bar in Inglewood called the Main Event. "When Smitty couldn't make it, Willie was the first call," Moore said. "He never said a word-just set up his drums, took care of business, and left. A few years later, I went to Catalina's Bar and Grill [in Los Angeles] and he was there with Roy Hargrove. He'd moved to New York. When a musician moves to New York, he or she gets some kind of edge, an awareness about the music that they didn't have before. Willie definitely had it."

Before relocating to New York in 1997, Jones had accumulated a formidable c.v. as a working L.A. musician—consequential touring with Arturo Sandoval; weekly sinecures at local boîtes; gigs with West Coast heroes like Teddy Edwards, Billy Childs and Kei Akagi; and albums for Sony and Impulse! with Black Note, a collective combo with bassist Marcus Shelby, trumpeter Gilbert Castellanos and alto saxophonist James Mahone. He met them at the World Stage, the workshop-performing space that poet Kamau Daáood and drummer Billy Higgins co-founded in Leimert Park in 1989.

"Billy was always in my ear," Jones said. "He told me from the beginning, 'What you're doing here is fine, but you want to go to New York. Don't get too comfortable.' He also was the first one who put the bug in my ear about having a label. He always talked about Strata-East [the label founded by Charles Tolliver and Stanley Cowell in 1971]. I never studied with him officially, but I'd watch him practice at midnight. That's the best drum lesson you can get."

During these years, Jones was taking official lessons with Albert "Tootie" Heath at California Institute of the Arts. "I knew I wanted to be a jazz musician as early as 7," Jones recalled. "But at CalArts they hipped me what to listen for, what I needed to do and how to go about it. I had technique at that point. Tootie didn't need to teach me paradiddles. He was always like, 'Let me hear you play.' Back then, the concept of phrasing wasn't in my vocabulary. It was like one stream of consciousness. Tootie said, 'Man, that's great, but you've got to *say* something. What are you trying to tell me?'

"Two years later, he got me on a three-week tour with Milt Jackson that he couldn't make, and Milt Jackson said the same thing: 'You want to play music; you don't want to play drums.' He also told me, 'If I have to count while you're soloing, then you're not playing anything.'

So I tell my students: 'I should just be able to listen to how you're phrasing on the kit, and I should know where we are in the tune.'"

Jones inherited his jazz obsession from his namesake father, a pianist, composer and arranger who moved from Jacksonville to L.A. in 1961 at the instigation of his childhood friend Freddie Hill, a trumpeter whose credits include multiple appearances with Gerald Wilson during the 1960s. Six weeks after he'd arrived, père Jones became pianist and music director for The Platters, the popular vocal group. By 1968, when Jones was born, he was gigging locally and working as a vocal coach for entertainers, including Ann-Margaret.

"My father knew all the musicians," Jones said. "I met Higgins when I was a kid, although I didn't know who he was then. I got to know [drummer] Larance Marable and Henry Franklin very well, and I met Teddy Edwards, who I played with when I was older. My father loved all black music and was into gospel, but he was a bebopper at heart. I think he had his own voice—he loved Bill Evans, Oscar Peterson and Wynton Kelly, but I don't think he sounded like any of them. He was very thorough rhythmically and harmonically. He'd have rehearsals at the house, and I'd get all excited just watching the drummer set up the drums. Then I'd sit right next to the floor tom watching him play."

"Willie's father was sort of like the Detroit session cats who did all those Motown records," Reed said. "His jazz playing was funky and jagged—it reminded me of [pianist] Elmo Hope."

Reed's November release, a hardcore jazzmeets-gospel quartet recital titled A Light In Darkness, is his fourth on WJ3. He and Jones first shared a bandstand circa 1985 on a gospel gig with Jones' uncle by marriage, singer-preacher Eric Claybon. "Meeting Willie helped me fuse a lot of things I was trying to do in combining gospel and jazz music," Reed said. "We'd both grown up on so many different types of music, including r&b and pop. We just wanted to play. He always played with taste. He loves to play time. Like Billy Higgins, he doesn't talk a lot; he reminds me of Higgins because his swing has a West Coast swagger, with a looseness that isn't lackadaisical and an edge that isn't overwhelming."

As Jones approaches age 50, he'll follow his lodestar principle of "documenting my stage of development." He continued, "If I'm around musicians writing originals, or if we're playing standards, that's what we'll record."

Jones mentioned his 2013 WJ3 release, *Plays The Max Roach Songbook*, capturing an event at Dizzy's Club Coca-Cola. "That concept was suggested to me as a show, then they recorded it and I decided to put it out," Jones said. "But I didn't sit down and think about doing a record dedicated to Max or Art Blakey or Billy Higgins—although I do have an idea for Billy. So many roads go through Higgins."

A prime example of one such interstitial tributary was Jones' tenure with Cedar Walton, who worked steadily with Higgins from the early '70s until shortly before Higgins' death in 2001. "Higgins would bring Cedar to his workshop," Jones said. "Cedar taught us his songs, and listened to us play, critiqued us. I didn't get close to him then, though once he called me for a couple of gigs. I knew his book the first time I played with him. After I moved to New York, he'd call me as a sub, and in 2008 I started playing with him all the time. Playing through Cedar's songbook and his arrangements took my playing to an even more musical level."

Having cultivated WJ3 to the point where it is self-sustaining, Jones plans to remain on the DIY pathway that Higgins advocated so assiduously. "It's a self-investment," Jones said. "I'm not making a profit, but I'm not losing any money. I've become more proficient at putting out each project. If a major label came along and said, "Not only will we put your project out, but we'll send you on the road for a tour" or something like that—which we know isn't going to happen But under those circumstances, I would jump at the opportunity." **DB**

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FABIAN ALMAZAN & RHIZOME

Alcanza Biophilia Records.....Sept.

Pianist Almazan's nine-part suite is bold and complicated, evoking a range of emotions melancholy, wonder, passion, joy, awe—in what is often a densely contrapuntal swirl of sound. There are moments where the playing delivers the energy of a collective improvisation, even though the melodies and rhythms follow a compositional logic.

BLUE NOTE ALL-STARS

Our Point Of View Blue NoteNov.

The latest edition of the Blue Note All-Stars includes Robert Glasper, Kendrick Scott, Lionel Loueke, Derrick Hodge, Ambrose Akinmusire and Marcus Strickland. The program is superbly dynamic, and the guest appearances of Herbie Hancock and Wayne Shorter up the ante even further. The result is a cross-generational dialog that exemplifies the label's living legacy.

LUCIA CADOTSCH

Speak Low

Yellowbird/Enja.....June

So ingenious is the way vocalist Cadotsch re-imagines the canon of standards that the songs on *Speak Low* feel fully in the here and now. The Zurich native accomplishes this in a deeply integrated partnership with two free-jazz players, saxophonist Otis Sandsjö and bassist Peter Eldh, whose intense instrumental swirl invests the material with tension and truth.

FRANK CARLBERG LARGE ENSEMBLE

Monk Dreams, Hallucinations And Nightmares Red Piano Records..........May

Finnish pianist Carlberg pilots his 18-strong crew over roiling seas of Thelonious rumblings on *Monk Dreams, Hallucinations And Nightmare*s. He jiggles his kaleidoscope and twists herkyjerky shards of melody into charmed, imperfectly quirky, mesmerizing pieces.

STEVE COLEMAN'S NATAL ECLIPSE Morphogenesis

PiSept.

On his 30th album as a leader, saxophonist Steve Coleman introduces yet another element to his ever-evolving sonic universe: a chamber group of complementary instruments, as well as a percussionist on five of the nine pieces. Coleman continues to evolve while maintaining the foundation of motivic cells and melodic interactivity that defined his M-Base philosophy in the 1980s.

THE FAT BABIES Solid Gassuh

DelmarkFeb.

Based in Chicago, the Fat Babies have built a large repertoire and demonstrated serious versa-tility while emulating many different trad-jazz groups, mostly from the 1923–'32 period. The performances here have the group sounding like a relaxed but hot dance band from the time, despite having only three horns. While the Fat Babies sometimes uses transcriptions from vintage records, their solos are creative within the genre rather than pure copies.

FOND OF TIGERS Uninhabit

Offseason RecordsJuly

The vinyl release *Uninhabit* by Vancouver's Fond of Tigers is a brilliant and beautifully intense album featuring innovative writing and improvisation sourced from avant-rock, free improvisation and art music. Led by guitarist/vocalist Stephen Lyons, the band merges edgy textures and extended instrumental effects into groovy hipster oneness.

JOSH GREEN & THE CYBORG ORCHESTRA Telepathy & Bop

Self-ReleaseApril

This long, animated album is a marvel of unexpected piano voicings, as well as tunes that threaten to go every which way but are paradoxically even-keeled. If Looney Tunes revived, Green would write the soundtracks.

CHRISTIAN MCBRIDE BIG BAND Bringin' It

Mack AvenueOct.

A big band powered by a big bass is a mighty thing to hear. Speaking volumes, this album nods to Count Basie, Oliver Nelson, Thad Jones and Charles Mingus and contains compositions by Freddie





Hubbard, McCoy Tyner, Wes Montgomery, McBride and Steve Davis. Each track has bountiful, detailed pleasures, supported, inspired and generated by the man at the ensemble's core.

SAM NEWSOME

Sopranovine	
Self-Release	June

Newsome presents new works for prepared and non-prepared soprano saxophone on his sixth solo album focusing on the straight horn. The wonder of Newsome is the way he allies geeky experimentalism with controlled musicality.

ARUAN ORTIZ

Cub(an)ism IntaktSept.

With his 10th album as a leader, and his first solo recording since 1996's *Impresion Tropical*, pianist Ortiz brings the spirit of his homeland, Cuba, into alignment with the visual art style known as Cubism.

OZOMATLI

Non-Stop: Mexico To Jamaica CleopatraAug.

Ozomatli honors the cultural diversity of its Los Angeles home with an infectious combination of reggae, hip-hop, salsa, funk, ska, Afro-Cuban jazz and rock.





The band captures the essence of roots music with tracks full of dub effects and pounding rhythms.

MADELEINE PEYROUX Secular Hymns

Impulse/VerveMarch

Peyroux doesn't have to raise her voice to express the conflicted emotions that mark the human condition. She made this album in an old English church with a wooden roof that brings a warm, natural reverb to her voice, lending these live performances a universal appeal.

SARAH SISKIND & SUNLINER Love

Self-ReleaseMay

Singer-songwriter Siskind's EP Love features six songs with her roots-rock trio Sunliner. This collection strips down her art to its essence: her voice, which draws emotional power from her sophisticated approach to melisma; her reverb-heavy hollowbody electric guitar; and an excellent trio including husband Travis Book on bass and backing vocals.

MARTIAL SOLAL & DAVE LIEBMAN Masters In Bordeaux

Sunnyside Dec.

Recorded at the Jazz & Wine

Festival in Bordeaux, France, this live duo album manages to exceed expectations. It's clear from the beginning that French pianist Solal and American saxophonist Liebman—both masters in their own right—aren't interested in perfunctory readings of jazz standards; the focus is not on the tunes but on the inexhaustible depth of their inventiveness.

BECCA STEVENS

Reaina GroundUp Music May

Regina is a fully realized, rapturous meditation on queens in history, myth, literature and Stevens' own fertile imagination. This complex, densely layered album-the long-awaited followup to 2015's Perfect Animal-contains allusive songs that are alternately dreamy and spine-tingling. Collaborators include singers Laura Mvula, Jo Lawry and Alan Hampton, as well as rock icon David Crosby.

YOSVANY TERRY/BAPTISTE TROTIGNON

Ancestral	Memories	
OKeh		Nov

On this propulsive album, Cuban-American saxophonist-composer

HISTORICAL *****

KENNY DORHAM

K.D. Is Here: New York City 1962 & 1966 UptownNov.

BILL EVANS TRIO

On A Monday Evening Fantasy.....June

DICK HYMAN

Solo At The Sacramento Jazz Festivals 1983-1988 Arbors JazzOct.

MAHALIA JACKSON

NEW ****½

Moving On Up A Little Higher Shanachie..... April **KEITH JARRETT** A Multitude Of Angels

Terry and Paris-born

TINARIWEN

Elwan

Trotignon-inspired by the music

of Martinique, Guadeloupe, Haiti,

New Orleans and Cuba's Oriente

Province-show that jazz can swing

Anti-.....Feb.

This album by the Tuareg musicians of Tinariwen, who come from the desert between

southern Algeria and northeastern

Mali, is steeped in desolation. The band's guitarists—Ibrahim Ag Alhabib, Alhassane Ag Touhami,

Elaga Ag Hamid and Abdallah Ag

Alhousseyni-generate a trance-like pulsation marked by sinuous,

ECMFeb.

Known for pushing boundaries,

Cuban pianist David Virelles

draws from cultural reservoirs like a perfumer distinguishing essential sonic oils from a potent

mix on *Antenna*. The emphasis here is on materiality of sound as Virelles manipulates recordings of saxophonist Henry Threadgill,

intertwining leads.

DAVID VIRELLES

Antenna

with a French-Carribean accent.

pianist

NRBQ High Noon: A 50-Year Retrospective



High Noon - A 50-Year Retrospective

Marcus Gilmore the verse at hand. and vocalist Román Díaz with meticulous abandon.

MIROSLAV VITOUS

drummer

ZIIJADU N	lights	
Intuition	-	March

What Vitous has accomplished with this live album is to remind listeners of the place he occupied during the seminal early years of the 1970s, when he was a founding member of Weather Report—and to display where he's taken it since. The bassist's designs were to play his instrument as musically as possible, rendering his timekeeping role moot.

MATT WILSON Honey And Salt: Music Inspired By The Poetry Of Carl Sandburg PalmettoAug.

Wilson's Honey And Salt group addresses the verse of Sandburg, and this album not only reminds us how whimsical a poet the master truly was, but also how gifted a drummer and arranger Wilson is. The program shifts and shifts, but each turn introduces a genuinely discrete approach to

WINGFIELD/REUTER/STAVI/ SIRKIS The Stone House

MoonJune.....July

The six pieces that constitute The Stone House were completely improvised by guitarist Mark Wingfield, TouchGuitar AU8 player Markus Reuter, bassist Yaron Stavi and drummer Asaf Sirkis, all of whom share lead billing. The sonic tapestry of all four instruments serves to enhance the album's ephemeral grooves and inevitable storytelling atmosphere.

LIZZ WRIGHT Grace

ConcordNov.

Wright singing Americana is a no-brainer. Her espresso-flavored alto seems to have emerged from the rural Georgian soil on which she grew up. She has a passionate yet plaintive delivery, and her unadorned tone embodies the American folk aesthetic. The deep resonance of Wright's voice never overwhelms the clarity of her diction, nor does it diminish the emotional conviction she kindles with each song's thematic intent.

ANTONIO ADOLFO

Hybrido-From Rio To Wayne Shorter Antonio Adolfo Music...... July

ERIC ALEXANDER Second Impression HighNote.....Feb.

JASON ANICK & JASON YEAGER United Inner Circle Music..... Aug.

JOÃO BARRADAS Directions Inner Circle Music..... Sept.

JOHN BEASLEY Presents MONK'estra, Vol.2 Mack Avenue Oct.

SHELLY BERG & DAVID FINCK The Deep Chesky.....Nov.

RICHARD BONA WITH MANDEKAN CUBANO Heritage Qwest Jan.

GEOF BRADFIELD Birdhoused

JOSHUA BREAKSTONE CELLO QUARTET 88 Capri..... Jan.

BILLY CHILDS Rebirth Mack Avenue April

GERALD CLAYTON Tributary Tales Motéma.....July

ANAT COHEN TENTET Happy Song Cellar LiveDec. Anzic RecordsDec.

MARC COPLAND Better By Far InnerVoice Jazz July

JON COWHERD Gateway Newvelle Records......Dec.

THE DELEGATION Everareen (Canceled World) ESP-DiskApril

DOMINIQUE EADE & RAN BLAKE Town And Country Sunnyside.....Sept.

ECMFeb.

Omnivore..... Jan.

VARIOUS ARTISTS Classic Savoy Bebop Sessions: 1945-1949 Mosaic.....March









YELENA ECKEMOFF GUINTET In The Shadow Of A Cloud L&H ProductionOct.

PETER ERSKINE NEW TRIO In Praise Of Shadows Fuzzy Music......May

DANIEL FOOSE Of Water And Ghosts Brooklyn Jazz Underground......Jan.

DAVID GILMORE Transitions Criss Cross Jazz.....June

VITOR GONCALVES Vitor Goncalves Quartet Sunnyside......March

CAMERON GRAVES Planetary Prince Mack AvenueApril

MARK GUILIANA JAZZ GUARTET Jersey Motéma.....Oct. TIM HAGANS & NDR BIGBAND Faces Under The Influence: A Jazz Tribute To John Cassavetes Waiting Moon Records Nov.

NOAH HAIDU Infinite Distances Cellar LiveJuly

TIGRAN HAMASYAN An Ancient Observer NonesuchApril

ANNE METTE IVERSEN QUARTET +1 Round Trip Brooklyn Jazz Underground...Sept.

VIJAY IYER SEXTET Far From Over ECMNov.

JAZZ PASSENGERS Still Life With Trouble Thirsty Ear......May

BERT JORIS & THE BRUSSELS JAZZ ORCHESTRA Smooth Shake De Werf......April



JULIAN LAGE Live In Los Angeles Mack AvenueMarch

OLIVIER LE GOAS Reciprocity NeuklangMarch

PEGGY LEE Tell Tale Drip Audio......July

DAVID LOPATO Gendhing For A Spirit Rising Global CoolantNov.















ROB LUFT Riser EditionNov.

BRIAN MCCARTHY The Better Angels Of Our Nature Truth RevolutionSept.

LISA MEZZACAPPA AvantNOIR Clean Feed.....Oct.

RON MILES *I Am A Man* Enja/Yellowbird......Dec.

DAVY MOONEY Hope Of Home Sunnyside......Aug.





LINDA MAY HAN OH Walk Against Wind BiophiliaJune

RICHARD OSBORN *Endless* Tompkins SquareJune

EDDIE PALMIERI Sabiduría Ropeadope......June

JEFF PARKER *Slight Freedom* Eremite.....Jan.



GARY PEACOCK TRIO Tangents ECMOct.

SAMORA PINDERHUGHES The Transformations Suite Self-Release......Jan.

PLUG AND PRAY *Evergreens* D Stream.....June

THE REUNION PROJECT Varanda Tapestry/Capri.....July

JAMIE REYNOLDS Grey Mirror Fresh Sound New Talent.. Dec.

TROY ROBERTS Tales & Tones Inner Circle Music......May

CHRIS ROGERS Voyage Home Art Of LifeMay

MARA ROSENBLOOM TRIO

Prairie Burn Fresh Sound New Talent Jan.





SAFT/SWALLOW/PREVITE WITH IGGY POP Loneliness Road RareNoiseRecords......Sept.

RYUICHI SAKAMOTO *Async* Milan Records.....Oct.

RON SAMWORTH Dogs Do Dream Drip Audio.....July

KEN SCHAPHORST BIG BAND How To Say Goodbye JCA Recordings.....April

BRANDON SEABROOK Die Trommel Fatale New Atlantis Records Nov.

BOBBY SELVAGGIO Quantum Man Dot TimeJune

YOTAM SILBERSTEIN The Village Jazz&PeopleApril

SOLANGE A Seat At The Table Saint/Columbia......March

CHRIS SPEED TRIO Platinum On Tap Intakt......Nov.

RAIN SULTANOV Inspired By Nature Ozella.....Oct.

DAVID S. WARE & MATTHEW SHIPP DUO Live In Sant'Anna Arresi, 2004 Aum Fidelity...... Jan.

HISTORICAL **** ½

DIZZY GILLESPIE

Concert Of The Century: A Tribute To Charlie Parker Justin TimeApril

LEE KONITZ & KENNY WHEELER Olden Times-Live At Birdland Neuburg Double MoonApril

MYRA MELFORD TRIO Alive In The House Of Saints Part 1 hatOLOGYOct.

FRANK SINATRA The Frank Sinatra Collection: The Timex Shows, Vol. 1 & 2 (DVD) Eagle Rock Entertainment.....Aug.





NEW ****

REZ ABBASI Unfiltered Universe Whirlwind..... Dec.

JOHN ABERCROMBIE QUARTET Up And Coming ECM May

GEOFF ACHISON Another Mile, Another Minute Jupiter 2 Records.....June

AMBROSE AKINMUSIRE A Rift In Decorum: Live At The Village Vanguard Blue NoteJuly

GABRIEL ALEGRIA Diablo En Brooklyn Saponegro Dec.

RAHIM ALHAJ Letters From Iraq Smithsonian Folkways Sept.

TONY ALLEN The SourceNov. Blue Note ...

BEN ALLISON Layers Of The City Sonic CameraOct.

BEN ALLISON Quiet Revolution Newvelle Records..... Feb.

HERB ALPERT The Christmas Wish Herb Alpert Presents Dec.

AMOK AMOR We Know Not What We Do Intakt.....Nov.

BILL ANSCHELL Rumbler

BANDA MAGDA Tiare Verve/GroundUp Nov.

SAM BARDFELD The Great Enthusiasms Brooklyn Jazz UndergroundDec.

BASSDRUMBONE The Long Road

DJANGO BATES Saluting Sgt. Pepper Edition Records Sept.

DOUG BEAVERS Art Of The Arrangement ArtistShare.....Nov.

TIM BERNE'S SNAKEOIL Incidentals ECMNov.

PETER BERNSTEIN Signs LIVE! Smoke Sessions Records.....Sept.

CHUCK BERRY Chuck DualtoneAug.

LISA BIALES The Beat Of My Heart Big Song Music May

ERIC BIBB Migration Blues Stony Plain.....Aug.

BILLY T BAND Reckoning Big H Records.....July

DAVID BINNEY The Time Verses Origin......April Criss Cross Jazz.....June

















ELVIN BISHOP Elvin Bishop's Big Fun Trio AlligatorApril

T.K. BLUE *Amour* Dot Time.....Sept.

BOKANTÉ Strange Circles GroundUp......July

JOE BONAMASSA Live At The Greek Theatre (DVD) J&R AdventuresJan.

FIONA BOYES Professin' The Blues Reference......Jan.

ALAN BROADBENT Developing Story Eden RiverSept.

KENNY BURRELL Unlimited 1 HighNote......Feb.



LUCIA CADOTSCH Speak Low Renditions Yellowbird/Enja.....June

URI CAINE & THE LUTOSLAWSKI QUARTET Space Kiss 816 MusicOct.

GEORGE CALDWELL/ BOBBY LAVELL Accord

American Showplace Music....March

GERALD CANNON Combinations WoodneckAug.

BILL CHARLAP TRIO Uptown, Downtown Impulse!..... Dec.

CHICAGO/LONDON UNDERGROUND A Night Walking Through Mirrors Cuneiform Rune.....June





Jason Kao Hwang SING HOUSE



LEONARD COHEN *You Want It Darker* ColumbiaJan.

TAL COHEN Gentle Giants Inner Circle Music......Aug.

GEORGE COLLIGAN More Powerful WhirlwindJuly

CHICK COREA The Musician ConcordAug.

GUSTAVO CORTIÑAS Esse OA2June

LARRY CORYELL'S 11TH HOUSE Seven Secrets Savoy Jazz......Sept.

ROXY COSS Chasing The Unicorn Posi-ToneJuly

SYLVIE COURVOISIER & MARY HALVORSON Crop Circles Relative Pitch.....July





INGRID LAUBROCK SERPENTINES MIYA MASADKA DAN PECA SAM PLUTA TYSHAWAUSOREY CRAD TABORH & PETER EVANS

BILL CUNLIFFE BACHanalia Metre Records.....Oct.

JASON PAUL CURTIS These Christmas Days Self-Release..... Dec.

TIM DAISY October Music Vol. 2: 7 Compositions For Duet Relay Recordings......March

JO ANN DAUGHERTY *Bring Joy* Self-Release.....Jan.

GUY DAVIS & FABRIZIO POGGI Sonny & Brownie's Last Train M.C. Records.....July

DEJOHNETTE/GRENADIER/ MEDESKI/SCOFIELD Hudson

Motéma.....Aug.

AKUA DIXON Akua's Dance Akua's Music March

CHANO DOMINGUEZ *Over The Rainbow* Sunnyside......April



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ELIANE ELIAS . DANCE OF TIME









CHET DOXAS Rich In Symbols Ropeadope..... Dec.

DR. MINT Voices In The Void Orenda.....July

MARK DRESSER SEVEN Sedimental You Clean Feed..... Jan.

DUCHESS Laughing At Life Anzic March

ANDREW DURKIN Breath Of Fire PJCE Records.....June

EARPRINT Earprint Endectomorph Music Jan.

NATHAN EAST Reverence Yamaha Entertainment Group... April

YELENA ECKEMOFF Blooming Tall Phlox L&H ProductionApril

HARRIS EISENSTADT Recent Developments Songlines May

ELIANE ELIAS Dance Of Time Concord.....June

ELOPING WITH THE SUN Counteract This Turmoil Like Trees And Birds Posi-Tone July

AMIR ELSAFFAR/RIVERS OF SOUND Not Two New Amsterdam Records July

PETER ERSKINE & THE DR. UM BAND Second Opinion Fuzzy Music..... May

JOHN ESCREET The Unknown Sunnyside.....Jan.

ESKELIN/WEBER/GRIENER Sensations Of Tone

RICK ESTRIN & THE NIGHTCATS Groovin' In Greaseland Alligator Nov.

PHILIPP FANKHAUSER & MARGIE EVANS Unplugged Black PalmJune

DAVID FELDMAN Horizonte David Feldman Music July

ALAN FERBER BIG BAND Jigsaw Sunnyside..... Dec.

ALAN FERBER BIG BAND Over The Rainbow Sunnyside.....April

JOE FIEDLER Like, Strange Multiphonics MusicJune

NICK FINZER Hear & Now Outside In Music April

BIG JOE FITZ Shoulda Known Better Self-Release......March

PAUL FONFARA & IPSIFENDUS ORCHESTRA Seven Secrets Of Snow Ipsifendus Records.....Feb.

DAVID FRIESEN CIRCLE 3 TRIO Triple Exposure Origin March

SATOKO FUJII/JOE FONDA Duet Long Song Records.....Feb.

CHAMPIAN FULTON Christmas With Champian Champian Records Dec.

CHAMPIAN FULTON Speechless Posi-ToneJune

LASZLO GARDONY Serious Play Sunnyside.....Oct.

GATO LIBRE Neko Libra Records..... Oct.

BRUCE GERTZ QUARTET Blue Cube Open Mind Jazz..... Dec.

GERRY GIBBS & THRASHER PEOPLE Jiasaw Sunnyside..... Dec.

JIMMY GREENE Flowers: Beautiful Life Vol. 2 Mack AvenueJuly

JIM GUSTIN & TRUTH JONES Memphis Self-Release.....July

JIMMY HALPERIN WITH PÅL NYBERG TRIO Live At A-Trane: Berlin

Klangverk Recordings...... May

ROSS HAMMOND Follow Your Heart PrescottJune

TOM HARRELL Moving Picture HighNote..... Dec.

HARRIET TUBMAN Araminta Sunnyside.....April

BRUCE HARRIS Beginnings Posi-Tone.....Nov.

JOEL HARRISON The Other River Whirlwind.....Sept. KEYON HARROLD The Mugician Legacy...... Dec.

LOUIS HAYES Serenade For Horace Blue NoteJuly

KEVIN HAYS & LIONEL LOUEKE *Hope* Newvelle......Oct.

ARVE HENRIKSEN Towards Language Rune Grammofon......Sept.

ERIC HOFBAUER Prehistoric Jazz Vol. 3, Three Places In New England Creative Nation......Feb.

MATT HOLMAN The Tenth Muse Panoramic/New Focus May

JULIA HÜLSMANN TRIO Sooner And Later ECMJuly

VAN HUNT Popular Blue Note Dec.

MICHAEL HURLEY Bad Mr. Mike Mississippi Jan.

JASON KAO HWANG Sing House EuonymusSept.

DAVID IAN Vintage Christmas Trio Prescott Dec.

KARI IKONEN Ikonostasis Ozella......Oct.

ANNE METTE IVERSEN Ternion Quartet Brooklyn Jazz Underground......Sept.

ETHAN IVERSON The Purity Of The Turf Criss Cross Jazz.....Jan.

AHMAD JAMAL Marseille Jazz Village/PIAS.....Sept.

TERESA JAMES & THE RHYTHM TRAMPS Bonafide Jesi-Lu......Feb.

JOSÉ JAMES Love In A Time Of Madness Blue NoteApril

B.J. JANSEN Common Ground Ronin JazzAug.

JEROME JENNINGS The Beast Iola RecordsFeb.

JLCO WITH WYNTON MARSALIS FEAT. JON BATISTE The Music Of John Lewis Blue EngineJune

GLENN JONES *An Idea In Everything* Okarina.....June

SEAN JONES Live From Jazz At The Bistro Mack AvenueAug.

PAUL JONES Clean Outside In MusicDec.

VIC JURIS Vic Plays Victor Young SteepleChase......May

NOAH KAPLAN QUARTET Cluster Swerve Hatology......Aug.

PETER KAVANAUGH Look For The Silver Lining Self-Release.....April

RYAN KEBERLE & CATHARSIS *Find The Common, Shine A Light* Greenleaf......Aug.

DAVE KELLER Right Back Atcha Tastee-Tone......April

STEVE KHAN Backlog Tone CenterAug.

FRANKLIN KIERMYER Closer To The Sun Mobility Music......March

PETROS KLAMPANIS Chroma Motéma......May

THE KLEZMATICS Apikorsim/Heretics World Village.....April

KNEEBODY Anti-Hero Motéma......May

KIRK KNUFFKE Cherryco SteepleChase......Sept.

OLGA KONKOVA & JENS THORESEN December Songs Losen Dec.

JULIAN LAGE & CHRIS ELDRIDGE Mount Royal Free Dirt Records...... May

LAMA & JOACHIM BADENHORST *Metamorphosis* Clean Feed...... Dec.

SONNY LANDRETH Recorded Live In Lafayette Provoque......Oct.

BRIAN LANDRUS ORCHESTRA Generations Blueland......Sept.

BOB LARK/PHIL WOODS QUINTET Thick As Thieves Jazzed Media.....Oct.





















ADAM LARSON Second City Inner Circle Music.....Web

INGRID LAUBROCK Serpentines Intakt......March

BILL LAURANCE Live at Union Chapel GroundUp.....Jan.

JOSH LAWRENCE Color Theory Posi-ToneMay

NGUYÊN LÊ & NGO HONG QUANG Hà Nôi Duo ACT.....Aug.

JESSE LEWIS & IKE STURM Endless Field BiophiliaSept.

DAVE LIEBMAN GROUP Expansions Live Whaling City SoundFeb.



HELGE LIEN Guzuguzu Ozella.....Oct.

HELGE LIEN & LIVE MARIA ROGGEN You Ozella.....Oct.

JOHN LINDBERG BC3 Born In An Urban Ruin Clean Feed......Feb.

SON LITTLE *New Magic* Anti-/Epitaph..... Dec.

MIKE LONGO Only Time Will Tell CAP.....June

ROMERO LUBAMBO Sampa SunnysideJuly

GUSTAV LUNDGREN, JORGE ROSSY & DOUG WEISS Jazz, Vol. 1 Lundgren Music/Plugged Records......April

BRIAN LYNCH Madera Latino Hollistic Musicworks......Jan.



HAROLD MABERN To Love And Be Loved Smoke Sessions RecordsOct.

BILL MACKAY Esker Drag CityJune

DOUG MACLEOD Break The Chain Reference.....Nov.

MIKE "MAZ" MAHER Idealist GroundUp/Verve.....Feb.

RUSSELL MALONE Time For The Dancers HighNoteNov.

MANERI/PARKER/BAN Sounding Tears Clean FeedOct.

EUGENE MARLOW'S HERITAGE ENSEMBLE A Not So Silent Night MEII Enterprises.....Dec.

REBECCA MARTIN & GUILLERMO KLEIN The Upstate Project Sunnyside......Aug.



MASTER MUSICIANS OF JAJOUKA & MATERIAL Apocalypse Live M.O.D. Technologies Aug.

SHAWN MAXWELL New Tomorrow Origin......Jan.

IRVIN MAYFIELD & THE NEW ORLEANS JAZZ ORCHESTRA *Live At Newport* Basin Street......Aug.

ROB MAZUREK Chimeric Stoned Horn

Astral Spirits..... Dec.

ROB MAZUREK Rome Clean Feed...... Dec.

CHELSEA MCBRIDE Twilight Fall Browntasauras Records July

LIZ MCCOMB Merry Christmas GVE......Dec.

MICIC/ABERCROMBIE/ BERNSTEIN/LUND Inspired ArtistshareFeb.

DOMINIC MILLER Silent Light ECMAug.

BILLY MINTZ	
Ugly Beautiful	
Thirteenth Note	RecordsJulv

MATT MITCHELL Plays Tim Berne: Førage Screwgun May

NICOLE MITCHELL Mandorla Awakening II: Emerging Worlds FPEJuly

NICOLE MITCHELL & HAKI MADHUBUTI Liberation Narratives Third World Press/ Black Earth Music..... Dec.

ROSCOE MITCHELL Bells For The South Side ECMOct.

CHARNETT MOFFETT Music From Our Soul Motéma.....Aug.

STANTON MOORE With You In Mind: The Songs Of Allen Toussaint Mascot Label Group/Cool Green.....Sept.

CARY MORIN Cradle To The Grave Maple Street Music March

VAN MORRISON Roll With The Punches Exile.....Oct.

MILES MOSLEY Uprising World Galaxy/Alpha Pup......Jan.

MOUTIN FACTORY QUINTET Deep BluJazz.....Feb.

AL MUIRHEAD Northern Adventures, The Canada Sessions Vol. 1 Chronograph Records......May

MARK MURPHY Slip Away Mini Movie.....Jan.

MICHAEL MUSILLAMI & RICH SYRACUSE Bird Calls Playscape Dec.

MICHAEL MUSILLAMI & RICH SYRACUSE Of The Night
Playscape Jan.

KENNY NEAL <i>Bloodline</i> CleopatraApril

THE NECKS Unfold Ideologic OrganMay

MARIUS NESET/LONDON SINFONIETTA		
Snowmelt		
ACTJan.		

SAM NEWSOME & JEAN-MICHEL PILC
Expansions Live
Whaling City SoundFeb.

JOHNNY NICHOLAS Fresh Air Self-Release.....Jan.

MONIK NORDINE TRIO The Old New Town Magenta MusicJuly

MILES OKAZAKI Trickster PiJune

EIVIND OPSVIK Overseas V Loyal.....July

OREGON Lantern CamJazz.....Oct.

THE ED PALERMO BIG BAND The Great Un-American Songbook, Volumes 1 & 2 Cuneiform Rune.....June

JASON PALMER Beauty 'N' Numbers: The Sudoku Suite Steeplechase JazzFeb.

DIANA PANTON Christmas Kiss eOne.....Dec.

SHANE PARISH/ **FRANK ROSALÝ** Labrys Cabin Floor Esoterica......March

WILLIAM PARKER Meditation/Resurrection Aum Fidelity.....Sept.

WILLIAM PARKER& STEFANO SCODANIBBIO DUO Bass Duo

Centering.....June

AARON PARKS Find The Way FCM Sept

NICKI PARROTT Dear Blossom Arbors Jazz.....Aug.

ANTHONY PASQUAROSA Abbandonato Da Dio Nazione Vin Du Select Qualitite.....June

BEATA PATER Fire Dance B&B RecordsMav

JOHN PATITUCCI Irmão De Fé	
NewvelleJuly	

MARIO PAVONE Chrome Playscape.....Oct.

IVO PERELMAN The Art Of The Improv Trio Volume 6 Leo Records March

PHRONESIS/ARGÜELLES/HR-BIGBAND The Behemoth Edition.....June

GREGORY PORTER Live In Berlin Eagle Rock......March

One of DownBeat's **BEST OF 2017!**





'What if Wayne Shorter had been born in Rio? That's the question that Antonio Adolfo poses-and answersin most satisfying fashion.

- Allen Morrison, DownBeat, July 2017



Personnel:

Antonio Adolfo (piano and arrangements), Lula Galvão (electric guitar), Jorge Helder (double bass), Rafael Barata (drums and percussion), André Siqueira (percussion), Jessé Sadoc (trumpet), Marcelo Martins (tenor/soprano saxes and flute), Serginho Trombone (trombone), Claudio Spiewak (acoustic guitar on Beauty and The Beast), Zé Renato (vocals on Footprints).

Tracks:

Deluge, Footprints, Beauty And The Beast, Prince Of Darkness, Black Nile, Speak No Evil, E.S.P., Ana Maria, Afosamba

All compositions by Wayne Shorter, except Afosamba, by Antonio Adolfo.

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SIMONA PREMAZZI Outspoken Pre.....Oct.

NOAH PREMINGER Meditations On Freedom Dry Bridge RecordsJune

ROBERT RANDOLPH & THE FAMILY BAND Got Soul Sony MasterworksApril

JOHNNY RAWLS Waiting For The Train Catfood Dec.

RED PLANET WITH BILL CARROTHERS Red Planet With Bill Carrothers Shifting ParadigmOct.

MIKE REED Flesh & Bone 482 Music..... Aug.

ERIC REVIS Sing Me Some Cry Clean Feed.....Sept.

MIRANDA LEE RICHARDS Existential Beast Invisible Hands Music Nov.

RIVERSIDE The New National Anthem Greenleaf.....Sept.

NATTALI RIZE Rebel Frequency Rootfire Cooperative/Baco...Aug.

BEN ROSENBLUM Instead OneTrickDog*.....April

JORGE ROSSY Stay ThereFeb. Pirouet.....

Bring Joy

ROVA SAXOPHONE QUARTET FEAT. BRUCKMANN & KAISER Steve Lacy's Saxophone Special Revisited Clean Feed.....Oct.

ADAM RUDOLPH'S **MOVING PICTURES** Glare Of The Tiger M.O.D. Technologies/Meta.. June

EMILIANO SAMPAIO MERENEU PROJECT The Forbidden Dance Session Work.....Jan.

EMILIANO SAMPAIO MERETRIO Obvio Session Work.....Jan.

SAN FRANCISCO **STRING TRIO** May I Introduce To You Ridgeway RecordsOct.

ANTONIO SANCHEZ Bad Hombre CamJazz.....Dec.

NICK SANDERS & LOGAN STROSAHL Janus Sunnyside.....Feb.

CHRISTIAN SANDS Reach Mack AvenueJune

SCLAVIS/PIFARÉLY/ COURTOIS Asian Fields Variations ECMAug.



RICHARD SEARS SEXTET FEAT. TOOTIE HEATH Altadena Ropeadope.....Feb.

SEXMOB Cultural Capital Rex Records.....Aug.

SFJAZZ COLLECTIVE Music Of Miles Davis & Original

Ride Symbol.....April

ELLIOTT SHARP AGGREGAT FEAT. BARRY ALTSCHUL Dialectrical Clean Feed......March

KENNY WAYNE SHEPHERD BAND Lay It On Down Concord.....Oct.

THE SHERMAN HOLMES PROJECT The Richmond Sessions M.C. Records Dec.

MATTHEW SHIPP TRIO Piano Song Thirsty Ear..... May

STEVE SLAGLE Alto Manhattan Panorama.....Feb.

NATE SMITH Kinfolk: Postcards From Everywhere Ropeadope.....Feb. **CLARK SOMMERS LENS** By A Thread Ears&Eyes Dec.

OMAR SOSA & SECKOU KEITA Transparent Water Otá..... May

MELVIN SPARKS Live At Nectar's One Note.....Aug.

VINNIE SPERRAZZA APOCRYPHAL Hide Ye Idols Loyal Label Dec.

TOMASZ STANKO NEW YORK QUARTET December Avenue ECM July

MIKE STERN Trip Heads Up International Nov.

COLIN STETSON All This I Do For Glory 52HZ Oct.

MATTHEW STEVENS Preverbal Ropeadope..... May

DAVE STRYKER Strykin' Ahead StrikezoneNov.

SULTANS OF STRING Christmas Caravan Self-Release..... Dec.

SUPERSILENT 13 Smalltown Supersound......Feb.

RICHARD SUSSMAN The Evolution Suite Zoho.....Feb.

JORN SWART Malnoia Brooklyn Jazz Underground..... Oct.

TANYA TAGAQ Retribution Six Shooter.....Feb.

TAMIKREST Kidal Glitterbeat.....Sept.

Compositions SFJAZZ RecordsJuly



AKIRA TANA AND OTONOWA Stars Across The Ocean Sons Of SoundApril

TANAKA/LINDVALL/ALLUMROD 3 Pianos Nakama.....Feb.

DYLAN TAYLOR One In Mind BluJazz.....Sept.

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Vincent Herring Hard Times SMOKE SESSIONS ***^{1/2}

To be in motion, music needs a fixed anchor to steady its mobility and locate its position—to navigate its course between the known and the unknown. Vincent Herring's latest album has two such anchors: his own bell-tower authority on alto and the routings of arranger Takahiro Izuminawa. Together they form a solid backbone for this set of small-band and quartet pieces.

Hard Times is easy to take. The tempos bob along in a relaxed sway but don't inhibit Herring's splashy whirlpools of elegant double-time embroideries. In different ways, he walks in the footsteps of Cannonball Adderley figuratively in the stylistic sense, and literally as part of the Nat Adderley group in the '90s. Cyrus Chestnut is an aggregator of piano styles that came together just before the discontents of the '60s swept jazz. It's a background that makes him a fine partner for Herring.

Like many of Herring's past projects, this one welcomes us with a few familiar handshakes we all know. In this case Gershwin's "Embraceable You" and "Summertime" are principally vehicles for Nicolas Bearde, a young, semi-known singer who can do the Great American Songbook with a blues feel the way Joe Williams once did. Herring's soprano saxophone accompanies him on "Summertime." But those who remember that Sidney Bechet virtually launched Blue Note Records with his classic version of that song in 1939 may wish that Herring had kept that one, perhaps as a salute to the old master himself. The other standard, "Good Morning Heartache," becomes a seven-minute-plus concerto for Herring's alto that is one of the album's high points.

Over on the far side of the familiar is the composing work of John Handy, George Coleman, David Newman and Mulgrew Miller. Frankly, most of the material is fairly bland and leaves the musicians on their own to find any pockets of inspiration. The one Herring original, "The Sun Will Rise Again," provides a lovely wrapping for guitarist Russell Malone's most elegant playing of the set. Malone turns sharply from his usual erudition to an uncommonly funky r&b groove on "Use Me," which he shares with Bearde.

Steve Turre, Brad Mason and Sam Dillon are heard in different combinations on all but three tracks, but mostly in a support mode, providing the gentle ensemble punch and textures that Herring plays to. Brief solo opportunities open up, particularly for Turre, on "Hard Times," "Piccadilly Square," "Amsterdam After Dark" and "Phineas." —John McDonough

Ordering info: smokesessionrecords.com

Hard Times: Hard Work; Use Me; Summertime; Hard Times; Embraceable You; Eastern Joy Dance; The Sun Will Rise Again; Piccadilly Square; Good Morning Heartache; Amsterdam After Dark; Phineas. (69:15)

Personnel: Vincent Herring, alto and soprano saxophones; Brad Mason (1–4, 8, 9), trumpet, Steve Turre (1–4, 8–11), trombone; Sam Dillon (1–4, 8, 9), tenor saxophone; Nicolas Bearde (2, 3, 5), vocals; Cyrus Chestrut, piano; Russell Malone (1, 2, 7), guitar; Ysushi Nakamura, bass; Carl Allen, drums.



Mostly Other People Do The Killing Paint HOT CUP ***¹/₂

As on previous albums, *Paint* features bassist Moppa Elliott's original compositions named for Pennsylvania towns that conjure horse and fracking country. The difference here is that MOPDTK scales down to a piano trio, jazz's hallowed high-art setting.

MOPDTK's droll re-creation of the famous *Money Jungle* session photo for *Paint* signals irreverence, but the album's music is more than

Irène Schweizer/ Joey Baron Live! INTAKT 293

Pianist Irène Schweizer has a lustrous and historically deep approach to the piano, informed by her early study of boogie-woogie and stride, and fleshed out through the exploration of other traditions: Romanticism, Impressionism, bebop and free improvisation. They've all informed her way of playing in duo configurations with drummers, which she's done alongside Han Bennink, Louis Moholo Moholo, Pierre Favre and Andrew Cyrille.

Live!, her first album with the illustrious drummer Joey Baron, collects seven freely roaming tunes—and there's not a dull moment. On "String Fever," Schweizer plays inside the piano, clacking the instrument's frame and dampening strings as she plucks them; Baron responds with thick clouds, drawn by strokes along the edges of his cymbals. On "Saturdays," he uses mallets against the toms to similar effect. This time Schweizer follows him, letting the light of her minor harmonies and suspended chords become subsumed under the shadow of his drums.

Abdullah Ibrahim's influence flickers up at various points, particularly when Schweizer

ironic toying with sacred cows. Elliott, pianist Ron Stabinsky and drummer Kevin Shea play carefully orchestrated tunes centered on a fault line between traditional styles and free improvisation, juxtaposing dissimilar elements to create little earthquakes in the listening experience. On "Yellow House," we're only a few bars into a jovial strut when Shea's drums begin a quiet riot against the prevailing mood. Such stylistic contradictions shake open new meanings over seven Elliott originals and one Ellington cover, "Blue Goose." There's no place for nostalgia in the trio's mash-ups-on "Green Briar," for example, we're too busy managing the turn from brisk bebop to what sounds like Don Pullen deconstructing McCoy Tyner's solo on "My Favorite Things."

Still, this juxtaposition game is high-risk. On "Golden Hill," Shea's polyrhythmic outbursts work like air pockets lurching the lilting waltz off its otherwise pleasant flight path. But unsettling our complacency forces us into the present moment, and that's the point: Even when I don't exactly like MOPDtK's musical choices, I stay woke as a listener, and I like that. We'll never drift into a dream of past jazz glories with this band, which is intent on making listening as dynamic as the music we admire. —*Michelle Mercer*

Paint: Yellow House; Orangeville; Black Horse; Blue Goose; Plum Run; Green Briar; Golden Hill; Whitehall. (46:40) Personnel: Ron Stabinsky, piano; Moppa Elliott, bass; Kevin Shea, drums. Ordering info: hotcuprecords.com



plays loping cycles of major chords or, as on "Blues For Crelier," warm little phrases of traveling two-note harmony in the right hand. Other times, as on "Jungle Beats II," it's Cecil Taylor who looms as Schweizer lets some of her natural cogency spread out and wander. Like Taylor, she can achieve a remarkable independence between her left and right hands in the course of a free improvisation, each projecting a crisp and full-bodied sound, full of rich and bluesy ardor. —*Giovanni Russonello*

Livel: Free For All; Up The Ladder; String Fever; Jungle Beat II; Saturdays; Blues For Crelier; The Open Window. (50:56) Personnel: Irène Schweizer, piano; Joey Baron, drums. Ordering info: intaktrec.ch



Tom Guarna The Wishing Stones DESTINY 0016 ****

Closing in on 50, it appears that guitarist Tom Guarna's days of flying just below the radar might be ending. Recording for an artist-run label with pianist Jon Cowherd and Wayne Shorter's longtime rhythm section, Guarna has made an adjustment to his amplification that gives him an arresting tone. On previous recordings, his voice was round and clean—a nice vehicle for the boppish tunes he favored on his SteepleChase albums. For *The Wishing Stones*, Guarna has introduced some processing to his tone, giving him a liquid sound with extended sustain.

From the pensive opener, "Prelude," to the burning "Modules," Guarna's original compositions offer a range of diverse harmonic approaches, and the arrangements bring out the best in his collaborators. On the loping "Song For Carabello," Brian Blade's accompaniment is a seamless cycle of understated patterns, propelling the piece forward while never leaving the deep background, save for occasional splash of cymbal. On "Unravel," the drummer moves higher in the mix for what is at points an extended duet with the guitarist, but again his pulse never steals the spotlight. Bassist John Patitucci swings hard on "Modules" and steps into a more familiar role elsewhere, modulating his participation in a way that illustrates his close listening and complete engagement with the music.

Cowherd is also an ideal fit. On songs like the soaring "Hope," the pianist strikes a balance between comping unobtrusively behind Guarna's lead lines and providing simpatico solos. His fulsome, flowing work on the contemplative "Moment = Eternity" is just one of the highlights on this highly satisfying recording. —James Hale

The Wishing Stones: Prelude; Song For Carabello; Surrender Song; Hope; Moment = Eternity; Unrave!; Modules; The Wishing Stones; Beacon; Run Signal; Native Tongue. (74:02) **Personnel:** Tom Guama, guitar; Jon Cowherd, piano, Fender Rhodes; John Patitucci, bass; Brian Blade, drums.

Ordering info: destinyrecordsmusic.com



Critics	James Hale	Michelle Mercer	John McDonough	Giovanni Russonello
Vincent Herring Hard Times	***	****	***½	***
MOPDtK Paint	****	***½	***	***
Irène Schweizer/Joey Baron Live!	***½	****1/2	****	****
Tom Guarna The Wishing Stones	****	***½	***½	***1/2

Critics' Comments

Vincent Herring, Hard Times

A sturdy rejoinder to the contemporary political climate. Guests Russell Malone and Steve Turre add flair to what is otherwise a predictable outing by hard-bop journeymen. —James Hale

As much as we need political jazz that expresses the harsh realities of our time, we also need music that restores our spirits. Herring offers escape and solace with these old favorites played in an old, familiar way. Comfort food like Mom makes it. —*Michelle Mercer*

 With an all-star cast behind him, Herring puts forward a dutiful recording of straightahead playing. His clean and beaming alto saxophone sound does plenty to get his point across, but not much to shake things up.
 —Giovanni Russonello

Mostly Other People Do the Killing, Paint

While the new piano-trio version of MOPDtK is missing the high-octane wackiness of the original lineup, the stronger spotlight on Moppa Elliott's compositions pays dividends. His warping of traditional elements creates ideal vehicles for elastic pianist Ron Stabinsky. —James Hale

The composer may be Elliott, but Stabinsky is boss once the music starts. His maximalism mingles many motifs. He'll take a fragment redolent of "Royal Garden Blues" and spin it into a swirl of postmodern commotion. Concerto-like swells suggest classical likings, too. But it also camouflages a clear identity for MOPDtK, whose colors change with the seasons. —John McDonough

This protean cabal of conservatory bros is on some kind of mission to declare the old jazz forms dead and gone, theoretically so others may rise. It's a worthy pursuit, but this coroner sometimes fails to find the heart. —*Giovanni Russonello*

Irène Schweizer/Joey Baron, Live!

The joy Joey Baron wears onstage is an ideal counterweight to the severe nature of the veteran Swiss pianist's improvisations, but these live duets lack coherence and focus. —James Hale

Schweizer should be at the top of every Talent Deserving Wider Recognition list: She improvised more form and meaning in this brilliant evening with Baron than most composers could craft in months of writing. —*Michelle Mercer*

Preservation Hall, avant-garde style. Maybe 50 years have tamed this European freedom pioneer. Or maybe she always spaced her brittle 12-tone-ish morsels to preserve their contrast. She welcomes us here with polite civility, then the thunder rolls in. Sometime her two hands seem to have broken diplomatic relations. But it's all smartly lucid in its flowery density. *—John McDonough*

Tom Guarna, The Wishing Stones

Glossy postcards from the modern mainstream, with a solid streak of facility from Guarna and unerring support from the rhythm section. —*Michelle Mercer*

Guarna's straight-up electric guitar is a child of the Christian-Kessel dynasty, now a crowded lineage of sound-alike partisans but still the instrument's ultimate test track. Here Guarna's frothy, lucid flow glides the turns of the music with a suave, unforced calm. —John McDonough

Guarna's slick and dusky guitar sound finds a welcoming home alongside three of the best players in the business, all of whom are well acquainted with each other. *—Giovanni Russonello*



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Pat Martino Formidable HIGHNOTE 7307 ***

Formidable starts with a bang. "El Nino" offers a bluesy, organ-groove-heavy take on Joey Calderazzo's memorable tune, followed by a two-chorus string of phrases on Pat Martino's guitar that tells a story and maintains its melodic character even in his fast runs. Then come trumpeter Alex Norris and tenor saxophonist Adam Niewood trading adrenaline-fueled, gratifying eights, fours and twos before finishing off in (gloriously ragged) unison.

Kermit Ruffins/ Irvin Mayfield A Beautiful World BASIN STREET RECORDS ***

Basin Street Records, in honor of its 20th year, has paired their two most recorded artists, trumpeters Kermit Ruffins and Irvin Mayfield, and invited a riverboat full of guest artists from George Porter Jr. to Glen David Andrews to John Boutte to fill out the band. The songs vary from traditional New Orleans jazz to swing to brass band to more modern rhythm and blues. All of them have that New Orleans easy lilt and dance feel to them.

Ruffins gets to revisit some of his favorite tunes of the past with different arrangements and add "Don't Worry Be Happy" to his recorded repertoire, a song perfect for his persona. Mayfield battles with Ruffins on several tunes while they harmonize well on others.

This album has the feel of a great New Orleans party record with its celebratory and soulful moods. At certain points, it sounds like they are concentrating more on the fun vibe and trying to fit too much into one album, causing the music to lose focus and seem repetitive.

The producers also have interspaced spoken interludes between some of the songs. These

Alas, the album is never quite so good again. About half of the remainder is nonetheless quite enjoyable. Dave Brubeck's "In Your Own Sweet Way" and Martino's own "El Hombre" top the list: Pat Bianchi devours the former with Hammond-organ relish, and the six-stringer submits an inspired solo that celebrates the latter's waltz rhythm. Martino's heated samba "Nightwings" gives Norris his best, most exploratory solo on an album that tragically underuses its horns. But the core trio does magic together on "In A Sentimental Mood," drummer Carmen Intorre Jr. outdoing them all with his beautiful brushwork.

There are duds, though. Save for some unexpected Bianchi exclamation points, "Duke Ellington's Sound Of Love" comes off as a bland ballad. "On The Stairs" and "Homage" swing hard but generate pedestrian ideas. Martino's least supportable idea is sequencing Hank Mobley's "Hipsippy Blues" right after "El Nino"; the two tracks are in the same key, making "Hipsippy" sound like a (tamer) retread. Pace the title, a half-strong album isn't exactly formidable—but one supposes calling it *Semi-Formidable* wouldn't help. —*Michael J. West*

Formidable: El Nino; Hipsippy Blues; Homage; Duke Ellington's Sound Of Love; El Hombre; In Your Own Sweet Way; Nightwings; In A Sentimental Mood; On The Stairs. (70:57) Personnel: Pat Martino, guitar; Adam Niewood, tenor saxophone; Alex Norris, trumpet; Carmen Intorre Jr., drums. Ordering Info: Jazzdepot.com



have their humorous moments, with DJ Soul Sister asking to be let in the studio and actor Wendell Pierce exhorting the players to turn it up or down and offering wild recipes to cure one's ills. However, at other points they feel forced and disrupt the overall flow of the record. Even with that, it's a party record that doesn't stop. —David Kunian

A Beautiful World: Well, Alright; Mystic; Be My Lady; Drop Me Off In New Orleans; Allen Toussaint; Move On Ahead; Sister Soul; Trumpet Bounce; Good Life; Beautiful World (For Imani). Personnel: Kermit Ruffins, trumpet, vocals; Irvin Mayfield, trumpet, flugelhorn, vocals, piano, keyboards, vocoder, talkbox, tambourine; Dr. Michael White, clarinet; Bill Summers, percussion; Jason Marsalis, mallets, percussion, voice; Rebirth Brass Band; plus more than 50 guest musicians.

Ordering info: basinstreetrecords.com



Marc Copland Nightfall INNERVOICEJAZZ 104

Originally titled "Reach Me, Friend," Ralph Towner's "Song For A Friend" suggests a musical connection every bit as deep as the one pianist Marc Copland has with the late bassist Scott LaFaro. LaFaro's "Jade Visions" opens Copland's *Nightfall*, its halting rhythms and subtle, cascading chords a perfect way to begin. And like "Jade Visions," "Song For A Friend" is also a quiet, mournful meditation on, in this case, a friend. And both songs are geared around bass players, Towner's with former Oregon bassist Glen Moore.

The balance of *Nightfall* is consistent with the moods established by those songs, Copland's affinities with what might be called a lush romanticism a hallmark of his work over the years. Those years include time spent with another bassist, Gary Peacock, whose "Vignette" is visited here, the song's gently flowing pulse and refrain in concert with the haunting melody.

And then there are Copland's three original compositions, which, in a way, tell us why *Nightfall* was created. "Nightfall" follows "Jade Visions" in a most natural way, Copland's pen a reflection of his ear for a good, simple melody and deliberate yet graceful construction. Likewise, "LST" and "String Thing" are fairly unadorned melodies but ones that continue to enhance the mostly dreamy mood of the album's setting.

In a sense coming full-circle, *Nightfall* ends with two by another Copland collaborator, the late guitarist John Abercrombie. "Another Ralph's" (clocking in as the album's longest number at more than 10 minutes) has a slight upbeat vibe to it even as it seems to ruminate around its modest theme. "Greenstreet" sends us out with some bona fide swing. —John Ephland

Nightfall: Jade Visions; Nightfall; String Thing; Song For A Friend; LST; Vignette; Another Ralph's; Greenstreet. (56:26) Personnel: Marc Copland, piano.

Ordering info: innervoicejazz.com

LeeAnn Ledgerwood Renewal **STEEPLECHASE 31835** ***1/2

A fixture on the New York jazz scene since the 1980s, pianist LeeAnn Ledgerwood has performed rewarding music since that time, mostly exploring modern mainstream jazz.

Renewal, her eighth recording as

a leader for the Steeplechase label, teams Ledgerwood with bassist Ron McClure and drummer Billy Hart on a well-rounded program. Everyone gets to solo on the opener, a swinging rendition of Harry Warren's "Summernite." The pianist contributes a pair of slow ballads ("I Wish You Knew" and "Renewal"), sometimes sounding as if she is thinking aloud at the piano. Placed between those two is a rendition of "All Blues" that, after the melody statement, surprisingly switches from being a jazz waltz to a medium-tempo romp in 4/4 time. The biggest surprise, though, is a version of Hindermith's "Adagio From 5 Pieces For Orchestra." Ledgerwood's classical background is displayed during the first half of the performance before she gradually turns the theme into jazz.

The remainder of the set consists of a medium-tempo exploration of Joe Henderson's "A Shade Of Jade," Jimmy Rowles' moody "502 Blues," a slow and conventional "My Foolish Heart" and a version of "Autumn Leaves" that serves as a fine closer for this pleasing trio date. -Scott Yanow

Renewal: Summernite: I Wish You Knew: All Blues: Renewal: Adagio From 5 Pieces For Orchestra: A Shade Of Jade; 502 Blues; My Foolish Heart; Autumn Leaves. (62:39 Personnel: LeeAnn Ledgerwood, piano; Ron McClure, bass; Billy Hart, drums. Ordering info; steeplechase.dk

Fred Frith Storytelling INTUITION 71324 ***

A three-part title piece is the central improvisation of this concert, recorded at Theater Gütersloh in Germany. English guitarist Fred Frith, joined here by saxophonist Lotte Anker (Denmark) and percussionist Samuel Dühsler (Switzerland), is equally at



home with complete abstraction and repeating structures, demonstrating aspects of both approaches during this set.

"Storytelling" opens with a voice alternating between deep muttering and high-pitched calls, with Frith gradually introducing a rubbed-string flotation, Anker fibrillating ever faster. As Frith percusses his strings and Dühsler flashes brushes over his skins, roles are unclear, aside from a joint desire to launch into rhythmic propulsion. Frith mimics the sound of backwards tape, wobbling pitches and building a bass figure as Dühsler attaches bells and shaker to his kit. There's a gathering sense of mystery until the trio becomes rougher, more agitated. The third, shorter "chapter" finds the three playing at full tilt, attaining a hyperactive climax. "La Pasión De Soñar" continues this mood of nervous release, but includes pools of resonant exploration. "Backsliding" has an alternative Hawaiian aura, restfully bottlenecked into a calmer corner. All three members of this trio walk easily along the perimeters between free-form and melody. -Martin Longley

Storytelling—Live At Theater Gütersloh: Storytelling (For Eduardo Galeano) Chapters 1–3; La Pasión De Soñar; Backsliding; Interview With Fred Frith. (61:34) Personnel: Fred Frith, guitar; Lotte Anker, saxophones; Samuel Dühsler, percussion. Ordering info: challengerecords.com



Tom Rainey Obbligato Float Upstream **INTAKT 292** ****1/2

The jazz standard may be the most renewable resource in popular culture. Even though some of these tunes have been in circulation for nearly a century, they remain infinitely malleable and eternally fresh. Obbligato,



drummer Tom Rainey's "standards" band, takes an approach that respects the melody and harmonic structure of these compositions while employing strategies from collective and free improvisation.

Take the torch classic "What's New." Obbligato's take on it opens with a long and discursive solo by bassist Drew Gress. He follows the changes, but the restless invention of his line makes pianist Kris Davis' eventual statement of the melody almost a surprise. Davis takes things at a rubato tempo, with gull-like chirps from Ingrid Laubrock's soprano saxophone and a thrumming, coloristic pulse from Rainey. The performance evolves from there, with Ralph Alessi's trumpet evoking Chet Baker and Lester Bowie in equal measure. Yet the haunting Bob Haggart refrain remains front-and-center the whole time, offering the perfect balance between the pleasure of a familiar melody and the thrill of hearing something entirely new. -J.D. Considine

Float Upstream: Stella By Starlight; Beatrice; What Is This Thing Called Love; What's New; There Is No Greater Love; Float Upstream; I Fall In Love Too Easily. (43:18) Personnel: Ralph Alessi, trumpet; Ingrid Laubrock, saxophones; Kris Davis, piano; Drew Gress, bass Tom Rainey, drums

Ordering info: intaktrec.ch

Gary Husband A Meeting Of Spirits EDITION RECORDS 1098 ****

Originally released in 2006, shortly before he joined John McLaughlin's 4th Dimension Band, this second of Gary Husband's two interpretive solo piano albums finds him reimagining McLaughlin's familiar themes from his Mahavishnu



Orchestra oeuvre and other sources with passion and authority. Full of invention and creative fire, A Meeting Of Spirits is an intimate homage to the iconic guitarist, showing a profound understanding of the music.

Flaunting uncommon dexterity at the keyboard, Husband not only tackles the challenging McLaughlin heads-full of knotty twists, angular lines and radical intervallic leaps-he also takes liberties in transforming them with an arranger's touch. The irregular blues "The Dance Of Maya" has him playing two-fisted barrelhouse piano, while the kinetic "Celestial Terrestrial Commuters" has the drummer-pianist accompanying himself by slapping the piano to percussive effect. The gentle "Lotus Feet" is given a luminous, rhapsodic interpretation, and the dense and tumultuous "Vision Is A Naked Sword" is given a sparse, understated touch.

Husband's stirring and captivating interpretations of McLaughlin's intense music are inspired and full of surprises. -Bill Milkowski

Ordering info: editionrecords.com



A Meeting Of Spirits: Spirits Opening; A Meeting Of Spirits; Vision Is A Naked Sword; Are You The One?: Maya Prologue; The Dance Of Maya; It's Funny, Lotus Feet Reflections; Celestial Terrestrial Commuters; Jazz Jungle (Excerpt); Joyful; Song For My Mother; Alap; Lotus Feet (Reprise); Earth Bound Hearts; Development And Closing, (47:00) Personnel: Gary Husband, piano, in-piano percussion, voice, bell, arrangements

Jazz / BY MARTIN LONGLEY



Fresh Passageways

English tenor and soprano saxophonist John Butcher has been improvising for more than three decades. Generally, this Londoner's approach has descended from that of Evan Parker, although venturing further towards resonant multiphonics, controlled feedback and interior amplification. He can inhabit a variety of playing zones, roaming from rampant free-jazz blowing towards introverted environmental minimalism.

Two of these three releases finally make available recordings that are between nine and 11 years old. In 2006, Butcher embarked on a short tour of Scotland. Together with veteran Japanese sound artist Akio Suzuki, the itinerary included performances in unlikely concert spaces: reservoir, mausoleum, cave, ice house and oil tank. The location for these recordings was so crucial to the ambience that they have even provided the names for each of the pieces, most of which hang in the ether for around six minutes.

There are five of these improvisations on **Immediate Landscapes (Ftarri; 59:20** $\star \star \star \frac{1}{2}$), as well as a longer closing track recorded in 2015 at the Tokyo club SuperDeluxe. There are lip-suckings and a lightly buzzed reed on "Reservoir," as Suzuki investigates his small items (pebbles, glass and brass plates, screws and a bamboo stick), made larger via the cavernous qualities of these locations.

This is improvisation that doesn't stem from a root tradition, instead being very naturalistic in character. There are drainage sounds on "Mausoleum" involving rippling sustains, with deep vocal elements infiltrated by Suzuki. They become a touch more active inside the "Oil Tank," Suzuki using what might be a sponge on glass, or perhaps his "noise whistle," Butcher making

English tenor and soprano saxophonist John stopped putters, sounding like he has wa-Butcher has been improvising for more than ter swilling inside his horn.

Ordering info: ftarri.com

The other two albums spring from a more familiar free-jazz vocabulary, although via markedly different sonic palettes and structures. Butcher is joined by bassist John Edwards and drummer Mark Sanders on Last Dream Of The Morning (Relative Pitch; 52:00 ****), recorded in London, 2016. This represents a core of free-jazz-rooted improvisation, in the classic sense. Activity is heightened from the beginning, with Butcher's fine breath-emission control, a vibrato burr and sinuous phrases, darting then pausing. Edwards has a groaning, bowed bass physicality. Sanders exists inside a forest of metal and skin, throwing out tiny details as he rummages among his stock of additional percussion devices. Tension, clutter and conflict are the dominant characteristics of this dramatic session.

Ordering info: relativepitchrecords.com

Recorded live in 2008 at 21 Grand in Oakland, California, The Catastrophe Of **Minimalism** (Balance Point Acoustics; 54:29 $\star \star \star \star \star$ finds Butcher in a similar instrumental setting, with Damon Smith (bass) and Weasel Walter (drums). The improvisation sounds less directly derived from the jazz idiom, with pieces of wildly varying length, operating on a much more aggressively spiky level. This trio makes greater use of silences, and then brutal explosions, with ruffled-feather trilling, dragged bass bow and a rumbling skin-barrage. There's a genuine unpredictability throughout, an extremity of controlled savagery and a belligerent dynamism to Butcher's roughened tenor sound. DR Ordering info: balancepointacoustics.com

Roberto Magris Sextet live in Miami (e) the WDNA Jazz Gallery Hian Lynch dynathan Comez Chukk Bergeron John Yarling Murph Aucamp

Roberto Magris Sextet Live In Miami @ The WDNA Jazz Gallery JMOOD 14 ****

The prolific Italian jazz pianist Roberto Magris leads a hot sextet on this fine live recording from February 2016. While the mostly original material is comfortably within Magris' revered bop tradition, the fire with which this group plays—goosed by the leader's keyboard pyrotechnics—puts the recording over the top.

The covers are a relaxed group rendition of the Roland Kirk ballad "April Morning" and Magris' solo take, full of eccentric bursts, on Billy Strayhorn's "A Flower Is A Lovesome Thing."

Effectively sequenced by executive producer Paul Collins, *Live In Miami* burns from the start and doesn't let up until Magris puts it to bed with the brief ballad "Blues For My Sleeping Baby."

Trumpeter Brian Lynch and saxman Jonathan Gomez pace each other well on the Miles Davis homage "What Blues?"; stoked by Magris' relentless comping, Lynch scales thrilling heights, paving the way for a satisfying turn by Magris. Shamelessly dramatic, he makes his fusion of blues and boogie here a blast.

The good times, leavened by those serious and gentle ballads, carry through on the sultry "Song For An African Child," a showcase for Lynch, Gomez and Magris, roiling and hammering. Bassist Chuck Bergeron turns in a piquant solo on "Il Bello Del Jazz," an original flaunting the outstanding rhythm section.

Magris keeps the energy going throughout this long but never boring album, suggesting there may be more material to mine from a date documenting an exceptional club performance. —*Carlo Wolff*

Live In Miami @ The WDNA Jazz Gallery: African Mood; What Blues?; Song For An African Child: April Morning; Chachanada; Il Bello Del Jazz; A Flower Is A Lovesome Thing; Standard Life; Blues For My Sleeping Baby. (76:41) **Personnel:** Roberto Magris, piano; Jonathan Gomez, tenor saxophone; Brian Lynch, trumpet; Chuck Bergeron, bass; Murph Aucamp, congas; John Yarling, drums.

Ordering info: jmoodrecords.com



Anouar Brahem Blue Magams ECM 2580 \star

The clichéd Western word for music from the non-European East is "perfumed," meant to conjure exoticism. Oudist Anouar Brahem's new album is certainly scented, but with the qualities of soil, landscape and humanity.

The characteristics of Brahem's native Tunisia are apparent in the ostinato rhythms, cyclical scales and horizontal organization. Underneath is a power that comes from the

Danny Janklow Elevation **OUTSIDE IN MUSIC** \star \star \star $\frac{1}{2}$

Los Angeles-based saxophone/flute hotshot Danny Janklow studied with Dick Oatts at Temple University's Boyer College and shares Oatts' unpretentious, beautifully articulated, lyrical sensibility on the alto.

"Philafornia"-a portmanteau of Janklow's formative locales of residence-opens with a lovely lilt thanks to drummer Jonathan Pinson and bassist Benjamin Shepherd's adaptation of Vernell Fournier's bouncing beat from Ahmad Jamal's "Poinciana." It's a pretty, hip theme, shaded in tasteful pastel by pianist Eric Reed, mallets and alto dancing with the catchy melody, the leader's nimble trade-offs with vibraphonist Nick Mancini a delight.

"Bad Reception" is a doozy, Shepherd charging on bass after the release and Janklow gear-shifting like a champ. Mancini's solo is luminous, then another tempo twist offers swing-swagger space for Reed. Like Oatts, Janklow has ballad chops as well as burning skills, but I'm not sure about his lyrics, if those to "Hidden Treasure" and "Serene State Of Love" are indeed self-penned. Jesse Palter's voice classes up the former but the words tip to

subtle individualism of the music. This is not a fusion, but a holistic synthesis of traditional North African musics, jazz and improvisation.

Tracks like "Bahia," "Bom Dia Rio" and "The Recovered Road To Al-Sham" effortlessly reach into the body, modern dance music with the dense fiber of ancient roots. Brahem's improvising is relaxed, with each note full of purpose.

Credit the rhythm section for seamlessly following the 60-year-old leader. Everyone handles the pattern-based forms with an easy flow. No surprise with bassist Dave Holland, who has a monumental sound, and Jack DeJohnette's trademark ticking cymbal sound is there, but in all other ways the drummer is so deeply submerged in the aesthetic that he sounds like an entirely different musician.

Pianist Django Bates at times lets go of the imagination in the music and returns to jazz. That concept is the flaw in the title track, where Brahem doesn't delve into Western equal temperament and vertical harmonies.

That hardly mars the overall experience. This is a long album that's constantly absorbing and affecting. -George Grella

Blue Maqams: Opening Day; La Nuit, Blue Maqams; Bahia; La Passante; Bom Dia Rio; Persepolis's Mirage; The Recovered Road To Al-Sham; Unexpected Outcome. (77:00) Personnel: Anouar Brahem, oud; Django Bates, piano; Dave Holland, bass; Jack DeJohnette, drums. Ordering info: ecmrecords.com



the trite, confirmed by the latter, which, despite vocalist Michael Mayo's best efforts, would induce scribes at Hallmark to gag.

With a cover of Radiohead's "Creep" and succinct structure from Reed, more vibes from Mancini and extra flute on "Calor del Momento," there's plenty to savor, however, on this tight, listenable, promising debut. -Michael Jackson

Elevation: Philarfornia; Bad Reception; Hidden Treasure; Creep; Toastmaster; Gemini Vibe; Lolobai; Calor Del Momento; All In The Name Of You; Serene State Of Love. (48:12) Personnel: Danny Jamklow, alto saxophone, alto flute; Jesse Palter, vocals (3, 7); Sam Barsh, keyboards (4, 5, 6); Michael Mayo, voice (10); Eric Reed (1, 2, 8, 10), John Beasley (3, 4, 7, 9), piano; Benjamin Shepherd (1, 2, 4, 6, 7, 8), Ben Williams (3,4,5,9,10), bass; Nick Mancini, vibes (1, 2, 5, 6, 8, 9); Jonathan Pinson, drums. Ordering info: dannyjanklow.com



DON BRADEN





Vince Mendoza & The WDR Big Band Homecoming SUNNYSIDE 1496

Germany's WDR Big Band looms large in the career history of Los Angeles-based composer/arranger Vince Mendoza. Since 1992 he has recorded an homage to Arif Mardin and collaborations with the Brecker

Brothers, Joe Zawinul and Chano Dominguez with the orchestra. In 2014 Mendoza conducted the band in a Cologne concert of new original pieces, heard here for the first time. While he makes good use of capable soloists throughout, the writing is front-and-center.

Mendoza is a superb colorist who ably allows his themes to build and his textures to turn. Rhythm and movement, always graceful, swirl throughout. Latin rhythms and textures bubble up, and "Keep It Up" has to be one of the more sublime orchestrations of funk. In Mendoza's hands, this orchestra can dance like a small group.

Introspective interludes and a relaxed tone mark this album as the work of a master who has many colors in his paint box. He shows that a chart can swing without forte bombast. —*Kirk Silsbee*

Personnel: Wim Both, Andy Haderer, Rob Bruynen, Ruud Breuls, John Marshall, trumpet; Ludwig Nuss, Andy Hunter, Shannon Barnett, trombone; Mattis Cederberg, bass trombone; tuba; Johan Horlen, Karolina Strassmayer, Olivier Peters, Paul Heller, Jens Neufangwoodwinds; Frank Chastenier, piano, Fender Rhodes, Hammond B-3 organ; Paul Shigihara, electric and acoustic guitars; John Goldsby, electric and acoustic basses; Hans Dekker, drums; Marcio Doctor, percussion.

Ordering info: sunnyside.com

Gary Meek Originals SELF-RELEASED ****1/2

Gary Meek has contributed to the backgrounds and ensembles of a countless number of sessions, not only as a saxophonist but occasionally on keyboards. He has also released a handful of albums as a leader.

Originals is Meek's definitive

recording. Joined by an acoustic trio consisting of pianist Mitchel Forman, bassist Brian Bromberg and drummer Terri Lyne Carrington, with trumpeter Randy Brecker and guitarist Bruce Forman on three songs apiece, Meek is in inspired form throughout. This no-nonsense jazz set of eight of the leader's songs is a consistently strong effort.

Meek displays an original voice throughout, both as saxophonist and writer. The first three songs feature Brecker in stirring form, making exciting statements. However, Meek is not overshadowed, and on "When You're A Monk" he takes a particularly adventurous and witty solo that recalls Eric Dolphy in spots. He also creates heartfelt ballad statements on "Spiritual For Iris" and a duet with guitarist Forman ("Lost Dreams'), and does some wailing on "Pacific Grove Fog" that is worthy of Ernie Watts. Also filled with inventive solos by Forman and Bromberg, *Originals* is a high-quality set of modern straightahead jazz. —*Scott Yanow*

Personnel: Gary Meek, tenor saxophone; Mitchel Forman, piano; Brian Bromberg, bass; Terri Lyne Carrington, drums; Randy Brecker, trumpet, flugelhorn; Bruce Forman, Michael Lent (3), guitar, Airto Moreira, percussion (3).

Ordering info: garymeek.net



VINCE MENDOZA

Eden Ladin Yequm CONTAGIOUS MUSIC

Eden Ladin's vibrant *Yequm* effortlessly fuses electronica and jazz in tunes spanning the moody "Lonely Arcade Man" and the exultant "The One Warm Hearted Man."

A Tel Aviv native who joined the New York scene close to 10 years ago,

Ladin's piano is deft and purposeful. Check out his interplay with drummer Daniel Dor and bassist Harish Raghavan on the occasionally turbulent "Warm Hearted Man." His compositions are dramatic and melodic.

A Middle Eastern tonality permeates the longer pieces on this solo debut, including "Safta," an expansive portrait featuring John Ellis' tenor saxophone and Gilad Hekselman's guitar; "Times Square," paced by Dor's subtle drums; and the ethereal "Dreams," which lays the feathery vocals of Camila Meza over Ladin's piano.

A diverse album of mood and texture, it's also one of thoughtful pacing, as Ladin pairs tracks, segueing from the abstract "From The Frozen Cave" to the inviting "Warm Hearted Man." Later, "Dreams" melts into "Gambit," a volatile meditation on chess featuring sinuous interplay between tenor saxophonist Dayna Stephens and Hekselman. —*Carlo Wolff*

Yequm: Lonely Arcade Man; Smell/Faded Memory, From The Frozen Cave; The One Warm Hearted Man Living In The Kingdom Of ICE; The Way We Used To Laugh; Safta (Grandma); Times Square; Dreams; Gambit; Schlompi; Autumn Song. (56:54) Personnel: Eden Ladin, piano; Yonatan Albalak, guitar; Daniel Dor, drums; John Ellis, tenor and soprano saxophones; Gilad Hekselman, guitars; Camila Meza, voice; Harish Raghavan, bass; Dayna

soprano saxophones; Gilad Hekselman, guitars; Camila Meza, voice; Harish Raghavan, bass; Da Stephens, tenor saxophone, EWI.

Ordering info: contagiousmusic.net

Seth MacFarlane In Full Swing VERVE/REPUBLIC B0027224

Anyone familiar with TV's *Family Guy* knows that its creator, Seth MacFarlane, has always secretly fancied himself a swinging Vegas lounge singer. Flaunting a polished voice and an obvious affinity for the Great American Songbook—



he tackles classics by Irving Berlin, Sammy Cahn, Jimmy Van Heusen and Jerome Kern, among others—his presentation is genuine. And while he does seem comfortable with swing, he lacks the syncopated phrasing and intuitive choices of Sinatra to make it all feel effortless and in the moment. He aims for Ol' Blue Eyes and comes up more Jack Jones.

In Full Swing showcases the revivalist singer in the company of a 48-piece orchestra anchored by drummer Peter Erskine and bassist Chuck Berghofer and featuring pianist Tom Ranier, guitarists Larry Koonse and John Parricelli and woodwinds ace Dan Higgins. While MacFarlane doesn't hit one out of the park on *In Full Swing*, he smashes one into the gap in left-center field and legs out a solid triple.

-Bill Milkowski

Personnel: Seth MacFarlane, vocals, Tom Ranier, piano; Chuck Berghofer, bass; Peter Erskine, drums; Larry Koonse, John Parricelli, guitar; Dan Higgins, Andy Panayi, Phil Todd, Jamie Talbot, woodwinds; Mike Lovatt, Patrick White, James Lynch, trumpet; Gordon Campbell, Danny Marsden, Jonathan Stokes, Andy Wood, Liam Kirkman, Peter North, trombone.

Ordering info: republicrecords.com



Homecoming: Keep It Up; Little Voice; Choros #3; Homecoming; Amazonas; One Times One; Daybreak. (54:57)

Originals: What Happened To My Good Shoes; When You're A Monk; Suite For Maureen; Spiritual For Iris; Stella On The Stairs; Pacific Grove Fog; Mr. DG; Lost Dreams. (62:00)

In Full Swing: The First Time It Happens; Almost Like Being In Love; Isn't This A Lovely Day, For You, For Me, For Evermore; Like Someone In Love; That Face; If I Had A Talking Picture Of You; I'm Glad There Is You; You Couldn't Be Cuter; I Like Myself; You Can't Love 'Em All; Have You Met Miss Jones?; A Kiss Or Two; But Beautiful; Moonlight Becomes You; My Buick, My Love And I. (49:00)



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Blues / BY FRANK-JOHN HADLEY

Got To Have Friends

Mitch Woods, Friends Along The Way (eOne 8958; 68:55 ★★★★) Mitch Woods has so strong an intuitive feel for blues and boogie piano that he can record with a pack of special guests without losing his way or being overshadowed. His interactions with singers Van Morrison, Ruthie Foster and Maria Muldaur show the same clarity and outlay of commitment as pairings with singing guitarists Elvin Bishop, Joe Louis Walker, Taj Mahal and John Lee Hooker (the latter wickedly ponders the implications of "Never Get Out Of These Blues Alive"). Moreover, Woods is a strong vocalist in his own right. Ordering info: mitchwoods.com

Wee Willie Walker & The Anthony Paule Soul Orchestra, After A While (Blue Dot 109; 58:26 ****) Back in the storied Memphis soul 1960s, Wee Willie Walker belted out a song like nobody's business. Today, he's a more refined and temperate vocalist, teaming with excellent guitarist Anthony Paule's seven-piece Soul Orchestra for a start-to-finish enjoyable album heavily weighted in favor of substantive musical drama. Indeed, Walker has a stout heart; he zooms in on the true-grit meaning of a lyric given him by perceptive, emerging songwriter Christine Vitale or brought out of the golden r&b past (Little Willie John's "Look What You've Done To Me," Mable Johns' "Your Good Thing"). Ordering info: bluedotblues.com

Stew Cutler & Friends, Every Sunday Night (Cogna 70070; 44:49 ***½) Don't pigeonhole Stew Cutler; the New Yorker has extensive credits in blues, jazz, soul and gospel. His guitar and vocals pulse with clear emotional intent throughout this enjoyable live-in-the-studio album, his sixth overall. Cutler is particularly effective putting his stamp on Gregg Allman's "Not My Cross To Bear." Trusted friends include singer Bobby Harden.

Ordering info: stewcultler.com

Eilen Jewell, Down Hearted Blues (Signature 2089; 38:05 *******½) Providing her first all-blues album, singer Eilen Jewell occasions special attention for how un-self-consciously she's swept the dust off canonical songs credited to Little Walter, Big Maybelle, Bessie Smith and others. Showing her firm grasp of basic blues sensibilities, the native Idahoan moseys along in low gear or neutral with veteran guitarist Jerry Miller adding firepower when needed. Ordering info: signaturesounds.com

Blind Boys Of Alabama, Almost Home (BBOA Records; 48:24 ****) The twilight of the Blind Boys' long-lasting



career is full of light. Great men Clarence Fountain and Jimmy Carter, along with three other singers and a band, stirringly interpret Ruthie Foster's "I Was Called" and 11 other songs of heaven-bound faith, in studios around the country. Simpatico producers include Steve Berlin, John Leventhal and Charles Driebe. There's a consistency of quality, and the Boys' extreme gratitude to the Maker never slackens.

Ordering info: blindboys.com

Ramon Goose, Long Road To Tiznit (Riverboat 1104; 37:01 ****) Ramon Goose's bursting intelligence and prowess as a singer and guitarist are matched by his gift for exploration. His latest release, recorded in London and Marrakech, charts the considerable progress he's made over the years in uniting the blues with the melodies and grooves of North Africa. Robert Johnson's "Come On In My Kitchen" is imaginatively updated without losing its Delta essence. Originals like "Wandering Sheikh" and the title track are invested with so much stimuli that repeated listens are required to unlock all their treasures. Among the guests are Robert Plant's guitarist Justin Adams and British Indian singer Najma Akhtar

Ordering info: worldmusic.net

Kim Wilson, Blues And Boogie, Vol. 1 (Severn 0070; 52:29 **½) Exceptional on harmonica but a limited singer, Kim Wilson shows fealty here to the Chicago blues once spun by venerated figures like Little Walter and Jimmy Rogers. Nostalgic originals and covers of classics are well-played with enthusiasm, no surprise given the talent of Wilson and pals such as guitarist Big Jon Atkinson and bassist Larry Taylor. Trouble is, a monotony of tone and a scent of embalming fluid win out. DB

Ordering info: severnrecords.com

ODED TZUR THANSLATOR'S NOTE



Oded Tzur Translator's Note ENJA 7773 ****

Urgency coexists with Zen-like calm on the darkly brilliant sophomore album by tenor saxophonist Oded Tzur. The dynamics of his fearless quartet mirror its ever-shifting storytelling intent. This album ripples and resonates.

Tzur's enigmatically titled tunes speak to the underlying purpose of this group, as do Tzur's literally fabulous liner notes. Whether the subject is the watery feel of "The Whale Song," the turbulent journey of "Single Mother" or "The Three Statements Of Garab Dorje," the Oded Tzur Quartet tells stories.

Tzur's tunes experiment with different forms of narrative. The "Dorje" cut, which references a Tibetan Buddhist oracle, feels like a conversation, Tzur commenting on Shai Maestro's pearly piano, Petros Klampanis' thrumming bass and Ziv Ravitz's feathery yet fierce drums. The songs, imbued with a profound melodicism, are dramatic and absorbing, and the interplay transcends empathy. There is nothing ragged about this ensemble.

A student of Indian classical music, Tzur is an architect of stealth, meticulously building his tunes from the ground up. At times, his very quietude seems to roar; the way he starts and ends "Single Mother" suggests a volcano on the ocean floor. An explorer of the microtonal and a player of such restraint and patience that his explosions are particularly startling, Tzur delivers a unique sound, giving his instrument pioneering dimension and depth. At times, his tenor saxophone grazes a flute's timbre; at others, it plumbs the depths of a bass clarinet.

The one cover is John Coltrane's "Lonnie's Lament." While not as schematic as the original, Tzur's version is relatively brief, leisurely and incantatory, capping a recording of enormous emotional pull. —*Carlo Wolff*

Ordering info: odedtzur.com

Translator's Note: Single Mother; Welcome; The Whale Song; The Three Statements Of Garab Dorje; Lonnie's Lament. (43:55) Personnel: Oded Tzur, tenor saxophone; Petros Klampanis, bass; Shai Maestro, piano; Ziv Ravitz, drums.



John Daversa Wobbly Dance Flower BFM JAZZ 302 062 438 ***

Following last year's *Kaleidoscope Eyes* album, trumpeter John Daversa, known for his big band work—as leader, writer and featured soloist throws a change-up. *Wobbly Dance Flower* is a small-band outing where he shares the front line with saxophonist Bob Mintzer. Add a ready-foranything rhythm section headed by keyboardist Joe Bagg and this group has "festival attraction" written all over it. This outfit emphatically leaves the listener wanting more.

Daversa's open horn on the bright "You Got

A Puppy?!" is a model of articulation and control. Mintzer is a righteous partner, blowing febrile tenor on the flag-wavers and adding color and solo tang with the bass clarinet. The title track is a joyous island romp that can stand next to "St. Thomas" by Sonny Rollins, while Miles Davis' venerable bebop proving ground, "Donna Lee," is full of surprises.

The stylistic range of Daversa's originals is impressive. "Ms. Turkey" burns like a Blue Note bopper. The bluesy "Brooklyn Still" shows two soulful soloists: the muted trumpet of "Jazz Heads" recalls Harry "Sweets" Edison's sly, mocking epigrams; Joe Bagg's splashy organ underpins a "Bitches Brew"type excursion.

Daversa and Mintzer indulge in electronic instruments—the EVI and EWI, respectively as does bassist Jerry Watts Jr. Presumably the intermittent nimble filigree under the ensemble is the U-bass. But except for the brief "Extra Credit" coda, it's not always clear how the juiced-up models are appreciably different from the traditional models. That's a small carp to an otherwise fine recording. —*Kirk Silsbee*

 Wobbly Dance Flower: Ms. Turkey; Donna Lee; Be Free; Brooklyn Still; Wobbly Dance Flower; Jazz Heads; Meet Me At The Airport; You Got a Puppy?! Extra Credit. (41:24)
 Personnel: John Daversa, trumpet, EVI; Bob Mintzer, tenor saxophone, bass clarinet, EW; Zane Camey, guitar, Joe Bagg, piano, Hammond B-3 organ; Jerry Watts Jr., bass, U-bass; Gene Coye, drums.

Ordering info: bfmjazz.com

Sarah Elizabeth Charles Free Of Form STRETCH MUSIC/ROPEADOPE

Free Of Form is Sarah Elizabeth Charles' third release as a leader and her second collaboration with co-producer and trumpeter Christian Scott aTunde Adjuah. It also marks her debut on Scott's Stretch Music (Ropeadope) imprint as its first female artist. Somehow, Charles and Scott are "freer" together, as both artists and collaborators, than perhaps they have been on their own previous leader efforts. Scott's adeptness on the production side gives Charles ample freedom and courage to share our collective thoughts on today's social injustices. The connection between Charles and Scott is also felt by the members of SCOPE—formerly known as the S.E. Charles Quartet.

Simply put, the first half of the album *is* the album. There's a level of in-the-pocket synergy achieved on cuts like the title track, "March To Revolution" and "Taller" by keyboardist Jesse Elder, bassist Burniss Earl Travis II and drummer John Davis that makes one wonder if they realized that they were in fact recording an album. Against the unwavering rhythmic backdrop, notably Davis' steady backbeat, this in part brings out the most from Scott's



untethered horn and from the abundant layers of Charles' vocals with effects. The potent immediacy and charge you get after hearing the first six tracks or so consecutively is not only attributed to its production value and socially relevant commentary, but, more importantly, a testament to how Charles has stayed true to the lessons she learned so long ago.

—Shannon J. Effinger

Ordering info: ropeadope.com



Robert Hurst Black Current Jam DOT TIME 9061 ****¹/₂

With *Black Current Jam*, bassist Robert Hurst is determined to cram in as much of the African diaspora in the Americas as possible. Straightahead jazz harmonies and improvisation merge therein with Caribbean clave and percussion, Brazilian lilt, funk and r&b grooves and textures, West African melodies and polyrhythms, and even African American poetry/spoken-word tradition. It's a multivariate fusion. Yet Hurst not only pulls it off, creating an insoluble whole with his Detroit-based cohorts; he sounds absolutely beautiful in doing so.

He sets up "Detroit Day" with an Africaninspired bass ostinato, then gradually layers funk drums, Latin percussion, salty soul saxophone and bebop/Afro-Cuban piano lines. Brendan Asante finally adds a melody that would fit into any or all of the above traditions, alternating between scat and lyrics.

Most remarkable is the attention Hurst pays melody, especially for a bassist known for navigating complex rhythms. Central though these are to "Detroit Day," or to the groovefest "This Is Your Brain On Drums," there is rarely a turn away from prominent vocal melody. On "Bela Bunda" Asante scats along with Rafael Statin's bass clarinet and saxophone; on "Keepin' It Rio," he vocalizes in gentle harmony to Hurst's guitar-like playing. "Afromation," a smooth, gorgeous ballad that is the disc's best, finds Asante's scat harmonizing with both Statin's flute and himself (overdubbed) along with Hurst's bass and Ian Finkelstein's sensitive, melodic piano. It, and Black Current Jam overall, is a triumph. -Michael J. West

Ordering info: dottimerecords.com

Free Of Form: Purview; Free Of Form; March To Revolution Part II; Taller, Learn How To Love; Change To Come: Thinker; Zombie; I Will Wait; The Fold; Another Cloudy Memory; The Struggle. (49:26) Personnel: Sarah Elizabeth Charles, voice; Christian Scott aTunde Adjuah, trumpet; Jesse Elder, keyboards; Burniss Earl Travis II, bass; John Davis, drums.

Black Current Jam: Detroit Day; Afromation; Two Beats And A Breath; Bela Bunda; Coneys And Vernors; Keepin' It Rio; This Is Your Brain On Drums; Morse Code And The Time; At First Sight; Happy Nappy. (68:33)

Personnel: Robert Hurst, acoustic, electric bass; Nate Winn, drums; Ian Finkelstein, piano, keyboards; Rafael Statin, saxophone, woodwinds; Pepe Espinosa, percussion; Brendan Asante, Jillian Hurst, vocals; Faith C. Hall, spoken word.



Gregory Porter Nat "King" Cole & Me BLUE NOTE 5792066 ★★★

In his 20-year prime, riding high on the popular music charts, Nat "King" Cole was a sophisticated crooner—smooth enough to cross the color barriers that were still in place in the '40s and '50s. Gregory Porter has shown a lustier style on his previous albums, so this homage to Cole may not seem like an obvious next step in his nascent career.

The glue that binds Cole and Porter here is the strings of the London Studio Orchestra, in lush, soaring arrangements by producer Vince

Cheryl Bentyne *reArrangements Of Shadows* ARTIST SHARE 0157 ***¹/₂

On this exploration into Sondheim's theatrical repertoire, Cheryl Bentyne powers her warm, pliant soprano on tunes that maximizes her interpretative acumen while allowing glimpses of personal revelations to pierce through.

Such is the case with her reading of "Wish I Could Forget You," on which she sings atop Tom Zink's twilight piano accompaniment. As she uncorks all the angst involved in trying to erase an ex from her heart and mind after a failed romance, it's difficult not to think of her 2011 divorce from pianist Corey Allen. On her splendid rendition of "Move On," the Ben Manson String Quartet insulates Bentyne's reflective yet resolute vocals with evocative, autumnal colors. Here she seems to channel the same defiant optimism she ignited while battling then overcoming cancer.

The disc has its zippier moments, too. The strutting "The Ladies Who Lunch" allows Bentyne to engage in some carefree joviality with fellow singers, Janis Siegel and Tierney Sutton, while the frothy "Comedy Tonight" displays Bentyne at her most dramatic as she tackles the jaunty melody with remarkable techniMendoza, who also conducts the orchestra. Even so, it's not always a smooth fit.

Where Porter prevails is in the moments when he lets his own instrument shine through. On "Miss Otis Regrets" he uses his operatic full voice to match the drama of the orchestra in the verse where the narrator details the mob's lynching of the protagonist. Likewise, he makes the surging end of "Mona Lisa" sound like an aria. Conversely, he's a model of restraint on "Nature Boy," which allows the beauty of his tone to shine through. Less effective is "Ballerina," which Mendoza soups up like one of the hard-swinging charts Richard Wess wrote for Bobby Darin, and the slight "I Wonder Who My Daddy Is," a ballad associated with Nat's brother Freddy.

Best of all is Porter's own "When Love Was King," a Cole-inspired composition that appeared on *Liquid Spirit* with spare accompaniment. Reprising it, Porter wisely puts the orchestra to excellent use; what was an intimate meditation becomes a powerful anthem. —*James Hale*

Nat "King" Cole & Me: Mona Lisa; Smile; Nature Boy, L-O-V-E; Quizas Quizas Quizas; Miss Otis Regrets; Pick Yourself Up; When Love Was King; The Lonely One; Ballerina; I Wonder Who My Daddy Is; But Beautiful; Sweet Lorraine; For All We Know; The Christmas Song. (63.13)

Personnel: Gregory Porter, vocals; Terence Blanchard, trumpet (4, 15); Christian Sands, piano; Reuben Rogers, electric bass; Ulysses Owens, drums; The London Studio Orchestra, Vince Mendoza, conductor.

Ordering info: bluenote.com



cal assurance and emotional awareness. And on the spry "Everybody Say Don't," Bentyne brings a sense of caffeinated elation as she swings the tenacious lyrics underneath Kevin Axt's barreling bass line and Dave Tull's crisp drumming. —John Murph

reArrangements Of Shadows: The Music Of Stephen Sondheim: I Remember, Sand; The Ladies Who Lunch; Everybody Says Don't; Comedy Tonight; I Wish I Could Forget You; Not A Day Goes By; Move On; Send In The Clowns; The Ladies Who Lunch (Solo CB). (44:52)

Noro Call, Chr. 201 Personnel: Cheryl Bentyne, vocals; Kevin Axt, bass (1–4, 7, 10); Dave Tull, drums (1–4, 7, 10); Janis Siegel (3), Tierney Sutton (3), Mark Kibble (9), Armand Hutton (9), vocals; Bevan Manson String Quartet (5, 8); Brad Dutz, percussion (5); John Arrucci, marimba (5); John Beasley (1, 2, 3, 7, 10), Bevan Manson (5, 8), Tom Zink (6), piano; Roy Wooten, cajon (9); Tom McCauley, guitar (7), (shaker (9).

Ordering info: artistshare.com



Adam Larson Second City INNER CIRCLE MUSIC

Though he hails from Normal, Illinois, 27-yearold Adam Larson's saxophone skills are beyond the norm; he's also a prolific composer. This is his fourth release under his own name, his second for Greg Osby's Inner Circle Music.

The opener "Who Even Is That?" relates to the Bronx-based Larson's presence on the competitive New York scene. It's a fleet, punchy, demanding composition that sounds very much like New York jazz. With that said, bass ace Clark Sommers moved back to Chicago after some years in the Apple, and in-demand keys man Rob Clearfield is a staple on the Windy City scene, where this date was recorded.

Sommers' bulbous, decisive solo stems the tide on "Out The Window" before the voluble tenor digs in. "First Step" is a gem; precariously moored with a trip-step second-line beat from drummer Jimmy Macbride, it gloriously grooves and Clearfield goes on safari.

Larson has a tendency to write multifaceted themes that threaten to render the blowing redundant, but he corkscrews through the form here with tensile invention. Amusingly he confesses to initially thinking Nirvana's "Smells Like Teen Spirit" was an Ethan Iverson composition, as he first encountered it in a Bad Plus iteration. Despite Macbride's slap-happy drums here, Clearfield's limpid Wurlitzer and the comparatively mellow Larson divorce this from the combative insolence of the grungy original.

You'd have to be a father to write a lullaby like "Sleep Now," and the sighing long tones show welcome restraint from this fiery, virtuosic player who immediately segues into the intense, odd-metered "Perpetuity." Another memorable highlight is the succinct, breakneck closer, "Breakout." *—Michael Jackson*

Second City: Who Even Is That?; Out The Window; First Step; Smells Like Teen Spirit; Sleep Now; Perpetuity; Uphill Climb; Breakout. (47:48)

Personnel: Adam Larson, tenor saxophone; Clark Sommers, bass; Rob Clearfield piano, Rhodes, Wurlitzer, Jimmy Macbride, drums. Ordering info: adamlarsonjazz.com


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Beyond / BY FRANK-JOHN HADLEY

Voices of Reason

A few singers operate on a level of high distinction where their voices embrace universal hallmarks like hope, love and compassion. This honest expressionism simulates beams of sunshine breaking through dark clouds. The following bunch of recording artists exist at such a lofty height or at least have their moments.

Raised in the African-American church. part of the secular soul scene and civil rights movement of the 1960s, Mavis Staples has long asserted that her music is healing. She sings to make people, everyone, smile. Thus the youthful 77-yearold keeps her eye fixed on the prize for all of If All I Was Was Black (Anti- 87557: **34:40** $\star \star \star \star$), her third album produced by Wilco's Jeff Tweedy and first featuring him as the only songwriter. Staples' conviction, bound up in her wonderful voice, underscores thoughtful lyrics that fit her own views on American society needing repair and how to go about improving things. Yes, love prevails on the program, though some bitterness over police shootings seeps into "Little Bit." In complement to Staples' measured eloquence, Tweedy's rootsy combination of melody and rhythm make the catchy songs even more memorable.

Ordering info: anti.com

An international star of the famous (or infamous) early 1970s singer-songwriter era, Yusuf/Cat Stevens finally hits his stride again on his fourth album since returning to Western pop music after many years away. On The Laughing Apple (Decca/ Cat-O-Log 0027220; 33:00 ***1/2), he reinvents himself even while keeping one foot cemented in his pop past. The warmth and sensitivity of Yusuf's singing remains undeniable and his flair for tuneful writing stays intact. Reunions with Tea For The Tillerman-era producer Paul Samwell-Smith and guitarist Alun Davies are all in his favor. Instances of weak sentiment in a lyric are tolerable given the altruism at the center of three new songs and eight new versions of bona fide or wannabe classics out of his songbook.

Ordering info: decca.com

Leon Russell's widow says the pianist was "an awkward romantic." A sentimental streak certainly does suffuse his last studio album, **On A Distant Shore—Deluxe Edition (Palmetto 2187; 61:51 ★★★½)**. In his mid-seventies and closing out a six-decade career in 2016, long-bearded Russell's quickly recognizable voice has lost some of its fullness and strength. Still, he does pretty well by new songs and revisits three lovey-dovey standards he famously wrote:



"This Masquerade," "Hummingbird" and "A Song For You." Arranger Larry Hall, a little heavy-handed with the strings, harks back to the days of Nat Cole with the Nelson Riddle Orchestra.

Ordering info: leonrussellrecords.com

British pop-soul's Joss Stone is a perfect fit for the role of a mother goddess singing original lyrics about the life-giving properties of nature. Arguably in better, more confident voice than ever before in the studio, she sustains a steady tone of humaneness through five songs on Mama *Earth* (Stone'd 7533; 30:38 $\star \star \star \frac{1}{2}$). Equally vital to the appeal of the album are the contributions of the members of her ad hoc group, Project Mama Earth. Cameroon-born guitarist Etienne Mbappé, guitarist Nitin Sawhney, drummer Jonathan Joseph and keyboardist Jonathan Shorten spontaneously work up compelling universal-African rhythms.

Ordering info: mascotlabelgroup.com

There's nothing facile or uncomplicated about the romantic interactions that former Levon Helm associates Larrv Campbell and Teresa Williams sing about on their second fine roots album, Contraband Love (Red House 303: 46:13 $\star \star \star \star$). Drawn to the vocal harmony and rudiments of gospel, blues and country, the married couple give a sense of trying to resolve the disguiet and anxiety of love in Campbell-penned songs such as "The Other Side Of Pain" and "When I Stop Loving You." Beyond vocals and lyrics, the listener can lose oneself in the rumbling flow of Campbell's guitars and a top-grade Woodstock, New York, rhythm section.

Ordering info: redhouserecords.com



Roscoe Mitchell Discussions WIDE HIVE 0339 ****

Few composers and improvisers have maintained a creative curiosity and rigor like Roscoe Mitchell, who at 77 seems unstoppable. Encountering an increasing number of commissions has led the reedist to tap into the potential bounty embedded in improvisation efforts from his past, and the music on *Discussions* was sparked by a pair of spontaneous recordings made in 2014 with pianist Craig Taborn and percussionist Kikanju Baku. Scholar Paul Steinbeck enlisted a number of graduate students to transcribe material from those trio albums, and with a raft of Bay Area musicians, Mitchell oversaw the birth of powerful new pieces codified from improvisations.

On most of these works Mitchell sits out, allowing the transcribed passages to blossom and teasing out dark-hued melodic shapes that dart by in an instant within the source material, but here linger among the lovely, haunting orchestrations. While "I'll See You Out There" hangs in the air ominously, "Cracked Roses" ripples with a percussive thrust and the dance of pointillistic brass and string stabs. The new collection does include some bracing improvised material, including two snaking duets between Mitchell, on sopranino, and flutist Wilfrido Terrazas. And two orchestral improvisations flow with refreshing clarity, as the ensemble members reveal strong listening skills and refined interactions, with Mitchell's searing lines frequently functioning like a high-powered flashlight guiding the performance forward. -Peter Margasak

Ordering info: widehive.com

Discussions: Cascade; I'll See You Out There; Discussions I; Cracked Roses; Discussions II; Frenzy House; Home Screen; Who Dat. (65:46)

Personnel: Roscoe Mitchell, sopranino saxophone; Steed Cowart, conductor; Wilfrido Terrazas, flutes; James Fei, electronics; Stacey Pelinka, flute; Jesse Barrett, oboe; Rachel Condry, clarinet, bass clarinet; Erin Irvine; bassoon; William Harvey, trumpet; Andrew Strain, trombone; Tiffany Bayly, tuba; William Winant, Scott Siler, percussion; Jordan Glenn, drum set; Brett Carso, piano; Roy T. Malan, Mia Bella D'Augelli, violins; Clio Tilton, viola; Crystal Pascucci, cello; Richard Worn, bass.



Sherman Irby & Momentum Cerulean Canvas BLACK WARRIOR RECORDS 1006 ****1/2

Alto saxophonist Sherman Irby has been an important force in modern straightahead jazz for some time. On *Cerulean Canvas*, he mostly leads a quintet in which he shares the front line with either Vincent Gardner or (on three selections) Elliot Mason on trombone.

While the individual playing is top-notch, it is the combination of arranged and jammed ensembles that really makes this a special

Ernest McCarty Jr. & Jimmie Smith *A Reunion Tribute To Erroll Garner* BLUJAZZ 3452 *******¹/₂

In July 2016, bassist Ernest McCarty Jr. and drummer Jimmie Smith got together after a four-decade hiatus. As alumni of Erroll Garner's quartet, they decided it was time to pay tribute to their former leader by recording a set of tunes he had played with them onstage countless times.

Garner had a sound entirely his own. While this is an achievement to which all musicians might aspire, it challenges those who want to recognize that achievement without lapsing into imitation. For this reason, McCarty's and Smith's choice of Geri Allen (since deceased) was inspired. Although the arrangements and some elements of Allen's playing do nod toward Garner, her approach overall lauds the spirit rather than the letter of his work.

On the Garner original "Gemini," Allen's improvisations include a few parallel fourths, as he often did in quick, ascending runs. But where Garner's touch was lighter, especially in the upper register, Allen sticks more to the center of the keyboard. She plays more aggressively recording and keeps the music from ever becoming too predictable. The program begins with "Racine," a cooking minor blues named after bassist Gerald Cannon's hometown. Cannon opens and closes the piece, which includes fine solos from Irby, Gardner and pianist Eric Reed. The latter is featured on "Blues For Poppa Reed," a medium-tempo blues that has some altered changes and particularly colorful ensembles.

More somber is "From Day To Day," a Mulgrew Miller piece performed in tribute to the late pianist. "Willie's Beat," although named after Willie Jones III, is most notable for Mason's long and rambunctious improvisation and a fine spot for Irby. "Blue Twirl" is the most complex piece, the dissonant ensemble passages giving way to some boppish solos. Irby is in top form on "John Bishop Blues," displaying his beautiful tone unaccompanied at first.

Cerulean Canvas is filled with modern swing, excellent playing by all of the musicians, and one excellent song after another with no throwaways. It is one of Irby's most rewarding recordings to date. —*Scott Yanow*

Cerulean Canvas: Racine; Blues For Poppa Reed; From Day To Day; Willie's Beat aka The Sweet Science; Contemplation; Smile Please; Blue Twirl: A Portrait Of Sam Gilliam; John Bishop Blues; Sweet Georgia Brown; SYBAD. (76:18)

Personnel: Sherman Irby, alto saxophone; Vincent Gardner, Elliot Mason, trombone; Eric Reed, piano; Gerald Cannon, bass; Willie Jones III, drums; Wynton Marsalis, trumpet (8, 10). Ordering info: blackwarriorrecords.com



than he did; her solo lines are more apt to stray beyond the chords into more outside territory. Yet one never loses sight of the tune.

Smith and Noel Quintana fit together seamlessly, the drummer scaling back to give the conguero control of the groove on "Caravan." This symbiosis allows Allen to speak in her own voice while honoring an irreplaceable predecessor. —*Bob Doerschuk*

A Reunion Tribute To Erroll Garner: Caravan; Gemini; When A Gypsy (Makes A Violin Cry); The Shadow Of Your Smile; Mambo Carmel (La Petite Mambo); Misty, Get Happy; Autumn Leaves; It Could Happen To You. (63:40) Personnel: Geri Allen, piano; Ernest McCarty Jr., bass; Jimmie Smith, drums; Noel Quintana, congas.

Ordering info: blujazz.com



Hilary Gardner/ Ehud Asherie The Late Set ANZIC 0060 ****

Like a perfect soufflé, Hilary Gardner and Ehud Asherie's delicate and tasty new album combines simple ingredients in a magical way: just a singer, a piano and a lovingly curated selection of songs from the Great American Songbook.

The Late Set conjures up a nostalgic vision, creating an intimate, after-hours vibe with a collection of songs by masters—Harry Warren and Al Dubin, Lorenz Hart and Richard Rodgers, Irving Berlin, Harold Arlen and Jule Styne among them—that are by turns melancholy, romantic and rollicking.

Gardner, a classically trained singer who is also a member of the singing trio Duchess, is blessed with an exceptionally pure tone and a simplicity of expression that brings out the nuances of the great lyrics herein. In Asherie, she has the right person for the job: He's a superb accompanist whose sensitivity provides ballast for an exploratory jazz spirit that finds expression in his solos.

Gardner and Asherie have worked together for 10 years, and it shows in the way she soars against his reliable, rock-solid groove. The album opens with two 1930s-era gems by Warren and Dubin that are rarely performed today, the romantic "Shadow Waltz" and the sexy "Sweet And Slow." "After You've Gone," from 1918, gives Asherie a chance to break into some convincing stride. Berlin's "I Used To Be Color Blind" will be a revelation to those unfamiliar with it. Gardner is perky and salty on Rodgers and Hart's "Everything I've Got" and sweetly nostalgic on "Seems Like Old Times."

The Late Set is delightful, recalling a bygone, more genteel era of American popular song.

—Allen Morrison

Ordering info: anzicrecords.com

The Late Set: Shadow Waltz; Sweet And Slow; A Ship Without A Sail; After You've Gone; I Never Has Seen Snow; I Used To Be Color Blind; Everything I've Got; Make Someone Happy; Seems Like Old Times. (36:40) Personnel: Hilary Gardner, voice; Ehud Asherie, piano.

Historical / BY BRADLEY BAMBARGER

Blue Hues, Fire Music & Party Pieces

Pianist **Sonny Clark** burned like a blue flame in his abbreviated career, his handful of albums as a leader including the classics *Cool Struttin*' (1958) and *Leapin' And Lopin*' (1961), for Blue Note. He also served as smooth-rolling keyboardist of choice for great sessions by the likes of Dexter Gordon, Grant Green, Jackie McLean and Hank Mobley. But, like so many jazz artists of the period, Clark was addicted to heroin, which killed him in 1963, at age 31. He taped his most mature trio session three years before his demise, not for Blue Note but for producer Bob Shad's Time imprint.

The album's eight original tracks plus six alternate takes have been reissued as a superlative double-LP vinyl set and download release titled **Sonny Clark Trio: The 1960 Time Sessions (Tompkins Square; 75:00** $\star \star \star \star \frac{1}{2}$). The remastering has given the sound an intimate new presence, while the package includes not only Nat Hentoff's original notes (with rare quotes from Clark) but also a fact-clarifying essay by Ben Ratliff. The music itself sparkles with lyrical joi de vivre and rhythmic subtlety, the pianist accompanied by what he calls two "dream cats": bassist George Duvivier and drummer Max Roach.

The session, Clark's only all-originals recording, pivoted on concise versions of tunes from past dates, kicking off with the hook-filled, noir-ish "Minor Meeting" and similarly catchy stroller "Nica" (titled for jazz patron Pannonica de Koenigswarter, though Clark previously recorded different arrangements of the tune as "Royal Flush"). The pianist revives "My Conception," the title track of his 1959 Blue Note LP, as a romantic solo number. Long unsung, *Sonny Clark Trio* isn't an ambitious, forward-minded statement for 1960, but rather, as Ratliff suggests, Clark's "most personal record." **Ordering info: tompkinssquare.com**

Long out of print, two Ornette Coleman live LPs from 1968-'69 have been reissued on one CD as Ornette At 12/Crisis (Impulse!/Real Gone/UMG; 77:34 ★★★★). Ornette At 12, taped at Berkeley, California's Greek Amphitheatre, finds Coleman in a guartet with Texas tenor Dewey Redman and returning bass comrade Charlie Haden alongside the leader's son. Denardo Ornette Coleman, on drums. Only 12 years old at the time, Denardo is no Billy Higgins or Ed Blackwell, but his feel is attuned to the spirit of the music. For "C.O.D." and "New York," the elder Coleman plays his alto saxophone, in galvanizing form. But for "Rainbow," he blows primitivist trumpet; for "Bells And Chimes," he plays violin as if



scoring an avant-garde hoedown. *Crisis* its cover depicting the U.S. Constitution set aflame, in an era of riots, assassinations and pointless war—was recorded at New York University, in more lo-fi sound. The lineup added another glory-days associate, trumpeter Don Cherry, to excellent effect.

The set list features intense versions of Coleman's "Broken Shadows" and Haden's "Song For Che," both iconic pieces, plus the leader's carnivalesque "Comme il Faut," rip-roaring "Space Jungle" and "Trouble In The East," a cacophonous swirl with Coleman sawing on violin and Cherry keening on recorders. The reissue cover art makes the CD look like a knock-off, but the booklet adds—to Martin Williams' original notes for *Crisis* and Coleman's incomprehensible words for *Ornette At* 12—Howard Mandel's contextual essay linking this on-fire music to troubled times.

Ordering info: realgonemusic.com

Recorded in 1967, **Grand Piano Du**ets (Sackville/Delmark; 44:45 ***½) presents Harlem stride master Willie "The Lion" Smith, age 69 at the time, paired with trad-jazz veteran **Don Ewell** (who played with Jack Teagarden, among others). Smith sat in with Ewell during the latter's extended club gig in Toronto, things going so well that these stylistically kindred spirits documented their impromptu partnership in a studio setting (with new, welltuned pianos).

With Smith in the left channel and Ewell in the right, it's a rollicking joy, the renditions of such pre-war numbers as "Everybody Loves My Baby" and "A Porter's Love Song To A Chamber Maid" colored by vocal exhortations from Ewell and the inevitable mental image of Smith chomping on a stogie, his derby askew as if he were rocking a Harlem rent party.

Ordering info: delmark.com



Marius Neset Circle Of Chimes ACT ****^{1/2}

If you crave genre-busting value-for-money, you have it here. Brilliantly eclectic thirty-something Norwegian saxophonist/composer/arranger Marius Neset sumptuously yokes frenetic grooves and stylistic jumpcuts jungles of elements melding classical, jazz and sound collage.

Recognizable on the more tobogganing sorties—such as "Sirens Of Cologne" and "Life Goes On"—is the influence of madcap genius Django Bates, who taught Neset at Copenhagen's Rhythmic Music Conservatory. Saliently, Lionel Loueke is on the session, plus two-thirds of the fabulous Phronesis, namely pianist Ivo Neame and drummer Anton Eger. Another star of this session, which boasts cellist Andreas Brantelid (featured on the schizoid, tension-and-release closer "Eclipse"), bass ace Petter Eldh and Neset's sister, flutist Ingrid, is Jim Hart, whose vibraphone and marimba heighten texture and excitement, down to the twilight-zone fade on the wildly ambitious "Sirens."

A leitmotiv are tubular bells, initially deployed to "ring in the New Year"—this project's genesis was a 2014 commission for a New Year's Day performance at Kölner Philharmonie. Neame intros "Prague's Ballet" as if launching into "Body And Soul," then dances with exquisite cello, Neset's soprano recalling the chaste classic approach of Branford Marsalis—needed respite from the audacious swirl of invention that precedes, notably the epic "Star"—which conjures the cyclic machinations of a whole solar system. "1994" reveals Neset as more than a doubler on soprano. Remarkable stuff. —*Michael Jackson*

Ordering info: actmusic.com

Circle Of Chimes: Satellite; Star; A New Resolution; Introduction To Prague's Ballet; Prague's Ballet; Life Goes On; Sirens Of Cologne; The Silent Room; 1994; Eclipse. (75.43)

Personnel: Marius Neset, tenor and soprano saxophones; Lionel Loueke, guitar, vocals; Andreas Brantelid, cello; Ingrid Neset, flute, piccolo, alto flute; Ivo Neame, piano; Jim Hart, vibraphone, marimba, percussion; Petter Eldh, bass; Anton Eger, drums, percussion.



Josh Nelson The Sky Remains ORIGIN 82741 ****

Pianist Josh Nelson thinks big. His own projects, showcased so far in clubs only, are multimedia affairs with scenery and video projections to live music. The music for these phantasmagoria is equally expansive, often revolving around Los Angeles history, science fiction and things celestial. The son of a Disney imagineer, he sees the town as the ultimate thrill ride. Nelson's triumph is essaying his personal obsessions in ways so musically pleasing that his songs and

Kyle Eastwood In Transit JAZZ VILLAGE 570146

Kyle Eastwood grew up in the shadow of his father, Clint Eastwood. While having a famous parent undoubtedly opened some doors to him early in his career, Eastwood long ago proved himself as a fine bassist and a bandleader who has now released eight albums of his own.

Eastwood, 49, leads a quintet on *In Transit* with Stefano Di Battista guesting on soprano and alto saxophones on four of the 10 songs. The music, which consists of six originals from the band and a song apiece by Charles Mingus, Thelonious Monk, Frank Foster and Andrea Morricone, is primarily hard-bop that looks back to the 1960s for inspiration. Trumpeter Quentin Collins contributes several spectacular solos, tenor saxophonist Brandon Allen and pianist Andrew McCormack are excellent, drummer Chris Higginbottom gives the lead voices stimulating support and the leader, who takes a few short solos, is mostly content to keep the music swinging.

"Soulful Times" is the type of joyful jazz/ funk that was popular in the mid-1960s, serving as a fine opener. The uptempo "Rush Hour" features a joyful solo from Collins and uses changes compositions stand on their own.

Nelson's light-touch piano and attractive writing on *The Sky Remains* denote his extensive classical background. Songs and themes are lyrical; the ensembles and the vocals breathe and flow naturally, with canny spacing and thematic development. The "Bridges And Tunnels" and "On The Sidewalk" motives gently roll, and Anthony Wilson's guitar acts as a fine second voice to the soloists.

The program hints at a fair amount of tragedy in Nelson's program notes and composing. Brian Walsh's desultory clarinet amid the carny rhythms of "Pacific Ocean Park" and Kathleen Grace's poignant vocal on "The Sky Remains" underplay frustration and broken dreams. But the sunlight of the piano rondo of "The Architect" and the optimism of the clean horn writing on "Ah, Los Angeles" indicate optimism.

Nelson has composed a soundtrack for a movie yet to be made, but the music provides more than enough content for private mental projections. —*Kirk Silsbee*

The Sky Remains: Bridges And Tunnels; The Sky Remains; On The Sidewalk; The Architect; Ah. Los Angeles; Lost Souls Of Saturn; Pitsleh; Pacific Ocean Park, Run; Stainways, (63:49) **Personnel:** Josh Nelson, piano, Nord Electro 3, vocal; Chris Lawrence, trumpet, flugelhorn; Brian Walsh, clarinet; bass clarinet; Josh Johnson, flute, alto saxophone; Larry Goldings, Hammond B-3 organ; Anthony Wilson, guitar, vocal; Alex Boneham, bass; Dan Schnelle, drums; Aaron Serfaty, percussion; Kathleen Grace, Lillian Sengpiehl, vocals.

Ordering info: originarts.com



similar to "Love For Sale" before taking a different turn for the last part of each chorus. "Movin" has a catchy stop-time melody that launches spots for Collins, McCormack, Allen and Eastwood. Di Battista makes his first appearance playing the melody of "Cinema Paradiso." "Rockin' Ronnie's" is the high point of the set, a happy strut that features particularly inspired tenor, trumpet and piano solos. —*Scott Yanow*



Jen Shyu Song Of Silver Geese PI RECORDINGS 72 ****½

Multi-instrumentalist/vocalist Jen Shyu's *Song Of Silver Geese* showcases exceptional performance artistry influenced by Shyu's Taiwanese and East Timorese ancestry, with numerous languages aboard from Shyu's passionate fieldwork in experimental music and dance. Nine spellbinding rapturous "door" movements explore multi-cultures, texture and ritual on a poetic compositional canvas. Enticing Taiwanese moon lute and Korean gayageum enhance Shyu's poetry alongside instrumental compositions with her impressive New York ensemble Jade Tongue teamed up with the Mivos Quartet.

Song of Silver Geese is a cathartic compositional work. The traveling is inward and extroverted, exploring deep emotional connections. Dramatic Indonesian, Javanese, Mandarin, Tetum, Korean and improvisatory vocals are made universal by Shyu. Her captivating vision, melodic spells and abstract pathways connect exquisite compositional balance and solid, tight-knit ensemble interplay.

Poetry visits compelling nature-inspired philosophical contemplation on the introductory "Prologue—Song of Lavan Pitinu." "World Of Java" offers mysterious, shadowy textures from bass, string quartet, vibraphone and snare complementing Shyu's exotic rhapsodies.

From the hauntingly melodic to inspired avant-garde magic, from the immediate to capturing the dream-world, *Song Of Silver Geese* celebrates the cycle of life with the hush of Shyu's rising "full white moon."

—Kerilie McDowall

Ordering info: pirecordings.com

In Transit: Soulful Times; Rush Hour; Movin'; Cinema Pardiso (Love Theme); Night Flight; We See; Rockin' Ronnie's; Jarreau; Blues In Hoss' Flat; Boogie Stop Shuffle. (56:08)

Personnel: Kyle Eastwood, bass; Quentin Collins, trumpet, flugelhom; Brandon Allen, tenor saxophone; Andrew McCormack, piano; Chris Higginbottom, drums; Stefano Di Battista, soprano, alto saxophones.

Song Of Silver Geese: Door 1: Prologue–Song of Lavan Pitinu; Door 2: World of Java; Door 3: Dark Road, Silent Moon; Door 4: Sinom Semarangan; Door 5: World Of Hengchun; Door 6: World Of Wehali; Door 7: World Of Ati Batik; Door 8: World Of Baridegi; Door 9: Contemplation. (49:37)

Personnel: Jen Shyu, vocals, Taiwanese moon lute, Korean gayageum, piano; Chris Dingman, vibraphone; Mat Maneri, viola; Thomas Morgan, bass; Satoshi Takeishi, percussion; Anna Webber, flutes; Dan Weiss, drums; Jennifer Choi, Erica Dicker, violins; Victor Lowrie, viola; Mariel Roberts, cello.

Books / BY KERILIE MCDOWALL

Sister of the Soul

Masterpiece jazz recordings evoke perfect states of being and a transcendent response. Similarly, in books, when authorship captures a character's personality, it creates a sense of immediacy, connects the reader, and time just disappears.

Italian jazz vocalist/TV and radio director/producer Lilian Terry's ageless jazz memoir Dizzy, Duke, Brother Ray and Friends (University of Illinois Press) celebrates intimate friendships with treasured elite American jazz recording artists. Piqued with a keen sense of curiosity, Terry established a network of close friendship bonds when working as a vocalist, producer/journalist and translator in the 1960s with a who's who of star talent. Dizzy, Duke, Brother Ray and Friends is centered around those friendships, and the book feels fresh and current due to Terry recapturing the humanity and camaraderie from those experiences.

Terry presents new jazz stories from Europe during the era in America when almost every family had a Dave Brubeck album near the turntable, children played with Slinkys and hula hoops, and shag carpets were vogue. Civil Rights Movement hero Martin Luther King Jr. was passionately inspiring the nation.

Dizzy, Duke, Brother Ray and Friends documents Cairo-born jazz personality Terry's unions with her RAI (National Italian Radio and TV network) interview subjects and focuses on her lifelong family friendships with mega-talents Dizzy Gillespie, Duke Ellington, Ray Charles, Max Roach, Horace Silver and Abbey Lincoln.

It's about déjà vu; you get the sense you have met with Terry before. Having that familiar, comfortable manner of making an artist feel at ease came naturally to her. Graced with a down-to-earth refinement, the talented vocalist and journalist chose to assist and befriend those artists who shared her creative world.

Milestones include Terry's special moments with Ellington, Billy Strayhorn penning lyrics to "The Star-Crossed Lovers" for the vocalist, and her recording tribute to Johnny Hodges and Strayhorn with Tommy Flanagan. Terry enjoyed a seven-year friendship with Ellington, picking up other friendships along the way, respecting and celebrating the culture of jazz and documenting its political essence.

Terry's interview subjects shared thoughts on Jim Crow. Max Roach explains, "In jazz, the properties are all laid out and we all know the law. Like in a democracy everyone has to be intelligent



enough to know that we have to govern these properties together equally, and that is what jazz is about."

After establishing bonds with Gillespie in the mid-'60s, Terry acted as his personal interpreter in Italy and interviewed him for the RAI. They eventually established a Bassano del Grappa jazz school together from 1983 to 1991. In 1985 Terry and Gillespie recorded the LP *Oo Shoo-Be-Doo-Be ... Oo-Oo ... Oo, Oo* together.

Gillespie spoke fondly in Terry's memoirs about Charlie Parker's influence: "When Bird came into my life, he brought a totally new dimension on how to attack a tune and how to swing it. ... We inspired each other with our differences."

Dizzy, Duke, Brother Ray and Friends offers a positive glimpse into the world of beloved jazz artist personalities with amusing anecdotes. From Ellington's poetry to conversations with Roach, Charles, Silver and Gillespie, Terry's shared experiences and interviews present a captivating look into the world of jazz and its private moments.

Bill Evans reflects with Terry, "It's like living with a certain tradition, a certain surrounding, therefore the language can change with time but the proceeding remains the same."

A great performer's music is timeless and renowned personalities are largerthan-life. The artists in Terry's book conjure up special eternal magic. New jazz stories are documented as Terry creates a comforting read nudging closer to the jazz greats. DB

Ordering info: press.uillinois.edu



Jason Stein Quartet Lucille! DELMARK 5025 ****

Sure, Charlie Parker's "Dexterity" has been covered countless times. But it's hard to believe that anybody has interpreted the bebop standard like the Chicago-based Jason Stein Quartet does on *Lucille!* Bass clarinetist Stein sounds like he's having a blast bringing the piece's upper-register flights to his low-end woodwind. When Keefe Jackson joins in on the even lower and more unwieldy contrabass clarinet, that audacity turns into a celebration.

Stein's group navigated such paths before; its 2011 debut, *The Story This Time*, combined his original compositions with twists on melodies from Thelonious Monk and the Lennie Tristano school. *Lucille!* follows a similar blueprint, but the results sound more vigorous. That energy comes across right from the opening, a reinterpretation of Warne Marsh's "Marshmallow" with Jackson's pointed attacks answering Stein's elongated lines. Drummer Tom Rainey—a relative newcomer to the band—encourages them through fleet cymbal hits.

Another part of this reinvigoration comes from Stein's writing, as his lyrical "Ryder's Uncle Dragon" shows that the quartet's combinations also excel at slow tempos. Similarly, on "I Knew You Were," bassist Joshua Abrams gradually builds tension while Rainey emphasizes open spaces. All of which serve as the ideal frame for Stein's deliberate pacing. Abrams' single-note lines also sound like a signal for the group to challenge each other while hitting different contours of "Halls And Rooms."

These ominous moments don't detract from the ebullience that runs throughout *Lucille!*, with the quartet's reedists continuing to find different ways of mixing it up in their basement ranges. —*Aaron Cohen*

Ordering info: delmark.com

Lucille!: Marshmallow; Halls And Rooms; Dexterity; Roused About; Ryder's Uncle Dragon; Wow; Little Rootie Tootie; I Knew You Were; April. (48:58)

Personnel: Jason Stein, bass clarinet; Keefe Jackson, tenor saxophone, contrabass clarinet; Joshua Abrams, bass; Tom Rainey, drums.

George Freeman 90 Going On Amazing BLUJAZZ 3445 ***1/2

Though somewhat misleading in title since the session took place a dozen years ago, recent live shows have attested that in his 90th year, the inimitable Chicago-born guitarist George Freeman remains undiminished. Aboard here are hard-pocket



bassist Jack Zara (onetime cohort of big brother Von Freeman), drummer Kevin Patrick and singer-pianist Vince Willis-a serviceable team set to lock Freeman in swagger mode. And swagger he does on the worldly, defiant "Summer Wind," plus his own epiphany-which might as well refer to his signature guitar style-"You Are Mine All Mine."

Veterans like Freeman know the importance of the right tempo for a trenchant groove, and the slow-to-medium stomps of "That's It," "Steppin' With George," "Contaminated" and "The Bottom" occupy his sweet spot. The latter demos some of Freeman's legendary low-end action, although he doesn't dive depth-charge-deep in deference to a flirtation with "Here Comes The Bride." Willis takes an emphatic but kaleidoscopic solo, injecting boogie-woogie licks, but the mix underserves Zara. The bassist's cooking skills are better evident on "Hit It," a welcome uptempo cut on which the leader's hardscrabble chicken scratch is particularly joyful. -Michael Jackson

90 Going On Amazing: Summer Wind; That's It; Hit It; Trees; Steppin' With George; Bruz, George, Chico & Von; That's All; Contaminated; You Are Mine All Mine; Mike's Tempo; The Bottom. (62.22) Personnel: George Freeman, guitar; Vince Willis, piano, vocal (6); Jack Zara, bass; Kevin Patrick, drums. Ordering info: blujazz.com

CHIN HEM FLOUZA

Guilhem **Flouzat Trio** A Thing Called Joe SUNNYSIDE 1492 ★★★½

While Guilhem Flouzat appears to be more naturally inclined to record his own music, A Thing Called Joe is an indicator of this trio's ongoing love life with the Great American Songbook. Joining the drummer

are longtime bandmates Sullivan Fortner on piano and bassist Desmond White. What they've come up with is a new generation's take on music recorded generations before they were born.

The delight is in the details, specifically their spontaneously chosen titles, including the title track, written by Harold Arlen. It's a sauntering visit that takes its time, swinging all the while, Flouzat's brushwork a reminder of Ed Thigpen with Oscar Peterson's trio. Fortner's approach to these songs is determinative and reflects many influences, including Nat "King" Cole and Erroll Garner on the bouncy "Walking My Baby Back Home." This trio's affinities with ballads is best heard with their renditions of "When I Fall In Love" and "There's No You," the arrangements personal and intimate. Flouzat's delicate march and Fortner's extreme patience with the melody of "When I Fall In Love" highlight this band's intimacy with music created when love was reflected through tough but tender melodies not originally designed for jazz interpretation. -John Ephland

A Thing Called Joe: There's No You; Oska T; Perdido; When I Fall In Love; Walking My Baby Back Home; Midnight Mood; Mrs. Parker Of KC; Happiness Is A Thing Called Joe. (39:49) Personnel: Guilhem Flouzat, drums; Sullivan Fortner, piano; Desmond White, bass Ordering info: sunnysiderecords.c

Alex Goodman Second Act LYTE 040 ***

Toronto native Alex Goodman turned heads when he won the international guitar competition at the 2014 Montreux Jazz Festival. Now 30 and a New York resident since 2012, his second album brims with stylistic feints but lacks any defining unity.



For example, there is little to connect the pretty melody and ethereal voice-and-saxophone unison theme of "Apprehension" to the heavily processed, scalar guitar and distorted Rhodes on "Empty." Nor much to make you think that the unadorned guitar on "Questions" belongs to the same musician as the one playing the abstract introduction to "Heightened." Reedist Matt Marantz introduces an EWI on "The First Break," creating a somewhat grating contrast to the fluid lyricism of Goodman's guitar that precedes it. The EWI returns on the multi-faceted "Sharon," which makes the transition from a wistful, unaccompanied piano to a Spanish-tinged tempo and a rollicking closing section. That kind of rhythmic variety is a signature of Goodman's writing, and he frequently uses fellow Torontonian Felicity Williams' pure, breathy voice to create an atmospheric upper end or double Marantz's saxophone.

—James Hale

Second Act: Questions; The First Break; Departure; Losing Cool Introduction; Losing Cool; Empty; Heightened; Sharon; Welcome To New York; Apprehension; Acrobat. (74:00) Personnel: Alex Goodman, guitar; Matt Marantz, saxophones, EWI; Eden Ladin, piano, Fender Rhodes, organ; Rick Rosato, bass; Jimmy Macbride, drums; Felicity Williams, Alex Samaras, vocals (5–8, 10, 11).

Ordering info: lyterecords.com

Nate Wooley Knknighgh CLEAN FEED 434 ****

Pronounce it "knife." Knknighgh is a tribute to the minimal poetry of Aram Saroyan, whose one-word poem "Lighght" earned an award from the NEA. Inspired by Saroyan's potent economy, trumpeter Nate Wooley provided his ensemble,

whose instrumentation replicates that of Ornette Coleman's classic late-'50s quartet, with just one 13-bar theme and a handful of looped phrases. Each of the album's tracks, which last between six and 16 minutes, is developed from these spare resources, but that's more than enough to fashion an album that bristles with invention.

Wooley's accompanists are all young but highly accomplished musicians, with a collective background that spans jazz, radical improvisation and new music composition, and they find in his spare materials instigations for abrupt, contrapuntal configurations, tumbling blow-outs and passages of dry, well-developed lyricism. The musicians treat unconventional and familiar techniques non-hierarchically, which gives the music a mercurial quality.

Wooley uses Saroyan's example of concentrated abstraction, layered meaning and engagement with essential materials to find a new way for musicians to work together. -Bill Meyer

Knknighgh: Knknighgh 3; Knknighgh 4; Knknighgh 6; Knknighgh 7; Knknighgh 8. (56:54) Personnel: Nate Wooley, trumpet; Chris Pitsiokos, alto saxophone; Bradon Lopez, bass; Dre Hocevar, drums

Ordering info: cleanfeed-records.com



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- 84 | JAZZING UP HIGH SCHOOL JAZZ BAND By JB Dyas
- 92 | MASTER CLASS By Robert Hurst
- 94 | PRO SESSION By Michael Fein
- 96 | SIENA JAZZ WORKSHOP
- 102 | TRANSCRIPTION Kamasi Washington
- 104 | TOOLSHED

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Making the Grade

hat if you—for a class—had to grade the album reviews in this issue of DownBeat? A, B, C, D or F: How would you do it?

What if you were *writing* one of those reviews for a grade in the class: How would you know on what basis you'd be graded, how it would be evaluated as good or bad? If you didn't like the grade, would you appeal it? Could the instructor defend that grade successfully?

After all, if writing effectively about improvisation may be an intangible skill defining an amorphous art—how artful would the grading of that writing have to be? And would the grading process then educationally inspire the writer to improve his or her craft in the future?

Stepping Out

How do you grade an English essay? Do

you focus on the mechanics—the spelling and syntax—or the meaning behind the words or both? Which can you teach? What can you quantify? This scenario parallels well what jazz-improvisation instructors face when teaching students of any age for academic credit, whether in a private lesson, an ensemble or an improv class.

Jazz improv has long been a graded part of the academic scene in hundreds of colleges and universities and in many high schools around the world. Yet jazz educators have barely spoken about how to grade improv effectively. Assess? Sure. You and I and our audiences assess our performances every day. But audiences don't have to grade the work; they are not entrusted with educating the performer to improvise better; they are not subject to grade appeals from the students. Grading improv is such a different matter than assessing it.

Creative Accounting

We've been fairly creative, out of necessity, in inventing improv-grading policies. But as the saying goes, creative accounting will land you in jail. Our grading may focus on attendance, or completing assignments, or mastery of certain chord/scale relationships or on the holistic artistry of the student soloist. But not being clear about what you're seeking from a student leads the student not to know what to work on the most. If your grading system doesn't emphasize the elements you actually believe to be the most important, then your students may allocate their practice time out of balance with your belief system.

Dr. David Coogan teaches Rhetorical Theory & Criticism at my university. What he says about grading creative writing certainly parallels the issues found in grading jazz improv, or painting or so many other pursuits: "Grading creative writing is hard because creativity, itself, can't be taught. The essence of that drive to create with words and make beautiful and even terrifying meaning, can be coaxed out of a student. Techniques of writing can be broken down, analyzed, taught, assigned as homework in longer compositions and graded. Students with natural talent can then develop and reach a new level, if they can take the time to learn, say, how to write a metaphor. Even students of lesser ability can achieve piecemeal the appearance of creative writing ability by following classroom instructions. They might even earn an A. But it might be for mediocre writing. Their performance might say more about their ability to follow classroom instructions than their ability to write creatively."

Do our students' improv performances sometimes say more about their ability to follow classroom instructions than to play creatively? Sometimes. Are we doing everything we can to lead our students to their most expressive improvisations? Perhaps yes, yet with one frequent exception: how we grade and thus how in this significant way we communicate with and inspire our students.

Snapshot

Across the globe, I've observed instructors' policies for grading improv. I've closely examined many, and I've spoken with hundreds of jazz educators about their priorities in teaching. I don't believe there is one right answer.

But this much I know. So many jazz educators have a student who entered the semester as a hot-shot player and never did the real work required by the course yet received a high grade. Many teachers have vocalists, drummers and horn players-or jazz majors and non-jazz majors-in the same classroom with no policy as to how they might be graded differently; and yet sometimes they are being graded differently. Many mentors are conflicted about grading any creative element of a student's improv yet strongly want their students to exit soloing creatively. Many instructors know what elements of novices' improv annoy them the most in a performance but haven't found the means to use a grading system to represent the course requirements as a path that would best prompt those students to grow in a healthier direction. As Coogan would say, "Their performance might say more about their ability to follow classroom instructions than their ability to write creatively." And a good number of educators have found out the hard way that their stated grading process-if there is

a stated grading process—doesn't hold up to a student grade-appeal.

The Charge

I believe it's time jazz educators dialogue about their grading policies. Most jazz educators come from one of (or a mix of) three streams: music education graduates, "street" jazz musicians and jazz program graduates. The first lot rarely encounters a jazz improv class within the music ed curriculum, much less explores how to grade it. The second lot "lives" jazz improv but very often prefers the grade of "bandstand hard knocks" to forming a clear academic policy. And the third lot often reflexively re-creates the policies of those with whom they'd studied.

It's time. We stand on the shoulders of educators who won decades-long battles to make jazz an extracurricular activity in the schools, then a co-curricular one and finally a curricular pursuit. That now accomplished, the elephant in the room is trumpeting a call to be recognized: Let's be sure to talk about how we can effectively grade jazz improvisation, thus strongly encouraging our students to grow in the paths that we model in our instruction and in our grading. When we grade jazz improvisation according to our educational priorities, we create additional opportunities to inspire our students towards greater knowledge, understanding and performance of the art form. DR

Trombonist, vocalist, composer and educator Antonio J. Garcia (ajgarcia@vcu.edu) is director of jazz studies at Virginia Commonwealth University. He is an executive board member of The Midwest Clinic, advisory board member of The Brubeck Institute, associate jazz editor of the International Trombone Association Journal, past editor of the International Trombone Journal and network expert (improvisation materials) for the Jazz Education Network. His newest book, Jazz Improvisation: Practical Approaches to Grading (Meredith Music), explores improv-course objectives and grading.





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Jazzing up Jazz Band By JB Dyas, Ph.D.

resenting jazz workshops across the country on behalf of the Thelonious Monk Institute, it's been my experience that too many high school jazz bands, although often sounding quite impressive, are really playing very little jazz. On any given tune, few students are able improvise-arguably jazz's most important element.

Most of the band members don't know the chord progression, the form, or even what a chorus is-essentials for the jazz musician. And all too often they haven't listened to the definitive recordings-a must in learning how to perform this predominantly aural art form-or know who the key players are. They're just reading the music that's put in front of them, certainly not what jazz is all about. What they're doing really has little relation to this music's sensibility; it's more like "concert band with a swing beat."

The teaching and learning of jazz can and should be an integral component of every high school jazz band rehearsal. Since most high schools don't have the luxury of offering separate jazz theory, improvisation and history classes, jazz band needs to be a "one stop shop." Therefore, repertoire is key, meaning the repertoire chosen for the school year and the order in which it is presented should be such that it is conducive to the learning of jazz theory and improvisation in a natural, understandable and playable unfolding of material. Beginning with relatively easy tunes on which to improvise, each subsequent tune should be a catalyst and vehicle for new improvisatory instruction while reinforcing concepts and skills learned on the previous tunes (see Suggested Big Band Arrangements sidebar on the following page).

As jazz musicians, every band member should know the form and chord progression of the tunes they're working on. Most importantly, the students need to listen to the definitive recordings of the tunes they're learning (as well as jazz in general) in order to know what the music is supposed to sound and feel like. To this end, I offer the following step-by-step rehearsal methodology for current and future high school band directors.

Form and Listening

Begin by passing out lead sheets (C, B-flat, E-flat and bass clef versions) of the tune on which you are about to embark, letting the students know that you will be distributing their individual big band parts subsequently.

Listen to the definitive recording together in class, identifying the key players and insisting your students memorize their names and respective instruments.

Then teach, discuss and have the students memorize the form (e.g., AABA, ABAC, 16-bar tune, 12-bar blues, etc.). Play the definitive recording again, pointing out the sections as they go by and having the students say aloud where they are on the first beat of each section (e.g., "top, second A, bridge, last A").

Theoretic Trilogy

Next, teach the tune's theoretic trilogy, that is, roots, chords and scales. Begin with the root movement, having the students play the roots along with the definitive recording as shown in Example 1 on page 88 (Horace Silver's "Song For My Father"). Drummers should do this on vibes.

Then move on to the chord qualities, having the students arpeggiate the chords as indicated along with the definitive recording (see Example 2):

• 1-3-5-7-9 for chords lasting two bars (have the 9th sustain for the second bar).

• 1-3-5-7 for chords lasting one bar.

1–3 for chords lasting two beats.

• for II–V–I's in major, play Example 3.

• for II–V–I's in minor, play Example 4.

This is also a good time to show your pianist and guitarist authentic jazz voicings for these chords (see Recommended Rhythm Section Resources sidebar on page 86).

Finally, teach the chords' related scales, having the students play them along with the definitive recording as in Example 5.

Note that at this point your students have listened to the definitive record-

SUGGESTED BIG BAND ARRANGEMENTS

Following is a list of big band arrangements of "must know" jazz standards. Beginning with easier tunes on which to improvise, they are sequenced in a logical order of chord/scale theory knowledge and improvisation skill acquisition. The list also contains must-know staples likes blues in B-flat and F, minor blues and "Rhythm" changes. Rehearsing the charts in this order will provide constant reinforcement of skills/knowledge attained on the previous tune(s) while acquiring new skills/ knowledge on each subsequent tune. Most can be found in Jamey Aebersold Play-A-Long Volumes 54 (*Maiden Voyage*) and 70 (*Killer Joe*). To listen to arrangements free online, go to listeninglab.stantons. com. To order arrangements, go to ejazzlines.com/jazz-big-band-arrangements-c932.html.

<u>Title</u>	<u>Arranger</u>	Aebersold Play-A-Long
"Watermelon Man"	Mike Kamuf	Vol. 54 (<i>Maiden Voyage</i>)
"Song For My Father"	Mark Taylor	Vol. 54 (<i>Maiden Voyage</i>)
"So What"	Mark Taylor	Vol. 54 (<i>Maiden Voyage</i>)
"Impressions"	Mark Taylor	Vol. 54 (<i>Maiden Voyage</i>)
"Maiden Voyage"	Mark Taylor	Vol. 54 (<i>Maiden Voyage</i>)
"Cantaloupe Island"	Mike Kamuf	Vol. 54 (<i>Maiden Voyage</i>)
"Lady Bird"	Mark Taylor	Vol. 70 (<i>Killer Joe</i>)
"Satin Doll"	Mark Taylor	Vol. 54 (<i>Maiden Voyage</i>)
"Blue Bossa"	Mark Taylor	Vol. 54 (<i>Maiden Voyage</i>)
"Summertime"	Calvin Custer	Vol. 54 (<i>Maiden Voyage</i>)
"Autumn Leaves"	Peter Blair	Vol. 54 (<i>Maiden Voyage</i>)
"Doxy"	Mark Taylor	Vol. 54 (<i>Maiden Voyage</i>)
"Tenor Madness" (B-flat blues)	Mark Taylor	Vol. 1 (How to Play Jazz)
"Now's the Time" (F blues)	Allen Gray	Vol. 1 (How to Play Jazz)
"Straight No Chaser" (F blues)	Mark Taylor	Vol. 1 (How to Play Jazz)
"Mr. PC" (minor blues)	Terry White	Vol. 70 (Killer Joe)
"Footprints"	John Berry	Vol. 54 (<i>Maiden Voyage</i>)
"St. Thomas"	Mark Taylor	Vol. 8 (<i>Sonny Rollins</i>)
"Sugar"	Mark Taylor	Vol. 70 (<i>Killer Joe</i>)
"Sweet Georgia Brown"	Jerry Nowak	Vol. 70 (Killer Joe)
"You Stepped Out of a Dream"	Jerry Sheppard	Vol. 70 (Killer Joe)
"I Got Rhythm" ("Rhythm" changes)	Jimmy Lally	Vol. 47 (Rhythm Changes)
"Oleo" ("Rhythm" changes)	Mark Taylor	Vol. 47 (Rhythm Changes)

RHYTHM SECTION RESOURCES

Everyone

- Jamey Aebersold Play-A-Long Volumes 1, 54 and 70
- "Methods for Fighting the Epidemic of Tune Illiteracy" (JB Dyas), Part 1, DownBeat, May 2010; Part 2, DownBeat, August 2010

<u> Piano</u>

- Jazz Piano Voicings for the Non-Pianist (Mike Tracy)
- Transcribed Piano Voicings for Aebersold Play-A-Long Volumes 1, 54 and 70

Bass

- "Linear Bass Line Construction" (JB Dyas), Part 1, DownBeat, August 2006; Part 2, DownBeat, August 2007
- Transcribed Bass Lines for Aebersold Play-A-Long Volumes 1, 54 and 70

<u>Drums</u>

• Drum Styles and Analysis for Aebersold Play-A-Long Volumes 54 and 70 (Steve Davis)

Guitar

- Easy Jazz Guitar-Voicings and Comping (Michael DiLiddo)
- Maiden Voyage-Guitar Voicings (Michael DiLiddo)

ing an additional three times, being active all the while.

The Melody

Now that your students know the form, root movement, chord qualities and related scales, it's time to teach them the head, pointing out the melody's relation to the chords and scales they just learned. While they can refer to the lead sheet, ask them to play as much as they can by ear, especially with regard to the rhythms and feel they've just been listening to.

Then have everyone play the head along

with the definitive recording, matching and blending with the players thereon as closely as they can.

Improvisation

Next, it's time to improvise. Using what they know-chords, scales, head-have each

SETUP FOR SUCCESS



Educators should set up their high school jazz band as a **bona fide jazz ensemble (see diagram above), with every**one as close to one another as possible. Since most high school band rooms are multipurpose music rooms, assign each student a setup job so they can quickly set up the band immediately before rehearsal and return the room to how it was immediately afterwards. Make sure you have long enough extension cords to put the guitar and bass amps in their respective proper places (as opposed to where the closest electrical outlets are).

Have your soloists take their solos in front of the rhythm section, facing it during rehearsal. This allows soloist and accompanists to have eye contact and better hear and react to one another. It also encourages them to memorize the chord progressions.

Have the piano tuned as least once a month. As this costs about \$100 per tuning (\$1,000 for the school year) and is not in the budget of most high schools, you'll probably have to fundraise for this. Do it; it's worth it. Playing with an out-of-tune piano is mis-educative. Meticulously tune up the band before every session, beginning with tuning by ear and then checking each instrument one after another with an electric tuner. Emphasize the importance of good intonation throughout rehearsal, insisting your students intensely listen to each other and adjust their embouchures as need be.

Regarding improvisation, urge your students to utilize phrases of the masters that they've transcribed on previous tunes when soloing on subsequent tunes, transposing where need be. Also, encourage them to quote from heads they know, increasing their understanding of jazz vocabulary all the while.

Start a combo comprising your big band's rhythm section and best two or three horn players, even if it means meeting before and/or after school a couple of days per week. Work on the same tunes that you're doing in the big band, giving the students further instruction and experience soloing on this repertoire. Bring in increasingly difficult tunes as well as diverse tune types as the combo improves. As the small group gets better, so will the big band as inevitable peer-to-peer inspiring, teaching and learning kick in. A rising tide lifts all boats.

Encourage your drummer to delineate the form by playing small fills between sections, big fills between choruses and bigger fills between soloists. He or she can further delineate by changing cymbals for each new soloist, playing the bridge differently, using brushes for the piano solo, etc.

On swing tunes, encourage your bassist to construct his or her own walking bass lines based on the chord symbols, rather than just playing the written quarter note lines.

Suggest to your lead trumpet, trombone, and alto players that they, on their own, schedule a weekly sectional with their respective sections. Here they can work on solidifying their parts, blending, articulation and intonation, as well as rehearse any difficult solis they might have in the big band. – JB Dyas

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Example 2





Example 5





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student, in turn, improvise with the rhythm section for eight measures a piece (or four bars a piece if it's a blues), everyone keeping the form.

Emphasize the use of jazz rhythms, and let everyone know that paraphrasing the head for a couple of bars every once in a while is always cool. Keep all the students engaged when they're not soloing by teaching and having them play simple backgrounds based on the chords, thus continually reinforcing the chord progression in their minds and ears.

After everyone has experienced soloing (for better or worse), it's time to talk about learning from the masters. Transcribe a phrase or two from a solo on the definitive recording, demonstrating to the students how you do this. Then teach your students those phrases, relating them to the chords/scales of the moment. (Make sure the phrases you select are not beyond the students' technical capability.)

Have everyone improvise again, this time incorporating the lines they just learned. Doing this on each new tune will not only increase their interest, listening skills and jazz vocabulary, it will give them more credibility to informed listeners (such as high school jazz festival adjudicators) when they quote those phrases.

Big Band Arrangement

Clued in to what jazz is about and how it works, your students are now prepared to rehearse a big band arrangement of the same tune, understanding from whence it came. It's no longer just notes on a page.

Upon distributing the individual parts, discuss the "roadmap," relating the big band arrangement to the tune's form and pointing out any repeats, multiple endings, dal segnos and codas. Then have the band sight-read the tune from beginning to end, stopping only if there's a train wreck.

After that, have the students go over the parts they missed, individually and silently, fingering only (not blowing) so everyone can be in their own space. Then run the chart again, giving everybody another opportunity to work on their sight reading skills.

Next, go back and teach your students how to count any tricky rhythms the chart contains, slowing down the tempo where necessary. Follow this up by rehearsing various sections of the piece, focusing on phrasing, blend, feel, time, dynamics, intonation, articulation, rhythmic interpretation and the like. Give extra attention to the intro and ending, the first and last things the listener hears. Lastly, play the arrangement again from beginning to end—featuring as many soloists within reason as time permits—and enjoy playing jazz.

Post Rehearsal Reminders

At the end of rehearsal, insist that your students download and continually listen to the definitive recordings of the tunes they are (and will be) rehearsing in the big band. With the advent of YouTube and other online sources, checking out the masters performing this music has never been easier.

Finally, remind everyone that one of the most fundamental aspects of being a jazz musician is being hip, that is, being in the know, aware, up to date, clued in—knowing what's up, what's going on. For every tune they play, this means knowing the form, changes, head, definitive recordings and seminal players not just the second alto part. **DB**

Dr. JB Dyas has taught jazz to students of all levels in a wide variety of venues, including middle and high schools, performing arts high schools, summer jazz camps, colleges and universities, jazz institutes and more. His "How to Teach Jazz to High School and College Students" video series can be found free online at artistshousemusic.org. Formerly the executive director of the Brubeck Institute, Dr. Dyas currently serves as Vice President for Education and Curriculum Development at the Thelonious Monk Institute of Jazz at UCLA. He has conributed several educational articles to DownBeat's Woodshed department.



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Terell Stafford, Director of Jazz Studies (trumpet) and Dick Oatts (saxophone/jazz faculty) with the Temple University Studio Orchestra during a performance of "Frank Sinatra Suite," commissioned by the Boyer College of Music and Dance from Michael Abene. Photo: Janette McVey

FACULTY

Terell Stafford Director of Jazz Studies

PIANO Bruce Barth Tom Lawton Josh Richman Elio Villafranca

BASS Mike Boone David Wong

GUITAR Peter Bernstein Craig Ebner Greg Kettinger DRUMS Steve Fidyk Rodney Green Byron Landham

Dan Monaghan VOICE Carla Cook Sachal Vasandan

Sachal Vasandani Najwa Parkins

SAXOPHONE Tim Green Dick Oatts Ben Schachter Tim Warfield, Jr.

TRUMPET

Joe Magnerelli Nick Marchione Mike Natale Terell Stafford John Swana

TROMBONE Luis Bonilla Mark Patterson

VIBRAPHONE Tony Miceli Warren Wolf

VIOLIN Zach Brock

ORGAN Lucas Brown Pat Bianchi

PROGRAMS OF STUDY

BM: Jazz Performance (Instrumental, Keyboard or Voice)
BM: Jazz Composition and Arranging
BM: Music Education with Jazz Component
BM: Music Therapy with Jazz Component
MM: Jazz Studies

AUDITION DATES

Wednesday, December 13, 2017 Sunday, January 14, 2018 Monday, January 15, 2018 Saturday, February 10, 2018 Saturday, March 3, 2018 Sunday, March 4, 2018



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The Art of

s an educator and lifelong road dog, I've noticed a dramatic change in how, where, when and why students and young musicians consume music. The tech-nical advances affecting the listening process that have occurred since my first European tour in 1982 have been astounding. And, while I'm a huge fan of streaming services, tablets, smartphones and cool headphones, I believe that communal listening as a pastime is disappearing from our daily life practices.

I am eternally grateful to my parents and the rest of my extended family for forming my first communal listening experiences. My father had a gang of Miles Davis records, but he also loved groups like Mandrill, War and Parliament Funkadelic. My mother loved female singers like Roberta Flack, Aretha Franklin and Sarah Vaughan, and my grandparents followed B.B. King and Bobby "Blue" Bland. Observing what my relatives responded to fostered an appreciation for seeking a variety of influences that I then integrated into my musical perspective.

Another memorable communal listening experience occurred on Oct. 18, 1982, Wynton Marsalis' 21st birthday the same day that I auditioned for his band. The audition

Communal Listening

went pretty well. Afterward, the band—Kenny Kirkland, Branford Marsalis, Jeff "Tain" Watts and I—took Wynton out for dinner. We ended up back at Wynton's apartment and began listening to music. We were checking out *Miles In The Sky* and *Live At The Plugged Nickel*. I remember everyone telling me how great they thought Wayne Shorter's solo was on "On Green Dolphin Street" from the *Plugged Nickel* album; we proceeded to play it about five times in a row, while they all sang along.

I realized then that I needed to listen to

Tain played Chaka Khan's record *What Cha' Gonna Do For Me.* Tain knew every bass line that Antony Jackson played on the entire CD. (It might have actually been a cassette tape.) I was cracking up as Tain performed an air-guitar rendition of Anthony Jackson's bass lines from this classic recording. I also remember feeling embarrassed that Tain as a drummer knew more about those great bass lines than I did as a bassist. Newly inspired by Tain's ability to integrate the qualities and skill set of another musician and their instrument, I immediate-

A heightened camaraderie can emerge when you take the earbuds off to surround yourself with individuals who are willing to explore the daily task of self-discovery.

music wholistically and in a more in-depth way. I recall Kenny Kirkland with much fondness, as we listened to "Country Son" from Miles In The Sky; his extensive knowledge of this track was stunning. I remember him playing "air bass" when Ron Carter would do something hip, playing "air drums" when Tony Williams would play a slick rhythm and "air piano" to all of Herbie Hancock's piano comps. And, of course, he knew all the solos. Kenny had us all rolling on the floor with laughter as he gave the most comprehensive visual demonstration of that classic Miles track. Kenny showed me how everything was related and fit together. He taught me to think about not just what each musician plays, but why they play it, and its effect on the music.

Looking back at every band that I've really enjoyed touring or playing with for an extended period of time, I've always cultivated a great relationship with the drummer. You can't have a great band unless the bass and drums are tight.

Shout-out to my man Jeff "Tain" Watts. I've played more gigs with Tain than any other musician. We played together for two years with Wynton Marsalis, five years with Branford Marsalis and two years on *The Tonight Show* with Jay Leno. While on tour with Branford or Wynton, I can remember very few times when we didn't hang out afterwards and listen to music following a show.

One of my favorite early memories happened one night after a concert with Wynton. We were hanging in Tain's hotel room and ly went back and learned Jackson's lines from that record and then vowed to pursue listening to music with much more rigor and sensitivity.

Tain also helped me improve my "record-digging" game (the ability to choose good records from the record store.) Whenever we were in Paris together, we would go to my favorite record store, Virgin Records on the Champs-Elysees. Virgin Records-Paris had one of the most amazing collections of African recordings that I'd ever seen. While on tour with Wynton in Paris, we spent a few hours together record-digging, got a gang of African artists' records, had lunch and then went back to the hotel to listen to our latest acquisitions. It was a great day. All of Tain's purchases were awesome. Unfortunately, mine were mostly terrible. Tain shared with me that I should select recordings from specific regions, countries and tribes. I took his suggestion seriously, and the very next day, I took all of my records back and then purchased some African "fire." We spent the rest of that tour listening to those CDs together, continually rewinding and replaying, observing with intentionality so that we could incorporate these African traditions, rhythms and concepts into what we were doing as a rhythm section.

Shout-out to my man Karriem Riggins. Karriem is a drummer and producer extraordinaire with credits that include Ray Brown, Oscar Peterson, Roy Hargrove, Common and Eryka Badu, to name a few. We have been touring together for the past 25 years with artists and bands such as D3 (our trio with Geri Allen), Nicolas Payton, Ravi Coltrane, and most recently for a decade-and-a-half with Diana Krall. I love being on tour with Karriem because not only is he a great drummer, but he always travels with no less than five multi-terabyte thumb drives full of music. We have had many epic pre- and post-gig listening sessions.

Karriem was also best friends with hip-hop legend Jay Dilla, and has a lot of Dilla's beats and sound files. I feel truly blessed to be able to hear some extremely rare Dilla beats and also discover how he chopped samples and programmed music. A few years back on one of our tours with Diana Krall, Karriem started the "tour bus DJ set," in which everyone on the bus had to prepare a hour-plus set of recorded music for the ride to the next city. Some of these rides were as much as 16 hours long. These DJ sets were not only a fun way to pass the time, but were extremely educational and provided much more insight into my bandmates' diverse musical interests and sensibilities.

In your pursuit of becoming a professional musician, a vast amount of information needs to be compiled and integrated into your daily practices. Be it from books and film, a classroom setting, live experiences, the practice room, private instruction or internet formats, you must stay alert to any and all opportunities to delve into the multifaceted nature of creating music. While intensive isolation is a fine way to extract and comprehend all of the components that shape tunes, beats and melodies, please remember the importance of communal listening and the heightened camaraderie that can emerge when you take the earbuds and headphones off to surround yourself with individuals who are willing to explore and undergo the daily task of self-discovery and valuing historical legacy.

Robert Hurst's career as a composer, electric and acoustic bassist, educator, recording artist and bandleader spans 30 years. He has toured and recorded with Charles Lloyd, Wynton Marsalis, Branford Marsalis, Dave Brubeck, Harry Connick Jr., Terence Blanchard, Tony Williams, Nicholas Payton, Sting, Carl Allen, Pharaoh Sanders, Barbara Streisand, Willie Nelson, Yo Yo Ma, Ravi Coltrane, Chris Botti, Diana Krall and Sir Paul McCartney, among numerous others. Hurst played bass in the house band for *The Tonight Show* with Jay Leno for eight seasons (1992-1999). His work in performing, directing, arranging and composing on the NBC program resulted in four Emmy Awards. Hurst has released eight albums as a leader, including his latest, Black Current Jam (Dot Time, 2018). He has also penned original music scores for several films, including The Wood (MTV/ Paramount Productions) and Brown Sugar (Fox Films), and he appears on more than 30 major film and video soundtracks. Hurst currently serves as a dedicated Associate Professor of Music, with Tenure, and the Director of Chamber Jazz Ensembles in the Department of Jazz and Contemporary Improvisation at the University of Michigan's School of Music Theatre & Dance. Visit him online at roberthurst.com.

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Using Technology To Teach, Enhance Jazz Improvisation

his article focuses on two accompaniment software applications available for Mac/PC, Android and iOS platforms that offer many features to enhance practicing and instruction. Throughout the improvisational process, students must constantly evaluate their playing. Students ask themselves, "Do I like the sound of that phrase, and does it work with the chord progression?" Jamey Aebersold Play-A-Long books/CDs (jazzbooks.com) were a huge help to me as I developed my improvisation skills, and I have all my private saxophone students work through Aebersold Volume 54: Maiden Voyage. The main issue with using a pre-recorded accompaniment track is that the tempo and key of each tune is set, restricting how and what I practice.

iReal Pro

iReal Pro (irealpro.com) is an auto accompaniment app available for Mac, iOS and Android platforms. At \$12.99 for iOS/Android and \$19.99 for Mac, iReal Pro is relatively expensive in the world of \$0.99 mobile apps, but it is worth every penny (see Figure 1).

Users enter the chords to any song via the on-screen keyboard and set the tempo, key and number of choruses. Tap the "play" button and iReal Pro generates a backing track with chords, bass and drums. Although users have the option to create accompaniments from scratch, I suggest searching the content-rich Forum built into the app. The Forum provides accompaniments for every tune in *The Real Book*, ii–V7–I exercises and much more. Once the accompaniment is created or loaded, users can explore the basic styles from jazz, Latin and pop categories included with the app or acquire additional styles via an in-app purchase. I particularly enjoy "Blue Note" found in the Jazz category for tunes like "Cantaloupe Island" for that unique Herbie Hancock groove. The user can modify the instrumentation and adjust the volume of the chords, bass and drums.

I suggest beginning improvisers start with a slow tempo and use the Professor feature to slowly speed the playback up by 5 bpm each chorus. Advanced improvisers can have the Professor feature modulate each chorus to practice tunes/exercises in all 12 keys. Tap the Chord Diagrams menu to display practice aids such as the piano/guitar/ukulele chord voicings or the chord tones and scale for each sounding chord.

Ensemble directors can share an accompaniment with a large number of students thanks to iReal Pro's multiple export formats. From the Share menu, select Share Chord Chart > iReal Pro Format to provide students with a file that can be opened by iReal Pro on a student device. Students can record their performance (Share > Record) with their device's built-in microphone and email it to their director for assessment. For students who don't own the iReal Pro app, directors can share a PDF of the lead sheet or an audio file. When exporting audio, I suggest creating a slow, medium and up-to-tempo version for student practice.

Band-in-a-Box

Band-in-a-Box (pgmusic.com) serves a similar purpose to iReal Pro, however, there is no app for iOS/Android and it requires a Mac/ PC computer. New users will pay \$129 for the least expensive version of Band-in-a-Box (called "Pro") while upgrades from previous versions range from \$69-\$79 (see Figure 2).

As with iReal Pro, users type in the chords to any song and set the key, tempo and number of choruses. Users can select from more than 400 styles ranging from jazz to classical. Sometimes I'll try 10 "Jazz Swing" styles until I settle on a particular groove that works best for a given tune. Users can record their performance using a MIDI keyboard or microphone for assessment.

Band-in-a-Box includes a Soloist Generator that can compose a solo over the given chord progression. For example, I could generate and print solos in the style of Joe Henderson, John Coltrane or Charlie Parker over the changes of "All The Things You Are." Users can tailor the Soloist Generator settings to limit the range of the solo for less experienced players such as young trumpet players with limited range. With the addition of "Real Soloists" and "Real Styles," Band-in-a-Box creates incredibly realistic sounding accompaniments and soloist tracks using powerful sampled software instruments.

Users can export a Band-in-a-Box accompaniment as an audio file to distribute to students or as a MIDI file for importing into music notation or production software. Users can print a lead sheet or notation of individual accompaniment parts. For example, I can print the bass part to demonstrate walking bass lines or the piano part to illustrate appropriate chord voicings.

Comparison

iReal Pro and Band-in-a-Box are two technology tools that do not get in the way of practicing or teaching. Both applications require little time to generate outstanding practice material and are very easily integrated into a lesson or practice session. Band-in-a-Box includes hundreds of styles, the Soloist Generator, and the ability to print lead sheets and accompaniment notation. iReal Pro is more affordable, has access to the Forum, includes practice features such as the Professor and Chord Diagrams, and works on iOS/Android devices including mobile phones. Thanks to the this technology, students can grow and develop as improvisers at their own pace in a comfortable environment.

Michael Fein is an instructor of music technology and jazz at Haverford High School (Havertown, Pennsylvania) and teaches graduate courses at The University of the Arts (Philadelphia). He was named Teacher of the Year by the Technology Institute for Music Educators and is a frequent clinician at music education conferences across the country. Fein recently authored *Teaching Music Improvisation with Technology*, published by Oxford University Press. Visit him online at feinmusic.com.

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Figure 1: iReal Pro screen shot



Figure 2: Band-in-a-Box screen shot



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Avishai Cohen perofrms in the Siena Conservatory.

Douglas, trumpet in hand, leads an ensemble class

Siena Summer Jazz Workshop Treats Students as Musicians First

By Ted Panken

Midway through the morning of July 24, the date that Siena Summer Jazz Workshop has opened every year since it launched in 1977, Stefano Battaglia and Roberto Cecchetto were conducting auditions in one of the 20 studios on the second floor of the rectangular 16th century building that it occupies. Like its 19 companions, the room was big enough to accommodate seven or eight musicians, furnished with an in-tune piano, a good drum kit, a comput-

er, music stands and wall-mounted sound-proofing baffles.

Their task was to place 15 pianists and 15 guitarists for the first week of combo classes, taught by an international faculty including Battaglia and fellow pianist Matt Mitchell, trumpeters Dave Douglas and Avishai Cohen, saxophonists Will Vinson and Claudio Fasoli, guitarists Gilad Hekselman and Ben Monder, vocalist Theo Bleckmann, bassists Ben Street and Drew Gress, and

drummer Marcus Gilmore.

Cecchetto would return the following week to join a new shift of teachers, among them guitarist Lage Lund, vocalists Beeca Stevens and Susanne Abbuehl, pianists Gerald Clayton and Franco D'Andrea, drummers Henry Cole and Roberto Gatto, saxophonists Logan Richardson and Ben Wendel, and, for three days, Enrico Rava.

As the paired aspirants entered, Cecchetto and Battaglia instructed each of them to choose a selection to play together, followed by a mandatory "gift," as Cecchetto put it, of Tadd Dameron's "Our Delight." A twenty-something Israeli pianist played a well-wrought solo arrangement of Bud Powell's "Hallucinations," offering reharmonized opening variations before a brisk improvisation that incorporated contrapuntal bass lines.

Others played, with varying degrees of skill and artistry, "Solar," "Straight, No Chaser," "Night And Day," "Dolphin Dance," "Autumn Leaves" and "Sonnymoon For Two."

During the three-hour lunch break that followed, Cecchetto discussed criteria. "Maybe I'm looking for the same things I'm looking for in myself," he said. "But they are always the same—good rhythm and knowledge of harmony. When they improvise, the percentage of personal playing and knowledge of the tradition is important—the good mix. I look at them as musicians first, not students."

Cecchetto, 52, started teaching guitar at SSJW in 1994, two years after he enrolled at the workshop with the express intention of encountering Rava, who hired him in 1993, beginning a long-haul association. Battaglia—also 52 and a performing classical pianist during adolescence and early teens attended SSJW in 1984, and first taught there in 1988.

"Enrico Pieranunzi and Franco D'Andrea were there, and Enrico helped me a lot," Battaglia said after morning classes on July 27. "There weren't so many students then, and the first level was just me. He'd play and I'd watch; I'd play and he'd say something. He suggested to Lee Konitz that he invite me to play with him."

In describing their respective experiences, both musicians implied SSJW President and founder Franco Caroni's analysis of the workshop's animating imperative since its inception.

"The most important thing is to bring the students to analyze, to scrutinize themselves, to understand their real objective," Caroni said. Translating was the eminent jazz historian and book translator Francesco Martinelli, who created and curates a comprehensive library of jazz books, audio recordings, artifacts and ephemera on the ground floor of the premises. "Do they want to become professional musicians, or do they want music as an added competence or pleasure to their life? We explain to the musicians the culture, so they understand how beautiful the music is, and how little time you have to learn about it."

After leaving Cecchetto, DownBeat went to Fasoli's office. The 77-year-old recalled

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BRIAN MCMILLEN

SSJW's first year, when he taught four saxophonists in the garage of a local tenor saxophonist in whose house he slept.

"It was a very economical situation," Fasoli said ironically. "The second year, there arrived 12 or more saxophone students, then on to 32 or 33. The level was very low then. The first thing I had to teach was embouchure and breathing. Now students, if they are serious, can emerge from this experience in good professional form. But the main thing is to bring the students to their own inner approach."

Battaglia concurred. "There are many different rooms in Siena Jazz," he said. "My room is dedicated to creation in music and a lot of improvisation. But this is possible because other people here are focused on traditions. It's very important to give responsibilities to young people. They have to trust themselves."

The previous evening, Battaglia had performed with four fellow Italian faculty members-Diana Torto, vocals; Achille Suci, alto saxophone and bass clarinet; Furio Di Castri, bass; and Ettore Fioravanti, drums-



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Photo by Lindsey Victoria Photography

in the courtyard of the 14th century Palazzo Chigi-Saracini that houses Siena University's Chigiana Musical Academy.

Operating with minimal rehearsal, they found common ground and creative impetus on compositions by Kenny Wheeler, with whom Battaglia and Di Castri had performed in different bands for various durations, and by John Taylor, who had frequently deployed Torto's virtuoso voice-as-instrument skills.

On July 25, Battaglia, Bleckmann and Monder had concertized with cohesive dramaturgy and collective spirit beneath the gaze of the gleaming marble angels on the roof of Siena's 13th century Duomo. A few minutes later, the same mise en scene illuminated a set by Douglas, Vinson, Mitchell, Street and Gilmore, who imbued repertoire by the two horn players with bravura spirit.

The concert ended after midnight, the post-concert wind-down a while after, but Douglas showed no ill effects the next morning, 9:30 sharp, when he entered Studio #3 for a session in which he and Avishai Cohen directed nine students, ranging from 18 to 30-ish, through a protracted investigation of mouthpiece technique.

Then Douglas moved next door, where his first combo class of the day was swinging "It Could Happen To You," and contributed a notey, tippin' solo, which included an interpolated motif from "Softly As In A Morning Sunrise." He said, "Sounds great-can we play it in B-flat?"

Douglas told the singer, "I think B-flat is low for you."

"No, it's fine," she informed him.

He turned to the drummer. "Did you see Whiplash? I hated that movie. But I can relate to it on tempo. That's not the tempo I counted off." He discoursed on the beat, impressed upon the drummer his responsibility for postulating the time, then duetted with him to reinforce his point, phrasing behind the beat. "It's going to be great," he said. "We're going to nail it."

After the next go-through, Douglas said: "It drives me crazy when people don't care enough to make a good ending. Don't be that person." He added: "I think we could get deeper into this song. A song isn't just a set of notes. It's a conversation. Everything you play should be a part of where you are in the song. I think one way is to get away from eighth notes, and focus on the contours of the melody."

After further sage advice and bon mots, Douglas had the class conclude with Thelonious Monk's "In Walked Bud." "Let's make it more organic," he said after the first take. "Take it more seriously-this is sacred music."

A half-hour later, Douglas, 54, who artistic directed the Banff Workshop on Jazz and Creative Music from 2002 until 2012, dis-





cussed his second tour of duty at SSJW. "One thing that makes Siena unique is how international it is," he said. "This is a time when communities all around the world are discovering their own way into this music. I've got an ensemble with an Israeli, a Costa Rican, an Australian and three Italians. Some of the Italians don't really speak English, so there's no common language—they have to figure out within the music how to communicate with each other. You're forced to open your eyes and ears to have an experience in that situation. Also, each ensemble works really closely and plays with one of the visiting artists, so it's an intense, hands-on experience that you don't always get in a workshop like this."

In a separate conversation, Cohen, teaching at SSJW for the ninth consecutive year, cosigned Douglas' enthusiasm. "For the amount of information you get, it's not too expensive," he opined, noting the tuition of 800 Euros. "If you don't have it, and you really want to be here, you can work for three weeks and make it. Drop in on any class, walk randomly into any room, and you'll have someone—Marcus Gilmore, Drew Gress, Matt Mitchell, whoever—dropping amazing knowledge."

"When I first saw the list of faculty, I thought it was a mistake," said Lucas Dann, a 20-year-old Canadian pianist, attending conservatory in Amsterdam, who'd been assigned to Douglas' morning class. "I thought it was a list of all the faculty they'd ever had because it's so impressive. And the facilities are great. Obviously, I rely on good pianos, and I haven't played a bad piano here yet."

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25-year-old bassist from Bologna who was returning to SSJW on scholarship. "My playing improved a lot last year, so I thought it was good to come back. It's good to play with people who are better than you, and the faculty teaches you how to live the music as well as play it."

Also from Douglas' class was alto saxophonist Giulio Ottanelli, 22, who had impressed at a jam session the night before in one of Siena's contradas-large spaces that serve each of the city's 17 separate districts, located behind the winding medieval streets like "invisible cities"-with a coruscating, through-the-keys solo on Warne Marsh's "Marshmallow" that would have earned him approbation in any New York City boite where the best and brightest gather.

'It's very important to give responsibilities to young people. They have to trust themselves."

—Stefano Battaglia

On July 23, Ottanelli, who attends Siena Jazz University, had performed under the Duomo with the SJU orchestra (with Fasoli guesting) in an impressive concert featuring faculty member Roberto Spadoni's challenging charts on repertoire like Charles Mingus' "Jelly Roll Soul" and "Nostalgia In Times Square," Duke Ellington's "Heaven" and Wayne Shorter's "Witch Hunt." It did not sound like a college band.

Preceding that set, 22-year-old Italian-German singer Francesca Gaza, who was auditing SSJW after attending the previous two years, presented a compelling performance on which she framed her own English lyrics with interesting voicings refracted from the languages of Maria Schneider and Kenny Wheeler.

"I like the coming-together of the American culture and the European culture," she said. "Every teacher has been different. What's unique is that you have so many practical lessons. You get to play a lot and sing a lot, to confront yourself a lot with other people. You're constantly inspired."

Her remarks conveyed the consequences of Caroni's decision in 1977 to ask Fasoli to come to Siena to teach him and his partners in a rock band to rehearse a few pieces and play a concert.

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"Claudio was very kind," Caroni said through Martinelli. "He didn't tell us that it was impossible to play jazz after two or three lessons. As we practiced, we discovered we couldn't do it as we thought."

At the time, Caroni recalled, he was a sales manager at one of Siena's pharmaceutical companies who moonlighted playing bass in a rock band whose members started to be interested in jazz and wanted to learn how to play it. He didn't mention that he approached Fasoli during the height of what bassist Giovanni Tommaso described as Italy's "strong delayed reaction" to the late-'60s student rebellions in the United States, France and Germany.

In Italian jazz circles, Red Records founder Sergio Veschi once wrote in his web biography, these developments manifested in "the promotion and diffusion of music mainly addressed to young people and workers," specifically by aesthetically radical African-American avatars like Max Roach, Archie Shepp, Sam Rivers and Sun Ra.

So pervasive was the political climate that produced Italy's Maoist Red Brigades and in which the Communist Party received 70 percent of the popular vote in Umbria's regional and municipal elections, that, in 1977, the Umbria Jazz Festival, then a large youth gathering that booked such icons as Horace Silver, Charles Mingus, Elvin Jones, Art Blakey, Stan Getz, the Count Basie Orchestra and Sarah Vaughan, suspended operations. It would remain dormant for several years.

"During those days, the Left said, 'This is old jazz; you have to play different," pianist Danilo Rea told DownBeat in a 2013 article pegged to the 40th anniversary of Umbria Jazz. "Italy was completely divided in two. They didn't care about the way you played. You had to have a project."

Gatto observed that "many concerts at Umbria were interrupted by people going to the stage and making a disaster." Pianist Dado Moroni recalled that a cohort threw stones at the Basie band bus after a 1975 performance for allegedly "representing America's Republican Party."

Caroni opted to incorporate both flavors within SSJW's pedagogy. "After two workshops, I basically stopped playing and dedicated myself to organizing," he said. "Thousands of people were applying to come to our workshops—our personal interest became a collective interest as well. In Italy, there was a prejudice against the idea of teaching jazz—that it's just spontaneous music, you don't need schools or stuff. We knew that you can't teach somebody to be a poet, but you can teach him the language in order to express his poetry from inside.

"We wanted everything-the swing

musician and the free musician. We wanted to give everybody enough of the culture and the formation to understand everything. In the same workshop we could have [avant-garde drummer] Andrea Centazzo, and then at the same time Amadeo Tommasi, who was an accompanist for Chet Baker—totally different stylistically. But the students were exposed to both of them. We stayed away from the argument."

It was suggested that SSJW's ongoing predisposition to find equipoise between contrasting aesthetic values strongly mirrors the 877-year-old intellectual tradition embodied by its parent university, which contributed consequentially to the Renaissance, to Humanism and to the Enlightenment. "We respect that tradition very much, and they respect the quality of our work," Caroni said. "Now we find ourselves part of that tradition.

"I didn't have a chance to study in a jazz school, so my dream was to offer the younger generation of musicians what we didn't have. I always wanted to build something, and this was a beautiful thing—to build, together, a future for the music."



Kamasi Washington's Tenor Saxophone Solo on 'February Drift'

Tener saxophonist Kamasi Washington, who has become a star attraction as a bandleader and concert headliner in recent years, occasionally lends his musical abilities to other projects. One example is the San Francisco-based collective Throttle Elevator Music, whose 2017 release *Retrorespective* (Wide Hive) features Washington throughout.

Washington's solo on the third track, "February Drift," isn't indicative of his playing on the rest of this record, nor on other albums for that matter. Washington certainly has chops to spare, but on this song (which plods along at about 67 bpm) we don't get anything quicker than a 16th note, and these never appear in groups of more than three. Most of his notes are of longer duration, and Washington leans on a lot of notes for two beats or more. He also leaves plenty of space, even laying out for all of bar 17 (as well as the four beats from bars 2 through 3). Many musicians would have double-timed their phrasing at some point, creating a contrast, but Washington instead goes along with the funeral vibe, adding to the dirge-like mood.

Also, Washington typically phrases over the bar line, whether playing lines (measures 1–2, 9–10 and 24–25 are some clear examples) or leaving silences (measures 2–3, 4–5, 17–18, 19–20). This makes his improvisation sound more like it's floating above the groove. If he'd played more rhythmically and with a stronger definition of the downbeat, it wouldn't have produced the same mysteriousness that we hear. The freedom he exhibits with playing on and behind the beat adds to this sense of his solo drifting above the rhythm section.

The entire song is in a dreary D minor. The bass just sits on the root note while the guitar plays atmospheric chords, so there isn't a strong sense of a mode. Washington uses this ambiguity to add to the mysterious quality. He achieves this by implying four different scale sounds.

He starts off with what sounds like D dorian; though without the sixth, it could be aeolian. It's the minor-pentatonic-with-theninth sound that we hear a lot in more rock-oriented playing. Then, in bars 3–4, Washington goes into the D blues scale (adding the flat fifth to the minor pentatonic). Though possessing different qualities, both scales create a D minor sound. The blues scale just sounds a bit bluesier, or darker, than the dorian.





Washington stays with D minor pentatonic for the next five bars, but then surprises the listener by playing a flat ninth in measure 10. This implies phrygian, and is much darker than what we've heard so far, and quite a contrast to his first lick.

We're back to the blues scale for the next nine bars, and then we get another surprise: The major sixth (B natural) appears in measure 20. This, combined with the ninth that shows up in the following two bars, makes it clearly dorian, about as bright as minor can get. But right afterward he plays that phrygian flat ninth again (in bar 23). He doesn't just play it, though; he leans on it, holding for most of this bar, milking the dark contrast to the brighter sound he'd just played. And then he ends with another blues lick.

Rather than picking a scale or mode and sticking with it, Washington moves between minor pentatonic, blues, dorian and phrygian to create varying degrees of light and shade. Especially enlightening is the way he tends to not put the dorian and phrygian next to one another, preferring to use minor pentatonic or blues scale as a bridge to connect them, except when he shoves the flat nine in your face towards the end.

Something else that also aids the eerie atmosphere is what Washington does with intervals. He starts out playing very melodically, with phrases that for the most part move from scale tone to scale tone (in the blues scale this means a couple of minor thirds). But in measures 6–7 he contrasts this by playing a line with mostly larger intervals, including the stacked fourths descending from the high F.

Throughout the rest of his improvisation we hear Washington using scalar, melodic intervals and juxtaposing them against larger, less melodic intervals. Notice how he plays the large intervals against the melodic aspects, taking care that his solo doesn't become either too smooth or too disjointed.

At measures 9-10, Washington drops a fifth and then up and down a minor second. In the very next bar he jumps up a fourth to descend a major second. Measure 15 drops a tritone and then ascends (and descends) the minor pentatonic scale. This balancing of large intervals with stepwise motion continues until measure 21. Here Washington makes a change and jumps up and down in wider intervals. Combined with the syncopation, this lick really sets up the ending (as well as the tense flat nine in measure 23 that we examined previously). His final lick continues the angular feel with a tritone, but continues with stepwise minor pentatonic and wraps up quite convincingly with a descending fifth resolving to the root. DB

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



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Casio Privia PX-870 *Authentic Piano Sound, Improved Projection*

asio's profile in the digital piano market continues to rise with the introduction of the Privia PX-870. It's the latest flagship model to emerge from the company's ever-evolving Privia line, and a couple of powerful new features distinguish it.

In recent years, Casio has done an excellent job of making instruments that deliver a true grand piano experience via high-quality sounds—some classic, some modern—and an authentic keyboard feel. The PX-870 takes things up a notch by adding a striking new four-layer stereo grand to its AiR Sound Source that comes alive with realistic damper resonance and simulates the entire body of the piano—not just the strings.

Play-testing the PX-870 was a revealing experience. I was surprised at the realism and multi-dimensionality of the new stereo grand sound, which is definitely a major improvement on an already impressive sound set (and lifts the bar for all digital pianos priced around the \$1,000 mark). The PX-870 simulates string resonance (the sympathetic harmonic relationships between vibrating strings) to add subtle beauty and authenticity to the sound. Other cool details include key-action sounds, key-off simulation and a lid simulator that can be set in four different positions, ranging from fully open to fully closed.

The PX-870 packs serious punch, too, with its new Sound Projection speaker system. This powerful 40-watt, four-speaker system envelops the player—and the audience—with detailed sound that emanates from various places on the instrument, just as it would on a real grand piano. It made for an incredibly realistic playing experience, and I was

able to fill a medium-sized room with more than sufficient volume. Speaking

of volume, the PX-870's Volume Sync EQ ensures that you hear a balanced, clear sound across the entire frequency range at any listening volume.

You get a variety of 19 instrument tones with the PX-870, and you can layer and split them as needed. With 256 notes of polyphony, the instrument can keep up with even the most complex piano performances and still sound perfectly natural.

The PX-870's Tri-Sensor II Scaled Hammer Action piano keys have simulated ebony and ivory textures for a comfortable and natural touch, and the hammer action is accurately scaled across the entire key range. Adjustable touch sensitivity and hammer response allow customization to suit any playing style.

You can connect two sets of headphones using the quarter-inch jacks on the front panel, making the PX-870 ideal for quiet practice. Putting it into "headphone mode" optimizes the PX-870's sound for headphone use.

Record your performances using the PX-870's two-track MIDI recorder, or insert a USB drive into a discreet port to capture your playing as a two-channel WAV audio recording. The PX-870 connects via class-compliant USB to any PC, Mac, iOS or Android device, with no drivers or installations needed.

Among the PX-870's many practice functions, a Concert Play feature allows you to play along with 10 recordings of well-known orchestral pieces, and you can slow down a recording without affecting its pitch.

The PX-870 is available in either a black or white finish. Controls are

located to the left of the keys, allowing you to play without distraction. —Ed Enright casio.com



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La Patrie Arena Mahogany CW Q1T Classical Comfort

The new La Patrie Arena Mahogany CW QIT nylon string guitar from Godin features thinline comfort, great playability, on-board amplification and an attractive \$699 price tag.

Built in Godin's La Patrie facility in Quebec, the Arena Mahogany CW Q1T is actually one of four models in the new Arena line, which all feature the same thinline cutaway body profile but are available in a variety of tonewoods. The Arena line features solid spruce tops, and models are available with an option of mahogany, wild cherry or flame maple for the back and sides. Prices range from \$499 for the cherry up to \$1,000 for the flame maple. All models use solid North American woods, and Godin never cuts down a live tree for its wood supply. "If a tree falls here, we grab it and start working," said Andy Dacoulis, Godin employee and endorsing artist. Arena guitars are Godin's first nylon guitars to use a thinline body, and according to Dacoulis, they are intended to be comfortable for the acoustic and electric player who is not used to performing on a classical guitar.

The Arena Mahogany CW Q1T is indeed a very comfortable guitar to hold, and the first thing that I noticed is how light it is. This instrument is built with the player in mind, and the Arena is extremely well suited to performing either standing or sitting. The combination of the thin body and cutaway add to the ease of playability. The guitar features a solid mahogany radiused neck with a 2-inch nut width and 24.84-inch scale length. Godin decided to keep the wider string spacing of a standard classical but go with a slightly shorter scale length and radiused fingerboard on the Arena. This is a smart choice since it helps retain the feel of a classical guitar while making it easier to play for the non-classical musician.

Acoustically, the Arena has a decent and well-balanced tone sufficient for playing around the house. However, Godin has included its QIT amplification system, which is a single-source under-the saddle transducer and active preamp to amplify the guitar. The QIT features a control box that mounted on the side of the Arena with volume, bass and treble controls plus a built-in tuner. The Arena sounded great either run through an acoustic guitar amplifier or plugged directly into a PA system.

The Arena Mahogany CW QIT is a great-playing, versatile instrument that would be a good choice for non-classical players who are looking to add the nylon sound to their repertoire. It may also appeal to the classical guitarist looking for a viable option for performing in situations that require amplification.

—Keith Baumann

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Peterson StroboClip HD One 'Sweet' Tuner

Peterson has been a leader in the world of electronic tuning equipment for more than 70 years and is well known for its highly accurate strobe tuning devices. Recently, the company released the StroboClip HD clip-on tuner, a second-generation clip-on strobe that not only offers significant enhancements over its predecessor, but at \$59, it is also \$20 less expensive.

Peterson first gained recognition with its mechanical strobe tuners, and in 2001 the company introduced the Virtual Strobe, which used an LCD display to digitally emulate a mechanical strobe wheel. In 2009 Peterson released the StrobClip, the world's first clip-on strobe tuner. The new StroboClip HD is Peterson's first upgrade to the original and retains the best of the old while adding some new features that make it noticeably easier to use.

Under the hood, the StroboClip HD contains the same audio processing engine as the original, with a tuning resolution of .01 cent. However, the shell has been redesigned to make the unit smaller and lighter while increasing screen size. The case is made from high-impact plastic in a matte black finish to give it more of a stealth appearance on stage.

The clip has been re-worked and features heavy-duty rubber padding to protect your instrument's finish as well as ample flexibility to allow for easy viewing from any angle. The new HD display features twice the pixel resolution of the original and is significantly easier to read in both light and dark environments. The HD LCD also provides a smoother and steadier strobe wheel display. Strobe tuners, due to their increased sensitivity, can take a bit of getting used to, but the StoboClip HD has definitely made the strobe a lot more user-friendly, a big plus for first-time strobe users.

Another enhancement is the addition of a USB port, which allows the

tuner to connect online though Peterson Connect, where firmware can be upgraded and user configurations can be individually customized. One of Peterson's most significant benefits is its proprietary Sweetened Tuning presets, which compensate for inherent tuning issues exhibited by different instruments. The StroboClip HD contains more than

50 sweeteners, and these can be downloaded, tweaked and even shared

among users via the web. Other features include the ability to adjust the concert A reference pitch and a capo/drop tuning mode that can also be used for transposition.

The new StroboClip HD is a definite advancement over its older brother, and although accuracy remains the same, the overall tuning experience has been greatly improved. The HD worked perfectly on every instrument I clipped it to. Considering its lower cost, what is not to love?

—Keith Baumann

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Zildjian is celebrating a quarter-century of its "A" Custom cymbals—known for their bright, cutting sound and long sustain with a limited-edition 23-inch "A" Custom 25th Anniversary Ride. Only 1,000 are in existence worldwide, and each cymbal is numbered 1 to 1,000 and personally signed by Craigie Zildjian. The "A" Custom 25th Anniversary Ride features symmetrical hammering, a brilliant finish and a clearsounding bell. It is crashable, with a medium-thin weight for a well-balanced sound. It comes in a commemorative box that includes a certificate of authenticity. **More inf: zildjian.com**

2. Drumming Solutions

The Drummer's Lifeline: Quick Fixes, Hacks, and Tips of the Trade (Alfred) by Peter Erskine and Dave Black offers practical yet offbeat solutions to just about any drumming situation. Topics include tips on practice, performance, recording and gear; tricks to achieve certain sounds from the drums; care and maintenance solutions; music business advice; instructions on choosing, changing and tuning drumheads; and warmup exercises and musical examples. More info: alfred.com

3. Slide Action

Antigua Winds has introduced the Vosi TB2211LQ trombone, which features a .500inch bore, a chrome-plated nickel-silver inner slide and a nickel-silver outer slide. The nickel-silver outer slide is more durable and more resistant to corrosion than brass, and also has a quicker response and a fuller sound. All Vosi instruments are covered by Antigua's five-year limited warranty and come with an ABS case.

More info: antiguawinds.com

4. Portable Line Arrays

Anchor Audio's Bigfoot and Beacon Air portable sound systems are battery powered, operate six to eight hours or more on a single charge and can be placed 150 feet or more from one another. The Bigfoot and Beacon portable line arrays are durable and easy to transport with built-in wheels and handles. Delivering 130dB and 120dB of clear sound, respectively, these portable sound systems are ideal for music and voice amplification.

More info: anchoraudio.com/anchor-air

5. Analog Collaboration

The SE-02 Analog Synthesizer is a collaborative effort from Roland and Studio Electronics. The SE-02's analog synth engine features three voltage-controlled oscillators, a 24dB low-pass filter and a dual gain-stage amplifier. Other features include three types of cross modulation, a filter feedback loop, a tempo-syncing LFO with nine waveforms, oscillator sync, a noise generator and a tempo-syncing delay. **More info:** roland.com



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Berklee's Valencia Campus Fosters Collaboration

THE MASTER'S STUDENTS AND FACULTY of Berklee College of Music's campus in Valencia, Spain, held their festive 2017 graduation concert on July 8. It was a feast of fusion— the result of a year of intense musical study and production from a class representing 18 different countries, a genre-hopping creative stew befitting musical guest John McLaughlin.

The personable, Grammy-nominated violinist Casey Driessen—who serves as director for the Master of Music in Contemporary Performance (Production Concentration) program at Valencia—was one of the performers.

"A lot of fun music happens here," Driessen said. "We've got people who come from contemporary classical, from jazz backgrounds, from pop, neo-soul and blues, from folk ... it's quite diverse. This year we have violin, viola, cello, alto sax, harp, oboe, Middle Eastern hand percussion and South Indian Carnatic flute. Every year has its own distinct personality."

Located in a series of well-equipped classrooms, practice spaces, recording studios and production labs in Valencia's futuresque City of Arts and Sciences, Berklee's satellite campus offers four different one-year master's programs: Music Production, Technology and Innovation; Global Entertainment and Music Business; Scoring For Film, Television and Video Games; and Contemporary Performance (Production Concentration). Students spend the year in classes, simultaneously working on their thesis presentations.

Students who are enrolled at Berklee's Boston campus can choose to do a semester or first complete year of undergraduate study in Valencia. According to Driessen, the main difference between the two campuses is the size: "There's certainly as much diversity in Boston as there is here, but this is a much smaller version of that. Here we have nearly 40 countries represented, with about 280 people. So, you get a diversity of styles and cultural backgrounds, but you don't have the sheer numbers that you do in Boston.

"Access to facilities is great here, especially on the master's side, when you're trying to focus on your program and your projects, trying to create something that's useful for your career."

Guest instructors such as Béla Fleck, Patrice Rushen, Jamey Haddad and Big Freedia teach alongside more than 40 faculty members in Valencia, including Vince Mendoza, Gary Willis, Olga Román, Polo Ortí and Sergio Martinez.

"We teach a wide range," Driessen explained. "It's not genre-specific. We take any instruments and stylistic backgrounds within reason, and figure out how to put ensembles together. They end up in the same place and find common ground—they experiment."

Driessen graduated from Berklee's Music Production and Engineering program in Boston in 2000. "I wanted to learn how studios worked, how to communicate," he said. "So in this program, I'm trying to help young performers who want to be self-sufficient and understand the whole process for their own creativity. We help folks develop their own personal artistry, through collaboration, through the different musical backgrounds here.

"Nobody knows who they're going to meet when they get here. They just trust that these people have a similar sense of musical adventure and open-mindedness." —*Robin Tolleson*

School Notes



2 Doctors, 1 Birthday: Guitarist Bill Frisell and composer Michael Gibbs were awarded honorarv doctor of music degrees by Berklee College of Music during an Oct. 19 concert celebrating Gibbs' 80th birthday. The career-spanning concert reunited Gibbs with Frisell, his student at Berklee in the 1970s, as well as jazz vibraphonist Gary Burton, a longtime friend and former Berklee classmate. The performance also featured saxophonist Jim Odgren and the Berklee Concert Jazz Orchestra, directed by Greg Hopkins, professor of jazz composition. The honorary degrees were presented by Berklee President Roger Brown. Also in attendance were numerous Berklee VIPs, including former Berklee president Lee Berk and his wife, Susan. berklee.edu

Pérez at Princeton: Pianist Danilo Pérez will perform with the Jazz at Princeton University Small Groups on Feb. 24. The concert will take place at Richardson Auditorium in Princeton's Alexander Hall. Other upcoming student concerts at Princeton include the Jazz Vocal Collective directed by Trineice Robinson (April 19), the Vocal Improvisation Ensemble directed by Jay Clayton (April 26), Jazz Small Groups directed by Rudresh Mahanthappa (May 1) and the Creative Large Ensemble directed by Darcy James Argue (May 12). tickets.princeton.edu

JEN Appointment: Sharon Burch has been appointed as full-time managing director of the Jazz Education Network. Burch will oversee the network's part-time staff and volunteers and work with Dr. Lou Fischer, conference coordinator/JEN co-founder. Burch previously served on the JEN Board of Directors as secretary and as chairperson of the JEN Education Committee, and has been involved with the organization since its first conference nine years ago. She has experience as a music educator, entrepreneur, presenter and education consultant. Jazzednet.org

Duo of Doctors: On Oct. 13 at Kodak Hall, the University of Rochester's Eastman School of Music gave honorary doctor of music degrees to pianist-composer Chick Corea and drummer Steve Gadd, who is an Eastman alumnus. esm.rochester.edu

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Rovner10 rovnerproducts.com

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Temple University......91 temple.edu/boyer

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University of North Texas... 87 jazz.unt.edu

Vandoren.....3 wearevandoren.com

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Blindfold Test > BY JENNIFER ODELL

Sean Jones

fiery player whose razor-sharp precision and soaring solos have long drawn critical praise, trumpeter Sean Jones imbues even his most complex music with a sense of his gospel roots. That influence shines through on tracks like "BJ's Tune" from his latest album, *Live From Jazz At The Bistro* (Mack Avenue), which dips into "Amazing Grace" for a spiritual finish.

Jones' early experience performing in church also informs his ability to engage and move an audience, as he did at the 2017 Detroit Jazz Festival, where he participated in his first DownBeat Blindfold Test in front of a live audience. Jones opted out of the star-rating system.

Bobby McFerrin

"Bang!Zoom" (*Bang!Zoom*, Blue Note, 1995) McFerrin, vocals; Jimmy Haslip, bass; William Kennedy, drums; Paul Jackson, guitar; Paulinho Da Costa, percussion; Russell Ferrante, piano, synthesizer; Bob Mintzer, saxophone, bass, clarinet, EWI.

Bobby McFerrin. This song is the opening track, I believe, to his album *BanglZoom*, right? This is one of my favorite Bobby McFerrin albums. There's a kind of spiritual glow to the whole album that uplifts you. It's not religious; it just makes you feel good.

Bobby McFerrin's entire body is an instrument and I try to think that way when I'm playing. Not just lines or things like that, but I actually try to transcend the trumpet and think about the voice, think about it being a percussive instrument. I think Bobby does that on all of his albums.

Orrin Evans

"Kooks" (#knowingishalfthebattle, Smoke Sessions, 2016) Evans, piano, Fender Rhodes; Kurt Rosenwinkel, guitar; M'Balia Singley, vocals; Luques Curtis, bass; Mark Whitfield Jr., drums.

It reminds me of Orrin Evans. But it doesn't really sound like him totally. [*after*] Orrin and I have been playing together for almost 15 years now and there are certain things that he does He did a certain chord that's in the middle register, and whenever I hear that chord I immediately know that it's Orrin. It's the way he voices dominant sevenths, and I knew it was him the moment I heard that.

Dr. Lonnie Smith

"Three Blind Mice" (*THINKI*, Blue Note, 1969) Smith, organ; Lee Morgan, trumpet; David Newman, tenor saxophone, flute; Melvin Sparks, guitar; Marion Booker Jr., drums.

That's "Three Blind Mice." This is the drummer's album? No? The drummer's playin' like it's his album. I'm drawing a blank on this one, I know the tune. This sounds like Kenny Burrell a little bit, too. That's definitely Lee Morgan. Is that Lee Morgan's record? It's not. There's some Wayne Shorter resemblances in there but I don't think that's Wayne. Oh! Hold on, that's Dr. Lonnie. You were trying to dupe me! I get 20 points for that one. Dr. Lonnie can groove all day long. I actually just had the opportunity to play on his live album. He's so soulful.

Art Blakey & The Jazz Messengers

"Thermo" (*Caravan*, Riverside, 1963) Blakey, drums; Freddie Hubbard, trumpet; Curtis Fuller, trombone; Wayne Shorter, tenor saxophone; Cedar Walton, piano; Reggie Workman, bass.

Freddie Hubbard. This tune is one of the hardest tunes for trumpet players to play ... and you just have to tongue all of that [*sings*] way up there. ... I think he actually wrote this to screw with trumpet players. But now I actually assign this to all my trumpet players. That part is really difficult, you have to just know where to hit that. But on the end, it's deep because he repeats that pattern. Is that the Blakey record? Because they recorded it a few times but I don't believe another trumpet player recorded that.



Wynton Marsalis

"Black Codes" (*Black Codes From The Underground*, Columbia, 1985) Wynton Marsalis, trumpet; Branford Marsalis, saxophones; Kenny Kirkland, piano; Charnett Moffett, bass; Jeff "Tain" Watts, drums.

Black Codes From The Underground. Branford is on that. Kenny Kirkland, God rest his soul. Jeff "Tain" Watts. To me, that was like the definitive record from that time period, the late '80s/early '90s. Everybody knows Wynton from the *Standard Time* records, but this album is to me his biggest statement as a composer at that time period.

Wynton's true genius is in his work ethic. There are certain people who transcend the norms and that's what makes them great. I tell my students that greatness is an extreme. If everybody could be great then everybody would be. But there's greatness in everybody. What separates the people that are great from the people that just have that potential is the work that they do, and not stopping.

Sitting next to him for six years [in the Jazz at Lincoln Center Orchestra] and seeing that he was always willing to raise money, always writing, it made me want to do more and up my levels. Wynton is one of the most misunderstood musicians out here.

Kim Burrell

"Victory" (Live In Concert, Tommy Boy Gospel, 2001) Burrell, vocals; Jerard Woods, Jovaun Woods, Kathryn Young, Melonie Daniels, Sheri Jones, backing vocals; Maurice Fitzgerald, bass; Jimane Nelson, Shawn Martin, keyboards; Fausto Cuevas III, percussion; Calvin Rodgers, Robert "Sput" Searight, drums.

That's gospel. That's Kim Burrell, this is the live [album] right? Kim Burrell is one of the greatest—woo!—gospel singers alive right now. From New Orleans, now living in Houston, she's on my fourth album, *Kaleidoscope*. She's an amazing musician, a really beautiful spirit. She's one of those people when you hear her music for the first time, it just goes straight through you; it makes you happy and lifts you up. And she's not one of those people who will try to beat religion over your head. She understands the broader spirit of it all. That's why I loved her music even before I worked with her. There's something about this music. Maybe it's because how I grew up with my grandmother singing over a pot of greens and Kim naturally has that in her music—just that depth of soul.

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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